



# Barry and Terry Bruce with The Way Out Ministries

## **A glimpse at what your support made possible**

We were so blessed in 2023 and there are so many wonderful successes in ministry because of your support and prayers. One thing that stands out is the Christian discipleship among our participants and their individual spiritual growth. We have seen lives changed and we have been able to offer continued support for the whole family.

Diego came to The Way Out in 2022 addicted to drugs and with his family in shambles. He started attending The Gathering Church where he was saved and began to change his life. Diego is a father of two boys and, after becoming a Christian, he felt he needed to get married. So, he and his girlfriend called up their friends from church and were joined in marriage at the courthouse with their boys by their side. Diego then decided to go back to air conditioning school where he graduated with honors this month.

Diego and his family, attend Bible study on Wednesday nights, and church every Sunday. Diego also attends our recovery study on Friday nights and his sons attend our Kid's Club every Tuesday. Diego, who is now celebrating one year of sobriety, is interested in our ministry study program and volunteering with our teens. He desires to keep others from making some of the same mistakes in life that he has. Diego has found freedom and a future through Jesus Christ.

The Mata family has been with us for a little over a year now and attends all our weekly programs, including our new program, "A Way Out," that began this year. A Way Out focuses on building up the family through discipleship and weekly seminars that include budget planning, family bonding, group counseling, gang and drug prevention, and family outings. The Mata's also received help from our Christmas store last month, which helped provide 35 needy families with gifts and household supplies. On Christmas day, we received this message from them:

*I'm writing you this Christmas morning with a heart full of joy and hope—a happiness that has not been felt for many years in my home. Through your program, my family and I have gained the knowledge, support, and tools necessary to grow into a happy and healthy family. Although the process requires patience that I still lack, I am learning and achieving. This Christmas, I had a different goal in gift giving. I used the tools gained in your program and gifted my children with board games, health benefit books, and a Bible study inspired by Terry Bruce—"The Chosen." This is the 2nd set of sessions we have attended, and we are looking forward to seeing what's coming next. I just wanted to say thank you from the bottom of my heart for everything you all have done for our family.*

*Love, The Mata family*

Ministry has its share of ups and downs, but stories like Diego's and the Mata family encourage us to keep going. Your prayers and financial support make stories like these possible.

## **Our challenges in 2023**

This year, finances were extremely challenging. One of our biggest independent donors decided to shift his funding after the Maui, Hawaii, fires to support rebuilding efforts there. We have also had many of our long-time donors pass away this year, which affects our monthly income. The prices of food, overhead, and operational costs have increased substantially. This makes it hard to offer all the services that help so many and start new programs when the budget is so tight.

Another challenge this past year is with our youth. The ways of the world and a life away from Christ are being pushed on our kids from all different directions. With the influence of social media, schools, peers, and gangs, it's a constant challenge.

## **Please pray**

- Please pray for Diego's family, the Mata family, and all of those we work with. Pray that God continues to reveal himself and change lives.
- Pray for our finances—that God will continue to provide for all the needs of the ministry and that we can grow.
- Pray for our ministry in the Philippines that God will provide a full-time pastor who has a passion for ministry and the people of San Jose, Occidental Mindoro.



*The Mata Family graduates "A Way Out" family Program.*



*Our kids get excited for the relay race at "Fiesta" summer camp.*



## Update from JJ TenClay February 2024

Dear Friends,

I've never been one to choose a single word to focus on for the New Year, or as a star word for Epiphany. It's just not a practice that I've adopted. In the past I've sometimes chosen a hymn or a Bible verse, but never a single word.

This year, however, in the time between January 1 and January 6, I had one word that stood out to me on three separate occasions: connection. I decided not to ignore it, and have spent some time reflecting on the word connection and its significance in my life and my work as a missionary.

And I've decided to write a series of Dear Friends letters in 2024 focused on the word connection.

Today, I'd like to share a story of my connection with the Sale Family from West Michigan.

In May 2022, Dee Dee Piers from Hope Church in Holland, MI, reached out to me with an urgent request to connect with a woman named Alison Sale. Alison's husband, Scott, served on active duty with the U.S. Army in Afghanistan, and Scott and Alison have been working hard since the fall of Kabul to the Taliban in August 2021 to protect the lives of Scott's Afghan interpreter and his family (I'll call him M\* in this letter to protect his identity). My name came up as someone who was working to evacuate vulnerable Afghans, and I connected with Alison immediately to assess the situation and see if I could offer any assistance.

Here we are almost two years later (and almost three years since the Taliban regained control of Afghanistan), and we are still working together to find safety and refuge for M\* and his family. I can't begin to estimate the amount of time I've spent the past two years consulting on this case, exploring options for resettlement in six different countries, and praying for the safety of M\* and his family and for God's guidance amid so much pain and suffering. These past 10 years of working in refugee care have taught me that we don't also get the happy ending we would like to see, or in a timeframe that fits our desires. **But the faithful response has been—and continues to be—to honor this connection to Alison, Scott, and M\*, and to continue walking beside them, praying for them, listening to their hopes and worries and frustrations, and letting them know that they are not alone. This is an important part of what it means to faithfully engage this calling of refugee care.**

Alison and Scott have written some words about this connection in a letter that I'd like to share with you today (with full permission from the Sales' to share):

*For over two years, we have been tirelessly working to find a new home country for our Afghan friends whose world was ripped out from under them when the Taliban took control of Afghanistan. They were forced to quickly leave their home and live in hiding for fear they would be killed due to their family's multi-generational history of fighting the Taliban and their beliefs. Throughout this painful and devastatingly long process, we have been so blessed by others who have used their time, skills, and resources to guide us. We are incredibly grateful that one of those special people was JJ TenClay. When it felt like doors were closing at every turn, JJ made us feel like we weren't alone. She has never given up advocating for this Afghan family we care for so deeply. It has given us so much hope and confidence knowing that we have her in our corner, praying for this family, and advocating for their journey to safety with her colleagues around the world. The connections we've made with people like JJ over the past two years that simply cannot be explained other than by God bringing people into our lives to help us on our mission to get this Afghan family to safety. It is because of the generosity of our global community that we've made it this far. From financial support to prayers to people taking the time to educate us about secure communications and filing legal documents, or connecting us to someone they know who might be able to help—one thing we have learned is that humanitarian work can't be done in a bubble—or by a single person. It takes all of us working together, sharing what we know, and making the time to connect with others that will make a positive impact in this world. While this family still has not reached their destination, we remain determined and continue to pray for God's guidance. We are hopeful 2024 will be a great year for this family.*

*Faithfully,*

*Scott and Alison Sale*

**Will you join Scott, Alison, and me in praying for safety, security, and a viable pathway to refuge and resettlement for M\* and his family?**

If you believe this ministry is important, will you share this Dear Friends letter with two additional people who might be interested and willing to support my ongoing work as a missionary?

Sincerely,  
JJ TenClay

Hello!

¡Hola!

FROM



First Reformed Church of Boyden

## PARENT-TEACHER CONFERENCES

# We want to help!



We will be offering

## a **FREE** meal and daycare

for you while you attend your child/ren's parent teacher conference at Boyden-Hull Elementary.



**We will be at Boyden 1<sup>st</sup> Ref. Church at 901 Pleasant Street on Tues, March 12<sup>th</sup> from 3:45 pm to 8:15 pm and on Thurs, March 14<sup>th</sup> from 3:45 pm to 7:15 pm.**

**Come and enjoy a meal and we'll watch your kids while you go to your conference.**

The Osceola County Ministerial Association

# Good Friday PASSION PLAY

Friday,  
March 29

*38<sup>th</sup> Season!*

**FREE TICKETS**

are available and may be reserved by calling

**(712)754-2945**

or by emailing

[ocmapassionplay@gmail.com](mailto:ocmapassionplay@gmail.com)

Church groups and organizations may request  
enough tickets for their entire group.

Please do not reserve more than you need.

There will be three performances

**5:00 p.m.**

**7:00 p.m.**

**9:00 p.m.**

at the Sibley-Ocheyedan High School  
Auditorium, Sibley, IA





CENTER OF HOPE

February 2024

# Center of Hope Newsletter

Sowing Seeds of God's Love...Physically and Spiritually

## Change in Leadership by Brett Rockvam and Adam Hofer



### A Message from Brett - Brett Rockvam

Hello friends of the Center of Hope. I wanted to let you know about some staff changes happening April 1, 2024. I will start the slow process of moving toward retirement. The hope is I will be at the Center of Hope for a couple more years, but Adam Hofer will be taking the leadership role of Executive Director on April 1 of this year. I want to thank everyone for supporting and walking alongside me during the last 18 years. I grew in leadership and loved the opportunity to be a part of the Center of Hope. I hope to see all of you around the Center of Hope for a couple more years. I support Adam in this role, and I will always have the Center of Hope close to my heart no matter what. Thank you and I hope you have a blessed 2024.

### New Chapter - Adam Hofer

The Center of Hope is a place where many go for healing, encouragement, and spiritual guidance. Our mission is to walk alongside people to promote physical and spiritual health,

and ultimately to change our community one life at a time. We did this faithfully when Fred Wilgenberg was our Executive Director and faithfully under the leadership of Brett Rockvam as well. As I shift into the Executive Director role in the months to come, I too will be faithful to our mission to walk alongside people to promote physical and spiritual health. We exist to share the message of hope we find *only* in Christ with the hopeless in Sioux Falls and beyond. This will not change. In fact, we will explore new, radical ways of living into our mission in the days to come. As the world around us changes, we at the Center of Hope will unapologetically proclaim, "The center of Hope is JESUS!"

As I look back at the journey that led me to this position, I am overwhelmed with gratitude. I am thankful for the professors at Dordt University and Sioux Falls Seminary who taught me effective

ways to communicate the Gospel message and the best ways to care for people that dignify and empower them. I am thankful for the volunteers who have served alongside me for the last seven years in the Bike Ministry, Care Center, Clothing Ministry, Sharing Christmas, and now at the Center of Hope Free Evening Clinic. I am thankful for my fellow staff members. Each member of our staff has been a blessing to me in their own way and are truly gifts from God to our community. We are all gifted in different ways. Yet, together, we make a good team. Lastly, I am thankful for Brett Rockvam's mentorship. He has been helping me develop as a leader for years now. Under his leadership, I had the freedom to expand programs such as the Bike Ministry, create programs such as the Earn-Your-Way program, engage in pastoral counseling in our Care Center, become a leader of the Sharing Christmas program, coordinate volunteer endeavors in our various ministries, lead Center of Hope fundraising and marketing efforts (e.g. fundraising events, Newsletters, social media), and so much more. My experience in all the areas of the ministry at the Center of Hope has equipped me for my new role. I can move forward in confidence because of his mentorship and all the people who have taught me life lessons along the way. I am excited to move the Center of Hope into a new chapter.



## Sharing Christmas **UPDATE**

The Sharing Christmas program was a success this year thanks to the generosity of our gift donors and volunteers. Because of you, **1,837 children** received gifts for Christmas (640 families). A special thank you goes to Nate Ryke from The Community Outreach for all the work he did this year! We appreciated his leadership

and enjoyed partnering with him this year to ensure children in struggling families received gifts for Christmas.

## Let's Connect—Mission Moments, Pulpit Supplies, and MORE!

Out of our gratitude, we want you to know that we value our partnership in ministry. If you are a pastor, elder, or deacon of a church, do not hesitate to reach out to us if you need pulpit supply help or if you want us to update your congregation on what God has been doing at the Center of Hope. We would love to join you for worship! All for HIS glory and honor.



## Join our Volunteer Family

We are needing volunteer help! We specifically are needing...

⇒ Registered Nurse Volunteers at our free clinic for the uninsured on Wednesday and Thursday evenings from 6:00pm to 8:30pm (**DESPERATE NEED!**).

⇒ Prayer Team volunteers to offer prayer and encouragement during clinic hours.

⇒ Bike Ministry volunteers to repair bicycles (training included) on a weekly basis (Tuesday-Friday).

⇒ Encouragement Card volunteers to make encouragement cards for our guests (this can be done at your church or business).

⇒ Care Center volunteers to help guests at the Front Desk and sort clothing items for the Care Center.

### Mission:

The Center of Hope exists to walk alongside people, to bring spiritual and physical health, and ultimately to change the community one life at a time.

### Vision:

The Center of Hope encourages and mentors people with the hope of redemption through Jesus Christ. Our focus is holistically addressing physical, emotional, social and spiritual needs of individual that can only come through creating relationship and accountability. We work in partnership with community organizations to engage in a consistent and positive interaction with guests.

### Principles:

1. All people are created in God's image.
2. Self sufficiency
3. Holistic Ministry
4. Reconciliation
5. Partnering to Serve

## MEMORIAL GIFTS

Center of Hope appreciates the gifts In Memory of — Roger Hindbjorgen, Sid Phelps (Brett Rockvami's stepdad), Steve Johnson, Berdell Langerock, Winora Hallstrom, Ken Klinger, and Gloria Weber (Center of Hope Faith Community Nurse)

### Your Gifts Change Lives:

**Stock or Commodity Gifts**—Talk to your financial advisor about gifting stocks and commodities to the Center of Hope.

**Make it Double**—Check with your employer to see if they will match your charitable contributions to the Center of Hope.

**Be a Sustainer of Hope**—A monthly gift will bring stability to individuals and families. Give online at: [www.centerofhopesf.org](http://www.centerofhopesf.org)

### Financial Update

Fiscal year runs from April to March, for the year 2023-24

April—To Date. Income  
\$328,257.17

2023-24 Budget Need  
\$381,265

Help us save on postage by receiving your newsletter electronically! Send your email address to [info@centerofhopesf.org](mailto:info@centerofhopesf.org) Also, please let us know if we need to update your mailing address.