

Hunger in America: Brittany's Story

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It's the shameful truth—too many families in the United States work hard but are falling behind. They're technically above the poverty line, but still living paycheck to paycheck. An unexpected health emergency or major car repair pushes them from barely making it into true crisis.

Nobody should live this way, least of all children.

Take Tanya*, a mother of two who works hard and wants the best for her kids. She wants them to have the chance to have a happy childhood and grow up and follow their dreams.

But sometimes the difficulty of everyday life gets in the way — even for families where both parents have jobs and are working hard to provide for their children. Tanya's husband is a truck driver, and his job takes him away for days at a time. He'll often come home from work in the middle of the night, take a shower, and be gone the next day. Sometimes it's easier just to sleep in the truck than disturb the family in the middle of the night.

Tanya's daughter Brittany is a creative 11 year old with lots of potential. She loves to sing and composes her own songs. When she's not making music, she's probably practicing her gymnastics moves. Brittany's brother Christopher is six years old but seems much older than his years.

Despite having two incomes, the family struggles.

Tanya's husband's job isn't consistent. Sometimes they have to decide which bills to pay and which ones to let slide until the next paycheck, or which expenses to put on the credit card. Some months, simple grocery items like chicken or ground beef are simply out of reach.

Each summer, the kids receive a list of school supplies for the upcoming year. Those times are especially hard for the family. In addition to the standard crayons and glue, school supply lists these days include large boxes of disinfectant wipes and jumbo bottles of hand sanitizer. And the kids are supposed to bring three packs of crayons, not one, because the class pools their supplies. These supplies can be a hardship for families struggling to meet even basic needs. But Tanya wants her kids and their classmates to have what they need to get a good education.

"I think people don't realize that a lot of middle-class people can be struggling," Tanya says. "And maybe they are too embarrassed to go even seek help, and they'll just struggle . . . and just suffer."

Tanya knows what it's like to struggle and suffer. Thankfully, she also knows that her local food pantry, one of Feed the Children's partner agencies, can help in her family's time of need.

"A little bit of extra help from the pantry makes a big difference," she explains.

The support Brittany's family receives from the food pantry has a ripple effect. Getting a little help with food frees up some of the family income to buy other necessities, such as school supplies and clothes. Tanya always wants her kids to have what they need to succeed in school.

Your support changes the lives of children like Brittany and Christopher. Thank you for giving to provide food, essentials and hope to struggling families here at home.

*Names have been changed to protect the family's privacy.

