

May 2008

Offering hope where so
little exists.

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For monetary donations please
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Hands of Hope Ministries
or HOH
Please send any checks to:
Hands of Hope Ministries
PO Box 24077
Cincinnati, OH 45224

INFORMATION

If you have any questions or need
any further information please
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Did you know:

In Ohio 2.3 million people have
a diagnosed mental illness
That's 20%!!!

* Hamilton County - 164,000
* Butler County - 71,000
* Kenton and Boone Counties
combined - 52,000

The mental health system
serves 18,500 adults. This
means that number of people
are having significant enough
problems that they need
assistance to meet basic needs
such as housing, food,
medicines, etc...

1 in 5 people suffer from
depression, bi-polar disorder,
schizophrenia and related
diseases (information taken
from NAMI - Hamilton
County).

Joe's News

"Joe's News" comes from The Story of a Man Named Joe which is a fictional story based on a compilation of life experiences from several people throughout the mental health system. You can read the full story of Joe on our website.

The Blog is Up!!

<http://handsofhopeministries.org/blog>

The other day we had a pretty severe storm pass through our city. The clouds turned a very dark, ominous black. The wind started to pick up and the power in our house went out—that is it went out just long enough to cause me a painful, nagging injury.

Let me explain. When the power went out my family and I were eating dinner in our dining room. With the rain coming and the wind blowing, I got up from the table to go around the house and make sure all the windows were closed. After checking the bathroom window, I walked into my dark bedroom (remember the power went out) and went toward the window only to encounter my briefcase...with my left pinky toe. I have to confess to you, I did cuss. I said the word "damn". The hurt of the toe and the realization that I had actually cussed was a double whammy. It became a triple whammy when I sat on my bed and, with just enough light to see, I saw that my pinky toe was already swelled up, slightly disfigured and was at about a 75 degree angle from its normal position. I had broken and dislocated my toe. Having broken toes and fingers in the past, I knew that if I went to the emergency room the doctor would tell me what I already knew about my injury and charge me \$500.00. So I reached down with my opposite hand and quickly "relocated" my toe back in place, then hobbled out to my living room so that I could milk all the sympathy I could from my wife and three kids (and it worked!).

As of today, my toe and part of my foot is purple and slightly swollen, my toe still hurts and I have extracted all the milk I can from my wife and my kids. Whereas on the night that this happened they all gathered around me and asked God to "heal daddy's toe" and I soaked in all the attention I wanted. Now I might get a passing "Hey, how's your toe?" with a vacant stare on the face of the person who asked (just kidding honey!).

Why am I telling you this? Am I trying to milk some additional sympathy from you, my loving audience? No milking going on here! This injury to the smallest appendage on my body has had an effect on the rest of my body. Since I am limping and favoring my good leg, my left leg is getting sore. In fact, my calf muscle on my left leg is sore which only adds to my favoring my good leg. It has even affected my perceptions of reality. Several times, one of my kids have come within "stepping-on" distance of my toe. When this has happened, my anxiety level increases rapidly, I inhale and hold it, and all time

seems to stop while I anticipate the searing pain that will happen when my foot gets stepped on only to find out that they didn't even come within 2 feet of my toe. An injury to one of the smallest parts of my body has affected me this much.

What spiritual application does this have? There is a verse in the Bible that says, "Don't you realize that sin is like a little yeast that spreads through the whole batch of dough?" (1 Corinthians 5:6 - NLT). Paul here is addressing an obvious sin that the Corinthians had allowed to continue in their community of believers. Notice that Paul says here that this "sin is like a little yeast..." and it has affected everything else. Like my little toe that has affected the rest of my body, this sin in the Corinthian church has affected the rest of the church.

Let me turn this on its head. This principle can be true in the opposite direction as well. While sin affects the rest of the spiritual body negatively, little things done in great love can dramatically affect the body of Christ and the community in which we live in a dramatic way.

Let me give you a short example. The bulk of our ministry consists of two food pantries and a bread ministry that supplies food to low-income individuals who live with mental illness. Now think about this, we are giving bread away, not cars, not houses, not boats or anything big like that. We are giving bread a very little thing when compared to cars, houses, and boats. I cannot begin to describe the ministry doors this has opened up for me. I have been able to share the love of Christ with many professionals because of this bread. Ministry is happening in ways that I cannot explain even if I had the space to explain it. A little bread is having a major impact on the lives of the people we get to give it to.

Recently, while talking to my father-in-law, he said something that I have dwelled on since. He said that he wondered if it wasn't the big things that God uses but the small things that He uses the most to touch the hearts of people. I think he's right.

What small thing can you do for your neighbor, co-worker, spouse, children? Let that be the "little" thing that blesses the socks off of someone.

Excerpt from Story of Joe:

Hi, my name is Joe. I grew up in your neighborhood—maybe even next door to you. I grew up as a pretty normal kid: liked to horse around with my friends, loved baseball - especially the Big Red Machine - and I loved 70's Rock-N-Roll.

I started to hear voices inside my head. At first, this really scared me. When I first began to hear these voices, I believed that everyone around me also heard them. A few times I responded out loud to the voices. I had my first "experience" with the mental health system when I turned 18. Happy Birthday!!! By the time I turned 35, I had been re-admitted to the hospital 11 times....

Organization Overview

Welcome to Hands of Hope Ministries (HOH) and our newsletter. We thought it would be nice if we kept you apprised of what's going on with HOH since we might speak with some of you less often than others.

If you are new to HOH here is a little background: At HOH we strive to reach the mentally ill by meeting their physical, emotional, relational and spiritual needs through various avenues.

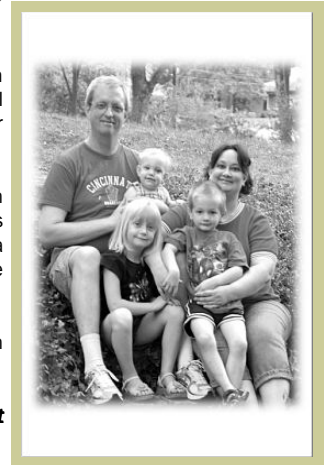
Over a year ago we began a food bank ministry in College Hill, Ohio as well as Price Hill, Ohio where the mentally ill can get food through their caseworkers when needed. In this time we've already spent more than \$10,000 feeding people. We provided Thanksgiving and Christmas meals at a mental health facility in Hamilton County as well as personal hygiene items such as soap, shampoo, deodorant etc. because many of these people have family members who want nothing to do with them even on the holidays. Last year we were able to provide over one hundred scarves, gloves, hats and coats for those who are unable to purchase their own. In the past 9 months we've provided over 600 lbs of fresh bread to low income families as well.

We are also beginning to look into starting such programs as Churches Against Homelessness and Hunger, which addresses the obvious issues and how the Church can help out more with these, as well as Adopt-a-Family which will be a program geared toward the "adoption" of a family within the mental health program so that we can offer financial, emotional and practical support and help.

As our ministry grows our desire is to own homes that would house the more stable mentally ill who are able to live on their own. There is a need for homes like these where the people are treated well. So many of the homes like this that are currently in existence have terrible living environments. We'd like a central location that could also house a small recreational area, a library and classrooms for GED training, family support and other services that would be helpful for the mentally ill and their families.

We are excited about where God has already led us and continues to lead us. He is opening doors for us quicker than we can even respond at times.

If you prefer not to receive the newsletters from us or to receive them via email please contact us at info@handsofhopeministries.org and let us know.



Facts About Mental Illness

- There are no other ministries in Cincinnati, Hamilton County or the State of Ohio that specifically target the mentally ill.
- Our ministry has been able to positively affect over 500 mentally ill clients in Hamilton County with the start of our Food Banks.
- Twice as many Americans live with schizophrenia as HIV/AIDS, but most people are unfamiliar with the disease.
- Major depression is a serious medical illness affecting 15 million American adults, or approximately 5 to 8 percent of the adult population in a given year. Among all medical illnesses, major depression is the leading cause of disability in the U.S. and many other developed countries. Depression occurs twice as frequently in women as in men. Without treatment, the frequency of depressive illness as well as the severity of symptoms tends to increase over time. Left untreated, depression can lead to suicide.

The Last Year

Here in a few weeks, the board of Hands of Hope, their spouses and significant others, their children, Jennifer and I will come together to celebrate the one-year anniversary of the first board meeting of Hands of Hope Ministries. That may seem as thrilling to some of you as going to the dentist to have a root canal done but, for Jennifer and I, this is a pretty significant moment.

Looking back, we had been ministering to the mentally ill for 7 months by providing food and clothing for those with low incomes. We had been blessed to see what God would do with something as little and as simple as non-perishable food items. Not only were we beginning to meet the physical needs for those living with mental illness but we were also ministering to the professionals who worked with the mentally ill. I was getting lots of questions from people trying to get to our ulterior motives for providing food. At first when I responded to their questions and comments that our only motive was to meet the needs of this woefully underserved group of people they didn't believe me. It was only after

delivering this food many times without asking for anything in return that people started to believe me.

Since January 1 2007, God has given us the ability to donate approximately \$15,000 worth of food and since January 1 2008, we have donated approximately 1500 pounds of bread. There is so much to tell that I do not have to space to write it. Suffice it to say, God has done more than what we ever expected. To Him be the Glory!

On Wednesday evening, July 27th, 2007 when the founding board members signed their names to the articles of incorporation, I got a lump in my throat and my eyes glistened. My thoughts went to how much God had already done in 7 short months and what He just might do until the day He returns. He has continued to exceed and blow away our expectations in the last year. To Him be all the Glory!!!