

Heartland

HEARTBEAT NEWSLETTER

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Hope Comes in all Shapes and Sizes

The Heartland community is not only a place of refuge, it is a springboard into providing hope for the hurting in our community, as well as around the world.

One of the goals at Heartland is to provide good jobs and vocational training for people who are looking for a fresh start in life. Cleansing Waters Laundry and Dry Cleaning provides a perfect opportunity for both of those. John Robinson, who heads up the operation, had never lived anywhere except Miami, Florida. Yet, he moved his wife and five children from the bustling city to the middle of a cornfield nearly three years ago. He knew God had a plan. Part of that plan was for John to take over the laundry business at Heartland, and to expand it into neighboring communities.

"We seek to establish a business presence in the communities of northeastern Missouri while displaying the principles, values, and practices of the Kingdom of God," John says. The first phase of these expanded services will start in Canton, Missouri, this spring.

An equally important goal in the laundry facility is that of training and encouraging young Christians. "Our aim is to provide both a professional and godly working atmosphere in our plant and outside locations: to enable sound work ethics, quality service, and production," John says. "A typical day in our plant is likely to consist of sharing the word of God regarding matters that arise throughout the work day." John says. In fact, they have been known to pause in production occasionally so the entire staff can pray for a member of the team who is in need. The greatest growth takes place as team members commit to work together to show forth the praises of God's glory—even while folding cow towels.

Meanwhile, a group of students and staff from Nations Harvest Bible College took a message of hope to the streets as they traveled to Juarez, Mexico in December. The purpose of the trip was to help a local church in the bordertown with their Operation Bless the Children Hope Box Project. Each year around Christmas time the church invites

(continued on page 3)



Students and staff from Nations Harvest Bible College help with setup and ministry at the Hope Box Project in Juarez.



John Robinson works alongside Jack and Samuel in Cleansing Waters Laundry.

testimonies



YOUTH RECOVERY

Before coming to Heartland I was very angry; I hated the world and I was very violent to my family. I would hit, kick, and bite, and even tried to push family members down the stairs. I had a lot of anger built up inside and I didn't know how to let it out. I grew up in church but I never had a real relationship with God.

I came to Heartland when I was 14 and a half. Since coming to Heartland, I have found that there is really something better than being angry. I found GOD. He has restored my relationship with my parents. I can look them in the eye and tell them that I love them and mean it. I love my little brothers, too. I have realized that God has blessed me.

—Sami



Sami lives in one of Heartland's youth recovery homes. She attends Heartland Christian Academy and enjoys playing trumpet in marching band.

▶ roadmaps

I have spent the past 30 years of my life moving from one place to another. In the military, we moved from one city to the next and for directions, I would carry an atlas with me at all times. As long as I carried that road map, I would be able to find my way. The largest city I ever lived in was Sacramento, California. Although Interstate 80 through Sacramento is not the widest highway in the country, it takes up eight lanes including two commuter-diamond lanes. In order to get on the highway at peak times, I had to get up to 65 mph on the entrance ramp and, at



high speeds, squeeze into a space about the size of a small car. It was more hectic than I want to remember and I still feel a bit stressed thinking about the heavy traffic and the enormity of this route.

I am thankful today that I am not living in the big city. I am presently living in a small rural town where many of the dirt roads are not even on an atlas. I have to rely on directions from the locals in order to get around. Some of the well intentioned instructions given to me have been, "turn left at the big red barn", "turn right on the second gravel road next to the big tree" or "turn at the driveway at the bottom of the gully on Route D". Many of the roads are made of dirt and gravel with barely enough room for two cars to pass in a cloud of dust. The numerous bridges over creeks and rivers allow only one car to pass over them at one time. When the verbal directions are not enough, I rely on what looks like an insignificant regional road map which shows all of the remote country roads in the area. I know it sounds like a great deal of trouble to go through to find your way, but the panoramic view of the rolling countryside rewards the unsuspecting traveler with indescribable

beauty.

The comparison of big-city highways and rural country roads reminds me of Matthew 7:13 & 14. "Enter through the narrow gate. For wide is the gate and broad is the road that leads to destruction, and many enter through it. But small is the gate and narrow the road the leads to life and only a few find it." NIV

The city highway and the broad path to destruction are wide and very busy. Many people travel through it without ever thinking about what they are doing. They travel that path day after day until they are numb to the stress and the consequences of their lifestyle. In contrast, the narrow gate like the rural dirt road is harder to find and difficult to maneuver. We have to rely on others who know the path and have traveled it frequently. When we can't find our way, we go to the master map, the Bible to find our direction. When we take the slower, less traveled road, there is a bounty of blessings to enjoy. Take the time to find the narrow path, the view is spectacular and unexpected pleasures will bless you along the way.

—Lydia Norris, Youth Recovery House Parent

a hope and a future

When I came to Heartland, my life had been ripped apart by alcohol. Even though I was blessed with a wonderful family that raised me in church, I backslid and started drinking when I was about 17 years old. What started out as fun soon became a life-controlling addiction.

My drinking grew out of control when I was in college. At age 19, I was arrested for the first time on alcohol related charges. That was just the beginning of problems that drinking would cause me. I was arrested numerous times over the next few years because of alcohol.

Besides numerous legal problems, drinking also caused me a lot of financial problems. I was making good money after I graduated college. I had it made, living in a house in the country. I had a new truck and boat sitting in the driveway, plus other material possessions.

These worldly treasures, however, didn't last long. Everything began to disappear before my eyes as my drinking got worse. Within a year, I lost everything and was in debt tens of thousand of dollars.

Some of the most painful consequences of drinking, however, were the relationships that were destroyed in my life; relationships with family, friends, co-workers, and my girlfriend of nearly six years. Everyone got tired of putting up with me and the way I was because of alcohol. My parents got to the point where they were afraid to answer the phone because of all the trouble I

was in. I drug my family name through the mud. Everyone around me learned not to trust me; I completely destroyed my reputation. My family, however, never gave up on me and never stopped praying for me. I came to Heartland as a last resort. I was at the point where I was either going to end up dead or in prison.

Since I came to Heartland nearly three years ago, God has been so faithful in my life. He continues to abundantly bless me each and every day. I've been set free from the bondage of alcohol addiction and living a purposeless existence. The life that I have now is a life filled with love, peace, joy, and meaning.

God has restored my relationship with my family and made it better than ever. I can't fathom all that He has done for me; He has given me hope and a future. Thank you LORD!

—Tom



Tom Hardy plays a vital role as part of the feed crew at the Heartland Dairy.

(continued from front page)

people from their neighborhood to a free meal. At this time the Gospel is preached, then gifts are given to the children. Thousands of poor, hungry, and needy people come. The biggest emphasis of this day is to let people know the love of God and His saving grace.

Not long after their arrival, NHBC students got to work alongside a similar college group from a church in Pittsburg, Kansas. They loaded boxes of gifts into a big U-Haul and took them across the border. The next day included prayer at the site followed by unloading, sorting and reloading boxes, and passing out flyers. Saturday started bright and early with the setting up of chairs and tables and organizing food and gifts. Then the people came; for hours they came—nearly 4,000 of them. The church's pastor, Elias Rodriguez, shared the Gospel of Christ with the people and saw many came to the altar to receive Christ and become connected with a local church. Many poor and homeless children in Juarez experienced God's love, and the students were blessed with new relationships being built with the church in Juarez and Pittsburg.

The Law of Love



Charles Sharpe

Much has been said about the fact that Christians live under grace instead of under law. That is true. The Bible says that no man is justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ, Galatians 2:16. That is good news, because we could never have lived up to the law anyway.

We do live under a different law, though, the Law of Christ. And the commands of His law are clear.

Under Christ's law, we are to show mercy and love to those who are hurting. We are to pick up a fallen brother and encourage him toward righteousness instead of brow-beating him for his failure.

We must also look out for other people's interests, not just our own. And we must help bear their burdens and their sorrows. The Christian life is a burden-bearing life. Besides bearing with our brothers and sisters, we must also bear the burden of sinners to the throne of Grace.

Bearing one another's burdens this way does fulfill the Law of Christ, Galatians 6:2. Simply put, the Law of Christ tells us what to do. The Love of Christ gives us power to do it.

