

# The Sharing Org

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## Ministry to the Adult Foster Care Community

July 2011

### Ministry Moment:

I was away at a men's retreat at Liberty Christian Church in Lansing, MI (you know, doing what guys do) and on that Friday night we went to a Lansing Lugnuts baseball game where another guy and I thought it would be funny to get our individual pictures with Miss Michigan and email them to our wives explaining how we were actually enjoying the game. Yes, it was childish, but as my wife says, guys never really grow up. Anyhow, the guy that talked me into getting my picture with Miss Michigan (*yes, I blame him* 😊) was none other than Pastor Doug Hon from Main Street Church in St. Charles, Missouri, near St. Louis. Doug serves as one of our board members for the Sharing Org, and he was the key-note speaker for the men's retreat in Lansing. While I thoroughly enjoyed myself shouting insults at the players, umps, and score board, the next day was a well-needed refresher that caused me to slow down and focus on the goodness of our God.

The reason that Doug is on the Sharing Org board is because he has a real passion for the ministry that we do. One of his own children has a severe mental condition, and he knows first-hand the value of ministering to the needs of those with special limitations. In fact, his church in Missouri has a special monthly gathering that is geared specifically toward those individuals who have some form of mental illness or disability. When Megan and I have had opportunity to talk with Doug and his wife Sandra, we share with one another stories of the Sharing Org's work, and they completely understand our experience. These times of sharing are rare but are blessed all the same.

As Doug spoke to us men on the Saturday morning of the retreat, he did so from his heart, sharing some intimate details of being faced with the challenges of raising his special needs child, as well as his personal struggles with how to cope with a faith that was not as clearly defined as it had always been before. As I watched him tear up with the pain of his situation, he dove into the hope that sustains him and brings him great joy: *one day Jesus would make all things right and all things new*. When he said that, I was instantly encouraged and reminded that, as I face the day-to-day challenges of the ministry, there is a light and hope at the end of the tunnel, a hope that is promised by the blood of our Savior and His resurrection.

As I listened to Doug speak, I was most powerfully reminded that a day will come in the not too distant future when the many people whom I have interacted with each week will thank me for not forgetting about them and not abandoning them to their circumstances. As I pondered this, I could not wait to share with you that I will not be the only one thanked, but you too will be thanked by the many people whom we serve with the love of Christ each week.

So I Thank you, in advance, for standing with me in that reception line...

~John

## Prayer Letter:

Dear Prayer Partner,

Wow! What a great month it was. Besides me having a chance to attend the men's retreat, my wife applied to Broomtree Ministries for a FREE week long pastors & wives get-away retreat for the two of us in November, and after a phone interview, her application was accepted! Then we scheduled a date with the local Operation Christmas Child chapter for October so that they could join us for a shoebox packing party. And then there were three instances where the residents demonstrated the value of our service to them.

Megan had come across a ministry that strives to encourage pastors by offering a week-long retreat for the ministry couple. It has been, well, since before Sela was born in early 2004, that Megan and I have had any time alone with God without our three kids. So Megan applied on our behalf, was interviewed, and was accepted by the organization. In November we are off for an all-expenses-paid spiritual retreat right here in northern Michigan. Praise God! We are giddy--you would think we were off to Hawaii!

Last month I asked you to pray about a woman from Samaritan's Purse who contacted us with interest in our shoebox packing parties with the residents. Usually people will contact us but then forget our number. Well, earlier this month I set a firm date for Samaritan's Purse to officially be a part of one of our shoebox packing parties. I am excited that word of our work with the nursing care community is getting to the ears of some people outside our own sphere of influence. Now, I need to begin raising the money for this year's shoebox campaign. Stay tuned...

And then finally, it can often feel as though my efforts with the residents becomes merely routine, that me showing up is just a nice visit but of no real spiritual effect in the lives I serve. Well, this month a gentleman shared a specific prayer request about some emotional concerns of his, and his sharing demonstrated the spiritual growth taking place in his life. Then I blushed as a group gushed on about how my time with them was the highlight of their week because of the spiritual nourishment to their souls. And finally, when I started a new series on the 10 Commandments, one of the residents indicated that she could not wait until the next week because she would hear the next part of the message. This meant that someone was actually awake and listening (something that I am not always sure about). ☺

This month I have just two prayer requests. First, please pray for me as I begin to raise the funding for this year's shoebox program, and second, please pray for Megan and me as we work though the logistics of getting childcare arranged for our November retreat.

And as always, I thank you for remembering us in your own times of prayer...

Have a great July!



John