

# SPRING NEWSLETTER 2020



## MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

What a journey we have ALL been on together as a business, city, nation and around the world. Unprecedented times for sure!

Since March 16, 2020, Downtown Hope Center has been actively adjusting to a Corona Virus world along with each of you reading this letter. We have watched and experienced with you as our world has been turned upside down and our daily lives completely disrupted.



I can't help but reflect on the scripture after the Israelites had left Egypt and wandered for 40 years in the desert and they were about to enter the promised land. Joshua instructs the Israelites to put a distance between themselves and the Arc of the Covenant and they will 'know which way to go, for they have not traveled this way before'. Joshua told the people to 'consecrate themselves because the Lord will do wonders among them tomorrow'.

During these days it's difficult to know which way to go as we make numerous decisions regarding our guests and those dependent on us. We are all instructed to "keep our distance" (difficult to do in a shelter situation!). We have chosen to follow 'the Arc', our God, knowing that when we don't know where to go, He has a plan. We have spent this time with our students and the women sheltered with us, focusing on Jesus and learning together what it means to follow Him, and believing He will do 'wonders among us!'.

During this whole crisis we have sought everyday to bring the love of God to our guests. We have shared God's word, prayed and loved them day after day. The goal during Easter week and Passover was to present the gospel every way we could. Life skills classes were focused on bible reading daily and the need for a savior, how Jesus fulfilled that in His death and resurrection and the restoration that is available to all of us hunkered down here at DHC through Jesus. We did a beautiful Passover Seder meal that all the women and students participated in. The students alongside the staff watched the 'Passion of Christ' on Good Friday....one after another we have seen Jesus touch our students' hearts! Praise God! We have had times of worship in the shelter and everyone in the building knows the song 'The Blessing', it's been played over them so many times! We are seeing lives truly changed and hearts tender to Jesus, like never before.

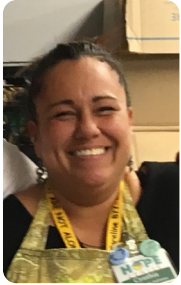
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# Staff Updates



**Vickie Drussell**  
Shelter Director

After a couple of years working in our Women's Shelter, Vickie recently stepped up into the role of Shelter Director! We are so excited to see how God uses Vickie to lead our guests and keep the shelter running smoothly. The shelter ladies connect well with her, and love her dearly. Congratulations, Vickie!



**Cynthia Skidmore**  
Volunteer Coordinator

We are pleased to announce that Cynthia is back on the team! You will find Cynthia working tirelessly alongside our volunteers in the kitchen, helping to feed our lunch guests everyday. Additionally, Cynthia oversees the volunteer scheduling and management needs. Welcome back, Cynthia!

## Clothing Needs:

Pants/Jeans  
Underwear  
Coats/Jackets  
Sweaters  
Hoodies  
Shoes

**We need these items in all sizes, both men and women.**

## Kitchen Needs:

Fresh produce  
Milk  
Yogurt  
Noodles  
Jelly  
Canned fruits/veggies  
Prepackaged snacks  
Monetary donations  
Thank you for your generosity!

*Continued...*

The staff has worked extremely hard, they all could have chosen to not show up, most could have made more on unemployment by staying home safe; but they showed up anyway and loved well. School went on as usual; ladies got healthier and off drugs and alcohol; we served lunch every day at the door to the people that could no longer stay at Sullivan or chose to continue camping, along with the low income neighbors that live on Social Security and food stamps. We made sure everyone received their mail and had fresh clothes, received a morning cup of coffee and donut; we continued to love people through a worldwide crisis! I'm so proud of our team! Not one didn't show up. Not one let fear control them. Not one even got sick! They all selflessly were the hands and feet of Jesus everyday!!

Through it all, YOU have continued to support us, whether through volunteering, prayers, delivering needed food supplies, or financial donations. YOU are what makes it possible for Downtown Hope Center to continue to touch lives so desperate for the love of God!

Thank you for your steadfastness in partnering with DHC in these remarkable times!

May God continue to bless you and protect you and make His face shine upon you and give you peace.

With great appreciation and love,

Sherrie Laurie

Executive Director



Passover Seder Dinner

## Coach's Corner

*"In the space between chaos and shape, there was another chance."* The reality is in all of our lives we have been given an untold number of chances. Those chances have helped us mature and make better choices in life. Having a second chance is what everyone longs for. A second chance requires our patience towards others. It is a good thing that God is a God of patience. Patience is even listed as one of God's traits in Galatians 5. I've heard patience defined as *"facing a difficult situation without giving God a deadline."* Hmm... God's deadline or mine?

Authentic patience is clearly seen when moving toward someone else with their best interest in mind. No one is perfect this side of heaven. Until we see that day, there are scores of people, in our spheres of influence who need a second chance because second chances provide hope. Hope is defined as *"a bright expectation for tomorrow."* In the Feed Me Hope program, we are doing our best to offer second chances to our students and we watch what God does in His timetable, transforming lives.

Coach Richard Irwin

## Feed Me Hope Student Reflections:

### Chris Conners - FMH Class 3

I was in prison for 36 years and 8 months, during which time God was working in my heart to prepare me for freedom. I am so thankful for His mercy, and that I have a second chance at life. I value my freedom. I have a great job here at the Downtown Hope Center, and I have so much to be thankful for. Learning to live life after prison is challenging for me, and for the first time in my life I am solely responsible for me- exciting, yet scary. My faith in the Lord will see me through the many challenges ahead. My success comes from being part of my Hope Center family, being held accountable, and being loved. God's plan is the only plan, and God is good!!

PS 119: 105, Truth's shining light guides me in my choices and decisions, the revelation of your word makes my path way clear.



### Arjorie Roberts - FMH Class 18

There are no words that will fully explain everything that the Downtown Hope Center has provided for myself and so many others. They have given me much, much more than just a safe place to sleep, a hot shower, or good food to eat. They have shown me a new way to live, where I don't have to be afraid of life anymore; instead I embrace it. I am no longer afraid, and I am now working towards realizing my dreams! Thank you to all at the Downtown Hope Center who have invested in me.



PO Box 202684  
Anchorage, AK 99520



**Want to volunteer? Contact Cynthia**  
**277-4302 ext 101**



## **WAYS TO GIVE**

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## MESSAGE FROM BOARD CHAIR LORRAINE O'NEAL

I really didn't want to go. I knew it was a right and good thing to do, but a revival service at the Downtown Soup Kitchen was way outside of my comfort zone. It's not that I didn't want revival, but I was not an evangelist and I didn't believe my presence would make any difference. I spent my volunteer time in the church, not out on the streets. I justified my behavior in many ways. This allowed me to stay busy, safe and distant in my familiar comfort zone.

My friend, Sherrie Laurie was very involved with the Downtown Soup Kitchen. She often spoke of God's love for the poor, and tried to motivate others to get involved. I was happy for her, but I still didn't want to go there. Im ashamed to say I looked away whenever I saw a homeless person. The need seemed too great, and too impossible for me to make a difference.



God is really not interested in our comfort zones. He wants us to GROW in love, and to GO into all the world. Sometimes I need a little shove. And so it was with the 2014 Revival meeting.

My ministry friend, Jimmie Sue Woelke had invited Wayne Gwilliam, an evangelist from Australia to speak at a conference she sponsored. He leads revivals all over the world, and wanted to minister to the poor...at the Downtown Soup Kitchen Hope Center.

I'll never forget that day! First of all, for me...it was uncomfortable! There were many people. Some were not well dressed or well behaved. Some were under the influence, others had not bathed. It was smelly, crowded and loud. The sound system was terrible. In the midst of the chaos, Wayne gave testimony and preached a few moments. Most were doing their best to ignore him. Suddenly, Jimmie Sue grabbed the microphone, leapt upon a table and started shouting for people to come forward for prayer. She commands with authority, and people streamed forward. As the team prayed the atmosphere changed. God's power was released with healing and love. Some were not able to stand in the presence of God. The cement floor was littered with people being touched by the love of God. I saw a woman walk out of her wheelchair.

A young couple reported later they didn't even know why they stepped up for prayer. They had been living in a tent, addiction caused the loss of everything, including their children. In the twinkling of an eye, God delivered them. They were so powerfully touched by the fear of the Lord they ran from the Hope Center to the Dimond Mall. They considered getting high to calm down, but that no longer worked, as God grace had set them free. They returned to testify of the goodness of God.

On the second day, tubs were brought from the kitchen to wash feet. As we knelt before our brothers and sisters tears poured, hearts were cleansed from pain and rejection, love was released and the glory of God's kingdom was manifest. This was exciting!

In 2015, Sherrie invited me to become a member of the board. By that time I wanted to do something for the Hope Center. I retired from a business career and I knew how to go to meetings. But I felt God wanted me to do more than send money or show up for a meeting. What did He want me to do?

I tried mingling and small talk during lunch. Miserable fail. I do not have the gift of gab, especially with strangers. Next I tried doing laundry in the shower house. To tell the truth, I don't even like to do my own laundry. Lunch service volunteer work was not very appealing.

Where do I fit? I asked myself, what am I good at? What do I feel God's pleasure on when I do it?

I know how to pray. I like to gather people, and I love to communicate in writing. I enjoy teaching the Bible, and I really like to make people laugh with standup comedy. Everyone of these talents I've put to use to be a blessing at the Downtown Hope Center! Who knew, but God!

I've been thrilled to be involved in recruiting and leading the prayer team. We pray for and support the ministry, staff, students and guests and make relationships with those we spend time with.

God has changed me through my involvement with the Downtown Hope Center. He has allowed me to see where I once was blind. He's allowed me to feel the compassions of His heart. He's brought me joy, enriching my life beyond what I knew possible. I've learned to love those who once I looked away from.

Even when I really didn't want to go, He blessed me. I am forever grateful. My prayer is that others in the body of Christ will join me in sharing their gifts with those who are in most need of His mercy. You will be glad you did.