

The Sharing Org

Ministry to the Nursing Care Community

MARCH 2008

Dear Prayer,

I would like to begin this letter with a hearty "welcome back" to *Belle River Pines*! Belle River was one of the three homes that I had to stop providing worship services to (due to financial reasons) last year when I underwent knee surgery. But because of an opening in my current schedule I have been able to once again provide the residents with weekly worship services and I could not be more pleased. **Please continue to pray** that God would provide the resources to again provide services to the other two homes that I served prior to my accident – which would mean that I could also provide services to three new homes as well!

I recently had the opportunity to meet with the *Bay Area* pastors and share with them the ministry concept of focusing on the adult foster care and nursing care communities. I was very warmly welcomed and greatly encouraged as the ministers seemed genuinely interested in our work. They seemed *enamored* with our work because it is *unique* and they have never heard of such a ministry before. I guess that would explain why I feel like I am making this up as I go, huh? **Please pray** that this meeting with the Bay Area pastors will prove to be beneficial to the homes in the Anchor Bay community.

I am pleased to announce that **God has answered our prayers** for a digital set-up for leading worship. On the 25th of February I received the gift of an iPod in the mail and have received donated monies that will cover most of the expenses associated with the integration of the set-up. **Thank you for praying with me** for this need.

Have you invited a friend, family member, or other colleague to join us in praying for the Sharing Org's ministry to the residents of the adult foster care and nursing home communities? **Please do so and pray** that God might unite His people to this cause. So far we have seen 6 new prayer partners added to our ranks, so we need only another 94 people to meet our 2008 goal of 100 new prayer partners.

I just received a report that shoeboxes are being allowed into communist China through a "Cultural Exchange" program. The children that have received the shoeboxes have (for their first time ever) received a Christmas gift and heard about Jesus who is the Christmas Child. What a great opportunity that we have to share the love of Christ with those who have never been allowed to hear it before. "Evangelism" is strictly prohibited in China but through the "Cultural Exchange" program children and their families in China can learn about the grace of our Lord Jesus. Our shoebox goal this year is to help the residents we serve fill 100 shoeboxes in participation with *Operation Christmas Child*. The residents are quite excited to be a part of this program. Many of the residents have acknowledged that our purposes change as our lives change and even though many of the residents that I serve find themselves limited in their abilities to be meaningful contributors to the world around them, they are very happy to find purpose in being a blessing to a poor child. At this time I have received enough donations to cover only 3 boxes (allowing 3 residents to participate). **Please pray** that God will provide for the residents that will be a part of this year's Shoebox program!

Please take a look at the Sharing Org web site as it has a *video of a "Thank You" card* that many of the residents signed as a way of expressing their appreciation to you for your support of this ministry. It is not much but it was something that they could do to say "Thank You".

I too would like to **thank you** for your continued prayers and financial support of this ministry. I am constantly told that without me the Sharing Org would not exist, but I am acutely aware that without you I cannot be here to do the work that God has called me to do. This is truly a team effort, so I thank you for your faithfulness to me and to God's calling.

In His Service,
John

www.thesharing.org

PO Box 73 · Armada, MI 48005 · (586) 949-6885

It is the MISSION of the Sharing Org to share the love of God and to build relationships with residents of care facilities by providing them with weekly interdenominational Christian worship services.

I would like to partner with the Sharing Org and serve the residents of care facilities by giving them the love of God through the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I would like to **partner** with the Sharing Org by making a **monthly contribution** of: \$50.00 \$25.00 \$15.00 **\$8.00 for 2008** \$_____ Other

I would like to make a **one time donation to the Sharing Org** of: 200.00 150.00 \$100.00 \$75.00 \$_____ Other

#0607030.5

Prayer Partner

12345 Anywhere St.

Your Town, MI 48---

Thank you for supporting this work as together we share the Love of God with the residents of care facilities.

You've pledged \$0 per month to support the Sharing Org.

Please make checks payable to: **The Sharing Org**
Please mail to: PO Box 73
Armada, MI 48005

Your gifts for 2008 have totaled \$0

Ministry Moments

In January of 2006 I began writing a correspondence series titled *Ministry Moments* for the monthly supporters of the Sharing Org. In Ministry Moments I highlighted key moments that happened in the ministry and my own reactions to those moments. I've since received so many positive comments concerning that series that I have decided to begin adding it to each newsletter. These Ministry Moments that I share are my most personal thoughts about what I've experienced in the previous month. My words are not always flowery or politically correct but they come straight from the heart – the heart that is ever being challenged and changed by our God who seems to surprise me every time I turn around.

MARCH 2008

After my children were born it was almost a *contest* to see who could solicit the first smile from the newborn: *me, my wife, a grandparent, an aunt, an uncle, or maybe even a simple gas-bubble*. Whoever (or whatever) solicited the child's first smile would remember that event for years to come (*I got Sela to smile first, but it was Mommy who persuaded Evan to crack his first grin*). This past month I made a conscious effort to notice the smiles of the residents whom I serve because I believe that there is a God-ordained blessing in each simple smile.

For instance, as I sat beside Terry's bedside this past week and the aide informed her that it was "Rev. John" holding her hand, without being able to open her eyes Terry smiled. While Kevin and Alex sang the hymns this past week they did so with big smiles across their faces, seemingly engaged in their own thoughts as they worshipped. And even though autism causes Margie to seem aloof most of the time, when she sings the hymns she gets quite animated and bounces to her feet to sing with a larger-than-life smile upon her face. ☺

There are many more instances of individual smiles that I see each week, and every last one of them communicates to me a blessing that they are experiencing because of one simple message: "Through Jesus, God indeed loves you." The residents hear this simple message through the songs that we sing, the conversations that we have, and the short messages that I speak. A simple message that I pray they will receive over and over again.

With each smile that I witness I wonder to myself if "this smile" is the first in that individual's *redeemed* life. Just as I worked hard for my daughter's first smile, I am driven to keep moving to be the first to experience each individual's first smile as well. The gospel message is simple and the hurdles are present, but I believe that there is a God-ordained blessing in each individual smile – *and I enjoy the contest*.

~ John