

The Sharing Org

Ministry to the Adult Foster Care Community

March 2012

Ministry Moment:

The other morning I went to the cemetery (*I often do - Yes, it might be a strange place to go for the fun of it but I find it peaceful there*), and as I was walking around and enjoying the quiet I came across a bunch of smallish headstones that were clustered together by themselves. I read one that said "*I Love You My Sweet Baby.*" While that line could be from any mother to any child or even from any wife to any husband, I noticed that there was only a single date under the words. I realized that this was the grave marker of a child that did not live past the date of its birth. As I looked around I realized further that I was standing among dozens of such grave markers – all of them with single dates. Some of them with heartfelt words and some with scripture passages - *some had both*. I immediately became overwhelmed with emotion, and if you know me well, *emotions are not my strong suit*.

I began thinking about these babies and the heart-ache of the parents that buried them. How each child was so genuinely loved by its parents and each represented dreams of what could never be. As this month was the anniversary of our own child who was never born and the hurt that we still have to this day, I thought about the fact that one of these stones could easily have been for any one of my living children and what a blessing it is that it is not. It is ironic that since my children are alive, I have a tendency to take them for granted. Why I do this, I do not know, but *I need to stop that*.

Then, I began thinking about the many adult children in the group homes who have no parents or family to love them. I wondered about these folks and if they ever had been loved by parents or if they too were taken for granted because they lived, often with physical or mental disabilities that forced their parents to "institutionalize" them. When I arrive at a home and a resident loudly runs over to give me a back-breaking hug (*that actually hurts quite a bit*), I do not know their back stories but I am glad that at least for that short time once a week, I am able to love on them and show them that they are special – *at least to me*.

~John

Prayer Letter:

Dear Prayer Partner,

Happy March! No, you are not mistaken – this letter is late. If you have ever run a marathon, birthed a baby, or even driven cross-country in a single trip, you may know that there is such a thing called The Wall – *and I have hit it hard this month*. No fears though, these walls are only temporary--but they are buggers to deal with when you have to hurdle them and keep on going.

Quickly then...

1. *Pray* for one of the activities directors from one of our homes who is hospitalized and *very* ill.
2. Continue to pray for ideas about how you and your group might raise money for this year's shoebox program – *we are shooting for 100 boxes!*
3. One of our supporters has generously offered to buy new partners of the ministry a \$25 Gift Card to **Anchor Bay Roasts** (<http://www.anchorbayroasts.com>) for a monthly commitment of just \$10.00 per month. Please tell a friend or family member who might appreciate being part of this ministry and get a chance to taste the best cup of coffee that Anchor Bay has to offer. (More on Anchor Bay Roasts at a later time...)
4. I will be out of town the first full week of March at the annual LifeLink North American Elder's Conference in Grand Rapids. Please pray that this will be a time of spiritual renewal for me and that I would be a blessing to the other ministers who are coming as well. Pray for Megan as she won't be coming with me this year but will be holding down the fort at home with our kids.
5. Please continue to pray that the residents would find comfort and encouragement in our monthly times of prayer. It has been an exercise that is living and developing but one that seems to be coming along nicely.
6. Finally, please pray for me and a particular resident who will remain nameless. This resident has decided that he no longer finds comfort in our weekly services. I am not completely convinced that the fault does not lie with me, and his words are something that I really want to take seriously and prayerfully consider.

Until next month...

Humbly yours,



John