

The LCF Connection

April 2011

Making a (Small) Difference

By Stephanie Sharp

I first heard about Gracehaven in a roundabout way. I knew someone who was thinking of running a 5k marathon to benefit this ministry, which focuses on helping sexually trafficked girls in Columbus. I didn't know that much about sexual trafficking, but it sounded like a good ministry, and I wanted to check it out a bit more.

Here are some statistics about human trafficking (information from Gracehaven):

- About 325,000 children in the US are at risk of commercial sexual exploitation
- About 1,000 youth between the ages of 12-17 are being sexually exploited in Ohio
- Toledo, Ohio is one of the top recruiting locations in the US for underage prostitutes

Since soliciting is a criminal offense, and since it is easier to catch victims than pimps, often these children end up in juvenile detention or foster care. The sad thing is that there are not many resources or shelters for rehabilitating the victims: there are only 49 beds in the entire United States in shelters that specialize in rehabilitating victims of sexual trafficking. Gracehaven will add ten more with a house they're preparing as their shelter. It is a huge house, with room for five bedrooms, four full baths, a living room, counseling room, kitchen, and dining room. One garage they are converting into a classroom; the other garage will be a rec room. People have been volunteering since last fall, and I believe they will be ready to accept girls by this coming fall.



Gracehaven's mission statement is the following: *Gracehaven seeks through Christian love to provide shelter and rehabilitation to girls under the age of 18 who have been victims of commercial sexual exploitation, and to raise awareness among young women about the issue of domestic minor sex trafficking (DMST) in order to educate and equip them so that they can avoid becoming victims themselves. All the girls will be referred by the court system to Gracehaven. The team at the house will include licensed social workers and counselors. The girls will receive counseling, education (high school diploma or GED), mentoring, and time for fun.*

My involvement until last weekend was simply following Gracehaven's email updates and "liking" them on Facebook. Which is how I found out about the renovation project. Several people from LCF expressed interest in helping out with this, so on Saturday, April 2, Levi Miller, Amy Rosati, Hans Stutzman, Kelvin Snider, Charley and Sandy Gregg, and Andrew and I spent part of the day working at the house. We helped prepare for a professional painting crew by painting primer, caulking nail holes, and cleaning up wood shavings, sawdust, and trash. Priming beside someone is a great way to get to know them better. I learned how Charley and Sandy met, Hans' crazy college schedule, and why Amy is a vegetarian. While we stretched to our tiptoes to prime trim, Sandy told me about the old houses she's lived in. It was an enjoyable way to spend a Saturday while making a contribution, even if it was just a small one, to making these girls' lives better.



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London Christian Fellowship seeks to develop authentic and passionate followers of Jesus Christ.

If you want more information about sexual trafficking and ways you can help, go to Gracehaven's website: www.gracehavenhouse.org.

The Changing of the Seasons



A Message from the Pastor

By Rob Swartz

Every year I get less tolerant of winter. I used to enjoy the season—snowmobiling, skiing, building snow forts, sledding. I still enjoy those activities, but the cold, clouds, bare trees, and lack of green and life are starting to outweigh them. I find

myself getting impatient with winter. These days with temperatures of 65 degrees one day and 30 degrees the next are particularly hard on me. This is why older people move to Florida (not that I'm older).

What if global warming has messed everything up and spring isn't coming? But you know, it always does. Oh, it's hard to predict the exact day we will have the last snow and freezing temperatures, but that day always comes and it's amazing. The brown grass that looked completely dead begins to turn green. The sun starts to break through the gray skies. The birds come back from distant regions and start chirping and daffodils emerge from seemingly empty flowerbeds. And so the cycle continues year after year.



Our spiritual lives and the life of the church run in similar cycles. There are times of warmth and sunshine, beauty and growth; when we can easily see the fruits of our labor and the blessings of our Father. We rejoice and revel in the joy and beauty of it all. We are in awe and wonder at what God is doing, and each day is filled with new discoveries. There is harmony in our relationships. We feel fulfilled and appreciated in what we have been given to do.

There are also, however, times of spiritual winter when the sky is gray and there's a cold biting wind. We don't see much growth; in fact, it appears that most things in our lives are pretty dead. We struggle to see what God is doing and feel unsatisfied. During these spiritual winter months it's tempting to get blue and become discouraged, and to wonder if things will ever change. But you know, they always do. It's unpredictable and largely out of our control, but it happens. New life emerges and we are refreshed.

The truth is that God is building his church and nothing can stop it. There will be times where we cannot perceive his work or understand his ways, but spring always comes with new reminders of his power and grace.

*"See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not perceive it?
I am making a way in the desert
and streams in the wasteland."*

Isaiah 43:19

Leadership Team Notes

Ideas and thoughts from recent meetings

Building Update: Weaver's Construction requested an increase in the initial budget to draw plans and provide the church with a 3-D drawing, because the civil engineer needs to do additional work. The new cost would be \$7,500. The leadership team is ready to approve this and is communicating with the finance team about this. If it goes forward, it will take about a month to get the plans ready.

The congregation will vote on April 17 on whether to retain Roger Hazen as **overseer** for another two year term. Roger's current term wraps up at the end of April.

The leadership team likes the idea of the Labor Day weekend event "**Be the Church**," a day when local churches cancel services to take part in service projects in the community. LCF attendees will be invited to participate, although because it's the first time for involvement, there will probably be a service at LCF as well, unless interest is so strong that there wouldn't be a point in having a service.

One recent discussion among the team has been the development of **discipleship training** for new believers. They don't know exactly what this would look like, but some ideas include:

- Possible additional classes during the adult class time
- Recommending independent study materials like books and online resources
- Connecting people with mentors who can help evaluate where a person is at and suggest a direction for growth
- Simply coordinating current teaching better with sermons, small groups, and adult classes, so that good coverage of the Bible is provided

The goal is to give people more direction and guidance on next steps they might consider taking. People are all at different places in their spiritual lives, and it would be ideal to help them understand where they are at and where they should be going. The team will continue to work on this idea in the next several meetings.

Helping the poor: the team will look at different organizations that meet the needs of poor people both here and around the world, and may take a Sunday to present those options to the congregation to consider supporting.

Rob is encouraging people at LCF to consider attending the **Xenos Summer Institute**. It will be held July 20-22 in Columbus, with the theme "My Whole Life for God." "I have found the Xenos Summer Institute to be a great opportunity for spiritual growth and encouragement," Rob said. "I always come away challenged and encouraged and it's something I look forward to every year." This year's featured speakers are JP Moreland, Ken Sande, and Gene Getz. More information is available at www.xenos.org/xsi.

Service structure: moderators will continue to try different things during the sharing and worship time and try to develop this area of the service.

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Ryan Freed's Radio Habit

An interview

Ryan Freed is an associate pastor at LCF and leads the youth group with his wife Kris. You also might have heard his voice on Christian radio station WEEC in Springfield, where he serves as production director, morning show host, and de facto IT guy.

When did you start getting interested in radio?

That was probably when I flunked out of the music program at Cedarville University. I always liked listening to radio. I always had something on from 700 WLW out of Cincinnati; they had a talk station. There were a lot of stations in Columbus that I'd listen to, but I never thought I'd be on radio. Like I said, I didn't do well in music and Mom actually suggested that I try broadcasting and I thought I might as well. And it turned out to be a very easy college major.

What are some of the things you study in broadcasting school to prepare you for the air?

I actually say "um" a lot. I try not to. We had a game in announcing class that was called the "um" game. You were given a topic and you had a minute to prepare. And then you had to speak for a minute, and if you said "um" or "uh" you had to start over. And it was really, really embarrassing. A couple of times I started with an "uh;" didn't even get off the ground. With practice you have less of those.



Is it intimidating doing live radio?

Up until the morning show I didn't do much live, I almost always recorded everything, because then you're sure the quality is pretty good and you can go do other stuff because you don't have to be sitting there waiting to talk, but the morning show is live most mornings. It's not intimidating if there's someone else to talk with, because then it's just a conversation and it's a lot of fun. You might say something a little weird when you're live; if you do that you just laugh and go on and people don't even notice.

Are there any embarrassing moments from your radio career that you'd care to recount?

I usually cause them for other people; I don't usually have any of them of my own. I've slept in a couple of times. That's really bad if the station you're supposed to be turning on at 6:00 a.m. requires that you show up and do that. And that's happened to me twice. It happened to me once in Alaska, and that time no one would have known, I don't think, except that I confessed. And at WRFD in Columbus, I slept in one time, and that's a 45 minute drive for me. I got a phone call at 6:20 that woke me up, from my boss. She was at the station turning it on. Now I have two alarm set to go off to make sure that I don't do that.

What were you doing in Alaska?

I did my internship in Alaska with KIAM in Nenana, it's a missionary radio station. I was there for 10 weeks. When I was there there were three people that were on the air, so we split the day up into three shifts and had one day off a week, it was kind of fun. The quality standard wasn't as high at the time and the equipment was probably the oldest stuff I've ever worked on. We had reel-to-reel tapes. It was really archaic but it worked. The area the station covered was about the size of six normal states down here. There weren't a whole lot of people out in those areas.

What are some of the challenges in radio work?

Getting a job, actually. It's weird, it hasn't been a challenge for me so I feel kind of blessed with that. There are so many people who go to school for it and then never work in it because they couldn't get a job. Beyond that, things keep changing technologically, every year there's new equipment. Also, I almost feel like I have to work in Christian radio, because secular stations ask things of their DJs that I don't think I could ever do. So I feel like I'm kind of pigeonholed into the Christian market, which isn't necessarily a bad thing, but I can't really witness to my coworkers very much, unless I'm teaching them about conscientious objection.

What are some of the highlights for you?

Being on the air is a lot of fun, and always knowing what's in the news, and also occasionally there are stories of people who have come to Christ through the radio station, that's always kind of an adrenalin boost.



Ryan working at the radio station.

Greetings From Seoul

By Ira Sairs



I have been living and teaching in Seoul, South Korea for seven months now. The job is about as stressful and rewarding as one could expect of a job that throws a recent college graduate in front of 30 disinterested Korean middle school students. But seven months has brought me the patience and skill to develop myself into a pretty decent teacher of English. The broad purpose of my job is to stand in front of these students and get them to actually speak English, as they probably know more about the technical side of our language than the average American high schooler, but lack the ability to pronounce well.

I am currently living a city called Suwon in southern Seoul, which is the home of Samsung Electronics and world-class soccer player Park Ji Sung. I traveled here with two good friends, and we tend to meet every weekend to discuss our jobs and life in a country where we have no idea what's going on most of the time. Seoul is a massive city and ranks as the fourth largest city in the world, even though most people I talk to have never heard of it. As a major urban center it is full of the fast paced distractions and temptations of all big cities; but on closer observation one can see a people really striving for meaning in their lives, whether in the 14th century Buddhist temples strangely juxtaposed next to shopping malls, or in the giant neon crosses scattered throughout town that mark the churches. Nearly 50 percent of the Korean population declare to be Christian, which is impressive in a country with such a longstanding history of Buddhism.

I have been attending an English service in the basement of Suwon's largest and most popular Baptist church, the pastor of which gained rock star status after translating for Billy Graham during what has become a legendary sermon in '73. The congregation has welcomed me warmly and I plan to serve the worship team in the future with my guitar.

Far and away the biggest benefit of living here has been the abundance of incredibly cheap, healthy food. The streets are crowded with stalls selling my favorite foods for the equivalent of a few bucks. I particularly enjoy the abundance of fish (when it's not moving) and absurdly spicy stews that come with a box of tissues.



Looking back, it is easy to see how God has given me protection since leaving home. Aggression from that friendly nation 30 miles to the north, a trip to Japan only weeks before the recent earthquakes, and the present threat of radioactive tap water have seen me no harm these past few months, but your thoughts and prayers are always welcome.

Best, Ira

Leadership Team Notes continued...

The leadership team will be **praying** specifically for the following people this month:

- Bob & Bettyjo Zachrich (Ryan & Kris)
- Aaron & Andrea Biscup (Richard & Robin)
- Tonya Brenneman (Reuben & Vicki)
- Mike & Tamara Brookins (Keith & Shannon)
- Marvin Davis (Rob & Doris)

Upcoming Events

- April 21 - Maundy Thursday Service
- April 24 - LCF Family Easter & Brunch
- May 8 - Child Dedication
- May 21 - Auction & Dinner Benefit

Last month's photo caption contest winner:



"Steady on." (Molly Rosati)

For her winning submission, a fabulous prize will be awarded by Molly to the editors.

From the Editor

If you read the article on Gracehaven's ministry, a statistic may jump out at you: there is (or will be soon) space for about 60 people nationwide in shelters that specialize in rehabilitating victims of sexual trafficking. It's a depressingly small drop in a bucket. The size of this and many other problems is enough to bring on what Rob refers to in his piece as a sort of spiritual "winter" of discouragement.

None of us can solve problems like these on our own, but that isn't what God asks. He calls us to show love to each other, to the best of our abilities. Those rehabilitation shelters can't help everyone, but they sure will make a difference for those 60 people. So let's not give up before we start because there's too much to do. We aren't called to do everything. We're called to love. Let God worry about the rest!



The LCF Connection

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If you'd like to make comments on any of the stories or "LCF Connection" in general, email us at: connection@lcfweb.org.

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