



CARIN' AT FARRIN

Inside the Law Offices of James Scott Farrin





Most days at our firm, folks are doing fine. Doing their jobs, enjoying their coworkers, committed to the purpose of helping our clients. That's most days. But then... life happens.

Times are not always easy. We definitely see that with our clients, and we see that in our employees' experiences too.

Illness. A loved one gets hurt or passes away. Family tragedies. Unusual financial pressures. Car or child care problems. Any sort of problem you can name — it can happen to any of us.

At our firm, we've got your back. Coworkers, at all levels, care. Hierarchy isn't our thing. Helping out when we can, some of us or all of us — that's who we are.

There are many reasons for this, but most important lies in our hearts. Employees at this firm are people — people who give our clients' causes their talents day after day. But there are tribulations for members of our team, too, and who would we be if we weren't moved to act?

The growth into the kind of caring place I always sought has been organic. You can't orchestrate generosity or insist we all look out for each other. It either occurs, or it does not.

It has happened — repeatedly — here. This booklet, "Carin' at Farrin," recounts many wonderful and powerful stories, which illustrate our spirit.

Sure: the firm can't do everything; friends and fellow employees can't do everything. But often we can do something. Life can be hard enough on your own. Our employees choose to help when they can. I am so proud of that.

When you walk in the door at this firm, please know we have high expectations. And one of them is to be a caring human being. I ask you to take notice when someone needs a hand. Try to extend one in some small way... or a bigger way.

That purpose is what makes what we do at this place more than a job. Our work makes lives better — including our own.

JAMES S. FARRIN



HOW WE CARE ABOUT EACH OTHER AT JSF

These stories, recollections and anecdotes come firsthand from our employees

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CHAPTER 1

The Little Things

WHEN FAMILY ISN'T NEARBY

In my department, there are a few employees who are expecting babies, and every one of them has gotten a baby shower from their colleagues. It's touching to me to see we have interest in and care for our coworkers. I know these gestures mean a lot to them, especially the ones who don't have family nearby. In that moment, their colleagues become their family. I love seeing that.

When I got married last year, my department threw me a bridal shower and decorated one of the rooms for me. I thought it was so sweet of them to do that.

EVERYDAY KINDNESS

There are a lot of things I love about how people treat each other here. There are many examples, but one in particular: when I was in the Durham Bulls Run, there were so many colleagues who were volunteering and motivating all the participants. I also love the way the firm honors their employees on their work anniversaries.

Another example: when one of our lawyers took my dad's case pro bono. There are a lot of great people here being nice to each other; you really do feel the love. It's a great feeling to know they are here for you.

A WORK ENVIRONMENT LIKE NO OTHER

I've never worked anywhere before where you get the anniversary flowers, the cards, the Christmas party, the events through the year, the five-year ceremonies in the hall. The firm really takes the time to recognize you and make sure you understand what you mean to them. Believe me, I remember.

DESPITE THE STORM

My colleagues threw me a baby shower in January. It happened to be on the day of a giant ice storm, but everyone stayed and waited it out. One coworker even drove all the way from Zebulon to bring us Chick-fil-A. It took her hours to get home, but everyone stayed to celebrate the baby shower.

NO BIKE? NO PROBLEM

I came to North Carolina from New York to work for James Scott Farrin. I mentioned one day that my bike wasn't in working order, and the next day a coworker showed up with hers for me to use. Coming from New York, I wasn't used to receiving so much kindness, but it's made an impression on me.

In my department, we treat each other with generosity, which is so refreshing compared to other places where I've worked.



IT'S CONTAGIOUS

I've never had so much support at any other job. All these things promote happy people and when people are happy, they pass that generosity on to each other. It's an amazing feeling to work in a place where you know your supervisors and colleagues have your back.

A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

There are little things that set James Scott Farrin apart from other firms I've worked for. They make us feel we are part of a family. But you know what: the little things feel big to me.

WILTED ROSES

One thing I like about working for James Scott Farrin is that work anniversaries are celebrated by flowers and recognition. I've seen how excited people are to receive their roses and they always keep them 'til they're wilted. I like working in that atmosphere.

OUT-OF-TOWN BIRTHDAY

Last year, I was working with a team of attorneys in Memphis on my birthday. We'd worked a very long day and we were all tired, but they still took time to celebrate me by taking me to dinner. That's when you know your colleagues care. It was so nice to be away from the office, but still be celebrated.

WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER

I used to work in a defense firm, and I was the workhorse. In the short time I've been here, I've seen such a difference in how employees are treated. Everyone here is checking on everybody to make sure we're OK. We all have lots of work to do, but we have the attitude that we'll do anything to help somebody else. That's a reassuring feeling.



FLOWERS AND FLEXIBILITY

I was the recipient of the firm's generosity when I had to have surgery. I thought it was so sweet that my department sent me flowers and a card. I had coworkers calling to check on me, which I truly appreciated. I also enjoy the fact that the firm is flexible with my schedule. I've had to take a few days off unexpectedly, or leave early, and the firm is great about letting me work from home. I've never had that anywhere else, and I don't take it for granted.

A LILY FOR MY GRANDMOTHER

I lost my grandfather to cancer in August 2012. The firm sent a peace lily and a sympathy card to my grand-parent's house, which touched my grandmother deeply. We were so thankful for the firm's generosity.

“In my department, we treat each other with generosity, which is so refreshing compared to other places where I've worked.”

THIS MEAL'S ON US

When a coworker's mother-in-law passed away, we gathered together and got a gift card to Foster's to cover a week of food.

MY DAD

My dad was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in 2006 after he had been sick for a long time. After he was finally diagnosed, his health went downhill very fast, and he began having problems at work. The company he worked for changed management and they were on him all the time. He was injured when he accidentally sprayed Freon on his hands, but he didn't want to file a claim because he thought he was suing his employer.

When the firm told me they were taking the case pro bono, I thought it was so great of them. My dad is so thankful. It touched me that they cared to help my dad.

WHO SENT THE FLOWERS?

A few years ago, my mother was rushed to the hospital in Virginia Beach, and I had to leave work immediately to be with her. It made an impact on me that I was able to leave work with no problems to be there with my mom. A few days later when I went to the hospital to visit her, there was a large bouquet of flowers in her room. I asked her who they came from and she said, "I don't know, but they came from your job." It was so sweet because I wasn't expecting anything from the firm. I was very touched.

THE BOY IN THE WHEELCHAIR

We moved to North Carolina from Michigan in late 2007 and shortly after we moved, my son's leg was broken at his after-school care. At the time, my wife was working in sales and was on the road every day. My son was in a wheelchair. He couldn't go to school, he was too young to be left at home alone, and my wife couldn't take him to work with her. That left me.

I went to Jim and explained the situation. I had been at the firm for a short amount of time, but I had to tell him that I would have to resign if I couldn't bring my son to work for about a month. His response was, "Bring him on in."

Some of you remember my little son in the wheelchair hanging out in the office every day. People would come by my office and take him to reception to stuff envelopes, or to the break room to play pool from his wheelchair. It was very welcoming to have their support.

Jim could've said, "You've only been here three months, I don't have time for you." But instead, we were welcomed. And on top of that, when he had his surgery, he was showered with activity baskets from the staff.

PEOPLE STILL ASK

Six months after I started working at the firm, my young son was seriously injured while we were vacationing in the mountains. I notified my supervisor, and the outpouring of support from the firm almost brings tears to my face again. Jim and my supervisors told me to take as much time as I needed to be with my son.

My son recovered from his fall, but still people ask me how he's doing, and that means a lot. The firm was so quick to step into my shoes so I could focus on the most important thing: family.

I was overwhelmed when the firm's response was to help me and my family in any way they could. All of the attorneys, including Jim, offered to cover for me. My paralegal was a champion and kept things moving. Everyone expressed genuine concern.

SCARED FOR MY WIFE, SCARED FOR MY JOB

Three months into my tenure at the firm, I underwent a family crisis that proved to me how the firm cares for its employees.

I started in October 2011 and on Dec. 15th, my wife went into the hospital for a serious, but routine surgery. Her recovery time was projected to be a five-day hospitalization, and the expectation was I would be out of the office on the day of her surgery and for most of the week after.

However, my wife suffered severe complications during surgery and what should have been a five-day hospitalization turned into five weeks. They told me they didn't know if she would survive, and if she did, there were questions if she'd ever return to her pre-surgery state.

I was scared for her, and I was scared I would lose my job. I've worked places where I've seen people fired due to extenuating medical issues and I've seen what happens after they lose their jobs. Jim didn't know me well at that time, and I was unsure of how he would react to the fact that my week out of the office was catastrophically turning into more.

As my wife's primary caregiver, I spent as much time as I could with her and conferring with her medical team. I also had to keep life as normal as possible for our 13-year-old daughter. All of these things kept me away from the office.

I was overwhelmed when the firm's response was to help me and my family in any way they could. All of the attorneys, including Jim, offered to cover for me. My paralegal was a champion and kept things moving. Everyone expressed genuine concern.

I talked to Jim later about what happened. He didn't see that what he had done for me was special, which speaks to the kind of man he is. He assumed any company would have done the same thing to help their employee, but I know differently.

I will always be thankful for what Jim and this company did to support me and my family.



When Times Are Tough

THEY'VE GOT MY BACK

The firm has helped me on numerous occasions with little things that have come up during my tenure. The instance that is coming to mind is when I was put on unplanned bed rest when I was seven months pregnant with my oldest daughter. The firm was so great to me. After my daughter was born, I was out of the office for another three months during maternity leave and yet, when it was time for me to come back to work, I had a job. I have no doubt that if something were to tragically happen to me, the firm would stand behind me and my family 100 percent.

ALONE... BUT NOT

There was a time when circumstances led to me being the only case manager. I had so many calls, and I was swamped. All the managers were so understanding of the fact that I was stressed out. I thought I was going to be fired, and I kept going home in tears. I'm emotional now just writing about it. It made me feel so good to know that the team I worked with supported me and understood what I was going through.

BEHIND THE SCENES

Working in HR, I see what the firm does for our employees behind the scenes that are private, and I can never talk about around the office. If they want to talk about it, and some have, that's fine. All I can say is I am amazed at what the firm will do when some people are in bad straits. It's behind the scenes when it happens, but I know and I am so proud to be a part of a place that does what we have done.

WANTING YOU TO SUCCEED

I had my 10-year anniversary recently, and I was given a signed football helmet from the Philadelphia Eagles. I know that Jim puts a lot of thought into giving these gifts by going to people we work with to find out what you like.

Other examples of the firm caring for us is by advancing money for paralegals I've had who had personal needs arise. One had a very difficult home life, and the firm did a lot to help keep her home stable. Other employers would've said, "It's your problem, not ours," but that's not what happens here — and it's touching.

There's a sense of wanting you to succeed.

NO TIME TO PREPARE

Across the board, our managers work hard to afford us the flexibility we need to live our lives outside the firm.

My husband went to the doctor on a Monday and was told he needed emergency surgery on his rotator cuff by the end of the week. There was no time to prepare, but my supervisors were so great. They encouraged me to not worry about work and to take care of my husband. After his surgery, I was getting text messages from everyone to make sure he was OK and to see if we needed anything.

Working at James Scott Farrin is very different from other places I've worked where we've been told to get our jobs done regardless of what's going on at home. It is not that way here. People care about you and they want to support you.



A DIAGNOSIS, AN UNRESPONSIVE SON, AND OVERWHELMING SUPPORT

There are two significant situations in my life that the firm's support helped carry me through. A few months after I started working here, I was diagnosed with Sjogren's Syndrome. Then I underwent more extensive testing and was also diagnosed with lupus. I thought my world was coming to an end. Between one lawyer's spirituality and words of encouragement, and another attorney pushing me to find the diagnoses — and providing a shoulder to cry on — I was given the support and strength to find the answers I needed.

Just a few months ago, my colleagues again rallied to support me. On May 4, I woke up to find my teenage son unresponsive in his bed. He suffered multiple seizures that rendered him unconscious. Later they told me I saved his life by turning him on his side when I found him because he could have died from asphyxiation. He was in kidney failure and was very sick.

I was worried I would lose my job. I stayed with my son during his 10-day hospital stay and went through the process of filing the FMLA paperwork. When my son was well enough for me to return to work, I called HR and said I was ready to come back. He was so sweet and wanted to make sure I didn't need more time. I ended up working in the same department as the one I was in before I left, which I was very happy about.

I'm so thankful to be at James Scott Farrin and I could not be more appreciative for everything they've done to help me.

I WOULD TELL YOU TO GO HOME

Right after I started working at James Scott Farrin, my dad needed an unexpected, immediate heart surgery. When I called the firm to say I couldn't be at the office for a week, my attorney supervisor's response was, "Absolutely. I wouldn't expect you to be here. I would tell you to go home." He didn't have to give me that time. It was a good feeling to know I had somebody supporting me. Shortly after I got off the phone with him, an employee called and wanted to know what the firm could do to help me.

It was overwhelming and meant a lot to me to have the whole firm's support.



HE FED MY DOG

I've been on bed rest and was able to work from home. I even settled a case through mediation from the couch. A coworker would let himself in the house to bring me files. He'd feed the dog, pour himself a drink, pour me a drink, bring me a snack — it's what we do for each other at the firm. We do what we can to help each other.

I have no doubt that if something were to tragically happen to me, the firm would stand behind me and my family 100 percent.



CHAPTER 4

Life's Hardest Moments

MY TERRIBLE ACCIDENT

I was involved in a terrible car accident almost three years ago and in that accident my father-in-law was killed. I was in the hospital for a month after the accident and not a day went by that I didn't get a visit from someone at the firm.

I've always known that James Scott Farrin was a good place to work, and I knew that people cared about each other, but it wasn't until then that I fully understood the depth of how much the firm cares for its employees.

My husband told me that right after the accident, everybody came. Jim came, everybody came running to the hospital and everyone was crying. It was like I was their sister, their daughter. I've never seen one of our lawyer's cry, except at his wedding, and to see him so emotional... it was hard. I knew you guys liked me, but through this painful experience, I've learned how much you love me. My sister also works at the firm and her supervisors let her be with me every day.

This accident never should have happened to me or my family. At the time, my little girl was only a year old, and for three months, I couldn't pick her up. I didn't have to worry, though, because my little girls were taken care of by my family and my colleagues. They still have the little princesses a coworker brought them.

I still can't function 100 percent or run with my little girls. It is still very, very difficult for me because I have not been able to return to work, but the firm lets me work from home. There are not enough days in my life to say thank you to everyone. I know I am part of this family. I told one attorney, "You're going to have to fire me because I am never leaving."

Parts of my story are very sad, but it taught me a big lesson about life. That lesson is to always be grateful for what you have because you never know what tomorrow will bring to you.

Thankfully, I am here and I am lucky to have everybody around me. I can't thank you enough. No matter how big James Scott Farrin gets, we're still a family. This is home.

HE HAD A GUN

The firm has a history of helping people. The story that comes to my mind is when a coworker was involved in an abusive relationship with a guy who threatened her with a gun. She was very afraid for her safety and talked to us. One of our attorneys helped her to press charges by talking to the district attorneys and getting federal prosecutors interested in the case.

He was able to show them how serious the situation was, and the man ended up in federal custody for a number of years. That has given our coworker security, and I know she feels so much better about it.

Since then, the firm has established a benevolence fund that everyone can donate to directly out of our paychecks. It's used for employees who encounter difficult times or tragedies. To say the firm cares for its employees is an understatement. We are family.

THE FIRM'S REACTION

When a coworker was in a terrible car accident in which she lost her father-in-law and suffered very serious injuries herself, a dark cloud fell over the firm. But despite the shock, everyone jumped into action right away.

We kept blank cards in the break room for everyone to write notes of encouragement to her and we made sure they were routinely delivered to the hospital so she had a steady stream of positivity from us. And nearly everyone visited her during the month she was in the hospital.

The firm sent lunch to her and her family every day for about a week or two after the accident. We sent care packages filled with things like toothbrushes and toothpaste to the family — and blankets and balloons to her cousin and mother-in-law, who were also involved in the accident.

Legally, we represented her entire family pro bono, which involved litigation in a couple of states.

The firm allowed her sister, who's also an employee at the firm, to take more than a month of paid time off to take care of her sister's children while she recovered. Neither sister had to worry about their jobs, because they were there as soon as they could come back. Today, her department allows her to work from home, to accommodate her disabilities.

Her story is a testament to the fact that the firm will take care of you. It was incredible to me how the firm pulled together to go above and beyond to help this woman and her family through that tragedy.

HER SISTER'S PERSPECTIVE

Three years ago, my sister was involved in an extremely bad car accident with several members of her husband's family, including her husband's father, who was killed in the crash. We were celebrating our niece's baptism as a family, and I was finishing lunch when I got the shocking phone call.

It was horrifying to see my sister lying in the hospital bed. She had two young daughters and the firm gave me more than a month off to take care of her babies while she recovered in the hospital. I did not have to worry about losing my job.

My sister also works at the firm and the outpouring of love and support from all our colleagues was astounding. The firm made sure we had food and drinks whenever we needed them at the hospital. Everyone sent cards and personally visited.

I never expected an employer to do so much for one of their employees as you guys did for us. This doesn't feel like a job anymore — it feels like my whole family. I will never leave James Scott Farrin. Every employee can count on this firm to be there for them when they need it, and that is priceless.

I WOULD LITERALLY BE DEAD

I was in an abusive relationship for six or seven years. Nobody knew about it; I kept it hidden. But it kept getting more and more extreme and one night when I went home, he was in my house waiting for me with a loaded gun. If it wasn't for the firm, I would literally, without a doubt, be dead now.

I could never face him by myself, but the firm backed me up and he ended up going to prison. If it weren't for one of our lawyers stepping up and acting as my attorney, I would never have been able to keep my resolve to press charges and get out of the situation. The firm took me under their care, and I owe my life to them.

WE LOST EVERYTHING

Several years ago I was the recipient of the firm's unmatched generosity. It was the week after Christmas, and I was working on the switchboard when I received a call from the fire chief informing me my house was on fire. My family and I lost everything except the clothes we wore out of the house that morning.

It was devastating, but I remember when I saw my son, who was in the house at the time of the fire, I was so thankful no one was seriously hurt. I knew the physical things could, and would, be replaced, but the most important thing was that we were all safe.

The firm kicked into gear. Jim called me while I was standing in my driveway surveying the damage for the first time. The person from HR drove to my house. I would come to work and find envelopes with money in them on my desk — no name. People were donating clothes and furniture. I was allowed to use an empty room in our new building to store what people were giving us.

Thanks to the firm, my family and I lived in a hotel down the street from the office for two weeks. I'd walk to the office in the morning with my kids and they'd get dressed and ready for school here. When our new house was finished, my colleagues threw a housewarming party for me.

If I had loyalty to the firm before my family's tragedy, they have my undying devotion now. Because of the love and generosity of everyone at James Scott Farrin, our hearts and souls were restored long before our physical things were.

Since then, the firm has established a benevolence fund that everyone can donate to directly out of our paychecks. It's used for employees who encounter difficult times or tragedies. To say the firm cares for its employees is an understatement. We are family.

AFTER THE FIRE

There is an infectious pay-it-forward mentality that lives here at the firm. I remember when a former colleague's house burned down, everyone pitched in with donations and money to help her. I'd never seen anything like it before in all the places I've worked.

Shortly after, the firm started the benevolence fund, which is used to help employees when tragedy strikes. I thought it was a great idea and I know it's made a difference in so many of our lives.

WHEN HER HOUSE BURNED

When a coworker's house burned down, she and her family lost everything. The firm immediately pitched in. Everyone knows this coworker — she's a mom to the firm, and we took advantage of the opportunity to give back to her.

It was incredible to see the outpouring of support. I remember there was a room next to the mailroom that was full of donations: money and household items. The firm paid for her and her family to stay in a nearby hotel, and everyone came together to help them get back on their feet.

This was the beginning of the "benevolence fund," and it really showed me (and all of us) that we are here for each other in good times and bad.



A Shared Spirit

HARD WORK IS RECOGNIZED

When I was not in the office working on the African American farmers' discrimination case, I was on the road with 10 young lawyers who I hired out of law school with little or no legal experience. We gave them the opportunity to work, and it impressed me that James Scott Farrin went on to hire five of those young lawyers after seeing what an exceptional job they did for the firm on that case. It was a historic and monumental case for the firm.

To me, that means if you do a good job and work hard at JSF, there are going to be opportunities... that hard work is recognized. That's a good team-building atmosphere.

OUR FANTASY WORLD

It's difficult to find just one example of how the firm cares for its employees. My husband works in the real world (working for James Scott Farrin is like working in a fantasy) and he does not experience the same level of commitment, care and flexibility from his employer. The firm does so many things for its employees; I'm always encouraged when I see it. Even when we had layoffs, the firm brought back people after realizing our financial landscape was better than they expected.

PICKING CHARITIES

One thing I really like about James Scott Farrin is the way we focus on charities that have affected our employees. It's not something we have to do, but it's something to help the community. It's also a great way to acknowledge that some of our colleagues have gone through tough situations and have been helped in times of need. That's something that's very rare in other law firms.

SUPPORTING THOSE WHO SUPPORTED ME

I love the firm's dedication to its employees expressed through the benevolence fund. It's an amazing opportunity for us all to be involved in helping each other through any tragedy.

One thing that touched me personally was when we had a bake sale to raise money for five charities. I am a cancer survivor and have long been supportive of a specific cancer group that has helped my family and me through my journey. With the downturn in the economy, the group has experienced financial hardships due to decreased donations. When we were asked if we knew of an organization that we could donate money to, I immediately suggested this organization, and the firm jumped on board to support them.



THEY NEVER IGNORE ME

Part of my job in marketing is to solicit stories from everyone that can be blogged about or shared on social media. I help bridge the gap between marketing and the work we do, which means I have to rely on everyone in the firm to communicate with me. Everyone here supports what I do and even though it could be easy for them to disregard my requests, they never do. Their respect makes me feel good about my job and good about the work we're all doing for our clients.

MY CANCER-FREE CELEBRATION

Every year I celebrate my anniversary of surviving cancer. One time, it was my 19th year of being cancer free and I came into work as normal. A coworker told me she broke the coffee machine and wondered if I could help her fix it. I walked to the break room, and everyone was there to surprise me with a celebration. They had cupcakes — my favorite — and gifts, including a t-shirt from one of the Duke charity events at the hospital. It meant so much to me that something I celebrate and that has a big impact on my life was celebrated by everyone.

TAKING ON OUR CAUSES

It means a lot to me that the firm makes donations to charities that have had an impact on employees. A couple years ago the social services team was brainstorming different volunteer work to get involved with. I mentioned I do foster work for dogs and there's a group that builds fences for people who can't afford it. Our team ran with that idea, and one Saturday a bunch of us went out and built a couple fences. The next year we donated a large sum of money to that charity.

CREATED JUST FOR ME

I am celebrating my one-year anniversary at the firm and I am so glad to be here. This position was created for me and Jim entrusted me with it even though I did not have much experience. I review files that have very complicated medical issues. Everyone was very receptive of me and made me feel comfortable. They welcomed me. I want to say thank you for accepting me and making my life easy. Because of you all, I enjoy my time here.



“...if you do a good job and work hard at JSF, there are going to be opportunities... that hard work is recognized. That's a good team-building atmosphere.”



CHAPTER 6

Listening, Knowing What We Need

HE KNEW... AND REMEMBERED

A couple months ago, I fell down the stairs and injured my shoulder. I needed a couple days off to take care of that. One day, when I got home from the doctor, there was an Edible Arrangement waiting for me — and a get-well card. Until then, I didn't even realize that word had spread around the firm about my injury. About two weeks later, I was at the firm president's team meeting, and Jim was sitting next to me. He asked me how my shoulder was doing. I was shocked that the president of the company even knew about it, and I was touched that he remembered and asked how I was two weeks after the accident.

I DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE

Recently I had some issues come up with my children that were going to affect my work schedule. I went to my boss and told him what was going on. I told him I loved what I do and that I didn't want to lose my job. The firm worked with me and I now have a flexible schedule that fits my family and work, which made me very happy.

CRYING IN HER OFFICE

An incident that had a great impact on me was when one of my work friends was going through a very difficult time outside of work. Her world was being rocked. She is a hard worker, but I was worried for her because she works for a tough supervisor. She was having a really bad day one day and was crying in her office. Her supervisor heard her, found me and said, "I think she needs a friend."

HOW CAN I REPAY YOU?

Most of my family is in New York or Ecuador, but I feel like most of the people here are my family. After I started working at the firm, I began having problems with my immigration status. I was not going to be deported, but I was having a problem that needed to be resolved. The firm hired a lawyer who came to the office to meet me a couple times. She was a great help and when I asked, "How can I pay you back?" they said, "Don't worry. The firm will help you with that." I work with people who have to hire immigration lawyers and I know how expensive it is. The firm was a great help to me.

Every time I ask for something, the firm's answer is always, "Of course, absolutely," they don't question it. I really appreciate everything they have done for me.

GIVING BACK TO MOM

One of the greatest things the firm has done for me was to give me a full-time position, after I worked part-time for almost two years. This has enabled me to give back to my single mom who no longer has to provide for me. I'm able now to help support her, and that is a relief to me.

REUNITED WITH MY DAUGHTER

The biggest surprise of my life yet, happened thanks to my JSF family

After becoming an American citizen, my priority was to start the paperwork for my daughter Emilia who lives in Ecuador with my parents. I have not seen her in several years and I miss her dearly. People often ask me why I don't go to Ecuador more often (I wish), but I am the only financial support for my family there, so I can't really make extra expenses. I really wish I could, but it is almost impossible for me to go. Anyways, I started saving some money, but I knew it would take forever for me to get it all together. My idea was to bring Emilia over in 2-3 years. But things turned out very differently thanks to my JSF family.

A coworker kept asking me about the papers and cost in a very sneaky way. One day, Jim came to my desk. He said I need you in my office to discuss some project now. I was very surprised, I said OK.

I was in there for about 20 minutes, clueless — I had no idea what he was talking about and all that was going through my head was, "I wish I had a recorder because there is no way I will remember any of this."

I could see some people standing in front of Jim's door suspiciously but I had no idea what it was about. Then someone came in and told Jim he needed him.

When I left his office and walked in the break room, most of the firm was sitting there and there were balloons and apple pie. People started clapping and I was a little embarrassed. I thought it was another celebration for my citizenship but it had been two months already so it felt a little awkward. Then a coworker started talking and asked me what is the first thing that you want to do, now that you are an American Citizen?

Of course, bring my daughter! So many thoughts were going through my head. Then he picked up this big piece of cardboard — it was a giant check. My amazing coworkers had contributed and collected the money that was enough to start it all right away. I was so overwhelmed. I could not say much, but I know I made a few people cry. It was one of the happiest moments of my life. Knowing that so many people care about me and my situation made me feel so special, so blessed. I spent the rest of the day crying, thanking God and every single person that came to see me for such a wonderful gift.

I will never forget that day.

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