



# Reflections

**Samaritan Women - Community AfterCARE Resources**  
Assisting women coming out of jail and prison to live godly lives

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## Nancy Notes ...

by Nancy Dixon

The shepherds were out tending their sheep on that memorable night so long ago when Jesus was born. And as told in Luke 2:6-18 "...an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them; and they were terribly frightened. But the angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid; for behold, I bring you good news of great joy which will be for all the people; for today in the city of David there has been born for you a Savior, who is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign for you: you will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.' And suddenly there appeared with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God." Immediately they set off to go find Jesus.

What would have happened to them if they had not gone? What difference would that have made in their lives? What happens when you hear about Jesus and His coming into the world to save us and give us new life? What difference does it make?

It is quite amazing to see the difference in a woman first coming to Samaritan Women fearful, lost and without hope and then see her later after she has been coming to the Center and getting help occasionally; this also includes her placing her trust in Jesus as Savior. It is the work of God to change lives, and here at Samaritan Women we get the privilege of seeing new life become a thing of beauty. We are here to give help and hope. What an exciting opportunity!

A woman recently came to the Center with despair written all over her face as she spoke of her sense of emptiness. As we



talked, I told her of my best friend Jesus and how He changed my life and that He loved her and wanted to give her new life. That day she invited Jesus to be her Lord and Savior. Later as I was talking with her she said, with a big smile on her face, that she could now see that things were beginning to make sense, that God been trying to get her attention for the last nine months".

The startled shepherds had the angels come tell them about the Good News and they responded by going to find Jesus. Today, God is trying to get our attention to tell each of us of His love, and this has not changed throughout the centuries since His Son's birth. He is still saying "I love you" to all who listen for His voice. Each of us long to hear we are loved and that there is hope no matter what we face.

Here at Samaritan Women, we have over 100 volunteers and each of our staff who throughout the year help in so many ways by building into the lives of our women and children, sharing the love of Jesus. A delicious luncheon was provided in November to bring each of them together, not only to thank them and show appreciation for the work they do, but as a time for sharing. Coming together we can see the many hands taking part.

Our women shared their stories so beautifully at our Auction and Dessert Fall Fund Raiser this past October. It was a very spe-

cial evening for everyone attending, fun and rewarding for all who took home great auction items that were donated. This was great for Samaritan Women and the work that is being done because of the funds that were raised.

I am so proud of the two Samaritan Women who are sharing later in this newsletter. Their stories show that change takes time and perseverance. Read how today both are making a difference in others lives because they took action in their own lives. A life changed is one growing each day with making choices to build character even when the choices are not that easy.

We are grateful to God for each woman that comes to us, the opportunity to serve her and her children and to you who care and help us. As you think of sharing your love with those you know, don't forget to share the Good News of Jesus. Have a Joyous Christmas in Jesus.

It was the **angel** that came with the message of Hope.

It was the **shepherd** that heard the Good News, sought out and found.

It was **Jesus**, the long awaited Messiah, God incarnate, who first demonstrated His love for us: coming to earth as a baby, born of a virgin; dying on the cross in our place paying for our sin.

It is the message of hope and Good News **for you and I** to hear and seek out Having found Him, we are to share with **those we love and care about the message of hope this Christmas.**

## Our Story Updates...

By Heather Thomas and Sandra Torres

Hello. My name is Heather. I was born in Alaska and from the ages of 2-17, I was in approximately 20 foster homes. I know about my mother and had never seen or spoken with my father until April of this year, where I found him living in Phoenix, AZ. Praise God! While in foster care, I witnessed other children being abused physically and sexually. At age 13, I started smoking cigarettes and pot. At age 15, I used cocaine for my first time. At age 16, I had given up my first son for adoption and 2 years later I had another son and a serious habit of using and selling cocaine.



I moved from Alaska to California, with my habit, and became involved in drug use and activity. I then became involved in counterfeit money and computer check fraud. As time went on, I had three more kids and owned a home and nice cars until the day the Sheriff's Department knocked on my door. That's when my life changed. They took my kids, my home and took me to jail with 14 felonies. I was looking eight years in prison.

While in jail, I read Jack Murphy's book, *Murf the Surf*. I knew if he could change, so could I. I began reading the Book of John. With every verse I could feel the love of Jesus surrounding me and filling up my cell. I began to realize God had a plan for my life,

even if it meant facing time. Of course, I did continue to pray to God that His plans for my life weren't in prison. God answered my prayers. I went to court, before Judge Levis, who offered me the opportunity, the chance to change by going to a program.

I had also heard about Samaritan Women in jail and knew they could help me. I was released that night and wandered around the streets of Fresno until Samaritan Women opened the next morning. I got a hold of Nancy right away. She said, "Are you ready for Bible study? I'll pick you up." From that day on, I spent all my time at the Center, attending classes and helping out wherever I could. The love, encouragement, acceptance and classes offered at the Center allowed me to develop a strong personal relationship with our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, and gave me a solid foundation.

In 2003, I was reunited with the son that I had given up for adoption 20 years ago. He moved to Fresno and gave me my first grandchild. In 2004, I was also reunited with my son Michael who now lives with me.

Today I am working full-time as a Case Manager for Samaritan Woman, and now God has shown me how to take all that old stuff that the enemy meant to destroy me and turn it around for good, to help, love, encourage and give hope to other women who need it the most. Thank you JESUS, Nancy Dixon, Jack Murphy, Judge Levis, & so many more at the Center.

My name is Sandra Torres and I am proud to say that I am a child of God. I am a daughter of THE KING! I came to know the Lord on August 15, 2002, on 'A' yard at VSPW. Before that faithful day my life consisted of drugs, violence, abuse, depression, oppression, anger, and fear. I was always confused and unsure about everything. My way to escape was to get high.



I was born into a family of domestic violence. I never realized how much of an impact that had on my life until I, myself, became involved in abusive relationships. I never thought it could happen to me. I turned to drugs and alcohol to numb the pain, or to help me pretend that it wasn't really happening. I soon became incapable of making the right choices for my life and the lives of my children. After being arrested a few times and having my kids taken from me (because of the violence), I finally ended up in prison. I was facing two years in prison and my children (3 boys) were placed in CPS custody (again) and this time they were going to be adopted. My life was a complete and total disaster. I lost everything — my kids, my home...EVERYTHING!

When I entered the prison walls, my heart broke. I was afraid of what I had become and what my children had become because of me — my lifestyle, my choices. I wanted to die. That is when I met Jeri who one day helped me to see my need for Jesus. The day that I surrendered my life to the Lord was the greatest day of my life! HE has changed my life completely.

On January 2, 2003, I became a resident at the TLC Home and graduated on October 10, 2003, with "The Blessing" of Samaritan

Women. With the help of Samaritan Women and by the grace of God, my life has changed. I have a new life in Christ. I have remained clear and sober for 2 years 4 months, my children have been returned to my custody, I have a good job, and I have a car. But most importantly...I **HAVE GOD**...Jehovah Jirah, my Provider. His love is sufficient for all my needs.

One of the most amazing things about the Lord is His grace and mercy. Grace means getting what you don't deserve and mercy means not getting what you deserve. He has shown Himself strong in every area of my life. Jesus is the head of my house and the love of my life. He has opened doors for me that no man can shut and He has shut doors that no man can open. He has given me the desires of my heart.

As long as I can remember, I have always wanted to help women stop the cycle of violence and because of my obedience and fervent prayers, the Lord has opened up the doors so that I could do just that. I am now a domestic violence advocate and I am truly able to give back to the community. My faith has increased with each test and trial that comes my way. Every time I am faced with a trial (and believe me they come often), I look at it as an opportunity to grow in faith, wisdom, and to see My Father's grace in action.

Although times can get rough, I know that I am not alone and that I do not face ANYTHING alone because the Lord is always with me. He will NEVER leave me nor forsake me! I am blessed and highly favored. To God be ALL the glory.

# BULLETIN BOARD



## Thinking of a Year-End Gift?

Samaritan Women would put your donation to good using, building into the lives of our women and children. We depend on your donations. We are 501(c) (3) non profit corporation. As such, all gifts are tax deductible. Gifts can include cash or property. Thank you to all who have been supporting us.



## Entertainment Books

Another excellent idea for a Christmas gift...for yourself or for a friend. We have books at the Center for a cost of \$25. For more information, call 227-2190.



## Make A Special Memory This Christmas Please Handle Me Baby Jesus

Have fun with the children in your life. Craft kits available to put together Baby Jesus in the manger with your child or grand-child. Make a special memory this Christmas and at the same time you will benefit the Samaritan Women Children's Enrichment Center. Call the Center at 227-2190 to place your order.



## Nana's Box...

### Children's Enrichment Manager...

All of heaven's resources are available to those who trust in God.

Little children begin as a little bundle of trusting confidence in their parents and the world around them; somewhere along the years they gradually, or even suddenly, lose that trust and it has to be born anew in them. You can be a special part of maximizing the possibility that each of our children here will find that new and fresh ability to totally trust in God, knowing Jesus as their Savior.

Your resources can join with all of heaven's resources on their behalf. Your gifts at this Christmas time to the children



here mean so much to them and to all of us. Gifts come in many packages:

\* healthy snacks—oranges, apples, peanut butter, crackers, cheeses, & individual juices;

\* spend an hour or two here with us. Even if you can't commit to coming on a weekly basis, an hour adds to their bank of experiencing a caring adult. The children themselves will teach you how to interact with them as you become like a little child for even a few moments. What better way to begin the Christmas season than to experience a child's world as he does.

God can do an amazing work in even "the least of these" as you share the resources He has given you, and even more as you share yourself. **His blessings are on the way!!**

## 'OPPORTUNITIES TO GET INVOLVED!'



## Mentor's Needed

Next Training January 2005.  
(Call to sign up, 227-2190.)

Women wanting a special friend to come alongside and encourage them along the way. You can be someone that will make a difference by offering a listening ear and love to one of our women. An average of 1 to 2 hours together weekly is needed to better build relationships. For more information regarding training class, please call 227-2190.



Webster's Says a Mentor is...a friend; a trusted counselor or guide; a tutor or coach.

## PEN PALS NEEDED

How would you like to invest into the life of one of our Samaritan Women? These women are eager to have a friend who can offer them encouragement and friendship. In the past three months, we have matched 12 inmates with pen pals. We currently have approximately 15 to 20 women on the waiting list. Please call Pam at 227-2190 for more information.



# Samaritan Women

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## Current Needs

**\*\*Women's Ministry Office** is in need of:

- Bus Tokens: 5 pk/\$4.25 or 10 pk/\$8.50
- Portfolio folders with inside pockets
- Baskets with handles for fundraiser.

**\*\*Children's Enrichment Center** is in need of:

- Healthy Snacks & Incentive rewards for children

**\*\*Office Equipment/Supplies:**

- Coffee/Creamer/Sugar
- Styrofoam cups, paper plates, plastic ware.
- Digital Camera (3 or 4 pixels)
- Staplers, tape dispensers

**\*\*Postage Stamps**, \$37 per roll

**\*\*Birthday Cards** - (We try to acknowledge all the women's birthdays.)

**\*\* Gift bag items** (Deodorant, toothpaste, shampoo, body spray, candy kisses, tissue paper, necessities)

**\*\* Items to help our women**

- Canned goods (tuna, noodles, boxed foods, power bars, microwaveable foods)
- Gift Items such as umbrellas, gloves, socks & underwear, jewelry, nail polish, lipsticks

## Executive Board

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