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MESSENGER

Helping Families, Transforming Lives



AUTUMN 2016

A New Life: Reborn and Rebuilding

What does it take to rebuild a life? You can ask Pete and Lorena, because they have been through the hardest transformation you can imagine. They are examples of what perseverance and trust in God can do. Having walked the long hard road of self-destruction, Pete is now walking in God's grace, changing his addiction to recovery, and Lorena is there to support him every step of the way.

We met Pete and Lorena seven months ago. "We had already been through a lot because of my addiction," began Pete. He looked down, wiped his eyes, and continued.

As a teenager, Pete started doing drugs with his brothers. "I tried to finish school and get back on track, but I was so addicted all I ever thought about were drugs," Pete said. "Before I knew it, I found myself homeless and on the streets. For five years, I wandered trying to feed my addiction, digging myself into a big hole. I was lost. I felt God had given up on me. I was disappointed, depressed, and angry."

Then he met Lorena. "I had heard rumors about him and I really didn't want anything to do with him. I wasn't interested in him at all." She smiles and Pete grins, "I watched her, wanting to see if she was a someone with character, someone who respected herself and someone who cares about important things... and she was." Somehow, Pete won her over

and she fell in love with him.

Still, with drugs always on his mind, Pete progressively got worse. Lorena couldn't rescue him,

He felt like God had abandoned him. He couldn't fight the demon alone. He spiraled out of control and there was no escape, no hope. Just the gut-wrenching craving for drugs. Then came a life changing moment: he went to jail.

With one small son and a baby on the way, Lorena moved in with her parents. Working two jobs, traveling by bus, and attending school, Lorena was

alone... and furious at Pete. She managed to find an apartment and get settled.

Six long months of prison time gave Pete plenty of time to think, and after getting out of jail he went to outpatient treatment at Lifeworks. "I knew what I had to do, but I was selfish. I still needed to learn how to trust God, love my family, and keep my demons off my back." Sadly, his new lifestyle was short-lived. When he returned home, his life fell apart again as he relapsed. Pete wasn't able to keep his job, and they couldn't afford their apartment on just Lorena's income, so the young family became homeless again.

They came for an interview at My Father's House. Pete confessed his relapse and drug addiction and

"Reborn," continues inside



M BANK

'Uncorked'

A Winter Wine Event

Presented by



Saturday, December 10th, 6:30 ~ 9:30 pm

The Aerie at Eagle Landing

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503-492-3046 ext. 224



Wish List

- ★ Canned fruit
- ★ Fruit roll-ups
- ★ Spaghetti sauce
- ★ Milk ★ Eggs
- ★ Cheese
- ★ Jam/Jelly
- ★ Chili / soup
- ★ Cereal - all kinds
- ★ Canned pasta meals
- ★ NEW full-size bed sheets
- ★ Birthday giftwrap/gift bags



WELCOME TO OUR NEW STAFF! We're pleased to introduce Dan, Program Director, and Teresa, Women's Case Manager.

Adopt a Family for Christmas!
Email info@familyshelter.org



from the Director's Chair We all have times

that it is hard to see the light at the end of the tunnel. No matter what I feel like from day to day, this truth remains: there is always a light. As families come to me who are struggling, I may try to encourage them by reminding them that there is always a way out... a "light at the end of the tunnel". Recently I was reminded about a time when I was on my "things will get better speech" and a young resident asked with all seriousness, "Yeah, but do I have to die?"

It really is that simple. When families come to My Father's House, many of them see this as the end of the road, the end of hope, the *end*. In reality, it's the *beginning*. The beginning starts with hope. The beginning is paved with new skills, and a new start at life.

Make today count. I encourage you to be part of this life-changing organization. Give, volunteer, or whatever it is that you can do. Be creative! Don't wait! Lives depend on the hope that is within you. We're counting on you to be the *light in our world* of hurting families.

Cathe

Cathe Wiese, Executive Director

Volunteer Spotlight: Karen Gracey

By Sara Green, Volunteer Manager



One of the wonderful things about volunteering at My Father's House is that we are usually able to fit you into a volunteering shift that works with your schedule. Even if you are not able to volunteer on a regular basis, you can help us by filling in when there is an occasional need.

Karen Gracey has been filling in for us for the past few weeks. Karen first heard about My Father's House back in 2013, and she jumped right in by adopting a room, cleaning rooms for us, and just being there for whatever we needed. Now she's retired and has been able to fill in for us at the reception desk. She has worked a couple of different shifts for us that fit into her schedule.

What Karen likes about My Father's House is how our program strives to keep families together. She has noticed that many calls are from families who are

afraid they will have to split up, and they are so relieved when they find out we keep families together! Karen

added, "I really like it that you are privately funded, so we can run the program in a way that is beneficial to the residents."

We are so thankful and blessed by Karen's flexibility, her willingness to jump into helping with any project, and her caring heart. If you have ever felt you may not have time to volunteer, we can probably find a shift that will work for you! To start, contact Sara at sara@familyshelter.org or 503-492-3046 x224, or sign up for a house tour on our website.

"Reborn," continued from page 1

his desire to be free from his destructive lifestyle. The staff at MFH encouraged him to get clean and put his family first, things he hadn't been able to do. "It was a wake-up call, one of many, and I decided I didn't want to live like that anymore. I still needed to learn how to be a man."

Through desperation, Pete sought help from God and godly people and once

again worked on his recovery. It's been seven months, and there have been miracles that got him through this tough time. God has become his source of strength, delivering him from the jaws of addiction and giving him a spirit of hope. Lorena has been right there by his side. It's time to put this family back together. "I am learning to trust God every day.

Lessons for a Lifetime

By Micah Wiese

I've been a professional educator for a number of years now. I often reflect on how idealistic I was when I started out. I love talking to new teachers, learning about all of their big ideas how they plan to change the world. I also love talking to the veterans who have lost the idealism, but have gained so much skill. I admire the way that they care for their students because it's their way of life, not just because they are out to make a difference. If you ever have the opportunity, sit down with a teacher and talk to them about the students that make it all worthwhile. You'll see their eyes light up, they'll get more animated, and you'll consider going back to school to get a teaching certificate.

Right now, when someone asks me, "How's work?", I talk about the awesome things that are going on at My Father's House. We've been conducting high school and GED classes for about the past year. We've graduated two students, and are expecting four more in the next few months. I love to sit with the moms and dads at MFH, and find out what their goals are. They always tell me what they've been learning in their classes, where they've been, and how bright the future looks. When I ask them why they want their diploma, they talk about earning their next promotion, setting an example for their kids, and fulfilling promises they made to their parents long ago.

One student, a single father of two wonderful kids, talked about how he thought he'd never earn his diploma. As the years pile up, and circumstances dictate your path in life, he said, you begin to believe you can't do it... and then he *did* it.

A young mom talked about her dream of working in healthcare. She wants to prove to her father that she can make it on her own. She wants to be an example to her kids. Most of all, she wants to follow in the footsteps of her mother, whom she lost at age six.

In this season of thanks, I'm grateful that these students are here to help me maintain my passion for teaching, and for those of you who support My Father's House financially, as well as in prayer. May God continue to bless these hardworking families *and you!*

