



## From The Desk of Peggy

### Phil Eiseman's Inspirational Life Change

When Phil came to our door, he was struggling with mental health issues and the loss of his family through a divorce that left him overwhelmed with



grief. The first time Phil and I sat and talked he asked me that if at anytime he felt fear and paranoia could he come and talk to me, and would I give him the truth of what he was thinking. That started a four year relationship between Phil and A Ray of Hope. Because he had a spirit of gratitude, during the first 6 months he helped keep the house and shelter clean. Then he managed Hope Thrift for a year until a husband and wife who came to A Ray of Hope for a hand up could capably manage Hope Thrift . So he came to me and said "Peggy I am stepping down so they can be blessed like I have been" and asked if he could be lead person at the shelter. Not only did he do that, he also learned how to run the front desk so that on the weekends A Ray of Hope doors are never shut to someone who finds they are in need of a hand up. You can see in the following statement that the key to his success is a spirit of gratitude for God and

A Ray of Hope.

"My name is Phil Eisenman. I have been staying at A Ray of Hope for some time now. This home is a Godsend. They have helped me considerably. They are working with me on my mental conditions, which are manic depression, bi-polar and schizophrenia. They also have helped me get closer to God. I now realize through A Ray Of Hope's teachings that I was a lost soul. They have helped me as well as many others to pick up the broken pieces of our lives. May they be around forever. I also have one last comment.....I love A Ray Of Hope."

**Thanks to this community, Phil is now living in his own place, spending time with his children, and comes back daily to A Ray of Hope to continue to help others in a hand up in finding the purpose for their lives also. Phil and A Ray of Hope are thankful to each person who donates funds and time to give so many lives a hand up in living in peace and joy, forgiving others, and giving back.**

**PEOPLE BECOME REALLY QUITE REMARKABLE WHEN THEY START THINKING THAT THEY CAN DO THINGS. WHEN THEY BELIEVE IN THEMSELVES THEY HAVE THE FIRST SECRET OF SUCCESS.** -NORMAN VINCENT PEALE

## The Move

A window of economic opportunity was offered to me—I qualified to enter subsidized housing. However, the winter storm season was an everyday concern. I had a three day window to move and clean-up my current rental residence. Only then could I breathe a sigh of relief. Being 71 years old, the challenge to achieve was there.

I found my “ray of hope.” At 10:32 AM, I was given the “green light” to move to government housing. I approached the facility of A Ray Of Hope social outreach office. I needed help to move my belongings. By 11:00 AM, help was offered: 3 men and a pick-up truck were assigned to me. At 12:45 PM, my effort to move would begin. Cost was nominal, very affordable.

The 3 men were “registered” members of “A Ray Of Hope” work force. I was given a comment sheet to fill out for each of the men. I was to turn in the evaluation sheets to the office after the job was done.

At 12:45 PM, my pre-job introduction occurred. I described the circumstances of the situation and the locations of the move. I was desperate, time was short. Snow and mud required the movers separate an inside man versus the outside truck loaders. Security at the doors at the new location had to be maintained. The elevators at the new location had to be shared with the residents. The men followed the minimum requests with maximum effort. I was in my old place to suggest what was needed to be loaded first. I was in my new place, requesting where the boxes were to go— kitchen, bedroom,, living room.

Within 3 hours, mission accomplished. The move was done. The men satisfied the housing managers concerns. I used windows to check on the progress and handling of my belongings. Co-operation, compliance, concentration and determination were freely given by the moving crew. The dark clouds of my worries and troubled concerns were replaced with a sun shining day by the Ray Of Hope organization.

Thank you, A. Victor

## Thank you from Kathy

In December 2012 I moved to Montana to build a relationship with my estranged daughter who had lived on her own in Whitefish for 4 years. With high hopes and very little money, there was only one thing on my mind—nothing was going to stop me from reconciling with my daughter.

The first week there wasn't any hope for work, my funds were dwindling, and I ended up homeless.

But I knew all along God wasn't going to give up on me, and He didn't.

It is now a year later and my daughter and I now live together in Columbia Falls. We both have our health, jobs and dependable transportation. Only now she is due in May with a baby boy.

I thought that with all we had to be thankful for we wouldn't need a Christmas, or maybe my job would provide a bonus so that I could give her a little something.

That was all fine until December 21st when Christmas memories of my childhood flooded my mind. There also wasn't a Christmas bonus from my employer. I happened to have an outdated copy of the Mountain Trader that I glanced at, and what got my attention was an ad from Ray of Hope about adopting a family.

I thought if someone could "adopt" my daughter for Christmas that would be such a blessing!

Personally I didn't want anything. God had really started to do things for me that were above and beyond what I could ask or think...what more could I ask for? (For instance my car had broken down beyond repair and a very kind and generous couple donated their van to me!)

## Kathy

From page 2

I decided to take a shot in the dark and emailed the Director of A Ray of Hope in regards to some Christmas help. I told Peggy Christensen the situation with my daughter, and that my bills were paid and I was working. (I wasn't going to be homeless again. It just seemed like I had come so far in such a short amount of time). Besides I had been injured on my job in October and lost 5 weeks of work. Although I was behind on my rent, my landlord was working with me. He kept telling me that he would work with me because I always showed good effort. We don't have Cable TV or Internet. We get by as long as we are smart with our money. But things just weren't looking too bright for Christmas.

Within an hour of sending the email, Peggy called me and offered what would be the greatest of surprises for my little Mom-to-be!

My daughter didn't think that I would be able to provide anything for her at all. It turned out to be a Christmas for her to remember. I have the generosity and kind-hearted people at A Ray of Hope to thank for making this possible. They also helped me to get caught up with my rent, isn't that just amazing? This was so unexpected! Thank you!

The Ray of Hope is a great answer to prayer. I have been looking for ways to give back and pay it forward. Now with the combined efforts of what God has provided in my life and the needs at A Ray of Hope, more blessings are at our feet and for those in need.

## THANKS

I would like to say thank you to A Ray of Hope and all those who donate to it. As many of you know, I lived and worked at A Ray of Hope for many years. Over a year ago I moved in with my daughter and her family and started looking for another job. It was time for a change and other people needed to be given the opportunity to learn and grow and give.

In December when I was driving a taxi, I slipped on the ice at the airport and blew out my left knee. I originally went to Peggy and A Ray of Hope to see if they could help me get my medication. It made me feel great knowing that there was someplace to go for help.

A Ray of Hope not only helped with my medication, but they helped me get my cane and a few other items I needed to help me get around. Thanks to those of you who donate to A Ray of Hope, I was also able to get gas in my car to get back and forth to physical therapy and doctor appointments. At this point in time I still don't know what the future holds for me, but I know God is there and leading me forward.

I know sometimes people wonder if they should give—if the little they have to give is enough to make a difference, and if it is appreciated at all by the people who receive it. I am here to tell you that all of your efforts are very much appreciated, and I for one am grateful that you do. Again, thank you for your kindness and generosity.

Teresa Eaves

## From the Desk of Mandy

In my youth, I never had parents who took the time to talk to me about money and how important it was and how to budget. I also had been bounced from school to school so I never had a chance to be taught about it there either. This led to a very irresponsible way of dealing with money in my life. I started out very young on my own and was very naïve as well. I allowed friends to live with me for free and help me rack up my bills. I partied and spent my money on drugs, going out to eat, not paying my bills, etc., etc. I soon got married to a man who also had no clue about money, budgeting or saving. The two of us were lethal in regards to our finances. He would work and then hand me his paycheck. I would only pay half the amount owed on our bills, and sometimes not pay them at all. I made promises to bill collectors I could not keep. I still did not take paying our bills seriously. I sure wish I would have. I didn't realize I was setting myself up for a huge black hole that was going to play such a important part in my life as I grew older.

After my divorce, my ex-husband left me with all the debt. I was a stay at home mom who was forced to look for work and put my children in daycare. During this transition the bills started piling up and shut off notices were appearing on my front door. I could not deal with the stress and checked out for 8 years. I lost everything.

Finally after 8 long hard years of abuse to myself, I realized that I wasn't in control anymore and that my life was unmanageable. I was ready for change. This change did not happen overnight. One of the most important words in recovery is "process" and "obedience". I started a 12 step program for life's hurts, hang ups and habits. In this 12 step program we talk about making amends. I did just that. I made amends to my family and friends and thought that I was done. That I had completed my step. Little did I know I truly was not finished.

After I became the Assistant Director of A Ray Of Hope, Peggy Christensen brought up to me one day that it would bless me to go through our program at AROH for Budget Counseling. I was scared to death. I could tell that God was trying to get my attention, but through this program He helped me realize that I had truly not made all my amends. I was convicted. There were bill collectors who were upset with me. I had offended them, therefore amends needed to be made. The bible states: Therefore, if you are offering your gift at the altar and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift at the altar. First go and be reconciled to your brother; then come and offer your gift. Matthew 5:23-24.

During the 8 years I had racked up enormous bills through the ER, doctors and Urgent care. I was very sick. I had finally realized what I was to do. There was the obedience God wanted to see. Through our program at A Ray Of

Hope I met one of our volunteer budget counselors named Danielle Oliver. I was embarrassed and ashamed because of my debt, ashamed, and I wasn't even sure if I would like her. God knew all that, as He works in the details. When I met Danielle I liked her immediately. I knew then that God was in control and I was so thankful to A Ray Of Hope giving me a hand up in this area of my life that needed reconstruction and healing.

First Danielle and I contacted all the people that I owed. I didn't even think this was possible. There had to be too many I thought. It was a process but not nearly as hard as I thought it would be. I was blown away by the end result. I figured that I had owed way more than I did. Still, the amount was not great but I was seeing hope. This was one of the many blessings that I received through the program. I needed help and got it through our budget counseling program at AROH.

As Danielle and I had started contacting my debt collectors, she was great enough to go before me and be my voice explaining to them my story of my past and that I wanted to make amends with them. Every one of them agreed to work with me (that too was a huge blessing) and I had a creditor who said they would forgive me of \$1500.00 debt. Amazing! I was blessed and encouraged through that. It gave me strength to keep moving forward and to be obedient. My anxiety came way down. It helped to know there was not just obedience and blessings but that God WAS in control and He had surrounded me with Godly people like Peggy and Danielle in helping me with this huge burden that I had carried for so many years.

I am still faithfully making my payments each month on time which has also brought stability and responsibility in paying all my current bills on time. This is what I have truly needed as a young woman.

Through our Budget Counseling program at A Ray Of Hope, I have been extremely blessed. God is faithful and rewards our efforts with success. I am also so grateful to A Ray Of Hope for blessing me with a HUGE hand up, not a hand out in this area of healing of my life.

I EARNESTLY BELIEVE THAT GOD EXISTS, THAT I MATTER TO HIM AND THAT HE HAS THE POWER TO HELP ME RECOVER.

"Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted" Matthew 5:4

Mandy Hyatt

## **A Ray of Hope is very grateful to the many people who sent donations to A Ray of Hope in memory of Bill Schlegel.**

Louis William "Bill" Schlegel, 84, was born Nov. 10, 1929, in Dillon, the second child of Louis and Gladys (Bump) Schlegel.

He attended schools in Kalispell and Kila, but only until grade six, when his formal education ended and he began a long career as a working man. His was truly a hard-knock life.

He passed away quietly at his home Feb. 13, 2014. His childhood and young adult life were full of adventures that sounded like the stuff movies are made of, time and again with tales from said to him again how we needed priceless. Sadly, it did not get

When he was 20, he married (Kahn) Schlegel, and they were in death. They too had adventures, worked together, had five children and faced down Carol's cancer as a team.

Besides his family, Bill's biggest accomplishments were his work history and the business he built from nothing. When he was 16, he worked alone in the Blacktail Lookout. At 17, he ran cross cut saws on the Hungry Horse Dam project and logging jobs from Seeley Lake to Superior. In the 1960s, he worked for Fred King, including construction of the south portal of the railroad tunnel near Trego, and many other heavy highway construction projects.

In the mid-seventies he took a leap and began his own business, building roads from the Libby and Eureka areas to the Flathead Forest. For many years he built logging road for Stoltze Land and Lumber. Wherever you went with him, he could point out some project he had worked on, and even recount details of who he worked with and how well they did their jobs.

Although Bill officially retired, he never was able to become a completely hands-off business man. Work was in his blood and little could distract him from it. When Carol became ill, though, she became his job and he took it very seriously, too seriously sometimes according to her! But when he wasn't otherwise occupied, he loved working on and showing off his old car collection, personally having restored a Diamond T truck and a 1928 Durant. These were like his babies, and if you wanted to score points with him, you just needed to express admiration for them.

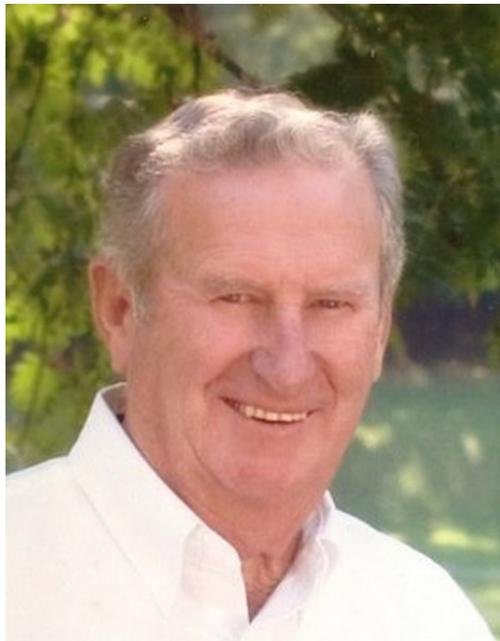
Carol's illness accomplished some things in Bill that nothing in his life had ever done, tenderizing his heart and beginning a late-in-life makeover that few thought they would see. He became humbler, more expressive, more willing to love and be loved. He started sometimes attending church and the Dirt Bags Bible Study in Bigfork, making friends and considering things he had never previously thought of, and God did a work in his life. Those of us who were close to him and were witness to the process were surprised and delighted. The past couple of years in particular saw a man far different from his former self. We were grateful to be present to observe the transformation up close.

Bill was preceded in death by his sweet bride, Carol; his son, Leslie; his mother and father; his brothers, Bob and Bennie; and his sister, Bonnie.

He is survived by his children, Ron and Vickie, Sandy Manning and Jeff, Mike, Mark, and Les' wife, Mary. He is also survived by his grandchildren, Karen, Wayne, Jerry, Shannah, Priscilla, Alex, Hannah, Karsen, Jessa, Kaylyn, Kylie, Kaden and Kahn; 12 great-grandchildren; and two great-great-grandchildren.

Services will be held at 1 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 18 at Crossroads Church in Bigfork, Jim Holman officiating.

In lieu of flowers, the family respectfully requests that memorials be made to Bigfork Fire or A Ray of Hope.



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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.



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