



Sharing Hope Ministry

Sharing Hope N • E • W • S

JUNE 2005
ISSUE NO. 32

—PHONE NUMBER—

Sharing Hope Ministry
358-7803

—ADDRESS—

P.O. Box 19985
Amarillo, Texas 79114

—WEBSITE—

www.sharinghopeministry.org

—STAFF—

April Riggs, Executive Director
april@sharinghopeministry.org

Leigh Link, Secretary
leigh@sharinghopeministry.org

—STATISTICS—

Total *Life Recovery Bibles* Distributed:
28,381

Total Bible Study Workbooks Distributed:
12,520

—VOLUNTEERS—

Pen Pal Volunteers: **100**

Office Volunteers: **35**

Prayer Group Volunteers: **3**

Stepping Stones Volunteers: **10**

Visitation Team Volunteers: **11**

Teaching Team Volunteers: **4**

—BOARD OF DIRECTORS—

Brenda Blakley, President

Sammye Stark, Vice President

Connie Hodges, Secretary

Chris Brady Jim Burgess

Dan Hetrick Rod Jones

Becky Logsdon George Snell

Jack Westbrook

Newsletter Design Courtesy of

Graphic Designs by Kim - 622-8399

The Most Important Statistic

This is an excerpt from Margaret Willis' speech at the Hope Fest Dinner and Silent Auction. Margaret became familiar with Sharing Hope Ministry, Inc. while in prison.

... There is a single statistic I want to bring to your attention tonight. That is the statistic of ONE. One as in...

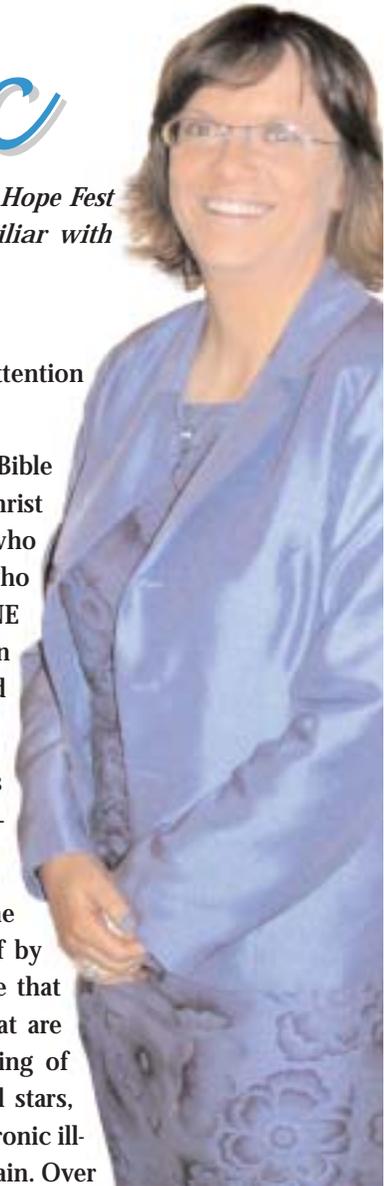
The ONE true God we serve at Sharing Hope. The ONE Bible study teacher who agreed to take the message of Christ behind bars to hurting women. The ONE woman who agrees to mail Bibles to inmates. The ONE woman who agrees to be part of the Bible study program. The ONE woman who agrees to act as a pen pal; The ONE woman who agrees to answer calls as women get out of jail and come into our community; and so on.

The bottom line is ONE... as in ONE woman who stands before you tonight with a changed heart and a wonderfully abundant life because of all the other ONES.

The walls and obstacles around me had built up over time and were a direct result of my efforts to define myself by society's standards of success. I would come to realize that society's gold stars kept me from the things in life that are truly important and kept me from a true understanding of myself. You see, while I was accumulating all my gold stars, other things were happening. I was diagnosed with a chronic illness and I was placed on medication to alleviate the pain. Over the next seven years, I became horribly addicted. As I sunk deeper into my addiction, the walls around me were reinforced and began to separate me from my family, my husband, my friends and my true self. I began forging prescriptions to obtain the pain medication. Later, all my gold stars turned to black marks as I was arrested at my home on felony charges of obtaining a controlled substance by fraud in three different counties - Randall, Tarrant and Dallas.

Enter Sharing Hope Ministry. In the beginning, I was not interested in visiting with the church ladies. Finally coaxed into visiting with them, I went, but I did not listen. Every visit

continued on page 4





Christmas in October is scheduled for October 1 and 2. It will be held at the South Exhibit Hall of the Civic Center.

There will be many volunteer opportunities and we would love for you to call the Sharing Hope office at 358-7803 and let us know where you can serve. We are looking for volunteers for the following areas:

- Workers during the event
- Provide food for the Bake Sale
- Help make bows before the event
- Fluffer's and Foofer's to work displays for the bake sale
- Help sell cookbooks
- Provide Christmas or Fall containers, clear cellophane, decorations and ribbons for the Bake Sale.
- Provide or help make white tablecloths to fit 8' rectangular tables.

COMING SOON

A TASTE OF GOODNESS *Sharing Hope Cookbook*

Did you love the Rum Cake from last years Christmas in Octobers Bake Sale or the yummy pumpkin bread? Now is your chance to have the recipes of some of the items from the 2004 Bake Sale. Volunteers, board members and staff have put together 500 wonderful recipes for our first ever cookbook. The cookbook will be a hard-back 3 ring binder and should be available sometime around the first of July at a cost of \$12.50 each.

Requests for a cookbook can be emailed to leigh@sharinghopeministry.org or be brought or mailed to the office.

Please help support Sharing Hope Ministry by committing to purchase one or more cookbooks. Proceeds will be used to help incarcerated women experience God's love, encouraging them to make changes in their lives to break the chains of destructive behavior.



New or current volunteers are welcome the first Saturday of each month from 9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m. to mail Bibles or work on projects. We even have group projects available for organizations.

June 4 - July 2 - August 6



Sharing Hope Ministry Has Several Needs:

- ❖ Holiday decorations and plates for the Christmas in October Bake Sale.
- ❖ Gift cards from Hobby Lobby and Michaels for Christmas in October expenses
- ❖ Yard work - pruning and trash removal from the office yard
- ❖ People willing to do data entry on the computer. We can use you for several hours or 1/2 day on a weekly basis.
- ❖ More Pen Pal volunteers. Can we come to your Bible study class to talk about the Pen Pal Program?
- ❖ Receptionist for one afternoon a week.
- ❖ Potter County Jail team members to go into the jail on Wednesday mornings.



Melanie and Wayne Beighle

Hope Fest Success

Hope Fest 2005 was held on April 15th at the Civic Center Regency Room. It was a huge success and raised over \$17,000! There were many highlights of the evening. Speaker Margaret Willis shared her touching testimony and encouraged us to continue sharing hope with other incarcerated women. Wayne Beighle's humor and skills helped drive the bids up during the live auction. The hot air balloon ride for two was the hottest item of the night and went for \$1000! The silent auction kept people on their toes with many wonderful items that were donated by our community and the table hostesses did a spectacular job making our guests feel comfortable.

We appreciate all those that gave of their time and money to help make this event a success.



Perusing the Silent Auction Fare.



Joyce Schultz shows off her table



UNITED WAY CONTRIBUTIONS

Federal employees in the Amarillo /Canyon communities have the opportunity to designate their contributions to area organizations. Please consider supporting Sharing Hope with your United Way contribution.

From an inmate to her pen pal.

Dear S.,

Just a few thoughts from me to you:

It comes to me suddenly and with perfect clarity as it sometimes does how this razor wire has enclosed my life. The everyday scenery of concrete and fences, fences that not only keep me in, but keep people out, that cut off relationships and hugs, missing the smiles of people that I care about. The constant yelling of the officers "Hands behind your back!", "No talking!" in a sea of white uniform shirts and pants.

I stare at the girl in line in front of me. Be her black, white or Mexican. Her shoulders either slumped in defeat or pulled back in defiance. Her loneliness just as real as mine.

Life... our lives, caged here behind the barbed wire. Then suddenly I look up and there is the sunset so beautiful, so full of color and here, yes... even here. Inside the barbed wire and razor wire and fences a picture of God's Love for me and any other woman who chooses to look and see. A work of art sent to us by God himself.

It speaks of hope and promises, no matter that I'm in here.

I won't always be here. And his love is for us too.

So I turn away from everything else to take hold of the hope offered to me in God's promise. As I look around and see where I am, I find the strength to reach down to deep new depths, and see this as a journey that even though not one step can be taken without permission, and I am locked in by these gates, the true journey is of my soul and like the sunset knows no boundaries.

With love, Stacy



P.O. Box 19985
Amarillo, Texas 79114

Non Profit Org.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Amarillo, Texas
Permit No. 237

continued from page 1

The Most Important Statistic

for about the first three months, I would ask Patsy, the woman from Sharing Hope who visited with me, to pray that I would go home. She would always pray that God's will be done in this situation. God's will? What about my will? I thought.

Later, I had to leave Randall County to go face my charges in Tarrant County. Thankfully God did not leave me there in that new reality alone. There was still Sharing Hope. Patsy had been writing to me regularly since I left Randall County. Now not only was it time to listen, but it was time to learn as well. I began diligently working Bible studies that were sent to me. I read every scripture Patsy quoted in her letters and more. It was in an isolation cell in Tarrant County that I fell before God and said, "I get it now. Not my will, but Your will be done." Furthermore, scattered throughout my pod were women who had Life Recovery Bibles they had received from Sharing Hope. And these women were not just from Potter or Randall County; they were from Lubbock, Longview, Tyler, Tulia, Houston, Galveston, El Paso, and many other places throughout the state.

Sharing Hope taught me many things — about the love of Christ, about God's plans for my life, and about seeing each and every ONE as valuable and as worthy.

So my question to you is who will be the next ONE to stop being a spectator and get in the game with us? Who will be the next ONE to make a regular monthly contribution to Sharing Hope? Who will be the next ONE to be a Sharing Hope office volunteer or to say, "Yes, God, use me to show a broken, beaten down, incarcerated woman that there is hope for a better future!" But more importantly, who will be the next ONE whose heart is changed by your efforts? Will the next ONE be a woman who opens her Bible - the first Bible she's ever owned - the Life Recovery Bible sent to her by Sharing Hope?

Does ONE make a difference? Of course, look at all the ONES I mentioned in the beginning. Each ONE made a difference alone and as part of a whole. My challenge to you tonight is to be the next ONE to help us share that same hope with other women incarcerated throughout this state.