

The Sharing Org

Ministry to the Adult Foster Care Community

October 1, 2010

Ministry Moment(s)...

Ralph and Mary celebrated their 70th wedding anniversary in the nursing home. Ralph lived there for years and Mary visited him faithfully every day. With a fresh slice of apple pie, a slice of sharp cheddar cheese, and a small thermos of hot black coffee Mary would arrive and treat her husband to a little taste of their life as they had known it. On good days he remembered Mary as she was in her twenties but mostly she had to remind him who she was.

Once upon a time, Ralph was the provider to the bride of his youth and father to his many children. He was a respected member of his community: he helped establish the local veteran's hall for soldiers from his town who were wounded in the line of duty, he coached his sons' little league teams, and he was a founding member of the First Baptist Church. Today, he sits in a wheelchair in the commons room of his nursing home, busied with the local news or Ellen Degeneres Show.

As a former leader in his church, Ralph requests to be a part of our weekly worship service. He requests to read a Scripture passage which I happily accommodate. Ralph and I quickly become more than friends, we are brothers. On days that his mind is good he reveals a desire to share the love of Christ with the people in his home, and when his mind is not so spry, he remarkably has the same desire. I am often surprised that he will forget his wife of 70 years, but he never seems to waiver in his faith and his desire to share it with others.

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I had often taken communion with him on a one-on-one basis. We would go to a private visitation room, and he would share with me the many ways that God had blessed him and his family through-out the years. As our relationship unfolded, I was gently reminded that Ralph, and people like him, is the reason that I was called to this mission. Not because it was through me that Ralph was able to have a connection with our God, but because it was through Ralph that I was able to know God with a deeper and less trivial understanding.

As I fondly remember Ralph, I know for a fact that through my relationship with him God was glorified and both of us were benefitted. I write these little Ministry Moments in an attempt to share with you these most beneficial relationships that I have formed with the residents in hope that you too might consider going into your own local Adult Foster Care or Nursing Home and allow God to bless you with the benefit of developing such a relationship as well. In fact, I think it would be a wonderful idea for your church to adopt your local AFC home as a missionary effort. Please pray about it, talk to your Mission board, and invite me into your church to pitch the concept to your church's leadership.

I minister to many people like Ralph – will you minister with me?

### Prayer...

Dear Prayer Partner,

October is Shoebox Party month. I have scheduled the 8 “packing parties.” If you or your church group is interested in helping me and the residents pack shoeboxes, please let me know and I will help you find a time that fits best with your schedule. Please pray for me and the residents as we gather together to conduct a mission effort that promises to impact all of our lives in some way. Pray most of all that the children who will receive these gifts in time for Christmas will feel the love of God and receive the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

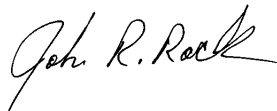
1. Sunday - 10/03, 2:30-4pm: Richmond Twp. (20 boxes)
2. Sunday - 10/10, 2:30-4pm: New Haven (10 Boxes)
3. Wednesday – 10/13, 9:30-11am: Smiths Creek (6 Boxes)
4. Friday – 10/15, 1:30-3pm: Armada (20 Boxes)
5. Sunday-10/17, 2:30-4pm: Memphis (6 Boxes)
6. Wednesday-10/20, 1:30-3pm: Richmond Twp. (15 Boxes)
7. Friday-10/22, 1:30-3pm: Armada (30 Boxes)
8. Wednesday-10/27, 1:30-3pm: Armada (6 Boxes)

Months ago I told you about Jessica helping us develop a plan for getting the word out about the ministry of The Sharing Org as well as attempting to communicate to churches the need & opportunity in their own neighborhoods. Please be in prayer with us as we are at a point that we are ready to test out our communication on a church that has agreed to be our guinea pig. If our communication is good (*and the Lord blesses*) then we will have our first participating church in the ministry. If not, then we will learn what the hang-up is and rework our approach. I'll let you know how it goes either way.

Last month I told you about a new book that I was reading called “Waiting for Home – The Richard Prangley Story”. I even posted a short video about him on our blog (<http://thesharingorg.wordpress.com/2010/08/19/122/>) if you want to check it out. I suggest this book to you, not to suggest that the treatment of the residents is the same in the homes that I serve (it is not!) but rather because the feelings of many of the residents are very similar to those of Richard: what they most desire is to go home or at least to receive a visitor. This book held many insights into the minds of the Nursing & AFC residents. I suggest it because it unlocks for me, in many ways, what residents are thinking when I talk with them.

Well, October is again upon us. Remember to enjoy the fall season and be careful this year as you take your children or grandchildren Trick-Or-Treating.

In His Service,



John