



McKay Christensen, President

The other day, a prospective customer asked me, "What do I get if I shop at Melaleuca each month?" My answer: "You get: no safety caps, a cleaner environment, first-in-the-world products, and a better value. But most of all, you get to help moms. Every time you shop, several moms earn a commission. As a result, they have more time with their kids and can put their focus on their family."

We also have a lot of special moms who are employees at Melaleuca. They have bought into our mission of enhancing lives. One of those special moms is Suzanne Hobbs. Suzanne is our Communications Manager. She writes a lot of the messages, emails and materials you receive. She's really good! She has a great story that I thought you'd like to hear. So, I asked her to share her story in this month's Leadership in Action.



A Safe Haven It's Now the Law

For Lilly Hobbs and Other Babies

Before coming to Melaleuca in November 2009, I was a news anchor and court and crime reporter for 14 years in Eastern Idaho. Reporters are taught not to get caught up in the stories, or to make them personal. I tried to follow that rule but one story I covered many years ago impacted me so profoundly that I felt compelled to take action. I had no idea how much impact that one decision would have on my life. It's the story of how I became a mother.

Early one morning in October 2000, my cell phone rang. It was a police officer with an exclusive news tip. A man digging through a dumpster looking for aluminum cans found the body of a dead, abandoned baby.

With the address scribbled in my notebook, my photographer and I rushed to the scene, arriving at the same time as the police cars. I'll never forget what I saw or felt. Crime scene tape was being rolled out to protect the area and detectives with gloves were carefully climbing into the yellow dumpster to investigate. Hardly a word was spoken by anyone. There was almost a reverent hush. I was sad and angry. For years, my husband and I had been trying, unsuccessfully, to have a baby. So to see a little baby discarded in the trash made me feel incredibly sad. I would have gladly taken this unwanted child. It was an unthinkable act.

I watched as a detective and a man from the funeral home gently lifted the body out of the alley dumpster. A ragged blanket attempted to cover up the tiny body of the baby girl. The body was placed in a van and taken away for an autopsy. Detectives then began knocking on doors to ask questions. I got to work, gathering my information while fighting back tears.

Within hours, police found the teenage girl who for months hid her pregnancy from her friends and family, and delivered the baby by herself in the bathroom. In a television interview a few days after the body was found, the teenage girl's father told me that he learned about other states having a Safe Haven Law. He said Idaho didn't have one and maybe if the state did, and if his daughter had known, the outcome could have been much different. I knew right then I had a mission and it was personal.

I immediately contacted a friend of mine who was a state senator and urged him to create the Safe Haven Act for Idaho. During the 2001 legislative session, Idaho passed a law allowing biological parents to legally abandon their children at designated safe havens like police stations, fire stations and hospitals. It passed with no opposition.

The Governor recognized my role in getting the bill passed. When he signed the bill, I was there to cover the news story. He called me to the front of the room and handed me the pen he used to sign it in to law and said to the audience, "Her fingerprints were all over this bill."

“This little baby had been waiting three days at the hospital for me. Little did she know I had been waiting seven long years for her!”

That was a memorable day, but I had no idea the best was yet to come. Nearly two years later, on a sunny morning in July 2003, the phone rang at my Idaho Falls home. I had an important criminal court case to cover at 9 a.m. I suggested to my husband that we let the phone ring as we were late getting out the door. He answered the phone and I'm glad he did! Our lives changed in an instant. It was a caseworker with the Department of Health and Welfare telling him about a baby abandoned at the hospital a few days earlier. A note was left by the mother that she was unable to care for the baby. Because we were on a list with the State of Idaho as parents wishing to adopt children, we were the fortunate ones chosen and asked if we wanted to adopt this baby. There was no reason to even think about it and we both said an ecstatic “Yes!”

It was quite a shock waking up one day, expecting it to be like any other, and instead becoming an instant mom! This little baby had been waiting three days at the hospital for me. Little did she know I had been waiting seven long years for her!

It was a special surprise when I showed up at the office of my state senator a few days later to show him my little girl and thank him for what he did. Lilly was Idaho's 5th Safe Haven baby.

The story of my helping to pass the Safe Haven legislation and the adoption of my beautiful daughter Lilly Love was featured on the front page of several newspapers in Idaho. That article ended up catching the attention of the Oprah Winfrey Show. In the fall of 2006, I flew to Chicago to be a guest on Oprah and talk about my involvement in the creation of

Today, the State of Idaho reports that 20 babies have been legally and safely given to new parents since the Safe Haven Act was passed. I'm thrilled to have played a part.

Lilly is now seven and a half. She knows the story about how her “tummy mommy” was kind enough to let me have her because my tummy was broken. It had to be a difficult decision for her, but I am thankful every day that Lilly's birth mother took her baby to a Safe Haven. Being a mother is my greatest joy.

The economic recession has impacted millions of families in recent years, causing a lot of people to lose their jobs. In August 2009, the television company I worked for ran out of money due to lack of advertising. Dozens and dozens of longtime employees in several states lost their jobs. I was one of them. I was called by phone and told not to come in the next day. It was a scary time. Unfortunately, my marriage ended in 2006 and as the only income provider, I had no choice but to work. The following day, the first phone call I made was to a friend at Melaleuca. I knew Melaleuca's reputation as a great place to work and knew that employees loved working there. I feel fortunate to be among those hired to work for such a strong and reputable business and to work for a man I had covered in positive news stories over the years, Melaleuca's CEO, Frank L. VanderSloot. We talk about Melaleuca being a plan B for so many people. Well, Melaleuca became my plan B.

In March 2010, as a Melaleuca employee of only four months, I was asked to go on business travel for Melaleuca. At the same time, I was faced with a personal

by the way they treat their employees. I have had many jobs over my lifetime and I have finally found a company that genuinely understands the demands of mothers and their children.

From that experience with McKay and many other small but significant moments, I know Melaleuca believes family comes first. From the outstanding Koala Kids child-care center adjacent to our building, to the giant Melaleuca family summer picnic, Melaleuca helps every employee create a better life for their families. Because of the work I do from the Corporate Office with Marketing Executives across North America, I know Melaleuca



Above:
Suzanne
kissing
Lilly at 3
weeks old



Left:
Suzanne
and Lilly
(age 3 ½)

“Melaleuca and Moms, a Perfect Fit!”

the legislation. With Oprah, I was able to tell millions of people all around the world how my greatest wish to be mother was fulfilled. Since then, I have given talks about the issue to many groups, helped other states to enact Safe Haven laws, and even answered questions by those wanting a similar act in other countries around the world. My story was also a two-page feature in a European magazine called *Woman*, where, at the time, the law was being considered. My hope is that by talking about this, anyone in that situation will know that a dumpster is not the answer to an unwanted child.

difficulty and I needed to be with my daughter. When President McKay Christensen heard about my issue, he pulled me aside and said, “Suzanne, what is the number one rule here at Melaleuca?” I was worried! My mind began to think of everything, from not being late, to working harder, to not missing work for anything. I wasn't sure of the right answer. McKay answered for me saying, “The number one rule here is: family comes first.” I was impressed and thankful. I spent the time with my daughter and others helped cover my work responsibilities.

I believe you can tell a lot about a company

is doing the same thing for countless families, giving you the ability to take care of what matters most—your children. I am amazed at the tens of thousands of moms who build Melaleuca business so they can be home with their children. I admire them. They are an inspiration to me. I take tremendous pride in the fact that each day the work I do helps Melaleuca moms contribute to their family income and create more time for their kids. Who would have thought that a \$29 investment could bring so much peace to so many families? It really is true ... what do you get with your Melaleuca membership? To help moms!

