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MESSENGER

Helping Families, Transforming Lives



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SPRING 2012

A Fresh Start

Hard Work and a Chance for Healing Brighten a Family's Future

As told to Jacki Washington

Robert, Nicole and their two sons loved their 'job' as caregivers for a handicapped friend. They not only took loving care of their friend, but also of the home and property he owned and shared with his caregivers. They functioned as a family. Robert was doing home maintenance and repairs. Nicole administered meds and did all the bookkeeping. The boys would do the yard work and entertain their 'uncle'. This was an ideal arrangement until suddenly, after four years of service to him, their friend died. Immediately the home they'd shared was sold.



With poor credit and no jobs, Robert and Nicole could not find affordable housing. Even as they were homeless and struggling to survive, they experienced additional grief as Nicole's mother and best friend passed away within months of each other.

Nicole called MFH in desperation. They needed somewhere to call home. Just a few days later, their family moved in and started their journey.

The family lived at the shelter for five months, completing weekly goals, obtaining jobs and saving money. When asked about meetings with their case managers and doing homework, the couple reply, "It was hard work, but so worth it. We wouldn't be where we are today if it weren't for the unique people and the program at My Father's House."

Nicole says the classes were life changing. "Since taking the Financial Peace class, we now have a modest savings and I signed up at work for the 401K plan. We have learned so much about ourselves through the Genesis Process and the parenting classes." Robert agrees with his wife. "Even the activities like birthday parties and field trips improved our relationship with our children."

Robert adds, "My relationship with my boys is so much stronger than it was six months ago. I am more patient and understanding." Both agree that the classes, case management, activities and the friendships have all been part of the family's healing. "I am enjoying spiritual and emotional health, which makes me a better dad and a better man."

Nicole's temporary job turned into a permanent one. "I love my job," she exclaims. "It's an answer to prayer." Another answer to prayer was getting their apartment. Nicole beams, "It was the first apartment we looked at and we were able to use our certificates from the Rent Well class we took at MFH."

Life still has challenges and struggles, but there are bright spots to look forward to. Nicole adds, "We have work and a cute little place, and most of all, each other. When we were overwhelmed and the family was going under, MFH gave us the chance for a fresh start. For that chance we will always be grateful."

Building a Path to a Better Life

Our 2012 Annual Benefit Dinner

Friday, April 27
7:00 to 9:00 p.m.

Persimmon Country Club in Gresham

Residents will share how their paths have taken them from homelessness to new lives... An impressive young band will perform original songs from their CD composed just for My Father's House... And you'll hear about our exciting plans for the future!

Hosts, Sponsors, and Volunteers Still Needed

We Hope You Can Join Us in Helping Families, Transforming Lives



from the Director's Chair

Each month, our residents are required to do a "Give-2-Grow" service project. Basically, it's all about finding someone in greater need than yourself (outside the shelter) and bless them without anything in return. This service project must involve your entire family. We always stress creativity. Projects have included serving meals at other shelters, yard work for a widow, cleaning house for someone ill, fixing someone's flat tire, and watching a friend's child.

It is always fun to hear about the families' projects. This last week, Emily and Andy wrote out their story. I was taken aback and absolutely amazed at their generous gift to a needy family.

Emily wrote that both she and Andy had "extra" work at their jobs and received not only a wonderful paycheck but a \$250 bonus because they did such a good job. They were excited to put money in their savings account and pay all their bills. Deciding a treat was in order, they even went out to eat. They hadn't yet decided what to do for their Give-2-Grow project, but they had both seen a man on the street with a sign saying he needed money to pay his family's electric bill. On their way back to My Father's House, they saw him again. They approached him and listened to his story. He told them the bill was \$78.54, and the power was scheduled to be shut off in just a few days. Emily turned around, rummaged through her wallet, and discovered she had four \$20 bills. She turned to Andy and gave him "the look". He grinned and nodded his head.

As they resumed their trip home, KC, their five-year-old, turned to his mom and asked, "Mom, did you give him all your money?" Emily explained that the man had a wife and two kids at home just like their family and needed the money so they could have electricity. Turning this into a learning to give experience, Emily asked KC what needed electricity to run. At the end of their conversation, KC was excited that they were able to help the family be able to cook, shower, and watch TV. Although our Give-2-Grow project doesn't usually involve giving others money, what a huge learning experience for this family to give from the abundant blessing they had earned. I am so proud of them and the difference they made to another family in need.

Emily and Andy will be leaving My Father's House in a short time. They have jobs and a savings account, and they have found housing. It's such a blessing to see how their lives have been transformed since they came to the shelter just three months ago.

Thank you for your support and for "paying it forward" in your own way.

~Cathe

Cathe Wiese, Executive Director



MEET SCOTT OLSON, our new Program Manager. He is married to Anna and has two boys. We are thrilled to have Scott join our team!



THANKS, SHARI'S! ...for a fun evening out. Free pie for all!



Unique, Volunteer-based Thrift Store
Proceeds benefit MFHI!
Open Tues - Sat
10 a.m. - 4 p.m.

Hood & 2nd in historical downtown Gresham
NEW annex features consignment furniture and vendor rental space! Vendors' wares must be preapproved. 503-491-8010

Wish List ☆ ☆ ☆ ☆

- ☆peanut butter & jelly
- ☆granola bars
- ☆graham crackers
- ☆baking/pancake mix
- ☆rice
- ☆pasta-dinner mix for tuna
- ☆pasta & pasta sauce
- ☆birthday gift wrap
- ☆canned tuna & chicken

Learning to Dance

By Kelly

Derrick and I have learned tons about all kinds of people and trials in life. As they say, no-one said life was easy. I was scared, angry; I felt hopeless, worthless, powerless, ashamed, and thought no one cared or understood what I was going through, so "I give up." Until that one day you just click with someone. That someone listens to you with no judgments and open arms. They tell a story of their past and *Wow, I thought I had it bad*. It really makes you see and feel how lucky you are and to pull your boots back on because now you are taking your life back. Yes, it will take time (it is taking time) to get back where we were. My question is, where were we? My family is now closer together. We actually talk to each other rather than at each other.



When a very bad situation changes your life overnight, just ask yourself whether the bad situation is a blessing in disguise. We can become stagnant, robots, the same-thing-just-different-day blahs. To keep life enjoyable, fun, exciting, happy, positive, and challenging, you need to take an inventory on life. Change anything. Do something like... let the person with one item at the grocery store go ahead of you. I have noticed lately that when I smile and the person who walks past me smiles back, it makes me feel real good. There is good in this world we just need to slow down, not watch so much TV, sing like no one is around, and dance as if no sees you. It is amazing how contagious that is. Just a smile a day.

I have learned so much, and last I checked, I have ears to listen and shoulders to cry on, with a smile and a hug saying *this too will pass with time*.

'Cause April showers bring May flowers / Like only You turn my darkest hour into / Blue skies, blue skies ~ from "Blue Skies" by Big Daddy Weave



4th Annual Golf-2-Give Tournament

the day will include: Hole-in-One, Long Drive Contest, KP's, Straight Drive Contest, Mulligan, Marshmallow Drive, player gifts, silent auction, and much more. It all happens at the beautiful Willamette Valley Country Club.

Registration begins at 11 a.m. The cost through July 1 is \$150 for an individual, and \$600 for a team. Prices increase after July 1. Price includes: greens fees, cart, use of driving range and practice greens, gift package, box lunch, and the awards ceremony with prime rib/chicken buffet. Dinner-only price is \$25. Mark your calendar and call 503-492-3046 ext 222 or 224 to reserve your spot!

Our 4th Annual Golf-2-Give Tournament is coming Monday, July 16, 2012! Don't golf? Join us for dinner!

The event will include a 4-person scramble, box lunch, and awards dinner following golf. Featured events for

<http://www.facebook.com/pages/My-Fathers-House-A-Community-Shelter-Inc>