



# 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

### A Dream Coming True... A Dream Unfolding

Five years ago we opened Samaritan Women here in Fresno to assist women who wanted to change their lives after incarceration. It was a dream come true to provide opportunities for these women to succeed. During the ten previous years that I had been the Chaplain to the women at Fresno County Jail, I had the great opportunity to see lives change. Because we saw how difficult it was for women who would go back into the same negative environment to stay strong in the Lord, it was the dream of some of these women and myself that we could have a home one day to help women. Even though their hearts had changed, many women soon were drawn into negative activity only to be back in jail again. I have also seen a number of women put God first in their lives and never go back, and they have been part in bringing others to Samaritan Women to receive help.

We opened a fairly small Center where women could fellowship, receive prayer, encouragement, clothing and job experience. Within months, we began classes and started our newsletter. We have expanded in space and staff several times to include a Children's Enrichment Center for the children's needs and a home for 6 women to build life skills.

Now we have women who are great examples of God working in their lives and who are now valued employees working at



Samaritan Women building into the lives of others who like themselves are seeking a better and godly life. **Yes, lives are changing.**

God helped us open the doors five years ago and He continues to bring opportunities to women coming to Samaritan Women with a sincere heart. Our case managers and program director are eager to help women plan for their future.

The best part of what is going on now is that "women who have been there and done that" and moved forward with their lives are involved in assisting the new women coming to us. This is what I always hoped for...women helping women enjoy their new life with the Lord at the center of their lives. God wants us to be concerned for one another and some of the best ones to help are the ones who have been helped themselves.

God has given each of us talents that if we use them to help one another, we see

1 Thessalonians 2:8,11-12 "We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well, because you had become so dear to us...for you know that we dealt with each of you as a father deals with his own children, encouraging, comforting and urging you to live lives worthy of God, who calls you into His kingdom and glory."

much greater progress than if they are not shared. Working together is important. Just as our bodies have many parts that work together, God has designed the people He created to work together to make a better world and in the process, each one is helped personally. God called the disciples, and He trained them to go out to help others to know the truth and find freedom. I believe He is doing the same thing here...calling, training and sending us to help other women. He never sends us out without first equipping us.

What makes the difference between those who find freedom and new life in Jesus in the jail and continue to take Him with them on the outside, and those that don't? I have seen that those who continue to follow Him keep near Him and seek other real Christians to spend time. They grow to know Jesus better and apply His Truth to their lives. Those women succeed because *they choose* to learn real Truth and value their relationship with God. Those who have no roots in the Christian life (applying God's Word to their lives) fall away. Our women who have godly role models and special friends (mentors) are greatly blessed and encouraged in this new life. We could use several more mentors.

Yes, God has given me a burden to see women succeed. How about you? Seeing lives change is a wonderful blessing. Now some of our women whose lives have changed have joined caring people from the community working together to assist new women coming to Samaritan Women for help. This dream is being fulfilled. To God be the glory for what He is doing!

## My Story...

By Tammi Lindberg

Hello, my name is Tammi. I grew up in a middle class family. I have an older half brother and half sister who frequently visited their dad on weekends. My biological father, who was a severe alcoholic and would later die of kidney failure, left us before I was born. He insisted my mother abort me, but she would not.

My first memory at age four was being molested by a local grocery store clerk. I remember telling my mother and walking back to the store hand-in-hand with her. When she confronted this young man, he denied everything and I would never speak of it again until my late twenties. Shortly after that, my mother remarried our step father. He was to be a good provider.

At age five, I was already experiencing depression and an overwhelming feeling of indifference, which would remain with me throughout my lifetime. Over the next two years, I would have plenty of encounters with alcohol as I would sneak homemade beer made by my step dad. I actually grew up being a good girl, a people pleaser. I knew of God but did not attend church regularly. I would only pray to God when I wanted something (always material). He was not a part of every day life for me.

I graduated from high school, began a career in banking and moved to Fresno. I was drinking very heavily at that time but would always show up for work the next day. The real darkness in my life began when I married the man who introduced me to my drug of choice, methamphetamine. We were to be together for 18 years. The drug use, which began as recreational, soon became a necessity. Then it was my master to whom I was very loyal. My husband and I maintained our careers but lived lives as outlaws. In the drug world, you have a responsibility to your reputation. I was filled with pride, upholding that responsibility. One of the things I will always regret is giving up the opportunity to have children because drugs were more important. In 1992, I was laid off from my career as a bank officer. This was a blessing as I could no longer perform my job.

I experienced deep depression over the next years and eventually the drugs stopped working. I lived a very immobilized life, seeing absolutely no way out. My first experience with the law was in May of 1999. My husband then divorced me by March of 2000. I was devastated by this. I was ordered out of our home, restrained from our business and at age 41 had to move back to

my parents house and go on welfare. This should have been my bottom. I was broken emotionally, physically and mentally. This was the beginning of my recovery process; however, I would not stop doing drugs for another two and a half years. I never seemed to be able to stop while going to AA and NA meetings. I had many encounters with Fresno County Jail to the point I was facing going to prison. By this time, I was not able to make any healthy decisions for myself.

In the winter of 2002, I began trusting in the Lord and looking to Him for help. I was attending church more frequently and decided to be baptized on June 28, 2003. That was the turning point in my life. In August of 2003, I was facing prison. By God's mercy, I was given one more chance. I also was given God's strength to close the necessary doors that prevented me from my recovery. I placed myself in a women's Christian home and would be surrounded by Christians from that point on. It was also during that time I began attending Samaritan Women and experiencing God's love through

these women, their support and their encouragement. I spent ten months in the Christian home, all the while building up my faith in Christ, learning to trust and reading the Word.

In my life today, I am not the same woman. I am becoming the woman that God has intended me to be. I'm 46 years and each morning I wake up, I surrender my life to God and ask for His guidance all through the day. His grace continues to cover me and helps me grow. I have a healthy life today. I make healthy choices and make it a point to stay away from unhealthy people, places or things. I have come so far in this life that God has intended for me. Today I celebrate 13 months clean and sober, and each day is a blessing. I am now able to volunteer my time at Samaritan Women to help other women in need, and my heart pours out to them. I have recently remarried to a very godly man, and we are so very blessed to have God in our lives. I know that Jesus Christ died for my sins, and I give Him all my shame and guilt each day. My goal is to continue to help women who have suffered a life with drugs and separation from Christ. You can't keep it if you don't give it away. My most recent blessing...I quit smoking September 8<sup>th</sup> by the grace of God.

Matthew 11:28-30, "Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

## Nana's Box...

Children's Enrichment Manager...

Do you have left-over craft projects and materials from Bible School, Sunday School or other programs for children? And have you wondered what you could do with them? Here we have a perfect opportunity for you to spend some time with a child helping him with a project and making a difference that can last a lifetime. Give us a call.

Do you have access to incentives of any kind that could be used to challenge children to read or do their homework or chores?

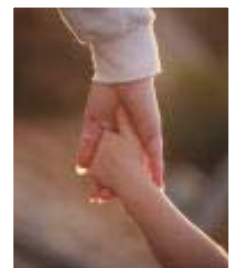


Children love rewards; working for them can also have a lasting impact in helping them to internalize positive values.

Do you have time to come and read to a child? Success in reading has its foundations in having a caring adult read to them. Book Buddies Thursday nights at 6 p.m. offers such an opportunity. Other times can be arranged to fit into your schedule. Being a reading partner for half an hour will enrich your life as well as the child's.

The "Please Handle Me Baby Jesus" project is in the planning stages. If you have or know how to acquire the small baby dolls please let us know. So far the supplier is not carrying them this year.

**Volunteers. We thank God for you; you meet people right where they are, just like Jesus did!**



# BULLETIN BOARD

## Entertainment Books Available

Another excellent idea for a Christmas gift...for yourself or for a friend. We have books at the Center for a cost of \$25.

Come by and get yours before they're gone! For more information, call 227-2190.



## Mentor's Needed

Next Training November 2004  
(Call to sign up, 227-2190.)

For our Samaritan Women, beginning a new life means they need a special friend to come alongside and encourage them along the way. We recently matched Nellie (one of our Samaritan Women) with Mary Lou (community member). Nellie says, "Having a mentor gives me a lot of support. Mary Lou gives me information on the Word of God. She's the girlfriend I never had. She's a very good friend and we communicate very well." Mary Lou says, "For me to be a mentor to Nellie is that I went in knowing that I wanted to give, to encourage, to help her grow. I went in to help her, but I am the one that's more blessed. When we give, we get more back. I have enjoyed her and look forward to seeing her each week. I feel like I've known her forever."



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

## \$ Matching Grant Opportunity \$

Opportunity to grow your gift by matching grant opportunity dollar for dollar, up to \$5000 for new donors. God is making a way to do some great things around here through this offer. Will you prayerfully consider building into Samaritan Women by marking your donation "matching grant". We have until December 31, 2004.

## Samaritan Women's Fall Dessert and Silent Auction

Thursday, October 21, 2004

Community Bible Church (northeast corner Maple/Nees)

To hear success stories by our women.

\$15/ticket or \$100/table of 8

### GREAT AUCTION ITEMS!

Weekend Getaway / Cruise  
Gift Baskets / Disneyland  
Elderberry House  
Professional Services & More!



## You can help in this event by:

- \* Donating an Auction Item (Antique Item, Weekend Getaway, Gym Membership, Painting, Gift Cards or Certificates, etc.)
- \* Volunteer your time at the event
- \* Making a Dessert for the Fundraiser
- \* Donate a gift basket (we have some baskets and you can fill)

### 'BASKET IDEAS'

**Reading/Education Basket** - Gift certificates to book stores, bookmarks, book lights; books for beginning, intermediate and advanced readers, books on tapes (kids); flash cards, coloring books, colors, etc.

**Car Care Basket** - Glass Cleaner Wipes, Armor-All wipes, armor all spray (for tires), \$10.00 off certificate at a local full service car wash. Air freshener, free rotating tires, free balance tires, free oil change.

**The Art of Letter Writing Basket** - Gift certificate for personalized stationery, note pads, stationery (adult and kid themed), sealing wax, calligraphy pens, glow pens, creative stamps and ink pads, books/rolls of postage stamps.

**Aromatherapy Spa Basket** - candles, candle holders, gift certificate to Bath and Body Works, gift certificate to a day spa, etc., oil diffusers, scented oils, massage oils, scented lotions, bath salts, loofah sponges, soothing music CD.

**All American Outdoor Fun & BBQ Basket** - yard games, red-white-blue themed picnic supplies, BBQ equipment, BBQ sauces, outdoor serving pieces, Frisbee, ball, wicker plate holders, mosquito spray.

**Hot Wheels Basket** - Lots of hot wheels cars, trucks, anything with wheels.

**Pasta Basket** - Sauces, different types of pastas, pasta recipe book.

**Baking Basket** - Cookie sheets, cookbook, chocolate chips, cookie cutters, apron, measuring cups/spoons, timer, etc.