



A Ray of Hope News Letter

December 2015

From The Desk Of Peggy

The GOOD And The BAD

When Bob and I opened the doors of A Ray of Hope, we stepped out in faith, agreeing that our motto would be “A Hand Up, Not A Hand Out”. With the solid guidance of the trustees, we believe that motto is the backbone of A Ray of Hope.

A Ray of Hope is wonderful but can be a messy ministry as we are working with people who no one else wants in their lives, let alone their homes. As Christians, we stumble in serving the homeless. We have learned that one of the ugliest of human traits is our tendency to feel better about ourselves when another person misses the mark. We have had people call and let us know that we are failures in running the ministry, and they feel free to tell others of any error or mistakes make.

The good news is that we have more wonderful people, who instead of sharing the latest gossip about the ministry, come alongside to love and help. Combining their positive outlook and our guidelines helps our guests to get their self-worth back, enabling them to stand on their own.

I am on facebook, and I try to be a positive influence in peoples’ lives. One day I posted the following:

“How do you react when a fellow Christian has stumbled? One of the ugliest human traits is our tendency to feel better about ourselves when another person misses the mark. Instead of sharing the latest gossip about a fallen brother or sister, let your heart break, and come alongside to love and help”. I received the following post from a dear lady who is fighting cancer. Your donations have helped she and her children to stay in a safe home.

Sherry Williamson This may not be what you are talking about Peggy, but reading this made me think of something that happened a long time ago, and I wanted to share it.

I had left a church because of what happened to a

church member. At 8 years old, my grandpa died. He was the Pastor of a church and when he died, The Deacon below him was eager to take over and change the rules. My grandpa had allowed anyone who wanted God in their life to come in the door.

One day a teenager, (almost adult) was living a life of crime. He had piercings and tattoos and wasn't leading a life with God in his heart.

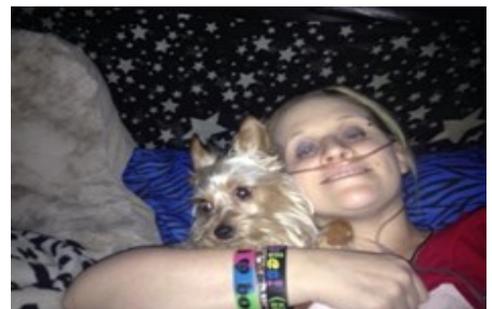
My grandpa saw him walking past the church and looked past his exterior. He invited him in and gave him donuts and coffee and visited with him. I watched this happen over and over



for weeks every day before the Sunday sermon. I was 8 years old and could see the change slowly before my eyes in this person. The first day my grandpa's kindness made him

cry. Every Sunday they met separately before the sermon and grandpa spoke with him and would invite him to stay for the sermon. He always declined.

One day after declining, he snuck in and stayed for the sermon. He never left. He turned his life around. We had become friends dur-



ing this time and I really looked up to him. A bad kid became a good kid and starting witnessing to others.

Continued page 2 See Sherry

From the Desk of Melenie Haidys

12 years ago I was new to town and found myself in a bind. I was low on funds, had nowhere to stay, and had my 2 year old daughter depending on me. I stopped by a thrift store on Hwy 2 where I met Peggy Christensen.

After a brief conversation Peggy offered my daughter and I a room at her Appleway house women's shelter. Not long afterwards, Peggy saw more in me than I saw in myself and asked me if I would become the shelter manager. I hesitantly accepted and my beautiful relationship with A Ray of Hope began. I was armed with a clipboard and a deep-seated desire to help those who would ordinarily fall through the cracks.

Returning to the Flathead in July, I was amazed at how far A Ray of Hope had come. The 5th Ave house, the Thrift Store, and a vision for a Women's Shelter (my personal passion), are amazing moves forward. We have defined new guidelines which greatly assist in maintaining order and balance. When a new staff was needed to facilitate A Ray of Hope's mission, I happily climbed on board.

I find myself in total awe and so very blessed to help facilitate the homeless and needy of the Flathead. I get to see firsthand those who walk through the door staring at the floor, with broken spirits and asking for help, turn into ready, able, and willing workers. A hand up not a hand out is an awe inspiring mission. I witness the very same broken spirited people quickly rebound and minister to other guests' needs. We have also found that many of the residents here have skills and are quite willing to help out here in the office, at the thrift store, even keeping the house property neat and orderly.

I would like to personally thank the people of the Flathead and beyond. It's your support and donations that keep this organization running. I am truly honored and blessed to be a staff member and house manager of A Ray of Hope. I encourage you to stop by and see what your support and donations are helping to perpetuate. Thank you and God Bless!

SHERRY

From Page 1

This was not the only one my grandpa helped. The second my grandpa died, this eager Deacon took over the church and kicked out anyone who didn't fit into his idea of a Christian. This included my friend. He was rejected and judged all over again and he went straight back to the drug dealers and the life of crime, because that is where he received the love he thought he needed, since the church wasn't giving it anymore. It wasn't really love, they needed him for bad things, and he confused that with love.

At 10 years old, I stood on the stage and walked up to the microphone. I was so shy and I started to shake. By heart I said scriptures about judgment, loving one another and anything I knew that applied to this situation. I said if you can decide who belongs in God's place, then this is NOT the place for me, because I was taught God loves everyone. I said I will be leaving this church and find a church that will accept all of God's children, and I walked out!!!

I never found out what happened to that deacon, but judging a book by its cover is not the way we should act. So many problems would be solved if we just listen with our heart.

A Ray of Hope guests, volunteers and staff are thankful for the basics:

Food, clothing and comfortable shelter, and that the wonderful community of the greater Flathead Valley has provided donations to cover our needs and overhead costs as we labor to help the less unfortunate.

We're thankful for work, play, and the treasured people who make our experiences richer and more meaningful with our guests. Thank you dear friends who support A Ray of Hope.



Letters

Your shelter and spiritual support allowed me the time and stability I desperately needed to get healthy both spiritually and mentally. If not for the shelter and fellowship you freely gave me, I very possibly could still be drinking or dead.

At a time in my life when everyone had given up on me, you welcomed me with open arms and I will never forget your help and patience. I am indebted to each of you; if there is ever anything I can do for The Ray of Hope, in any capacity please keep me in mind.

Thank each of you for helping me get back on my feet again, during a very trying time in my life. I believe that what you do is faith in action and very commendable.

I wish there were more people with a heart like yours.

Love Always, May God Bless You,

Clark Martin

Our first contact with A Ray of Hope was back in 2010. We relocated from Bridgeport, Connecticut to Montana. We got our first apartment and had nothing, nor did we have the means to acquire anything.

We went to the Hope Thrift Store where they provided us with beds, dishes and anything else that one would need to get started in our new home. Our son Tyler, who was 11 years old at the time would go after school and help out. This was a wonderful experience for him.

Fast forward to 2015, where we found ourselves in a homeless situation. A Ray of Hope allowed us a spot in their home. We have 3 children that I love and would never want them to experience being homeless.

Since being here, A Ray of Hope had given us a hand up with encouragement, clothing, food and any other needs. There were times their generosity was overwhelming. I now have a full time job and am looking for our new chance to move into our own apartment. These past 14 months have taken a toll on our family, and there are many pieces to put back together. With the help and support from A Ray of Hope that seems much more possible than ever before. I have a new family and I am very proud to call them that, Family. I will never forget this experience for all the right reasons.

Thank You!!

Dustin, Andrea, Tyler, Leia and Parker

My name is Ashlie-Marie, I have 3 children. Two boys Abram 6 years old, Avery 5 years old and my newest addition Kailani who is 1 month old. My pregnancy with my daughter was difficult; she was born a month early. This caused me to need to leave work much sooner than expected. She was in NICU for a week but is now growing and doing much better. Due to financial issues I was low on funds and worried about how I was going to pay my rent. I was online one day and read about A Ray of Hope. I was a little unsure of asking for help. Needless to say, A Ray of Hope was amazing. I went in and filled out an application. By the next day I had been approved. It all came together so fast.

I wanted to say Thank You! Also, thank you for being there to help so many families and individuals when they are down and give them A Hand Up. You helped my little family in so many ways and I will always be grateful.

So Very Much Appreciated!

God Bless

Ashlie-Marie Campbell and Family

I would like to thank everyone at A Ray of Hope for extending a Hand Up when I was down. You helped me and my family in so many ways. I am a single mother and had just lost my job. I was without a home and no income. I was about to lose everything I had worked so hard for and was slowly losing faith until I was referred to A Ray of Hope. Everyone was there to support us and I can never thank you enough! A Ray of Hope was a huge blessing at our time of need and helped restore my hope and faith.

Thank you, Thank you and Thank you!

Much Love

Cately, and Airaraye

Our Family would like to thank A Ray of Hope for helping us in our time of need. We are a family of six and struggle from time to time. It is amazing to know that people like everyone at A Ray of Hope care and are willing to help when we are down.

Thanks to All for A Hand Up.

Calhoun Family

A Ray of Hope
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Kalispell MT 59901

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Visit us at <http://arayofhopemontana.com/>

Phone 406 755 4673

A Hand Up Not A Hand Out



Helmville

2340 Hope RD 406 260 8084

WE have good workers that need a Hand up
with Work
Call 755-4673

MISSION STATE- MENT

A Ray of Hope shall provide a safe harbor for those in the community with nowhere else to turn. It will provide those who seek help not only with food, clothing and shelter, but also with knowledge and a avenue to develop competency in meeting life's financial, emotional, family, and legal rehabilitation challenges.



Shelter

46 5th Av West Kalispell MT 59901 PH 406 755 4673



Thrift Store

105 6th Av West Kalispell MT 59901 PH 406 260 4184

Please send donations to PO Box 5407, Kalispell MT 59903