



Dear Friends:

January 4, 2006

Happy New Year! We're so excited to tell you about a special gift that we received in the Fall. It is a real miracle. And in a place full of miracles, this one really amazes us.

For years, we've prayed for a safe place for our transitory and displaced teenagers, especially the girls. These girls, like the one in the story to follow, reflect the challenges we face daily in our community – teenagers with unstable or unsafe homes who end up “sofa hopping” or worse to survive. And we've received an answer to this prayer – a dear friend purchased a 7 bedroom home near our center that is perfect for what is needed. It will become a refuge for girls like Linda. Her mentor, Anne, will tell you about her and why we've been praying for this home. To protect them both, I've changed their names and some of the details of this story.

“The girl that I have mentored, Linda, was born to a mom addicted to crack cocaine. She is now 16, a teenager eager to be liked by her peers but still a troubled young woman. She got involved with us at The Neighborhood Center a few years ago. Linda and I began a relationship through I Can Do It! when she was in the 8th grade. We studied math, creating flash cards, and practicing regularly. Near the end of the second semester, Linda, beaming, announced that she had passed all her multiplication tables. Her confidence grew under the kindness of her night school teacher and my regular, positive voice in her life.”

Miracles in the midst of our grief: Thank you everyone who continues to express your love to us during this time of loss. Including Kit's mother, we have experienced the loss of 12 people (friends or relatives of people in our community). Our courageous friend and staff member, Katy Reel, passed away just this week. If you would like to know more or pray with us, please find my prayer email and updates at [www.nmaz.net](http://www.nmaz.net).



“We have met regularly for the last three years, and over that time, she has found respite from her insecure family situation in our weekly activities. She loves to spend time at the Wednesday night High School program. She tries to act happy even when she's not to please me and others. But sometimes, especially in the last year, she has been very honest about her sadness and anger. Most of it is directed at her birth mother and the relatives she lives with now.”

“Linda is the second oldest of the siblings at home. They live with their real dad and his wife, but have spent time over the years with other relatives or family friends. The family situation has never been stable in Linda's life. The father and the step-mom have a hard time finding regular work and leave the children to fend for themselves most of the time. Linda has left home a number of times over the last 2 years for several weeks at a time to find love and affection, often returning home from an even more difficult situation. It is the kind of transitory, instable life that we see often in the teenagers of our community.”

"Thankfully, Linda was able to get into another program at The Neighborhood Center so she could start meeting with a professional, Christian counselor. This step represented an amazing dose of holistic care and the beginning of something new for her."

Since Anne wrote this story about Linda and her struggles, Linda began working to finish her GED and began standing with me in prayer for the 3 houses that would provide a place for teenagers like her to live. I have prayed for these houses with several people for years. Linda actually named the first house in faith, calling it "Hope House", because, she said, "Thinking about this gives me hope."

Then, in September, a family that we have known for years surprised us with a request. We have loved their children in our programs and now they needed to move for health reasons. They needed to sell their house and wanted us to have the first opportunity to purchase it for "Hope House". They had heard about my prayers for these houses. The mother told us that she wanted us to be the first to consider the purchase because we have loved her kids so well all these years. On the open market we would have had quite a fight for this semi-restored old Victorian home. Even ordinary homes in our neighborhood are skyrocketing in prices. If you had asked me since this process got rolling, to close my eyes and pick a house in our neighborhood that would be the PERFECT house for "Hope House", the ideal home to own... I would have picked this house, but would have said, I know it will never be available, or even if it was, we could never afford it.

So here we are today. The house miraculously became available; the owners never put it on the market because they wanted us to have it. At the same time, a dear friend remembered a conversation from almost a year ago and willingly purchased it for the purposes of God, trusting us for its use. The handprints of God are all over this next step. Our three years of homework have led to today. There are kids in our ministry who are so ready to live here, it is simply overwhelming.

Last month, I said to a teenage girl that needs this place to live that God is doing something beautiful that is for her rescue. She cried as I asked her about how hard it is for her right now. This tough teen just sobbed out right as I asked her to not give up -- to hope again, to be patient, that God was doing something right now just for her. She agreed to not give up ... hope. I asked her to have hope. "Hope House".

This miracle will make it possible for Linda and many others. Thank you for praying with us for these miracles!

We love you,

  
President

#### Upcoming Activities:

- **Jan 14:** NM Holistic Training and Spring Program Launch for all volunteers. At The Neighborhood Center, 9am-2pm. Call Mark Baker with questions.
- **Week of Jan 16:** Evening programming begins again.
- **March 20:** NM Golf Classic at FireRock CC.

**Questions:** call 602-252-5225 or see [www.nmaz.net](http://www.nmaz.net)