



## GRIT

... is powered by purpose.™

PHOTOS SPEAK M1



Photos positively representing Jeneece Edroff

IMAGINE

# PERSEVERANCE AND PENNIES

... you are 3 years old and your body is in so much pain that you can't move. The doctors diagnose you as having Neurofibromastosis type 1. This is a disease that causes tumors to grow on your nerve pathways in your body. Doctors put you in a body brace to support your spine and make the pain better. This is where Jeneece Edroff found herself at 3 years old. It is also where her grit began to develop and her courage took root.

In Jeneece's case, these tumors grew off the nerve roots coming off her spine. This caused her spine to be very weak. It made it necessary for her to wear the brace. At age 5, Jeneece had her first spinal surgery. It involved placing a rod and screws to help make her spine more stable. The first time she sat up after this surgery, she had a problem with two of those screws. Jeneece had to have another surgery. She was told not to lift her head above her elbows for 4 months. Her doctors didn't think she would ever walk again. But, her surgeon cried when Jeneece ran into his office, hugged him, and told him, "Thanks for letting me walk again."

Throughout these surgeries, Jeneece stayed strong. She fought through the pain to get better. At 7, in her third body brace, she learned that a local charity had been helping her family pay for her medical expenses. Jeneece wanted to help the charity to raise money. She showed great compassion in making this decision to give back. Jeneece started a penny drive and raised \$164. She was not pleased with this amount, so she did it again the next year. This time, Jeneece went to a local news station and asked them to help. She raised \$25,000 and then \$30,000. The following three years, Jeneece raised \$52,000, \$59,000, and \$96,000. Over the years, the total became \$640,000. Jeneece's grit, courage and compassion were helping her give back to the people who helped her.

Jeneece didn't stop there. She went on to raise money for several other charities. She has raised over \$1.25 million dollars combined. She has done this through her penny drives and selling flowers, hot dogs and even her own artwork. But her greatest achievement was raising \$5.5 million dollars to build a home in her community for the families in need of medical care, called Jeneece Place.

Jeneece's example of grit and compassion has also encouraged other people to give back in their communities. This is probably what Jeneece is most proud of. "I am a bit like a penny, by myself, I am not worth much. But with a little help and lots of pennies, you can achieve a lot. Every penny counts and even the smallest person can make a difference," she says. What can you do to make a difference in your community? How can you use grit to help write your own best TrueSuccess lifestory?

### QUESTIONS LEAD TO UNDERSTANDING M2/5

1. What evidence is there that John had grit? Do you think John's story would have ended the same if he did not have grit?  
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2. How did John's grit help him overcome his difficult start in life? What was John's purpose he worked so hard for?  
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3. How can you learn from John's lifestory? What are specific actions you can take to overcome challenges in your own life?  
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