



Celebration Journal SPRING 2011



A New Family in Christ

“So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.” (Hebrews 2:11b)

By Rev. Keary Kincannon

Most everyone engaged in bringing the Good News of God’s love to others knows that we are not only made “new” in Christ but that we join a “new” family with each other in Christ.

In the fifteen years since chartering Rising Hope as a United Methodist Church, we have made it our mission to bring the love of God to



those living on the margins of society, who are ostracized for economic or cultural reasons. At the same time we have also received members who hold down jobs and own homes in what might be called

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Above, “Jesus Christ” by Kim W., artist

Bountiful Contributions

The Value of \$3,500, \$35, and 35 Cents

By Sharon Emory

As Rising Hope's Business Manager, I see all the individual contri-



butions that come in and am thankful for each and every one.

All are noteworthy.

Near the end of last year, we were experiencing a financial situation that was not promising. But as the year-end donations started coming in, we saw a ray of hope. Little did I know that there would be three

very meaningful donations that really touched my heart.

On one of the first days of De-

‘At that point, I cried.’

ember, a very generous church member brought in a check from him and his wife, and when I saw

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“main stream America.”

But what is clear to everyone is Rising Hope’s mission to bring the power of Christ and the support of the Church to the least, the lost, the lonely, and the left out.

I am incredibly thankful that the faithfulness of our members and volunteers has grown our outreach to touch about 8,000 individuals in our community every year. We are fulfilling Christ’s command to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and welcome the stranger. Without a doubt the love of God is manifested at Rising Hope in very real and concrete ways every day.

Yet I want you to be aware of another daily miracle. Marginalized, outcast, and even disreputable members of our community are being welcomed. At Rising Hope everyone is invited into the family in Christ. No one is excluded because everyone was created by God, therefore everyone has value. We do our best to make everyone feel needed and provide a way for everyone who desires to give back.

As a result many hurting and broken people come through

Some are transformed and literally become ‘new’

our doors and stay because they feel the love. Some are transformed and literally become “new” creatures in Christ, changing negative lifestyle habits, getting jobs, and reconciling with those they hurt by their negative actions.

Others, for reasons known only to God, are not able to make that transition. Yet everyone here at Rising Hope is welcomed into our “new” family in Christ because the love of Christ excludes no one.

Kim was homeless. She was a pleasant woman who loved to feel needed. She asked us if she could volunteer and she always did a very capable job of whatever task was put in front of her... for a while.

For no reason I could ever determine, she’d go on a drinking binge and be absent for days or even weeks. Every police officer and EMT along the Route One Corridor knew her because she would often be found passed out in public places. Her drink of choice? Listerine!

Yet Kim loved God and valiantly tried to stay sober. She would do well for a while, even months at a time. We prayed with her, counseled with her, connected her with doctors, psychiatrists, and 12-Step programs. We even helped arrange for her to get into a housing program. Yet Kim usually wanted to do things her way, so at times we had to get tough, telling her she could not volunteer unless she went to her appointments.

Kim was a gifted artist and made a pencil drawing of Christ that I framed and hung prominently in our hall way. (See front page.) Unfortunately she could not shake her demon.

In early February, while in a drunken stupor she fell, hit her head, and died a few days later.

Jerry had a traumatic incident in his life while still a child. He too loves God and wants to do right. I have prayed with Jerry, and I was blessed to baptize him.

He too has a drinking problem. At times he gets belligerent and insulting, especially to women. More than once he chased away much needed volunteers. In spite of our attempts to help him we have had to ban him from Rising Hope from time to time. We could not jeopardize our work to help others because of his negative behavior. Several times we and the merchants in the area have had to call the police and have him arrested for trespassing.

Not long ago Jerry said to me in all honesty and without anger, “Pastor Keary, I don’t care how many times you have

‘God put Rising Hope here.’

me arrested, I love you unconditionally.”

Jerry got it.

He and Kim both had broken lives and they both came to Rising Hope with the hope for healing. It is not easy dealing with the Kims and Jerrys in this world. But God put Rising Hope here so that everyone would know they are loved by God. No exceptions!

I believe that both Kim and Jerry have become better people because of the love they found at Rising Hope.

I know I have.

*Pastor Keary and
Worship Leader Mauri
Bishop serve
Communion at the
March 20 Sunday Service.
Mauri is a
seminarian from Wesley
Theological Seminary.*



Rising Hope 'very, very spiritually rewarding'

Jennifer Mann passes on rewarding Community Ministries post to volunteer Mary Hamilton

By Ed Simmons, Jr.

After five years devoted service to Rising Hope and now embarking as an entrepreneur, Jennifer Mann bid a fond farewell to our Mission at the end of January and welcomed Mary Hamilton to be the new Coordinator of Community Ministries, effective February 3.

Mary's warm, welcoming smile is every bit as bright as Jennifer's and like Jennifer she is well-equipped to handle the challenge of aiding those in need while radiating Christly joy and compassion. As coordinator, Mary helps constituents in crisis and oversees the Clothes Closet, the Food Pantry and the Hypothermia Program.

"The thing that makes Rising Hope unique," says Mary, "is that every staff member is committed to being the hands and feet of Christ," adding, "I'm so blessed that people are in place and things run so very smoothly... and the volunteers are so very reliable."

Originally hailing from Colorado

'...You're in God's house and you can make a difference.'

and growing up in Venezuela where she learned conversational Spanish, Mary started as a volunteer at Rising Hope a little over five years ago and her recent work for the Census Bureau included surveying undocumented

Hispanics. "It gave me insight into the injustices that many people in this area suffer," she says. "It really softened my heart to the plight of immigrants."

Mary is a former Church Council Member at Community Covenant Church in Springfield, which is an



Jennifer (standing) welcomes Mary to her new office at Rising Hope.

Evangelical Church, and while serving as their Outreach Mission Chairperson for six years she channeled her fellow congregation members' missionary efforts to Rising Hope.

Jennifer's church background is also interesting and significant. She is a member of Bethel A.M.E. (African Methodist Episcopal) Church in Reading, Pennsylvania, where the older church building, now a museum, is notable for having been a stop on the Underground Railroad during slavery times and has built-in concealed cubby holes, some under floorboards, for hiding escapees to freedom. She is also a

'...Every staff member is committed to being the hands and feet of Christ.'

member of Ebenezer African Methodist Episcopal Church in Fort Washington, Maryland.

Jennifer, who is a retired U.S. Army major with 22 years service, has now joined a group of like-minded veterans to form a new business, Veterans' Elite Express Transportation, and is also opening a home for mentally ill and challenged persons in Woodbridge.

Looking back on her time at Rising Hope, Jennifer says, "It's a good challenge because you're in God's house and you can make a difference."

Mary echoes that sentiment, saying she finds her new work at Rising Hope "very, very spiritually rewarding."

The Value of \$3,500, \$35, and 35 Cents (Continued from Page 1) 4

the amount of \$3,500, tears came to my eyes. With that, we could pay one month's mortgage, one month of utility bills and provide groceries to over 30 families.

A few days later, a little boy walked in and handed me an envelope. I noticed it had \$35 written on the front.

He said, "I took this money out of my piggy bank and from my wallet, because I wanted to help the homeless." The tears started flowing when he told me that.

He had come in with his twin brother, his sister and some friends. I remembered they were the "Bread and Butter Boys" who in helping

serve Christmas Dinner learned the meaning of helping others. These two eight-year-old "Bread and Butter Boys" learned that giving to others is its own reward.



It took me 58 years to learn that! Then when I was counting the Rising Hope offering after the next Sunday Service, I opened one of the envelopes and out rolled a dime and a quarter. *Thirty-five cents.*

At that point, I cried.

I realized that as in the Bible story "The Widow's Offering" from Matthew 12:41-44, the value of that offering from a loving lady of the congregation was *Priceless!*

Left, 'He had come in with his twin brother, his sister and some friends.'

A "New" Used Van for Rising Hope – Hallelujah!

Just like most of our blessings, this big one arrived just in time.

In February, Rising Hope received a grant of \$10,000 from the Northern Virginia Community Foundation to purchase a "new" used van. *Thank you!*

Our "fleet" of vehicles has been in need of rejuvenation. We just retired a 1995 Ford Winstar with over 250,000 miles, and our remaining vehicles are a 1994 Dodge Caravan do-

nated to us five years ago with 200,000 miles "under its belt" and a 2002 Honda Odyssey with over 100,000 miles.

We need serviceable vehicles so we can pick up food at wide-spread locations and make food deliveries each week to the homebound. We also use our "fleet" to transport our members and constituents to the shelter and back, and to Rising Hope for worship and many other activities.

Thank you Northern Virginia Community Foundation for your consideration of our needs!

Volunteer Rick Turpyn, seen here driving the antique '94 Dodge Caravan, has been a Rising Hope stalwart for the past 10 years. He attends Cameron United Methodist Church.



We Welcome Again! Ms. Sula Tyler

Ms. Sula Tyler comes to Rising Hope with extensive education and experience grounded in theological study and a calling to make Disciples of Christ.

She was the Program Administrator of Wesley Theological Seminary Equipping Lay Ministry certification courses; she has taught in the New York City Public Schools and at Penn State University; and she was an editor and speechwriter for more than 15 years in corporate America and the government, including the 1995 EPA White House Initiatives.

Sula graduated with a Master of Divinity from Wesley Theological Seminary, received one full year of training in Clinical Pastoral Education and Cri-



sis Management, and served as on-call Chaplain in Montgomery County, Maryland. She is a Certified Lay Minister in the Virginia Conference, assigned to Rising Hope.

In her statement to the Board of Ordained Ministry, she expressed her Call: "Teaching, worship, and giving a word of comfort to persons in need are areas where I can help others learn from God. Rising Hope is a place where I can give aid and comfort and focus on seeing people through tough circumstances to a future of possibility through belief in Jesus Christ as our Savior."

We welcome Ms. Sula Tyler to Rising Hope!

Shepherding 'The Children of God'

By Sula Tyler
Children's Coordinator

Here at Rising Hope Mission we eagerly embrace the vital task of teaching Bible stories to our children that will guide them in their Christian life and encourage their spiritual reflections on God.

We understand that children need to have *Faith* that God is looking out for them, *Knowledge* that God hears their prayers, *Encouragement* to stay on the right path, *Joyous* church experiences, *Warmth* and *Love* from all church people and *Safety* in church interactions – all to strengthen them as they go out into the world.

We are blessed to be building a children's ministry that unites the efforts of our parents, our pastor, and our congregation to nurture our children and strengthen our church. It is all *Joy*... not a playground drop-off, but a fun-filled *Discipleship Journey* learning the love of Jesus

Christ in our lives.

Growing in faith, seeking understanding, and freely asking questions, our children are learning how God acts and how to respond. They participate monthly in Holy Communion and weekly in Praise and Worship with the congregation. They study Scripture,

practice devotions and are growing through Confirmation Classes.

We're looking forward to the exciting June Family Fun Fair, Camp Rising Hope, Camp High Road, Vacation Bible School, the annual Samaritan's Feet Ministry, and Back-to-School Supplies to equip our children for academic and life success.

We are grateful for the generous support of all the churches and organizations that make Rising Hope's Children and Youth Ministry possible.



Left, little Olivia Johnson watches as Diana Trinidad, Miracle Wyatt, Patrick Lancer, Antwan Pratt, Daisy Trinidad, and Miya Menskey point to their "Be-Attitudes."

Rising Hope Launches Anniversary Celebration June 25

Miracle on the Route' is 15!

Let's WHOOP It Up!

The dream of a church to serve the least, the lost, the lonely and the left out on the Route One Corridor became a reality fifteen years ago in the summer of 1996.

Now in our seventh location since our inception, the reality is now a miracle of transformation not only for the ones served, but also for those who serve.

Our year-long celebration will begin with the Family Fun Fair on Saturday, June 25, when the children of the community come for food and fun and to sign up for late summer and fall activities.

That weekend will also include a special worship service and performances in the evening, Sunday, June 26.

Later in the fall, there will be a Dinner, Dance and Auction on September 24 and a Comedy Night in October. There will also be a concert in mid-2012 to end the festivities.

We'll keep you posted on the dates so you can come help us celebrate and Praise the Lord for this "Miracle on the Route."



Music Director John Kunu performs on piano with his son Bastian on drums, Mary Baker on tamberine, Craig Stevens on bass and Jackie Martin singing.



BOY SCOUT ALERT!

Our heartfelt thanks to Eagle Scout Alexander Fry of Troop 888 who built and painted the fine, sturdy purple benches which are now outside the "Milk & Honey" Food Pantry, where folks waiting to pick up food can rest.

Alexander also repaired a long line of outdoor benches.

Left, Intake Coordinator Venisa McCormick points to where she needs a shelf in the "Rags to Riches" Clothes Closet.

"When the Boy Scouts come back again," she says, "we're hoping they'll build us some shelves right here."



Holy Week

- Sunday, April 17 Palm Passion Sunday Worship Service, 11am
Monday, April 18 Samaritans' Feet, 10am to 2pm
Thursday, April 21 Maundy Thursday Worship Service, 7pm
Friday, April 22 Good Friday Worship Service, 7pm
Easter, April 24 Sunrise Service, 6:15am **Meet at Woodlawn Plantation**
Easter, April 24 Worship Services, 9 & 11am

May 1 SOJOURNER'S MAGAZINE releases major story on Rising Hope

Month of May Visit Rising Hope's new website www.risinghopeumc.org

Barbecue Benefit at Shane's Rib Shack Thursday, May 12, 5pm to 8pm

Stamp-Out Hunger USPS Food Drive

Saturday, May 14. Put food by your mailbox for your carrier to bring to Rising Hope and other food banks.

Family Fun Fair Saturday, June 25, 10am to 2pm

Kick-off Rising Hope "Celebration of 15 Years Anniversary" Sunday, June 26

Rising Hope Wish List

The Rising Hope community relies on the generous donations of many friends, faith communities and associates in support of our Mission to serve those in need. Many organizations and individuals continue to ask: "How can we help?" Here's what you are invited to contribute!

Our Meals Ministry

- Powdered drink mix
- Ice tea mix
- Coffee and tea
- Sugar, creamer and artificial sweetener
- Peanut butter and jelly
- Salad dressing, French and Ranch preferred
- Condiments: mustard, ketchup, mayonnaise
- Dish soap & pot scrubbers
- A meat slicer
- Gift cards for food pantry

Our Ministry to Families

- Diapers, all sizes
- Baby wipes and diaper cream

Our Administrative Needs

- Two round folding tables
- Digital camera
- A desk top copier
- Gift cards for gas for church vans
- Adobe Photoshop for Macs, for our newsletter



Rising Hope Mission Church: A United Methodist Congregation
– *Rev. Keary Kincannon, Pastor* –
8220 Russell Road, Alexandria, Virginia 22309

Thanks to your support,

God's love & power continues to transform lives at RISING HOPE MISSION CHURCH.

Our new website www.risinghopeumc.org will be up in May & feature Pastor Keary's iPod Sermons. Look for it!

703-360-1976

Fax 703-360-0976

BARBECUE!

FUNDRAISER: Support Rising Hope!

DATE: Thursday, May 12

WHERE: Shane's Rib Shack

Mount Vernon Plaza
7694 Richmond Highway, Alexandria, VA 22306

Shane's will donate 20% of net revenue!

TIME: 5pm-8pm Purchase a delicious BBQ dinner **AND**
talk to Pastor Keary.