

# God's Great Faithfulness

## The Place of Refuge

*"When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze." (Isaiah 43: 2)*



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### Recent Highlights

- Growing partnerships
- Getting the word out
- Vision for the future

**"I know and I have felt that here there is a group of people that care and are truly being the hands and feet of Christ inside this community."**

## God's Great Faithfulness

How often do we hear about the wickedness facing men and women the world over?!

Our hearts break when we think of those dear university students in Kenya, so many dead and so many wounded, and the thousands of tears that continue to flow. I think of the inevitable retaliation—the echoes of all those shots fired. I think of men sitting around campfires in the Rift Valley and riding in the back of pickup trucks down dirt roads,

dust rising high behind them, and the righteousness these perpetrators felt to have carried out something so terrible. And then I think of the righteousness of love between brothers and sisters united in Christ, under my father and your father, under my God and your God—and I pray.

At Refuge, we hear stories each day, of war, of shootings, of violence, of hurt. We have learned there are wars that happen within the four walls

of a home. Almost none of these stories ever reach the news, but each reverberates inside the chest of the one who has been hurt, taunting them to spit back in the face of the one who has hurt them. In battles large and small, this is the story of sin.

Your support of this precious ministry helps everyday people tell a different story, the story of mercy, of grace, of peace, and of love, and that is a story that must not stay hidden.

## Recent Highlights & Updates

Thanks to all who have supported these outstanding efforts:

Last year, our team of counselors continued to demonstrate a deep connection to the community, with the 149 families we saw averaging over 24 counseling sessions each to date in

their treatment—a remarkable figure considering the national average is 1 to 2 office visits.

In all, nearly 500 individuals were impacted by our counseling, training and mentoring.

Participation on the Faith-Advisory Board of the city's Department of

Behavioral Health has made a way for Refuge to work with a special multi-faith task force assigned to advance the integration of faith and behavioral health with over 60 health professionals trained at Friends Hospital last month and a city-wide training soon to come.

## Telling a Different Kind of Story

Meeting recently to supervise one of our graduate counseling interns, Stephanie Rodriguez of Cairn University, I am reminded again of the meaning of this work to those we serve.

Stephanie shared with me the story of a man who she is counseling, who is struggling with depression after keeping pain bottled up inside for a long time—not such an unusual

place to be by any means, except coming from the Caribbean, his English is limited and he's processing cultural isolation as well.

Since meeting with him, she says he has been challenged with many hardships. Despite everything, his faith in God has always remained strong throughout. "When I met with him this past week," she said, "I asked him to

reflect on how he has been impacted by God's faithfulness in his life. He responded by telling me that he knew that God had a purpose in bringing him to Refuge."

He explained: "I know and I have felt that here there is a group of people that care and are truly being the hands and feet of Christ inside this community."

Stephanie said that she herself was ministered to by his response.

And so I pass this on to you as well, that you would also be encouraged, being a supporter of this important work. This man tells a different story. Tested in hardship, he does not answer the way the world answers, but he comes alongside the one who we celebrated this Easter and every Easter.



Therapists Carla Contreras (L) and Stephanie Rodriguez (R)

Crystal Rodriguez, Intake Coordinator playing percussion at holiday lunch

The Place of Refuge is a 501(c)3 non-partisan, non-profit organization that seeks to bring redemptive healing through faith-based trauma treatment and training focusing on urban populations and their caregivers.

It is our privilege to carry out this work.

We give thanks each day for you, that you have come alongside us in this vital outreach. Please pray through what it would mean to allow more men and women to know the peace of God—in their moments of hurt and in the midst of great distress.

We have strong pledges of support and an amazing year ahead. With a goal of nearly \$120,000 yet to raise and much work to be done, we prayerfully seek your help too. If it has been on your heart to support a ministry like this, then say yes. This work is His.

**It is your gift that makes this possible.**

Thank you! May you continue to find joy in our risen Savior and find great comfort everywhere you look this spring!

### The Place of Refuge

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**A place of help, hope & healing  
in Philadelphia!**