

NEWSLETTER



“...but if you have faith as small as a mustard seed, you can say to this mountain, ‘Move from here to there,’ and it will move. Nothing will be impossible for you.”
(Matthew 17:20)

Winter 2019

December 18, 2019

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Faith to Heal

As we come to the close of this year (and this decade) in the midst of our Christmas celebrations, we invite you to reflect and give thanks with us for all the Lord has done and continues to do at REFUGE. This year we want to share the testimony of one of our clients. She asked for a chance to share her heart with you by writing a letter of thanks to all the supporters of this ministry.

The stories our clients share are sacred. This story is just one of them. We will call her Morena.

Morena was assaulted in the street last December, exactly one year ago. At random—she was beaten, bloodied, hurt, and humiliated in broad daylight on a busy sidewalk. Not one person intervened. She describes the hurt of being left alone to suffer as this happened as being more painful than the physical agony.

What she felt was not just the physical hurt of one random, unfortunate accident. It became part of the story of all her pain—her race, her language, her skin color. The experience changed her life completely. What she describes is trauma. In time, her pain became fear. As she went out, now fear overwhelmed her daily.

This is her testimony. “It is hard to live with fear all the time,” she says. She went first to Esperanza Health Center. “I knew *esperanza* means hope, and it was here I got my first glimpse of it.” It was as she was being treated for her wounds and being ministered to at Esperanza that she was referred to REFUGE.

“At REFUGE, my healing first started when I found someone willing to listen, someone who could understand this fear. There was warmth in the way I was welcomed—my language, my skin, even with no insurance, the doors were open to me.” Here with us she was not alone, and the story of her life changed.

She is thankful to God for the people working here. She says, “You don’t even know how much God can transform lives in this place. People must know the magnitude of what they are supporting. I haven’t just recovered my life. This help has recovered the life of my whole family.”

She was able to overcome severe trauma at REFUGE and by God’s grace, her life and her family’s life was transformed. A place that welcomed her faith, where truth was spoken and brought into the light as she healed—this most of all she wanted to acknowledge in gratitude to everyone who has made this possible.

“It has been every blessing to know people from God who have walked alongside me as a woman of faith—knowing that I am not alone *en la calle*.”

Morena is a living testimony of how supporting a place like REFUGE—it is a way of intervening in the hurt we see. When we give by faith, we never know what God will do with it—but sometimes we do get a glimpse of it now and then.



Hope for the New Year, a New Decade

We invite you to join us in setting down a foundation for the time ahead as we seek to raise \$30,000 in additional support to finish the year and seed the vision for the next decade of work to be done.

Morena's journey of healing continues today. Her story represents the testimony of many, many clients who have passed through these doors. We are so thankful for this and for all the good work that God has done this year and in the time since we first opened this office in the heart of North Philadelphia ten years ago. Though the task before us remains great—providing quality counseling and training in these urban neighborhoods where it is most needed, we can at least begin by trusting and praying that He has gone ahead of us in all these things.



Through your generous support:

- we can continue to grow and counsel more of these precious families;
- we can continue offering training in these communities, building up the strength of local congregations to walk alongside the many hurting people in their midst;
- we can continue to be a resource to pastors as they seek wisdom in policy guidance about ways to make their churches safe spaces, places of refuge—especially for the children in their care; and
- by faith, we can continue to find all that God has in store for this mission and vision.

Refuge staff celebrating Esperanza Health Center's Grand Opening at Kensington & Allegheny, 10/25/19 (L-R) Carla Contreras, Amber Richardson, Yin Hu, and Bryan Dickey

We invite you to celebrate all the Lord has done in REFUGE in the 20 years since 1999 when Diane Langberg, Ph.D. convened our first board of directors, wrote our first letters and grants, and first filed the paperwork establishing REFUGE as a non-profit corporation. We also invite you to celebrate with us the 10 powerful years since 2009 when Elizabeth Hernandez, D.Min. in partnership with Community Behavioral Health first established our contract with Philadelphia County Medical Assistance making REFUGE the only faith-based outpatient counseling for adults in this region to accept Medical Assistance insurance—the primary way that people living below the poverty line in this city and throughout our nation get help.

In REFUGE, God has set a light in North Philadelphia. Stand under His promise with us and give thanks!

Ways You Can Give

To support this work, simply use the card and envelope enclosed, or consider the other options available, including:

- through our website at: www.placeofrefuge.net
- through guidestar.org, 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#: [49946](https://www.unitedway.org/49946)
- 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: [The Place of Refuge](https://www.benevity.com/cause/placeofrefuge)

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 non-partisan, non-profit organization.

Our mission is to bring redemptive healing through faith-based trauma treatment and training focusing on urban populations and their caregivers.

We invite you to consider all that this mission realized in fullness can mean for these neighborhoods, this city, and our nation. You have our thanks!

Your gift makes this possible!

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