



HOPE UNITED

ST. JOSEPH COUNTY, MICHIGAN

SUMMER 2020 • NEWSLETTER

A Word From Our Director

I must admit, I have a tendency to run ahead of God! His ways are usually much slower than my own and it can be so very difficult to patiently wait on Him. Our Covid-19 experience has taught me a great deal about what it means to wait on God. In the early days of the pandemic I felt such frustration and anxiety over not being able to move forward with the many plans for Hope United. As more time passed, however, God began to teach me what it looked like to wait. It looked like waking every morning in eager anticipation of where He would lead, what doors He would open, and what He would do with the day and hours ahead of me instead of being so absorbed in my planning and striving. So much joy is to be had when we can slow our pace enough to observe the workings of God's hand in the many moments of our every day. This can only be accomplished when we are still enough to see Him. It is much like looking out the window of a speeding car. The scenery goes by to quickly to take in the view if we are traveling too fast. Sometimes God needs to slow our pace to enable us to observe what He is doing and where He is leading us. It is my prayer that God has used this Covid-19 experience to bring this kind of awareness to many lives during this time.

God's faithfulness is so evident in the stories we have shared with you in this newsletter! He is working in so many ways, in so many lives, in and through this ministry. God's ways are always perfect even in the midst of a pandemic! He has not wavered! Let's wait on Him together in eager anticipation of what He desires to accomplish in our churches, community, and most of all in each of us, recognizing that there are many lessons to be learned in the waiting.

Thank you for your faithful support of Hope United and Amanda's House. Our ministry would not be possible without you and we are so very thankful for each of you! May God bless you and keep you well and safe!

Blessings,
Jill Gunn

[Click Here To Make A Donation](#)

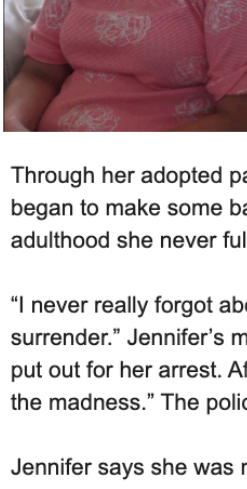
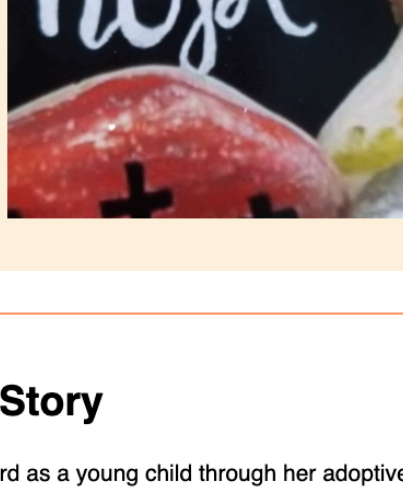
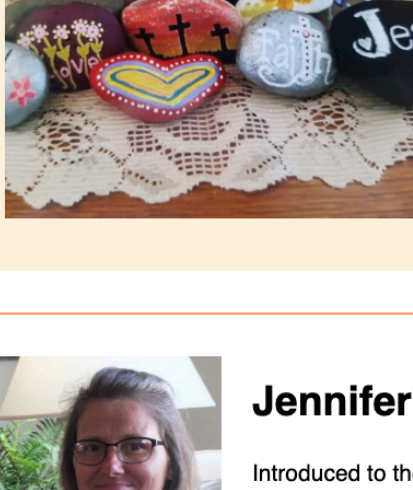
Amanda Rocks

By Jef Rietsma, Sturgis Journal (Reprinted with Permission).

In a home that provides a bridge to a better place, an unlikely hobby has taken over and provided a therapeutic, inspirational outlet. Current residents at Amanda's House, a Three Rivers home for women overcoming personal setbacks, have discovered the art of rock painting. Resident Beth Chartrand said she was bored one day and finally decided to pick up a rock and start painting. Some of the paintings are simply designs that, resemble a Vera Bradley-like pattern. Most, however, feature an inspiring word or phrase. The process begins with securing rocks just the right size, shape and texture. It has led to group outings in search of ideal rocks. Then, the rocks are washed and dried, acrylic paint is used to create the image or message, and a coat of polyurethane is applied to protect the paint job.

Chartrand is often joined by fellow residents Jennifer Brandis and Lucy Blesch, and the three typically work in an assembly line-like routine. Amanda's House officials, including "house mom" Cherie Olson, volunteer Valerie Burrows, and its residents agreed to initially give the rocks to Amanda's House donors and supporters. The rocks and accompanying notes are placed in gift bags and presented to a recipient.

Next, the goal is to help promote the rock project and its upbeat message. "We'll ask people to take a photo with the rock and post it to our web page so we can have some pictures out there, and everyone can see how we're trying to do something nice for people," Chartrand said. "Eventually, we'll maybe start hiding them around town and hope people will see them and smile." Blesch said she recalled moving in and noticing the rock on a bedside nightstand. The message? Endure. "I was going through a lot when I first came here and that rock was just, bam!" she said. "It's really meant something to me ... it's all about the message and taking it to heart."



Jennifer's Story

Introduced to the Lord as a young child through her adoptive parents, Jennifer has learned that the Holy Spirit is **TOO POWERFUL TO BE IGNORED**.

"I don't know what more I could ask for! I really don't"

Jennifer is extremely grateful for the life that she has now. Born to two addicts, Jennifer was in foster care as a young child. She and her three siblings were eventually adopted by a Christian couple.

Through her adopted parents, their church, and her private school, she met Jesus. She began to make some bad choices after her adoptive parents' divorce. As she continued into adulthood she never fully reestablished that connection with the Lord.

"I never really forgot about him and I really believe he never left my side. But I didn't surrender." Jennifer's moment of surrender came in April of last year. A warrant had been put out for her arrest. After five months, Jennifer says that she cried out "Lord, please stop the madness." The police found and arrested her two days later.

Jennifer says she was never scared in jail because she had finally turned back to God. "It's hard to describe unless you've done something like that," she said "but I just surrendered." She was taken to drug court, rare for a first time offender, and she is extremely grateful. "It's a God story, for sure," Jennifer says. In jail, Jennifer met Valerie from Amanda's House, and called the team for help after she was released. At first, she was nervous and had her guard up. "The enemy was working hard for two months". But Jennifer was convinced that the Lord called her to be there and eventually she settled in and began establishing relationships.

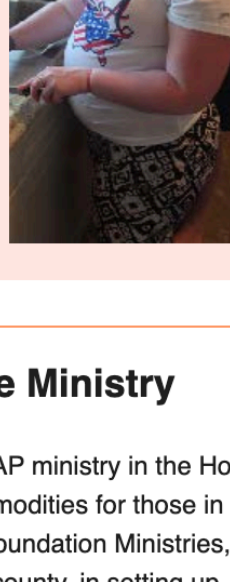
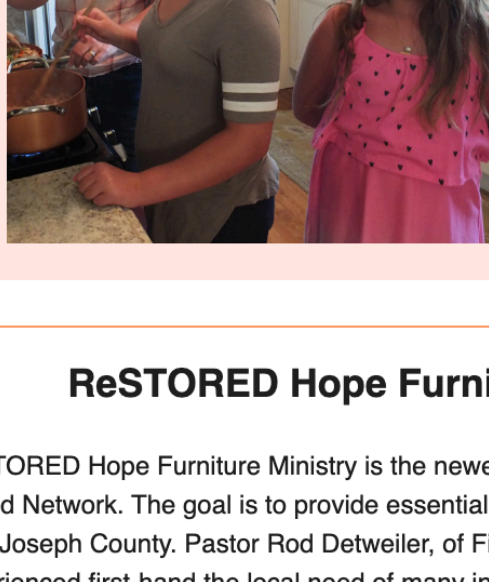
One day while walking past a store downtown, Jennifer heard the Lord's voice telling her "to bring a resume in there." She walked out that day with a job. She is invested in her work there, praying the Lord brings in business during the COVID-19 crisis and making plans to increase her responsibilities in the future. She is also restoring her relationship with her three children. She spends time with her youngest daughter and communicates with her older daughter, who serves in the military and is proud of her mom's progress, and her son who is reaching out more and more. "He had a crisis and called me," she relates. One day, she would like to be a homeowner.

Jennifer references a quote from Narcotics Anonymous when she says that she will always come back to Amanda's House to help other women who find themselves with nowhere else to go, "We only keep what we have by giving it away."

As Jennifer lives her life by returning all the blessings Amanda's house has given her, her message to donors like you is: "Thank you. Thank you so much, it is very much appreciated."

Cooking With Joy

Joy Palmer and her two daughters Victoria (age 13) and Rose (age 11) spend every Tuesday evening at Amanda's House. They cope to cook a meal with the residents, but they also make sure that their visits are relaxing and social. The goal is to give the women a night of family time each week. In addition to the meal, they often play board games and go for walks. Joy says that she loves to laugh and joke with the residents. Her favorite part of spending time with them that is that she feels like she is growing her family. Her daughters talk about the residents as friends and extended family as well. Your donations help make events like this possible and bring a little more joy into the lives of the women at Amanda's House.

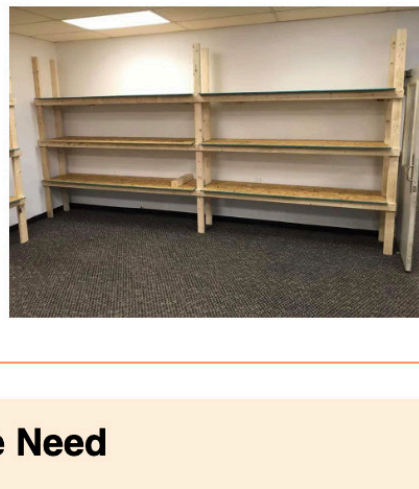
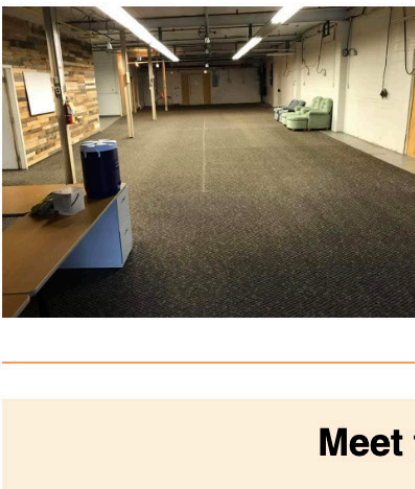


ReSTORED Hope Furniture Ministry

ReSTORED Hope Furniture Ministry is the newest GAP ministry in the Hope United Network. The goal is to provide essential commodities for those in need in St Joseph County. Pastor Rod Detweiler, of Firm Foundation Ministries, has experienced first-hand the local need of many in our county, in setting up adequate living environments. From victims of fire and other disasters, to homelessness, there is a present and ongoing need. Clients will be referenced through the mentor program of Hope United, county housing coordinators, local churches and social service agencies. The goal is to deliver needed items to their door. (Using the Hope United webpage - <https://hopeunitedsjc.com/>)

Where will these items come from? You! Already our phone is ringing, and people want to donate. Finalizing the use of a storage area is in the works with the goal to begin in the later part of this summer. Donations will be picked up, stored in the warehouse until requested, then transported to the client's residence.

How can you help? Several options are available such as: Rental fee of storage facility, cleaning supplies and equipment, as well as gas and vehicle maintenance will be an ongoing expense. Our desire is to give freely. Would you help us with a gift? Volunteers will also be needed to maintain the warehouse, clean donated items and transport. You can sign up to volunteer by going to Hope United's website and click "[Get Involved](#)".

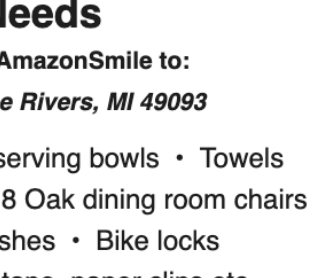
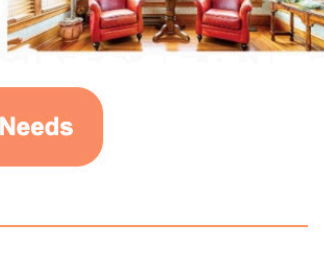
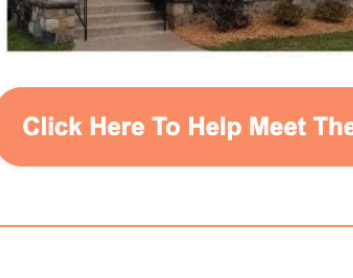
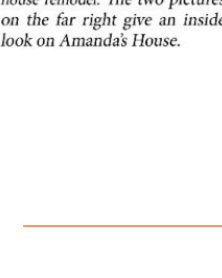


Meet the Need

Wondering how you can help during this trying time? Volunteer to meet the needs within our community by dropping much needed items at individuals' doorsteps, ordering items online to be delivered or taking time to pray with encourage individuals over the phone or internet who are suffering due to the circumstances of Covid-19.

Go to Hope United's website page at www.hopeunitedsjc.com, click on "More" then "**Get Involved**" and then "**Volunteer and Resource Needs**" and sign up! You will then be contacted as we receive needs from within our community.

AMANDA'S HOUSE • THREE RIVERS, MI



[Click Here To Help Meet The Needs](#)

Amanda's House Needs

Needed items can be delivered through AmazonSmile to:

Hope United, Inc. 222 S Main Street, Three Rivers, MI 49093

Toaster • Mixing bowls • Small to medium serving bowls • Towels
6-Large totes • 6-52 Quart under bed totes • 8 Oak dining room chairs
Kitchen towels • Hot pads • Baking dishes • Bike locks
Office supplies: copy paper, pens, pencils, tape, paper clips etc.
Grocery store gift cards

