

HAPPY



THANKSGIVING

A Ray of Hope News Letter

November 2013

From The Desk of Peggy

We have all seen guests, staff, and volunteers at A Ray of Hope who had a big head. They do more talking than walking the walk. They were brash, with an audacity and arrogance beyond compare in pointing to other's bad behavior. As you observed from afar the actions and the pain they caused, you dislike them immediately. This is the point at which you and I should give the same amazing grace that we received when we were given the Gift of Forgiveness by the Lord Jesus Christ. When a guest or staff reaches out to you one day and asks in word or deed if you would coach them, ask yourself "can I find any goodness in the person and work with them with the same grace and mercies that have been given to each one of us"?

As we open ourselves to them as Christ opened himself to us in love, we become His hands to those seeking help at A Ray of Hope.

We might learn that they are kind, funny, or one of those rare people who would give someone the shirt off their back. Compassion is part of their personality, and it is a wonderful surprise. And you find that they have a good heart, and they become a friend. This is why we're to hate the sin, not the sinner; hate the crime not the criminal.

Those messy, complex, frustrating, wonderful people, who come to the door of A Ray of Hope rarely come with facts and data tattooed on them. The ability to "get" people might not come naturally, and it requires relying on something other



than traditional knowledge. The bible will teach and grow you as you work with unlovable people and see one heart at a time grow in knowledge and competency in meeting life's challenges. By you giving them a "hand up", rather than a "hand out" to build self-respect and dignity in one heart at a time, the gift of learning and trusting God grows in our hearts. People are unpredictable at best, frustrating at their worst. To serve them well, you must be able to understand them, to see beyond your immediate (or even long-lasting) impressions. And be careful about pinning on them another's actions in your reaction to a new person you start working with.

As well, many people rely on facts and data to make decisions. Relying on facts is a natural outcome of the times we live in and what kind of knowledge we appreciate. Yet, there are times when facts and data can't tell a full story — perhaps we don't have the right facts, or we are unable to obtain enough data. People are like that. True "data" about their motivations, inspiration, values and emotions (to name

but a few things that aren't immediately apparent or predictable) aren't always visible. In the years of our work with broken people we have found that, like us, they want to be forgiven and learn to do better in their poor choices and reactions to other's in their life. Listening gives insight to what triggers their going out and getting drunk, using drugs, gambling, laziness, and/or negative reactions. Once you recognize what triggers them, you can then, through bible studies and taking time with them, be used by the Lord to lift the blinders off their minds that have held them captive. This does not happen overnight and it takes a team in the body of Christ working together and staying in fellowship. As an example, it means not finger pointing at another team member because the broken person starts telling you how another team member is causing them to stumble. If you take what they say as truth and not check out the facts, it can stop the healing of a broken heart that is full of bondage and bring strife and hard feeling to another team member.

Some people call the ability to judge others "listening to your gut." However, the skill of understanding others takes all of you, including your brain, emotions, senses and body. It requires practice and wisdom. It is some of the hardest work you will do in your serving of others, because we can still get it wrong. People are delightfully messy and complex.

We should all work hard to get better at understanding others, because it will improve our relationships and our ability to serve others as we have been served. Some thoughts on how to start:

Observe: Understanding others requires your attention and a stillness that is in contrast to our high-tech, fast-paced and distracting world, or gut feelings. You can observe glimpses of what others value and what motivates them by using all of you to gently watch them. Who frustrates you? Who do you misunderstand or want to get to know better? Observe them without judging their hearts. That is God's job, not ours. Bad behavior doesn't always mean a hard heart cannot be softened.

Engage all of you: Using your senses is a great place to begin as you pay attention to others. Watch their body language, listen to their words, feel the emotion. Notice your reactions — how do you respond to the other person, and where do you feel this response? Is it a balanced response (or all negative or positive)? What might you be missing? There is a great richness in encouraging ourselves to dig beneath the surface of first impressions that can often create great allies out of those we thought we couldn't tolerate.

Check your assumptions: Nobody is made up of pure evil or pure goodness. We all have depth and layers below the surface. We're intricate. We aren't what you think we are.

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Adopt a Family for Christmas

From Peggy's Desk—AROH Director

In giving a hand up to people within our mission statement 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 an avenue to develop competency in meeting life's challenges. A Ray of Hope will offer a "hand up", rather than a "hand out" in order to build self-respect and dignity.

We attempt to act and react in our guests' lives with the same heart and actions that we would have for our own families. This effort starts

with coaching them in the healing of one incident at a time (a poor choice); showing God's love for them using our guidelines and teaching then how to embrace living

with others in a home that provides them with safe and healthy boundaries. Then comes the wisdom and blessing in having a new harmonious outcome in their relationships with others.

We do not do this alone. The support of this community has made every success story from A Ray of Hope yours as well. This is our 10th year of giving you the opportunity and blessing of adopting a Family for Christmas. You will be planting seeds of kindness and hope in their hearts from your giving a Christmas to them. We have seen many from this loving community reach out and care by giving sustenance and comfort, thus making it possible for a family to make it through another year of living in a safe home.

When you personally adopt a family you help in the following ways:

- *Help them catch up on rent and utilities that threatens them in losing their home.
- *Providing the Christmas dinner for the family.
- *Supplying them with extra canned goods that helps them get through the next year.



Each family member makes a list of their needs and includes their clothing sizes, shoe size, and their favorite colors, books, etc. Each child also lists a toy.

Christmas started with God's love in giving us the birth of Jesus. This season provides boundless opportunities to play Santa Claus by giving and showing God's love to your neighbors.

Contact us at 406-755-4673, arohdirector@gmail.com, www.arayofhopemontana.com and on facebook. Simply come in a fill out a form and name the size of the family you would like to adopt, and we will match you up with a family.

Thanksgiving

From page 1

Ask some questions of the other person about your assumptions, and stay open to surprise. Their own file tells you our assumptions and FEELINGS are often wrong. The best servants of the Lord are willing to be mistaken about the conclusions they've made about another person.

Keep it up: Continue this disciplined way of **paying attention and praying for others** as a way of understanding them. However, don't expect to be able to control or predict their behavior based on what you observe. Everyone does things that are unexpected. Isn't that great? The world would be a pretty boring place if people always acted as we expected them to. The richness of human behavior is to be celebrated, not put into a box with a label. There has never been a person in history with the same combination of appearance, personality, natural talents and spiritual gifts as each one of us, and there never will be!! This should be the basis for the positive way we see every person that comes to the ministry of A Ray Of Hope—**That God has a unique purpose for each one of us**. That each of us is fully pleasing to the Lord because **when one accepts the Lord as their savior and asks forgiveness for ALL their sins**, HE imparts great value to them here in this old world of ours. That is why we hate the sin not the sinner.

Challenge what you think you know about others by using all of you. And give back to others the grace you want from others. You might be pleasantly surprised.

With the hope that God spoke in Jeremiah 29:11 "For I know the plans I have for you, says the LORD, plans to prosper and not for evil. Plans to give you a future and a hope."

We founded A Ray of Hope as God's servants. We strive to give to each person who walks through the doors of A Ray of Hope time to find His plan and purpose for themselves and for us.

Sincerely,

Bob & Peggy Christensen, Founders

A Ray of Hope

Content or Contentious?

Dr. David Jeremiah

Having food and clothing, with these we shall be content.

1 Timothy 6:8

Some people are contentious and others are content. Some strive and struggle to get more and more; others find joy in what they have, and most of all in Whom they serve.

William Henry Channing, a nineteenth-century clergyman, summed up his philosophy of life like this: "To live content with small means; to see elegance rather than luxury, and refinement rather than fashion; to be worthy, not respectable; and wealthy, not rich; to listen to stars and birds, babes and sages, with open heart; to study hard; to think quietly, act frankly, talk gently, await occasions, hurry never; in a word, to let the spiritual, unbidden and unconscious, grow up through the common -- this is my symphony."

When we're walking with God and finding our sufficiency in Christ, contentment is the melody of the soul. All of life is a symphony. We may not have the latest sound system in our living room, but we have a choir of songbirds in the nearby park -- and they sing for free!

As the Bible says, "Godliness with contentment is great gain" (1 Timothy 6:6).

Contentment ... is the soul's enjoyment of that peace that passes all understanding.

Arthur Pink



Mark Rogers is on the left. Bob Christensen is pictured on the right side.

A Ray of Hope has given me a renewed Hope in the word of God starting with the Shelter in Kalispell and working with Mandy and then Bob and Peggy's son who brought me to A Ray of Hope retreat at Helmville. At my first bible study Bob and RJ Christensen prayed over me. They have helped me to embrace again the word of God. They encourage people to work with mental health programs. They have given to me a place of love that I know I can come to and be embraced that I am loved and accepted for who I am. Peggy Christensen pointed out to me (when I told her "thank you") about all the people who care for me by donating their time and funds to A Ray of Hope, so that they and all the staff can do the work they love to do in giving a hand up to others. So I might never meet all you great people but know I am thankful for a much needed hand up in my life

In gratitude Thank you.

Mark Rogers.

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A Hand Up Not A Hand Out

Peggy Christensen Executive Director
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Linda Mengwasser / Paul Befumo / Lynn Wilson
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Call 755-4673

Donations Of Food, Eggs, Meat, Sugar, Coffee,
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Donations are tax deductible

Mission Statement:
A Ray of Hope is a 501c3 State and Federal tax-exempt organization formed to help those in need. Our primary focus is helping families become functioning members of society and helping the hungry and homeless with their need when all else has failed them.

Please send donations to
A Ray of Hope
PO Box 5407, Kalispell MT 59903



Shelter
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