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# MESSENGER

Helping Families, Transforming Lives



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

AUTUMN 2015

## Just Begun

By Jacki Washington

With a pained expression as her thoughts emerge, Marie recounts the past and the horrible man who forced her under his control. "I felt so trapped, and even as I called out to God, my prayers seemed hollow as if I wasn't heard. But I was desperate; I had no other direction to turn. I thought, I may as well kill myself, rather than have some strange man kill me. I reached out on the Internet and started corresponding with the first person who answered my call for help."



That was four years, two children, and a new pregnancy ago. The man who befriended her was Jerome, the father of her children. "He told me God loved me and there was hope for the future. Over the next few months he became my hero and we decided to meet. He rescued me from my dangerous situation and we have been best friends ever since."

Along the way, Jerome and Marie have made some good and some bad choices. One was the drug use. They talked about turning their addiction over to God, and even though it was a bumpy road, Jerome says, "I ultimately knew I had to go all the way with

Jesus. I quit playing and made the choice." Both Jerome and Marie have a Christian upbringing and want to raise their children in a healthy, wholesome home.

Wanting to change their lives, they moved to Portland, Oregon, to start fresh. Once here, finding jobs and housing was much harder than they had imagined. What they did find was My Father's House and the life-changing classes they were required to attend.

"Coming to My Father's House has been a sigh of relief," says Marie. Then immediately they both agree. "We love it here!" Marie adds, as she rubs her pregnant belly bump, "We

feel accepted and loved as we learn and share with others. We are able to build a solid foundation for our growing family." Jerome nods in agreement.

The longing in Jerome and Marie's hearts is to complete their relationship by getting married. One of the things the staff at MFH loves is to throw a party! This month they will realize their four-year dream of tying the knot. Everything is coming together. Both have found employment and are looking for their new home together. They truly have just begun.

CONGRATULATIONS, Jerome & Marie!



## Unmasking the Face Of Homelessness

Join us on a journey of discovering hope for homeless families.

*Unmasking the true story of success*

Please join us on October 22nd at 7:00 p.m. at the Oregon Zoo

(There is a small charge for parking.)

Pierre the Vulture will be on hand, swooping down and collecting donations (for those willing to participate!)

If you are interested in sponsoring or hosting a table, or to RSVP for the event, please contact Sara at 503-492-3046 ext 224.





**STEPPING STONE APARTMENTS RIBBON CUTTING**  
Ed Heissler of GE Properties was the honored ribbon cutter on July 31, along with My Father's House executive director Cathe Wiese and event sponsor, Larry Schwartz of Riverview Bank.



Today, right outside my window, I see bright and happy reds and yellows mixed in with just a hint of green. Yes... a true sign that Fall is trying to push its way into my comfortably warm life. As I was thinking about the different shades of color, my mind wandered to how this season also reminds me of how very different people are too. Colorful, interesting, unique individuals who make up the tapestry of my life living here at the shelter.

Living at the shelter, like Autumn, is all about change. But loving Autumn and loving change are two different things. Unfortunately, inner change is more painful than the beauty we see in nature. We all fight change to some degree, even though it happens around us every day. At My Father's House, families move in and out every week. I refer to it as a "bittersweet revolving door". I love to see them succeed by finding sustainable jobs and affordable housing. But I hate to see them go because they are experiencing so much growth and they have become family.

We would love for you to become part of our changing, growing family. We have so many ways for you to get involved. From hanging out with the kids in childcare, sorting clothes or shopping with residents, to adopting a room or giving a monthly donation... we'd love to have you find your extended family with us.

It's a season of change...so be the change in someone's life by volunteering.

God bless!

Cathe

Cathe Wiese, Executive Director

## Springwater Studio Partners with My Father's House Family Shelter

The mission of Springwater Studio is to build community through the healing and transformative power of the creative process. Through two grants from the Episcopal Diocese of Oregon, Springwater Studio artists have provided several art-making opportunities for residents at My Father's House.

The partnership began in December 2014 with children from the shelter invited to attend Springwater Studio's winter break puppetry camp. This summer, families attended the studio's Friday night Family Paint Night, where they painted a Cezanne-like scene of Mt. Hood.

In addition, two instructors from Springwater Studio, Elise Astleford and Wendy Thompson, came to My Father's House for three consecutive Wednesdays to lead a class called Watercolor, Words & Release. In this class, residents explored the concept of surrender or letting go through watercolors and poetry. They learned how to make a book out of their painting and wrote their poems in the handmade book.

Finally, residents went to Springwater Studio to learn how to make clay bowls that will be auctioned off in a fundraiser for My Father's House on December 6. Save the date for this No More Empty Bowl Art Auction. From noon to 4:00 at Springwater Studio/St. Luke's Episcopal Church, located at 120 SW Towle Ave, there will be art-making opportunities, entertainment, soup lunch, and the silent auction of handmade ceramic bowls. You won't want to miss this opportunity to build community and support My Father's House.



## Volunteer Spotlight: Connie Dana

Connie Dana started volunteering with My Father's House in 2002 when we were housing five families in a duplex on Division Street. Connie was a trouper then, and she still is. She is one of our longest standing volunteers. Back in our duplex days, she did whatever needed to be done: cleaning rooms, working in our donation center, answering phones, and encouraging others! After 13 years, she's still here, putting her gifts to use. Nowadays it's mostly office work, and she's still here faithfully every week.

Friends Carlene and Darryl Dahlman first introduced Connie to My Father's House when they came to pray over the building, and she decided then to become

involved. She was drawn to MFH because it was an exciting new venture she had never seen before. It was in her heart to help the poor and volunteering at My Father's House met that desire.

She has always been impressed with the staff at MFH and Cathe's philosophy. "God is behind the ministry," she says. "Everyone I have met here has been a breath of fresh air."

She remembers Dan Price, board member at MFH, as "my hero at the old shelter." There was a shed in the back yard that was very full, and it seemed every time she came to volunteer she would have to go and get something out of the shed. The patio added to the back of the shelter had no stairs to the yard so coming back into the shelter with her hands full became quite a challenge. Dan came one day and built stairs which made the trip to the shed a much safer and easier experience.

She is inspired by the perseverance she sees at My Father's House. Even in the case of a setback for the staff or a resident, "everyone just keeps on moving forward and working as hard as they can." Connie is encouraged to see people receiving second chances, but, she adds, "there is a line drawn to keep the help from becoming enabling."

What would Connie say to someone thinking of volunteering? "There is a blessing in giving of yourself to others. You receive much more than you give."

If you're interested in volunteering at our shelter, whether for a one-time opportunity or on a regular basis, please contact Sara, our office manager, at 503-492-3046, ext 224. The following opportunities are available:

**Childcare Center** Care for and love our kids!

**Donation Center** Sort clothing and/or "shop" with residents

**Teaching classes** We are always looking for good, quality teachers!

**Reception Desk** Answer phones and do light office work

**Room Stewards** When a family leaves, stewards ready the room for the next family

**Drivers** Pick up food donations, drop off donations, etc.

**Yard projects** Join our Yard Leader, Paul, in keeping the outdoors nice

## Wish List

☆ Like-new coats and sweaters

☆ Canned tuna/chicken

☆ Girls' backpacks

☆ Kids' underwear (new, all sizes)

☆ Peanut butter & jelly

☆ Copy paper