

# One Team Member's Favorite Holiday Tradition

We recently celebrated our [ninth Very Merry Meijer event](#) surprising customers and team members in each of our stores with more than \$400,000 in holiday shopping sprees. Over the years, this event has become a favorite holiday tradition for many of our team members as they get to partake in the fun of the event and sometimes be surprised themselves.

Monica Vedders still remembers how special she felt to be selected for a Very Merry Meijer surprise three years ago. She had just joined the Meijer team as a Cashier at our Cedar Springs, Mich. store while undergoing a significant personal transformation. Now as a Team Lead overseeing customer service and checkout, she takes extra pride in keeping an eye out for unsuspecting customers that could be potential recipients.

"I remember the feelings I had when receiving a Very Merry Meijer surprise, and now to be able to pay it forward to somebody else is pretty cool," Monica said.

Three years ago, her supervisor surprised her by asking her to move to a different lane to assist a "very special family" that was going to be coming through.

"I was super excited for the family who received the surprise," Monica said. "But I didn't know the team member also received a gift card. I was completely shocked when I was handed a certificate to use for my family."

The gift couldn't have come at a better time.

"I had been a stay-at-home mom to my three children for 13 years but found myself going through a divorce that was final just before Christmas. I wasn't sure how I would provide my children with a special Christmas since we were going through many family changes." Monica said. "However, with the Very Merry Meijer gift card, I was able to pick up a couple of bonus gifts and surprise them. We were also able to pay it forward to a couple of other people as well. It truly was a blessing."

She has also continued the tradition of wearing a jingle bell hat each holiday season, which she was wearing during that special moment three years ago. It continues to bring smiles to the faces of customers and team members alike when they hear the bells.

"I wear my hat all of December just to keep my cashiers going. It jingles as I walk and creates a little bit of holiday cheer up front here when we're so busy," said Monica, who has been the team lead for the service department for about a year.

This year's Very Merry Meijer recipient at the Cedar Springs store was a young couple who were shopping with their baby. They received a \$1,000 shopping spree, and two Meijer Pickup customers received a coupon for \$250.

"I still get goosebumps from being part of that and seeing their faces when they're surprised," Monica said. "It was also neat to be paired up with Hank Meijer and (Store Director) Tony Cook as they were scouting out our store. I shared comments that I heard from families as they shopped."

Monica was thrilled for the cashier who was randomly selected to be the team member recipient this year. "When she found out, I really thought she was going to cry on her lane. She said it definitely made her holidays brighter."

Watch this year's Very Merry Meijer surprises [here](#).

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