NEWSLETTER

"For we are God's handiwork, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do." (Ephesians 2:10)



Winter 2018

December 26, 2018

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Seasons Greetings

With each passing year as the Lord reveals more of his story in our lives—the simple truth—<u>that this was for us</u>—for you and for me that He gave us this life in Him, it is in this belief that the Lord allows us to return again to what is sacred.

It takes a kind of stillness, but sometimes we are given grace enough to remember the day we were first called, and we can hold our breath again as we look upon the manger in our hearts, or as we sit beside him at the wedding curious about the wine and the music in his voice, or torn to pieces at the foot of the cross, and kneeling in the empty tomb on that first Easter morning when his voice broke the silence of the morning air and asked her dearly, "Mary, why are you crying? Who is it you're looking for?"

The Measure of His Faithfulness

Over the course of this year, in spite of the grave tests we've faced together in our neighborhoods, our cities, our nation and throughout the world—at Refuge, we continue to simply look after this precious ministry with as much reverence and love as we have found in our hearts to offer.

As we began the year, it was clear that all the Lord was doing in us was good, and strengthening—and in wisdom that surpassed all our understanding, He made a way for the road ahead. There was never a single day that didn't require grace, patience and faithfulness—but everywhere we see signs of his hands at work:

- just consider over 115 new cases started in the last two years
- and a three year credentialing approval, a qualification reserved only for the most excellent clinical programs in Philadelphia

We set out to organize every smallest process at Refuge with the care that we felt that the delicate beauty the original vision for this place deserved:

- adding new processes to better anticipate crisis, measure intensity and risk, allowing us to keep better watch over our own hearts
- nurturing new partnerships focusing on strengthening the work we carry out in our most vulnerable cases—including those faced with trauma, violence, addiction and the opioid crisis at our door

Looking back, though we are encouraged—it is still a wonder that He would call such imperfect creatures as us to come and be a part of the blessing of His good work here in the poorest neighborhood in Philadelphia.

We believe that He has called each of us to this present moment. So what can we do but trust him, and celebrate one thing above all—simply, that He is with us—and that we can hope in his presence for all the days to come.

The Path Ahead

Though we have much to celebrate, we must continue to look ahead—and we do so recognizing the sacred challenges that touch the urban working class neighborhoods of this country from end to end. Yet still, we look ahead with great hope to the coming year for all the ways the Lord has blessed us—emboldening us in strengthening this vital outreach. Surely, we have seen the faithfulness and grace of God at work among his people here. We continue to marvel at the places God has put his heart, and that He has called us to be part of it. Refuge carries out this important work in a place where need is evident on every corner.

Yet in the ways He has allowed us to answer this need, in every case that comes before us, we see hope—we see that He has not forgotten us, and we find light in the eyes of all those He has sent into our care as they come and go.

It is striking to think that the good works the Lord prepared beforehand would lead each of us here. Yet in awe, it is clear to each of us that it has been as if our lives have been knit together perfectly, in the lead up to every day.

Please know the gift that you have given to many hurting people here through your faithful support.



2018 clinical team (L-R) Bryan Dickey, Paz Shroyer, Carla Contreras, Rachel Stout, Marilyn Gonzalez, We prayerfully invite you to join Debbie McIntosh, and Lorraine Tauriello celebrating Christmas brunch at Tierra Columbiana, Dec17

us as we step into the New Year!

We thank you for your prayers, especially for the lives of each of us at Refuge, for our families, and for your many financial blessings. Just to know that your heart is with us—it is such an encouragement.

Giving Has Never Been Easier!

Simply use the card and envelope enclosed, or consider the other options available, including:

- through our website at: <u>www.placeofrefuge.net</u>
- through Guidestar, where Refuge's top tier GOLD rating (since 2016) reflects our firm commitments to our mission, programming, transparency, and the conduct of all our legal and financial responsibilities
- through the **United Way**, designate agency#: <u>49946</u>
- or check with your workplace to see if yours is among the hundreds of enterprise companies who have chosen to bring their social mission to life with the fundraising technology behind **Benevity**: simply search our cause, and you'll find us there: <u>The Place of Refuge</u>

<u>Help us meet our goal and finish the year with strength as</u> we work to raise the remaining \$20,000 in support we seek to clear the way for the year ahead and all the Lord has in store.

The Place of Refuge

2938 N. 5th Street Philadelphia, PA 19133 phone: 279-909-8550 / e-mail: info@placeofrefuge.net

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

Please pray about what it would mean to come alongside us and allow more families in our city to know this ministry.

Consider becoming part of this outreach by making a tax-deductible contribution!

Your gift makes this possible!

On behalf of the staff and the board, thank you! Merry Christmas! Happy New Year! And God bless you!