



## Kristi's Story

by Beth Fontana

I first met Kristi\* four years ago at the Winnebago County Juvenile Detention facility. While there she accepted Jesus as her Savior. In fact she said, "This time it's for real." However, she continued to be incarcerated, and it was like a revolving door for her.

During the week of June 16th, I received a letter from Kristi, who at that time was being housed at the Winnebago County Jail. She was such an encouragement to me. Her love for the Lord and others was expressed in many ways.

Because of COVID-19, Kristi had limited time out of her cell. She started leading Bible discussion/prayer groups with other women. She referred to them as her "sisters in Christ." She was able to share with the other women about our Bible study scripture lessons that she and I were doing together through letter correspondence. They continued to discuss some of their insights with one another as well.

Kristi let me know that they were all praying for me and my family. She asked me to read Psalm 31:1-24 and share it with my family. Three other women wrote a few words of encouragement and prayers for me as well.

Now, she is out of jail and is working hard to get her life back in order. Together, we made a poster filled with her goals. Kristi is working on getting her license and has applied for several jobs. She is also going to be receiving tutoring from one of our ministry leaders. This is to help her achieve her goal of getting her GED. Because she is working so hard, she just got off of home confinement.

I am meeting with her weekly to encourage in her relationship with God and helping her achieve her goals. Kristi is also very committed to coming to our Next Steps group on Mondays.

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She has even brought her mom and a friend. It is amazing to see what God is doing in Kristi's life. These are difficult times for everyone, but especially for young people like Kristi. Please pray for Kristi as it can be very difficult to go back into your old environment, but we know our God is faithful and will get her through.

*\*Name was changed for confidentiality purposes.*

### A Faithful God, A Faithful Ministry

As we continue to navigate a challenging year, stories like Kristi's propel us forward. We know God is faithful in every season. Therefore, our ministry remains faithful to local youth. We continue to discern how to best engage youth amidst the uniqueness of 2020, and we are committed to modeling the faithfulness of Christ in our love towards them.

Your support is an *eternal* investment in lives such as Kristi's. We could not be more grateful.

Thanks, as always, for your generosity to YFC!

Haddon Anderson

## 2020 YFC Golf Outing

We enjoyed a beautiful day at our annual Golf Outing!  
Thank you to all our participants and sponsors.

### Ace

Joy Box Foundation

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Illinois Bank & Trust, The Luedke Investment Group – Stifel, SVL Productions, Subway

### Putting Green

John Widell Construction, Inc., Bill & Terri Roop, Lorna Haugen Tutoring, Mid-Northern Management

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» give life to your story

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## Camp Retreat

With plenty of health precautions in place, our organization took a group of local youth on a camp retreat in early August. This was incredibly timely for our youth who have been isolated and really struggling. The loving presence of Christ was made tangible through this experience, which resulted in youth opening up and finding hope in Christ.

## Impact Story

Last fall, when YFC partnered to provide thanksgiving meals for many of our families, a generous friend of YFC met Quynna (pictured here in red) and offered to sponsor her for YFC Camp. After many months of uncertainty due to COVID-19,

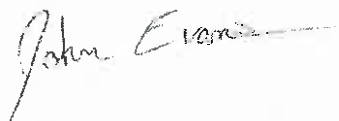
our team pursued a safe, fun, life-changing camp experience for a small group of students. Thanks to the generosity of strangers, Quynna said "yes" to Jesus for the first time this summer and she is learning what it means to be loved and cared for by Him.

Dear faithful supporters and prayer partners!

Praise God that the gospel is bearing fruit and increasing in spite of the restrictions and challenges of the last three months (Colossians 1:5-6). We thank God for His strategy of making disciples who live their faith based on the priority of "Me and Jesus" every day. Over the last three months, inmates have been isolated with little interaction with one another and with very little outside contact. In spite of these conditions, the kingdom of heaven is growing and spreading both inside and outside the jail because they have been equipped to be and make disciples. Here are some of the highlights of what God has done over the last three months:

- The disciples are able to be fed and nourished directly by the Word and the Spirit every day with the goal of keeping His commands and doing what Jesus tells them.
- The disciples have sown many seeds and when things open up a bit more, they will be able to disciple many new men and women who were not involved with us before the shut-down.
- We have seen great fruit among the women. There are three committed women disciples who have been shining their Light and encouraging others. They make time with Jesus a priority every day, feeding on His word, keeping His commands, and doing what He says. They are equipped to be disciple makers, and these three have reached three new women and are now discipling them.
- Dave Ahrens is still actively involved with the youth at the Juvenile Detention Center. He has been able to go in and minister to the young men who look to him for encouragement and truth.
- Outside, faithful disciples have stayed connected and engaged with "Me and Jesus" and "Me and You" as they meet weekly with their disciple groups. They are solid for the Lord in spite of challenging times. Several of the men have formed their own small businesses and others have been able to find employment. God is blessing them as they seek His kingdom and trust in Him to provide for their needs instead of going back to old ways.
- In the last month, there have been ten new disciples who have been baptized in the Kishwaukee River as a public statement of their commitment to be Jesus' disciples.

Pray for us as we seek the Lord's guidance for how best to continue to support the disciples inside and outside. Things inside the jail will not go back to what we think of as "normal" so we need to hear and watch to see what the Lord's plans are for this next season.







Dear faithful volunteers, supporters and prayer partners!

Greetings in the name of Jesus! The reason for writing you again so quickly is to inform you what is currently happening in the jail and the Juvenile Detention Center (JDC), the likely next steps of ministry progress, and some ways you can continue to partner with what God is doing through RRJM.

In the jail, only staff is able to physically enter the building, and we are still unable to meet face-to-face with men or women or conduct any classes in the jail. All visitation is still taking place through video visitation. While this is frustrating, the good news is that the disciples in the jail are actually “being the church” and making disciples! We’ve also had more disciple-making among the female population than ever before!

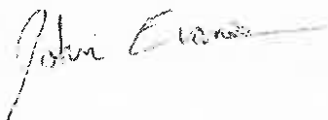
In the JDC, likewise, only staff is able to enter; however, we thank God that we are still able to meet in person one-on-one with the youth. The big news concerning the JDC is that Dave Ahrens has now joined his family in Michigan, and Amber Wilson has been brought on board to fill his former position. Praise God, we are able to continue serving the young people!

I don’t know when or if things will ever get back to the way they were. In the jail, the next ministry progression will be for staff to be able to meet weekly with disciples from each pod separately. In the JDC, the next ministry progression will be to identify another volunteer or two to help meet with the young people, which takes place two to three times a week.

Current ways to serve:

- writing personal letters (please call for detailed instruction)
- using GTL, on your computer or mobile app, to connect with disciples electronically (please see <https://web.connectnetwork.com/> or call RRJM for detailed instructions)
- prayer
- continued giving

Thank you for your support and prayers. We value your partnership and thank God for you!





# FACES OF SUCCESS OVER 20 YEARS

**FAITH**

“FOR I KNOW THE PLANS I HAVE FOR YOU,” DECLARES THE LORD, “PLANS TO PROSPER YOU AND NOT TO HARM YOU, PLANS TO GIVE YOU HOPE AND A FUTURE.”

-JEREMIAH 29:11



**TRANSPORTATION**

“IMPOSSIBLE SITUATIONS CAN BECOME POSSIBLE MIRACLES.”  
-ROBERT H. SCHULLER



**OPTIMISM**

“MAKE YOUR LIFE A MASTERPIECE, IMAGINE NO LIMITATIONS ON WHAT YOU CAN BE, HAVE OR DO.” -BRIAN TRACY



**JOBS**

“OUT OF DIFFICULTIES GROW MIRACLES.”  
-JEAN DE LA BRUYERE



**CONFIDENCE**

“THOSE WHO LEAVE EVERYTHING IN GODS HANDS WILL EVENTUALLY SEE GODS HANDS IN EVERYTHING.” -UNKNOWN





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HOUSING

"HAVE GREAT HOPES AND DARE TO GO ALL OUT FOR THEM. HAVE GREAT DREAMS AND DARE TO LIVE THERE. HAVE TREMENDOUS EXPECTATIONS AND BELIEVE IN THEM."

-NORMAN VINCENT PEALE



RESILIENCE

"HE KNOWS NOT HIS OWN STRENGTH WHO HATH NOT MET ADVERSITY."

-WILLIAM SAMUEL JOHNSON





# DEER TRACKS

October, 2020  
Newsletter of Deer Ridge  
Ministries

## INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- Christmas Teas
- Dessert Auction
- Wives Getaway

Deer Ridge Ministries was established to provide retreat experiences for full-time Christian pastors, ministers and missionaries. We seek to encourage them in their calling, promote methods of self-care, and provide ways to help them keep their ministry and their marriage in healthy balance.

It is our determination to provide 5-day Sabbath rest retreats as a gift to our full-time ministry guests.

We are committed to provide 15-20 clergy retreats each year at our present location.

It is our vision to partner with other ministries in a worldwide effort to develop pastor retreat sites across the USA and beyond.

## Serving the Shepherds

At the beginning of the 2020 COVID adventure, we cancelled two retreats at the retreat house and did our best to keep busy during the 'lock-down.' We cleaned, worked outside, constructed a new entrance to the retreat house, cooked and froze meals for later use, and prayed for pastors as they navigated thru doing church a whole different way.

We resumed a normal retreat schedule in the middle of May and have continued with retreats all summer and into the fall. We have been busy, very busy, listening and helping pastors navigate the challenges they have in their churches, their families, their marriages, and in their own faith. Our individual counseling/visit times with pastors



have been longer and heavier than in the past. As those of you who are pastors can relate, this has been like nothing we have ever seen in the church. Pastors have so many questions... "When will it end?" "What will the new normal look like?" "Will we continue to do on-line church forever?" "How

will we connect with each other?" "Will people ever come back to church once there is a vaccine?" "How will we survive financially as a church?" **"What next, God?"** We have heard the level of frustration and anxiety rise to a fevered pitch. Is what we at Deer Ridge provide still an essential ministry? We think, YES, now more than ever before.

Unfortunately, due to the COVID restrictions, some of our major fundraising events for 2020 were cancelled. We missed serving the Tri-County School dinner in the spring and the Wycliffe Bible Translators dinner in the fall. We are suspending the Christmas Teas and most Christmas related large gatherings. We rely on these events to pay for retreats we provide for pastors and their wives. **We need your help to**

**make up the difference.** We are grateful for the churches and individuals who faithfully supports on a monthly basis. However, the big events infuse cash into the ministry, so we can keep providing much needed retreats. Consider what you can do to help us overcome the deficit we have, so we can move

forward in the next year. We have enclosed an envelope and a coupon in this mailing. Please pray and ask God to help you provide something for us at this time. *Thank-you!*



*Pictured on this page are just some of our guests from the spring and summer of 2020.*



## Christmas Teas!

Unfortunately, due to the COVID concerns, we have made the decision to suspend the Christmas Teas at Deer Ridge for this 2020 year. We know this Christmas event has become an annual event for so many. However, with the close quarters of the house and the fact that you can't eat or drink with a mask on, we thought it would be best to take this year off. We want all our guests and friends to remain healthy. Please plan to join us next year. The Tea tradition will no doubt survive this pandemic and be back on the calendar. Have a cup of tea in your own dining room, and wish yourselves a Merry Christmas, from us! \*Consider sending us a donation for the amount you might spend on bringing your friends to Tea.

## Annual Prime Rib Dinner Dessert Auction

We are pressing on and pressing into 2021! Our prayer is that by March of next year, we are able to meet in groups and meet in person. We have set the Prime Rib Dinner Dessert Auction for

**Friday, March 5th at Crossroads Church in Freeport.**

We will be announcing a theme after the Thanksgiving holiday (when the bakers vote). Begin thinking about getting a group of friends together from your church or small group. Last year, friends came together who had never come to the auction. They had a great time with each other, but were surprised by the dessert prices. They were not prepared...but vowed to be back this year, ready to bid. We know this often happens. People need to plan. So, we are putting it out early, the first Friday in March is the date!



## 2021 Pastors Wives Getaway

Ladies, please make plans to join us on March 21-23 for a spectacular time of connection and friendship. Now, more than any time in the history of this ministry, we are hearing that women need to be with each other. Being a pastor's wife has become more difficult in 2020. Many women are now home schooling children, becoming impromptu camera artists for their husbands, and learning how to navigate Zoom meetings. We are offering a three day getaway or respite from ministry responsibilities. We want wives to feel pampered, encouraged, connected to others and rested. We know some of you have been asking and waiting for this time to be away. We will be sending out more information in the future...but for now, put it on your (and your husband's) calendar. Sunday, March 21 thru Wednesday morning, March 23. We hope you will make this a priority. You need it!! *To keep up on the latest updates, please Face Book friend Louise and she will invite you to the "Deer Ridge Pastors Wives Getaway" page. This is a closed group which allows us to quickly share information with wives. The information shared there is not seen by any of your other FB contacts.*

## Pastors, Get Registered!

Yes, it is hard to believe, but 2021 is right before us! We know pastors are making plans and setting schedules for your churches. If you did not come to Deer Ridge this last year, it is time to schedule a rest and retreat. We will begin holding "regular" retreats in April, following Easter. We are starting with these dates and will add more or make adjustments as we see how things are progressing with COVID. Register online at our website, [www.drmretreats.org](http://www.drmretreats.org) for the following dates: April 11-16, May 2-7, May 16-21, June 6-11, June 13-18, July 11-16, July 18-23. Do it now, before they fill up!







*Meeting the physical, emotional, and educational needs of inner-city children  
by instilling hope in a safe Christ-centered environment.*

Dear Friends in Ministry,

As our annual Streets & Sweets Gala approaches, we have exciting plans for the future and want YOU to be a part of it! We will be renovating the final section of our building and are seeking Event Sponsorships to help raise money to be allocated towards the cost of the expansion.

With our expansion Help for Today...Hope for Eternity - Rock House Kids will be able to increase the number of children we serve each week, by providing space for four nights of programming for both the elementary and the junior/senior high groups, and will allow Rock House to open its doors earlier each evening, to help children get off the streets sooner and be in a safe and productive environment. We will be adding:

- A recreational activity center to include a basketball court, a sound area, and a full projection screen.
- A library to complete our existing Computer Lab where the kids can get tutoring help, research, apply for jobs and much more.
- Four new classrooms for teaching and tutoring
- A lounge-type area with individual and collaborative workspace, a game room, and additional restrooms.

The Rock House Kids educational and recreational facility needs to be enhanced and the amenity level expanded to meet the needs of our youth in order to be a more integral part of community development goals for the future of the children. As we know, great communities and great youth programs go hand-in-hand.

For our friends in ministry, we are offering a discounted rate of \$400.00 a table instead of \$500.00 to attend Streets and Sweets. Your sponsorship is a strong statement of hope to future generations of Rockford's inner-city kids and helps provide the foundation and consistency they need to succeed in building a stronger community. We hope you will consider donating to this worthy cause.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to reach out. We will be in touch with you soon to follow-up on the opportunity to participate in our expansion.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kim Alexander". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Kim Alexander  
Office Coordinator  
815-962-5067 X 112

*Rock House Kids was established as a nonprofit organization in 1999. We are a FREE evening program open four nights a week for inner-city children ages 6-18 and currently serve 250 students. For some areas, we also offer free transportation to and from our facility. Our goal is to help inner city children by providing them with a safe, nurturing environment to learn and become responsible adults. Each night of programming we offer a nutritious hot meals, and provide instructional time with caring adults who teach basic life skills. At the end of the evening, we distribute "kid friendly food" bags of non perishables. In addition, we provide needed essentials such as hygiene products, socks/underwear, school supplies and much more. We receive no federal/state funding, but operate solely through community support from corporate and individual donors, as well as fundraisers that provide money for our evening programs, seasonal distributions, and general operating expenses.*





