

A photograph of a smiling woman with her hair in a bun, wearing a bright green scarf and a dark top. She is standing on a sidewalk at night, with a blue mailbox and streetlights in the background. Two quarters are lying on the sidewalk in the foreground.

# FROM TWO QUARTERS TO FAITH

**OUR CULTURES**  
*Stories That Shape Us*

*Interview and story by Ronald Hale*

## *Pamela Solomon was ten years old when she decided to test God.*

She was walking with friends through her Boston neighborhood on the way to the Boys & Girls Club, thinking about a question that had been on her mind. She had grown up hearing about God, but she didn't fully understand what it meant to believe in Him.

So she tried something simple.

"I said, 'God, if you're real, put two quarters on the ground.'"

Then she closed her eyes.

When she opened them again, she looked down at the sidewalk near the corner of Winthrop and Greenville Street. Right beside a mailbox, lying on the pavement, were two quarters.

She picked them up, surprised. Like any ten-year-old, she used the coins in the Boys & Girls Club vending machine to buy a snack.

*"I always had a drive in my spirit  
to treat people like people"*

Decades later, Pamela saw that day differently. What seemed small at the time helped guide a life of faith and care for others.

Pamela grew up in Boston with her single mother and four siblings. Life in the city showed her the hardships many families faced: poverty, violence, addiction, and broken homes.

"I always had a drive in my spirit to treat people like people," she says.

She didn't learn it in a classroom; compassion came naturally.

"I don't like to see people hurt," she admits. "Even now, if I see someone who looks lost or out of place, my heart goes out to them."

That instinct eventually led her to social work, a career that would define much of her life.

For more than 20 years, Pamela worked with families through the State's Department of Children and Families. But to her, the work was never just about case files or policies.

"It was a ministry," she says.

Many of the families she worked with were facing overwhelming challenges. Some were battling addiction. Others were dealing with neglect or family crises. Many felt judged, afraid, or misunderstood when someone from the state entered their home.

Pamela approached those moments differently.

"When I came into someone's house, I respected it," she explains. "This is your home. You tell me where to sit."

Instead of treating people like problems to solve, she treated them like human beings who deserved dignity. She spoke honestly about difficult situations without ever losing sight of people's humanity. "I would tell them, 'It's you today, but it could be me tomorrow.'"

Over the years, those gestures of care stayed with people long after their cases were closed. One day, a woman approached Pamela in a grocery store. "Do you remember me?" she asked. Pamela didn't. But the woman remembered everything. Her commitment to help extended far beyond her career. One moment involving her brother showed just how deeply that commitment ran.

Not long after their father passed away, Pamela bought her brother a plane ticket so he could come home for a family gathering. But he never used it. Instead, he called her angry and embarrassed, lashing out over the phone.

Months later, on her son's birthday, the phone rang again. Their mother believed her brother was having a stroke.

Pamela didn't hesitate.

She immediately called emergency services and coordinated help from hundreds of miles away.

Once she knew he was safe, she booked a flight, rented a car, and went to be by his side.

When she walked into the hospital room, she saw him lying in bed in serious condition.

The first words he spoke when he saw her were simple: "I'm sorry."

Pamela didn't bring up the harsh words he had spoken months earlier. She didn't dwell on the past. Instead, she wiped away his tears.



*Someone who always shows up  
for people. That's simply  
who God made me to be.*

“I said, ‘Just get better,’” she remembers. “I told him, ‘I love you.’”

For Pamela, compassion doesn’t require calculation. It’s simply how she lives.

“It’s the love of God in me,” she says.

Looking back, Pamela understands the meaning of the moment that began on a Boston sidewalk decades ago.

At the time, those **two quarters** were nothing more than pocket change and a snack from a vending machine.

But as life went on, with its challenges and responsibilities, she began to see that moment differently.



*“From two quarters to faith”*