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# MESSENGER

Helping Families, Transforming Lives



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

SPRING 2009

## Crossing a Great Divide

Three years ago, Doug suddenly became a single father, when his wife, Jennifer, was sentenced to five years in prison after a tragic traffic accident. They had been together 15 years... soulmates, Doug calls them. When Jennifer was sent away, Doug and his three kids, Tyler, Tiffany and Timmy, now 15, 11 and 7, were on their own -- a family divided.

Doug grew up in Portland, the son of a minister. He fell into some bad habits in his early adulthood, using drugs and drinking -- rebelling from that upbringing. During this time period he moved to Florida, where he met his wife. They had a rough start; both of them were struggling with drug use. "Eventually our families found out about our problem," Doug recalled. "They wanted to help and prayed, but what started out small became overwhelmingly huge and uncontrollable." The point of change came one night, when Doug and Jennifer were both injecting drugs. Jennifer overdosed, lost consciousness, and essentially died in front of Doug. He says he prayed, begging God to save her. "I promised God that we would never use drugs again," he said. "We had been trying to quit for two or three years..."



Jennifer miraculously survived, and they began the uphill battle to get clean. Eighteen years after rebelling and leaving his childhood behind, Doug had hit bottom. They lost a baby son, nearly lost Jennifer and found themselves broken and ready to change, and finally they were able to leave the drugs behind. When Jennifer was incarcerated,

Doug was left with the three kids to care for, and even though it has been the hardest thing in the world to do, he was able to do it sober.

Doug is an apprentice mason, and last year he was laid off as the economy took a downturn. He and the kids moved in with family, while Doug began to pursue the education he'd need to become a journeyman mason. As the pressure mounted to move on from his extended family's home, Doug heard about My Father's House. "I heard about it through my sister-in-law," he said. "I liked that it is a Christian place -- I knew I needed spiritual guidance as well as every day living help." Since moving in, Doug, Tyler, Tiffany and Timmy have become family to the staff and volunteers. "We've been here almost three months now, and my children are calmer, smiling more, and friendly," Doug remarked. "The staff and volunteers all work together to make a positive atmosphere. There is a big difference in my family. I have hope for our future."

Doug has taken advantage of the services offered here  
*"Crossing" continues on page 3*

April 3rd

7:00-9:00pm

Persimmon  
Country Club

Dinner & Dessert Provided

This is a free event.

No children please.

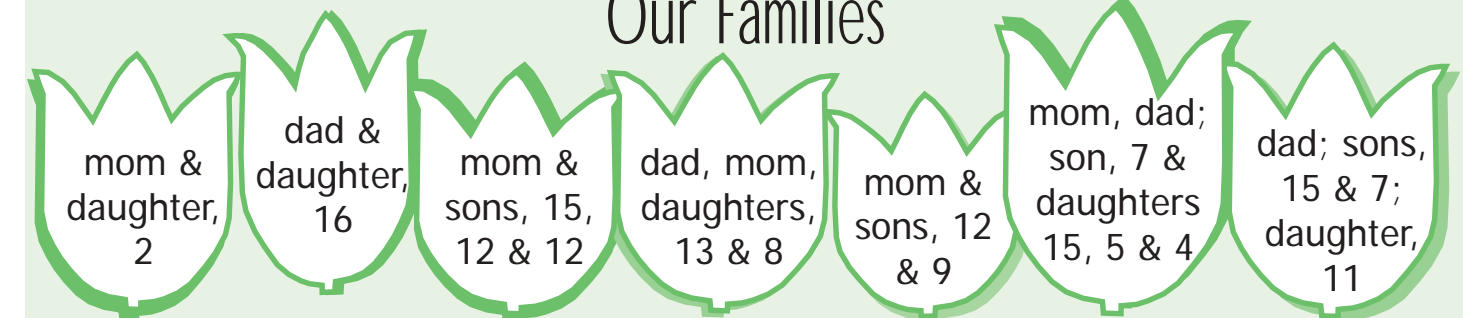
## Everything NEW

Our spring benefit dinner will be an evening of fun and a wonderful opportunity for you to share My Father's House with your friends and family.

We have a NEW home, NEW residents, NEW events in 2009, NEW volunteer opportunities, and a NEW video... and we look forward to making NEW friends!

CALL now to reserve & host your table of 10.  
503-492-3046 x222

## Our Families



**Our goal is to add 1 to 2 families each month until we reach full capacity!**



## On-line Classes Offered to Community, MFH Residents



My Father's House has partnered with Vantage Point Consulting in making available to our residents, and the community at large, an on-line training opportunity through SkillSoft.

Courses are available for business skills, environment and safety, and computer skills, as well as IT and computer programming. These reduced-cost courses are being assembled to assist anyone out of work.

Join our residents in taking advantage of the available courses or course bundles by enrolling in one of the many training courses. For every 20 courses taken by our supporters, our residents are able to take a course FREE.

Go to [www.familyshelter.org](http://www.familyshelter.org) and click on e-learning. If you have any questions you may contact our Vantage Point Consulting representative, Peter, at: 503-702-9402.



The day the Lord created hope was probably the same day he created Spring. ~Bern WILLIams

**SMILE! WE'RE ALMOST DONE!** Sponsors are needed for the rooms on the nearly-complete third floor! Call Cathe to put the finishing touches on "your own" room: 503-492-3046.

## House Tours

You can tour our new facility and learn about our program the third Thursday of each month from 7-8 pm. Reservations are required. (503) 492-3046, ext. 224.



**FAMILY NIGHT** Once a week our families enjoy volunteers serving them a meal and playing games or doing crafts together. We are setting new habits for parents to spend time with their children doing fun family activities.

**"LOOK HOW BIG OUR FAMILY IS NOW!"** exclaimed Ava, 5, one of the growing number of children being served at My Father's House.



## Register Now for July 20 Golf Tournament

My Father's House is joining Columbia Edgewater Country Club for a golfing experience you won't soon forget. Mark your calendars for July 20 and join us for our very first golf tournament. Form your own team of four, or take your chances with an assigned team. Contests, giveaways, lunch and an awards reception are all included. **Just \$150.00 per person if you sign up by June 1.** Check it out on our GOLF SITE on the web. Just go to our website [www.familyshelter.org](http://www.familyshelter.org) and click on "Golf Tournament" in the right-hand column.

## Ford Mustang Raffle

We will soon be giving away a beautiful 1967 Ford Mustang! Don't miss out on winning this dream car... a blast from the past. Tickets are \$20 each or 6 for \$100. Call 503-492-3046 NOW – we're only selling 1000 tickets!



**Our website has a new look! Check it out at [www.familyshelter.org](http://www.familyshelter.org)**

*"Crossing," cont'd from page 1*

at My Father's House. "My favorite activity at My Father's House is the one-on-one counseling time with my case manager and teachers," said Doug. "I also liked cooking class and the finance class, and the Genesis Process is one that I *have* to do to walk the Christian life."

"I would recommend My Father's House to others. If you want to be spiritually healthy, get your life on track and have peace and skills – this is the place to be." Doug continued, "My whole family appreciates the program, even my wife expresses how her family is no longer a 'wreck', but calm and trusting God... having faith."

In two years, Doug and the children will be reunited with Jennifer. Their journey over the many years together has seen them tackle so many obstacles together, and now even while apart they continue to do it together. Jennifer is using her time in prison to heal and pursue a life with God, and Doug is walking with her on his own parallel path. Looking into Doug's eyes, seeing his wife in the faces of his children, watching the joy they're experiencing even in this tough time... it's clear this family is crossing a great divide, headed for a much better place.

## from the Director's Chair

lately I look around at this great big house and the wonderful families who are living here with me and my husband, Dan, and I feel like that. It really is true... and I have the best job in the whole world! Today, I was on a mission to get something from the learning center and I rushed upstairs, went in, and was gathering items when I heard some giggling. I turned around and there were four of the sweetest faces you ever saw. The oldest girl, Tiffany, whispered, "Can we come give you a hug?" Oh, be still my heart! I embraced three girls aged

Ever wake up in the morning and think... *did that really happen?* Well, it doesn't happen to me very often, but

11, 6, and 5, and a 7-year-old boy. The love that these kids give me is far greater than anything I could give.

The giggling foursome were all excited as they informed me that tonight was "Movie Night" and asked, "Do you know what movie it is?" I didn't, but I assured them that it would be a fun night and that Mike was making popcorn and Berta was making cookies. They squealed with delight as they ran to drag their parents to the movie room for the evening.

Everyday I watch the kids run and play throughout this wonderfully huge new building and my heart longs for the day that it will be totally full with all 30 rooms filled. I try to be patient because I know that we have to watch every dollar we spend very carefully. I remind myself that everyone is watching their money closely and soon we will have more

families filling the hallways of My Father's House. But it's difficult as the need in our area grows and the job market declines. Last week, over 90 families were turned away. All of them were looking for a safe, warm, secure place to call home... even for a little while.

So, I would like to challenge you. If you have read our newsletters or emails and thought to yourself, "I *should* get involved!" or "I *could* give \$10 per month," then now is the time. With your help we can fill our rooms and help families. Together we can help families transform their lives. We need you to be part of the solution today! Pledge just \$10 per month and watch what we can do together! Give me a call at 503-492-3046 or email me at [Cathe@familyshelter.org](mailto:Cathe@familyshelter.org).

~Cathe

Cathe Wiese, Executive Director

## Wish List

### Items We Need

- ☆ toaster ovens (new or like-new)
- ☆ bus tickets
- ☆ spaghetti noodles
- ☆ spaghetti sauce
- ☆ instant rice
- ☆ macaroni and cheese
- ☆ jelly/jam
- ☆ juice
- ☆ milk
- ☆ eggs
- ☆ ketchup and mustard
- ☆ mayonnaise
- ☆ dish soap
- ☆ laundry detergent



## Volunteer Opportunities

- Help needed now for these upcoming events!

- ☆ April 3: table hosts and decorating committee members needed
  - ☆ July 20: Golf Tournament Team Leaders needed
- Call 503-492-3046 for further information.