

JANUARY 2013:

01/04 - Today I made a special visit to the Don Bosco Senior Community Center to visit and have lunch with my 81 year dad. For over 20 years the [Don Bosco Center](#) has been helping seniors age 60 and over and adults with disabilities maintain independent living by providing meals, transportation, fellowship and activities that promote health, education, and recreation. My dad visits daily for meals and companionship. What a wonderful organization. As I sat and had lunch with my dad we had good conversation. I got to meet and get to know one of his lunch friends Rosalee, who is a 71 year old regular at the center. She has had a rough life. She told me about her 5 children, 22 grand children and her pets. As we sat there talking, many of the regulars would come by and give her their leftovers to take home so she could feed her pets. She also told me about a homeless man who lives in the basement where she lives and the compassion she feels for him, she takes him food and whatever she can to help him out. Before I left I gave her a coat and blanket from the bundle of items that I was planning to take to Salvation Army so that she could give to her homeless friend. During my lunch with my dad I could tell he enjoyed having me there with him. He gave me a new lunch menu and book on Pearl Harbor to read. Afterwards my dad and I took a trip to the local Salvation Army to drop off the remaining coats, blankets and watches that I was given by the family of my good friend Chuck who recently passed away, and then I took my dad back to the center to finish his day. What a great day to connect with and honor my dad and be able to meet and share my blessings with people in need.

01/06 - Today I attended a memorial service for my friend Chuck who passed away suddenly on December 31st from a blood clot in his lung. Chuck was a long time companion of my mom's and over the years I had gotten to know him very well. After my mom's passing, we would often get together for lunch and enjoy each other's company. In fact we had lunch together just days before he entered the hospital and I spoke with him only hours before he passed, which makes his sudden loss even more tragic and difficult to understand. Over the last few days I had been helping his family out with getting the burial plans figured out, organizing the service, cleaning out the house etc.. and today's service marked the final goodbyes for myself and his family. I will miss Chuck very much, I will always remember the times we spent together and I'll never forget the compassion and love he showed my mom during her struggle with cancer and the heart-filled gestures of kindness that he gave me whenever I saw him. I thank God for allowing him to be apart of my life. May he now rest in peace.

01/07 - Today I spent the morning picking up leftover promotional material from Harvesters "Check- Out Hunger" event. This yearly event, which ended Jan 6th, was sponsored by the Retail Grocers Association in collaboration with Harvester's Community Food Network and utilized scannable coupons at each check-out line to help raise awareness and money to feed the hungry throughout our community. The goal this year was to surpass the \$404,000 that was raised last year, however it

will be a while before the final numbers are tallied. My job today was to pickup the left over materials from the two local grocery stores for which I was assigned, and thank the store managers for their commitment. It was a blessing for me to be able to play a small part in this effort to make a difference in our community.

01/11 - *Today I made a special trip to the [Don Bosco Center](#) to visit my 81 year old dad. We had lunch together and I got to spend some quality time with him. I got to meet some of his friends, like Rosalee whom I had met once before. She talked my head off and thanked me for the coat and blanket that I gave her to the last time I saw her, and was still collecting leftovers from the other residents so she could take home to her pets. I also got to see Jackie, my dad's girlfriend, and got to meet some new visitors like Ann Marie and Anne Miller the director of the facility. The seniors who come to this facility come from all walks of life and represent all races, religions and sexes, but the one thing they have in common is the need feel apart of something. Many seniors today are lonely and feel like their life has no meaning. They just need someone to talk, someone who cares and listens to them. The Don Bosco Center provides this, it is a amazing organization. During my visit I decided to fill out an application to volunteer at the center preparing meals for their "meals on wheels" program where they deliver hot meals to seniors in the community who cannot get out of their homes, I figured I could do this once or twice a month on the days that I visit my dad. It would be a perfect opportunity to give back while spending time with my dad. All in all it was a great day to be alive. I am blessed to have the opportunity to make a difference in the lives of some of our forgotten seniors in our community and let my dad know that someone still cares.*

01/14 - *Today I spent the day volunteering for the Phoenix Family Housing Organization's Mobile Food Pantry. Together with Karen (the Service Coordinator), Karen's supervisor Lisa, Melanie, and a new member from the Phoenix family group, Sterling, we unloaded food brought in by Harvester's, then helped distribute the fresh vegetables and fruits to the senior residents at the Palestine Housing apartment complexes located in the urban core. It was great to once again see all the friends I've made there over the past 9 months and be blessed with the opportunity to be able to make a difference in the lives of the many senior residents there. I hope and pray that God will continue to allow me to give my time and resources to express my faith with such acts of kindness, compassion and love.*

01/16 - *Today I got to spend some quality time with my son. Although he is 25 years old and still lives at home, I actually enjoy having him living with us. He is such a wonderful person with so much going for him, he's kind, considerate and respectful, loves cooking for us and has a heart of gold. Don't get me wrong, he is not a saint, but then again who is? But today was a special time for him and I as we had lunch together, shopped for some new clothes and hit the grocery store for dinner. In a world full of tragedy and despair, it is these special moments in life that you can never replace. Life is so short and you just never know what tomorrow will bring. I am so thankful to have shared this day with my son and I hope and pray that I can be good example for him as he continues to grow in his faith.*

01/21 - *Today I made a special trip to visit my 81 yr old dad. Since it was Martin Luther King Jr's day and the the senior community center that my dad attends daily for lunch and companionship was closed, I thought it would be nice to spend some time with him. Today we drove around the city to visit some of his childhood neighborhoods and the places where he lived*

and attended school. We also drove by places where our family use to live and I listened while he reminisced about a happier time in his life. We then had lunch together and stopped by the shoe store to see if he could get himself some new shoes and finally by the local CVS to get batteries for his TV remote. Life is so short and as I look at my dad I can see that his age is starting to catch up with him. He often repeats himself, talks about the same things over and over and feels isolated, lonely and regretful for the bad decisions he has made in life, but he, like so many seniors today just need someone to listen to them and feel like someone still cares about them. I am truly blessed to be in a position to help comfort my dad, help him stay strong in his faith and most of all be there for him.

01/23 - Today I finally got word that there is an opening for the [Greater KC Red Cross](#) - Mobile Meals for the Homeless Program. This is a volunteer program that occurs once a month, it involves the preparation and delivery of hot meals to homeless individuals living in the city with the use of Red Cross canteen vehicles and equipment that follow a specified feeding route. I had signed for this program up back in April 2012, took the required courses and even got certified to drive the ERV (Emergency Response Vehicle) that they use, but because of the popularity of the program I was put on a waiting list, and now it seems they finally have an opening. I am looking forward to participating in this wonderful opportunity and expressing my faith by helping out the homeless in my community.

01/24 - Today I signed up to offer part of my land for a tree garden project being sponsored by [The Giving Garden](#) in partnership with [The Kansas City Community Gardens](#). The Giving Grove is a relatively new non-profit organization that was born as a way to provide hunger relief by planting perennial gardens once, and then developing a sustainable system for tending and harvesting. The mission of the organization is to help communities learn to grow their own food, while sharing a percentage of the produce grown at each garden with those in need. I am looking forward to hearing more about this wonderful project in the coming days and I hope that I am able to offer my resources to be able to make a difference in the lives of those in our community who are struggling to feed their families.

01/25 - Today I spent the morning volunteering at Harvesters Volunteer Outreach Center helping sort donated food items that will be distributed to the agencies that help feed the many children, seniors and families in the community. Today we had very few regular volunteers, but there were many school children who came in to volunteer their time. It was great to see these young children learning the value of giving back. I spent all morning in the sorting section and connected with some of the "regulars" like Doris and James, who is one of my favorites and continues to amaze me. He has been coming to Harvesters everyday for over a year despite living in a homeless shelter. He shares the passion of Faith and we always encourage each other in our journey, he is an amazing person. Once again, it was a great day knowing that the Lord has given me this opportunity to share my time and blessings to help those in need and be able to reconnect with some very special people and an organization that is making a difference in our community...After my time at Harvesters I decided to stop by the Don Bosco Senior Center to visit my dad and have lunch with him. The residents there are so nice and friendly to me and they're beginning to know me by name. During lunch I had the opportunity to meet Christine, we shared conversation about our families and she talked a lot about her pets. You can tell the seniors who frequent the center just want to be heard, someone to listen to them and feel like they matter. I am privileged and honored to be able to connect with them and hopefully

make a small difference in their lives. After lunch I took my dad with me to Walmart to pickup some groceries and supplies and then back home to finish up the day.

FEBRUARY 2013:

02/02 - 02/03 - *This weekend I welcomed a very dear friend of mine into my home for a special visit. Donnie and I met over 12 years ago while working together at the same company. Since that time he has been my colleague, mentor and close friend. After his retirement 3 years ago he frequently visits me from his home in Tennessee, and this weekend he decided to stop by for a special visit. Unfortunately, just prior to his visit he got word that he had been diagnosed with prostate cancer and the news of his diagnosis was both tragic and shocking to both of us, however despite the bad news he decided to make the trip to visit me anyway. Although I was saddened by the recent news, I was very happy to see him again and be able to spend some quality time together. We got together with some mutual friends to catch up on our lives and topped off the weekend watching the Super Bowl together. It was a very special time that I will cherish, for it is not often that you will find true friends in this world and I will continue to hope and pray that God will find a way for my friend to overcome his cancer so that we can continue to enjoy times like this in the future.*

02/04 - *Today I spent the day volunteering for the Phoenix Family Housing Organization's Mobile Food Pantry. Together with Karen (the Service Coordinator), Karen's supervisor Lisa, Melanie and Sterling we unloaded food brought in by Harvester's, then helped distribute the fresh vegetables and fruits to the senior residents at the Palestine apartments; a low-income senior housing complex located in the urban core. It was great to once again see the wonderful residents who I have come to know and love over the past year and see their smiling faces when they receive the healthy foods that they would not be able to afford otherwise, And most of all showing them that someone still loves and cares for them. What a blessing it is that God has not only given me the opportunity to be able to make a difference in the lives of these special people, but to also bring me happiness and joy from serving them!*

02/12 - *Today I gave the gift of life by donating my blood through the [American Red Cross](#) at UMKC. With my donation there is the potential to save as many as 3 lives, as the donated blood will be delivered to a Red Cross blood component laboratory where it is processed into several components (e.g., red blood cells, plasma, platelets and/or cryoprecipitate), with each component being used for someone who needs it. This was my first time donating and the process was smooth and painless, taking about 30 minutes in all. It was a great way of giving back to the community, save lives and express my faith through this act of kindness and compassion. Afterwards I made a trip to visit my 81-year old Dad at the Don Bosco Senior Center. He had been having problems with his old microwave and was trying to learn how to work the new one that I had given him several months earlier. I think about him often and wonder how much longer he will be able to take care of himself and continue living his life independently, but for today I am blessed to be able to have the opportunity to be there for him and let him know someone still cares.*

02/20 - *Today I made a special trip to visit my dad (aka "pops") to take him to the local Walmart to pick-up some needed groceries. He had called me earlier in the week to let me know that he*

was getting low on some essentials and wanted to make sure that I would pick him up so that he had enough food and supplies to get in through the expected snow storm that's being forecast for our area. When I arrived he had a very large and impressive family Bible that he wanted me to have, and in turn, I gave him a faith-based DVD about life after death and a plastic container for him to use for some items he wanted to pack up for donation. It's amazing how our relationship has grown since the passing of my mom. I know the rest of my family still struggles with the issues of his past and how he broke up our family, and I can't blame them, but I figure God allows things to happen for His purpose and maybe the relationship I now have with my father is one of them. My dad has given his life over to his Faith and I just want him to know that regardless of his past, I still love and care for him. After all, we are all sinners and come short of the glory of God, but the beauty of God's grace allows us to be forgiven, and if God can forgive a wretch like me, then who am I not to forgive others. I hope and pray that God's purpose for me allows me to continue using my time and resources to not only take care of my father, but to continue making a difference in the lives of others by helping them realize their potential through the power of Faith in our Lord and Savior - Jesus Christ.

02/25 - *Today was my schedule day to volunteer at the Phoenix Family Housing Organization's Mobile Food Pantry, and as usual I spent the day working with Karen (the Service Coordinator), Lisa, Melanie and Sterling to help unload food brought in from Harvester's Food Network, then distributing the fresh vegetables, fruits and drinks to the senior residents. I wasn't quite sure if I was going to be able to make the trip today because of an impending snow storm, but the snow held off long enough for me to make it, which made me very happy. Over the past year I have come to know and love the residents and members of the Phoenix Family support staff and look forward with anticipation to helping them out. Today, I made a point of spending a little extra time with each resident by talking to each one as their names were called to fill their bags and carrying their bags for them if they needed. I also took time to pay special attention to some of the residents that I've come to know personally; like Ms. James (the sweet lady with the braids), Mr. Gulley (who is always sharply dressed), Ms. Porter (the other sweet lady in the wheelchair) and Ms. Walker (the hugger, who is a shut-in). You can just see the joy and appreciation on the faces of the residents when someone takes the time to offer a helping hand, pay attention to them and letting them know someone cares about them...this is what living a life in Faith is all about, it's about showing your love and compassion for those in need, sharing your blessings and gifts with other's and experiencing the joy and happiness that comes from serving!*

02/28 - *I began my day by spending the morning volunteering at Harvesters Volunteer Outreach Center, helping sort donated food items that will eventually be distributed to the agencies that help feed the many children, seniors and families in the community. When I first arrived, we had very few volunteers, but as usual, I always like to take time to meet and get to know other volunteers, and today I got the chance to meet Robert, an older gentleman of retirement age who has been volunteering for about 2 years now. As the morning progressed, I notice several groups of young people from schools or organizations coming in to volunteer, this is not unusual, but the ones that caught my eye were a group of mentally challenged kids. As I continued my work, I couldn't help but think how amazing these kids were, I mean here they were, facing tremendous challenges of their own, yet they were here giving a helping hand to help feed the homeless and hungry in our community. It made me step back a moment to put my own perceived difficulties in life into perspective and be thankful for the gifts that God has given me. It was a humbling experience that would carry me through the day and help me recognize that in a world where we*

are constantly bombard with bad news and sensationalism on TV and the Internet, there is a whole group of people out here doing great things for the right reasons, and when I see this, it warms my heart, makes me smile and inspires me, and most of all it gives me hope in the human race.... After my time at Harvesters I decided to visit my dad, who had been cooped up in his apartment for the last few days due to the recent snow storms. Together we drove by the local Salvation Army to drop off some donations, then decided to visit their thrift store so my dad could try and find a Navy P-coat, something he has been wanting for a while now. Although we didn't find the coat, I did pick out a couple shirts for him, which he liked and purchased. Afterwards, we went to have lunch and then to Walmart to pick-up some groceries and supplies to finish up the day. My dad will be turning 82 in March and I often wonder how much longer he will be able to live independently, but for today I am grateful that I am able to spend time with him, honor him and let him know someone cares. This is what living a life in faith is all about, serving others by sharing kindness, compassion and love.

MARCH 2013:

03/07 - *Today I received information that through the efforts of volunteers like myself this years "Check- Out Hunger" event campaign was able to raise almost \$350,000! This yearly event was held from Nov 7th- Jan 7th, 2012 and was sponsored by the Retail Grocers Association in collaboration with Harvester's Community Food Network, and utilizes scannable coupons at each check-out line to help raise awareness and money to feed the hungry throughout the community. Although I played only a small part by delivering and setting up promotional material at several local grocery stores, I am honored and thankful to be able to have shared my time helping fight hunger in our community. Thank God for the wonderful work of Harvester's Community Food Network, the Retail Grocers Association and the many other volunteers that made this happen. What makes this effort so special is that Harvesters is able to provide five meals for every dollar contributed. This is amazing!*

03/14 - *Helping to feed the many children, seniors and families in our community is a natural expression of my Faith in Jesus Christ, but in order to address the problem of hunger, we must first understand it. Which is why I have decided to volunteer to join forces with the Harvesters and Feeding America organizations in the Hunger Study 2014. This 3 month volunteer commitment involves an extensive, nationwide study of hunger that captures detailed information about who is in need of emergency food assistance and their circumstances. The results provide an invaluable resource for developing programs that help support people in need. They also inform advocacy work and the public policy discourse so that federal nutrition programs can better serve families facing hunger. To have the opportunity to join forces with all the amazing organizations and agencies to get a better understanding of how best to solve the problem of hunger in our communities is a blessing that I look forward to.*

03/15 - *Today, I took the time to visit with my dad. It started with a trip to the [Don Bosco Senior Center](#), where my dad can be found on most days. The Don Bosco Senior Center has been helping seniors age 60 and over and adults with disabilities maintain independent living by providing meals, transportation, fellowship and activities that promote health, education, and recreation. And today I was there to have lunch with my dad. With St Patrick's day on the horizon the lunch of the day was corn beef and cabbage. The place was packed with seniors,*

those with disabilities and a band. It was quite a sight to behold and a special time that I will never forget...After lunch, my dad and I made the trip to the local Walmart so we could pick up his weekly supply of groceries, and along the way I listened to the stories of his life and special times he spent with my mom, moments in his life that are special to him, and stories that may have never been known if I had not taken the time to be there with him and for him. And after it was all said and done, I dropped him off at his apartment, gave him a hug and told him "I loved him".

03/18 - *Today was my day to volunteer at the Phoenix Family Housing Organization's Mobile Food Pantry, and as usual I spent the day working with Karen (the Service Coordinator), Lisa, Melanie and a returning volunteer; Kim (and her children, Jack and Anabella). Together, we worked to unload food brought in from Harvester's Food Network, then organized the food onto tables so the residents could come up in groups to gather the food they need. We also packaged up the fresh vegetables, fruits and drinks in bags to be distributed to the many shut-in senior residents who are unable to make it to the location...On a day when my body was weak and my spirit waning it was great to get out and see my senior friends and family at the Palestine Apartments, a reminder that this is what living a life in Faith is all about; offering your love and compassion to those in need. At the end of the day my spirit had been lifted and I had a renewed sense of passion to get through the day. Thank you God for always being there to lift me up!*

03/20 - *Kindness, compassion and love are at the core of exemplifying our Faith in Christ. But today was a lesson in patience as well, and it all began with a trip to the local DMV to get my dad's license renewed. Being 81 years old with no car and very little money, one would think "why does he even need a license?", but I humored him and made the trip to help him out. Often times with senior parents they just want to get out of the house or want someone to talk to, or they just do things cause they've always done them that way without really thinking it through, and today was probably all those things. But here we stood in line, waiting to get my dad's license renewed, and despite all our planning efforts, when we got to the window we were missing a key document, So we traveled back to his apartment to get what we needed only to discover that somewhere between the DMV, the car and his apartment my dad had lost his Social Security card and old license. Feeling a bit sorry for my dad and a bit regretful for me not paying better attention to what he was doing, we decided to give it a try anyways, so we headed back to the DMV and waited in line again, and low and behold we did not need either his SS card or the old license to renew his license after all. Only this time, after multiple attempts and the clerk trying desperately to give him a license, my dad could not pass the vision test. I felt sorry for my dad cause I know how disheartening it was for him, but I never got mad or frustrated with him during the whole ordeal, I just tried to be patient and caring, letting him know that it was ok and that I would be there to do whatever it took to try and get the job done. Unfortunately in the end we were not able to get it done, but at the end of the day I got to spend time with my dad and share a little kindness, compassion, love and patience with someone in need, and that is what living a life in Faith is all about.*

03/25 - *Today I made a trip to visit my dad, who will be turning 82 tomorrow. He has been complaining about hip/leg pain for a few days and I wanted to visit him to check on him and take him to the store to pick-up groceries. Often times he will take the city bus to make these smaller trips to the store, but I think all the walking is starting to catch up with him, so I think I will start visiting him every week so that he won't have to walk as much. I'm starting to see a bit of a*

decline in his health and I often think about how much longer he will be able to live independently. I talk to him almost daily now and I want to make sure he is comfortable and safe. I recently made an appointment at the local VA hospital to have a check-up and consultation for the recent pain he's been experiencing, until then I advised him to take Tylenol to help with any pain. Life is so short and we must take the opportunities that God gives us to share our love and compassion with those in need, and right now my dad needs me. I praise God everyday for allowing me to have this opportunity to honor my father and let him know someone cares.

03/29 - *Since the founding of the Leap Of Faith Movement over a year ago I have been blessed with so many opportunities to share my God-given gifts and resources to help those less fortunate, and the volunteer work that I've been involved with has allowed me to not only build lasting relationships with some amazing people, but I have been able to personally see and experience the joy and peace that comes from sharing God's love with others. It has been an experience that has changed my life forever and one that has allowed me to understand God's purpose for me. I am here to serve. Although my resources and ability to provide for my own family are declining, my faith has not wavered. I believe that God is now taking me down a path that will allow me to continue to fulfill His purpose for me.*

And so today (Easter day), I launched [A Man Of His Word](#), a company who's goal is to use my God-given gifts of expression, my passion for writing and my experience and Faith in God to create original written material that influences people's lives. This company will serve individuals, businesses and organizations in the Non-Profit and Faith-Based industries by providing professional Copywriting Services for Online or Published Print media projects. By launching this new business, I hope to leave an indelible mark on the world by not only helping to bring awareness and growth to these vital industries, but to allow me to provide for my family and share any success that God allows me to have, to continue bringing hope to those less fortunate and show the world how the power of faith can change our lives.

APRIL 2013:

04/03 - *Because of my dad's recent leg and hip pain we agreed that I would visit him weekly to take him to the store or appointments so he wouldn't have to walk to the bus as much. Normally we plan a few days ahead of time, but today was an exception...today my dad called me in the morning to say that he had plans to take the bus to Walmart because he was low on breakfast bowls but it was just too cold to make the trip. He said that he didn't know what to do since he had taken the day off from his normal routine of visiting the Senior Community Center just to go to Walmart, and now he was stuck at home, low on food and nothing to do the rest of the day. Rather than argue with him about our previous agreement, I thanked God for allowing me to be in a position to accommodate his needs, postponed my plans for the morning and rushed over to help him out. I've been telling my dad for some time now that he should buy items in bulk, but for some reason he is just stubborn on some items, and breakfast bowls are one of them (granted he does have a small refrigerator which doesn't accommodate a lot of goods). So off we went to Walmart for our daily dose of companionship and of course groceries. God bless our parents.*

04/04 - *[Hunger Study 2014](#): In order to address the problem of hunger in the world today, we must first understand it. To that end, every 4 years [Feeding America](#); the nation's leading*

domestic hunger-relief charity, joins forces with the regional food networks; like [Harvesters](#), to conduct one of the largest volunteer-driven surveys of any type in the country. This extensive, nationwide study of hunger captures detailed information about who is in need of emergency food assistance and their circumstances. The information collected will be an invaluable resource for developing programs that help support the people in need.

Because feeding the children, seniors and families in our community is a personal mission that is near and dear to my heart, I officially took the first step in securing my place as a volunteer by participating in a 6 hour training course to learn the responsibilities of my commitment. The room was full of people, who like myself have also made the 3 month commitment to join forces with these amazing organizations to help solve the problem of hunger in our communities. How cool is that?

04/08 - Today was my scheduled day to volunteer at the Phoenix Family Housing Organization's Mobile Food Pantry, and as usual I spent the day working with Karen (the Service Coordinator), Sterling, Lisa, and Melanie. Together, we worked to unload food brought in from Harvester's Food Network, then organized the food onto tables so the residents could come up in groups to gather the food they need. We also packaged up the fresh vegetables, fruits and drinks in bags to be distributed to the many shut-in senior residents who are unable to make it to the location... it was yet another great day to get out and see my senior friends and family at the Palestine Apartments, a reminder that this is my purpose, to serve others. I just pray that God continues to bless me so that I can continue to bless others, and I have Faith that He will!

04/23 - Today I took my 82-year old dad to the VA hospital for his 6-month check-up. The day started out very cold, windy and rainy, however this had little affect on the number of people awaiting service at the hospital. As we made our way through the lines of people, our first stop was to have blood drawn for the standard blood tests. Our next stop, the primary physician. Although my dad seems to be in good health, he has been complaining recently about pain in his knee and hip, and so today I wanted to make sure that the doctor was made aware of this, and as I suspected the doctor confirmed it was likely arthritis; not uncommon for someone his age, and recommended that he continue taking Tylenol for any pain. And finally our last stop, the ear, nose and throat doctors, where the ears were checked, cleaned and we were given a clean bill of health... After our doctor visits I took my dad to the store for groceries and a little lunch from Wendy's, then back home. At the end of the day it was great to hear that my dad is good health, and the time spent today listening to the stories of the good times he and my mom spent together, and his life in the Navy was something to remember as I don't know how much longer he may be around. Life is short, we are like water spilled out on the ground to be soaked up in an instant, but I know that at least for today, I have spent my time well, making a positive difference in both our lives. Thank you LORD for all you have done and continue to do in my life!

04/26 - Day 1: [Hunger Study 2014](#) - Today I participated in my first site survey at the [Della Lamb Community Food Pantry](#) where together with Connie, Audrey, Sharon and Kelcey we conducted random surveys of clients receiving food assistance. This extensive, nationwide study of hunger captures detailed information about who is in need of emergency food assistance and their circumstances. The information collected will be an invaluable resource for understanding and developing programs that help support the people in need...The one thing that touched my heart today was seeing the amazing work that this agency does in helping to feed the poor and

hungry in our community, many of which are immigrants whose main source of food is through this food pantry. It never ceases to amaze me how many great people doing great things that there are in this world, these are the hidden gems of our society who are bringing hope to so many. I am humbled and honored to have had this opportunity to share in this experience and gain a better understanding of how God works in our lives.

04/29 - *Today was another great day of volunteering at the Phoenix Family Housing Organization's Mobile Food Pantry, where together with Karen (the Service Coordinator), Melanie and a new guy; David (who is now the new volunteer coordinator for Phoenix Family), we worked to unload food brought in from Harvester's Food Network for distribution to the wonderful senior residents of Palestine Apartments; a senior living community located in the urban core. If not for the dedicated work of both Phoenix Family and Harvesters, many of these special seniors would not be able to get their daily balance of nutritious fruits and vegetables that are so vital to a healthy life, and when you get to see the joy on their faces when you take time to listen and talk with these very special seniors, you would understand why I do what I do. What a blessing it is to serve the seniors in my community who deserve our respect, dignity and a loving hand!*

MAY 2013:

05/06 - *Today I made a trip to visit my dad to take him to the local Walmart to pick-up some needed groceries. I hadn't seen him a couple weeks and enjoyed seeing and sharing some time with him again. Later this week I will be conducting a Hunger Study survey for Harvester's at the Don Bosco Senior center where he eats lunch everyday, so this will give me another opportunity to share some time with him. I hope and pray that God's purpose for me allows me to continue using my time and resources to not only take care of my dad, but to continue making a difference in the lives of others by helping them realize their potential through the power of Faith in our Lord and Savior - Jesus Christ.*

05/09 - Day 2: [Hunger Study 2014](#) - *Today I participated in my second site survey for the 2014 Hunger Study. Today's site location was the Don Bosco Senior Center, where together with Ann, Angela, and Dianna we conducted random surveys of clients receiving food assistance. These extensive, nationwide studies of hunger captures detailed information about those who currently receive emergency food assistance in our communities and their circumstances. The information collected will be an invaluable resource for understanding and developing programs that help support their future needs.*

The history of the [Don Bosco Centers](#) has always been closely tied to the neighborhood and people they serve. Built on the foundation of the Catholic faith and the Italian-American community it has been providing free English classes to adult immigrants and refugees for over 30 years, and for 20 years it has been helping seniors age 60 and over and adults with disabilities maintain independent living by providing meals, transportation, fellowship and activities that promote health, education, and recreation. This site is one that I am very familiar with, as it is the site where my dad spends most of his days interacting with other seniors and utilizing the meal services they offer. What a blessing it is for my dad to have this available to him, I am grateful for the services he is able to use that allow him to live a life of dignity and

independence. I'm looking forward to the next site survey to learn more about other amazing agencies who are making a difference and bringing hope to people's lives.

05/16 - *Today I made my weekly trip to visit with my dad and take him to the grocery store. It was a beautiful day, with the birds singing outside the window and the sun shining as I left the my house to take the long journey to visit with my dad. As I arrived, my dad was waiting for me at the front entrance of his apartment building as usual, and off we went to Walmart for groceries and supplies. Along the way we spent time talking about the weather, our pets etc., and he mentioned how thankful and appreciative he was to have me take the time to travel such a long distance to take him to the store. I let him know that this was nothing extraordinary, and that I was blessed to be in a position to spend time with him and care for his needs. We spoke about my mom and how much we both missed her, and the regrets he has for the mistakes he's made in his life. At the end of our journey, I helped him unload his groceries at his apartment and I listened to a story about the first (and last) time he drank a beer, it was kinda funny and special to think I would never have known this had I not been here with him today. Eventually we would jump back in the car and head over to the Don Bosco senior center to drop him off for his daily meal and activities...On my way home I would stop by my mother-in-laws grave site to do a repair on her headstone, as my wife and I had notice on our mothers day visit that both vases had been broken off. Later, I had lunch with son and enjoyed some father and son time together. How thankful I am to God for all that I have and all that I can give to glorify His name. I truly feel His spirit working in my life right now.*

05/20 - *Today was my scheduled day of volunteering at the Phoenix Family Housing Organization's Mobile Food Pantry, and as usual I worked together with Karen (the site Service Coordinator), Lynn, Melanie and Sterling to help unload food brought in from Harvester's Food Network for distribution to the wonderful senior residents of the Palestine Apartments; a low-income senior living community located in the urban core.*

I've been volunteering at this site for over a year now and the senior residents, staff and volunteers have become part of my family. Today I got to visit with all my favorite residents and took the time to let them all know how much I loved seeing them and being here with them. During my last visit I had taken several pictures of the residents with the purpose of writing an article for publication that would focus on my volunteer experiences with Phoenix Family Housing. My hope is that this article would bring to light the personal rewards of my volunteering experiences, engage and inform potential volunteers about Phoenix Family Housing and help advance interest in volunteering for this amazing organization. I had also mention to one of my favorite residents (Ms. James) that I would spotlight her in my article, and today she asked me how it was coming along. I told her that I hadn't forgot and that I should have it written up by my next visit. She smiled and said she couldn't wait.

By the end of the day we had distributed fresh vegetables, fruits and drinks to over 60 senior residents, but more than that I got to connect with some very special people and share the compassion and love that exemplifies that true spirit of my faith, and that is something way behind anything money can buy.

05/27 - *Today is Memorial Day, a day to remember and honor those who have served in our countries military, and our loved ones...*

It began with a special trip to visit my 82 year old dad; a veteran of the Korean War whose life while serving in the Navy is one that he continues to hang on to. A time much different from today, a time filled with the memories of the innocence of his youth and his adventures abroad.

It is also of day of remembrance for my beloved mom; whose birthday is today, and my mother-in-law, both of whom have passed on to heaven, but who's spirits and memories will forever be apart of our lives.

As I made my way to visit my dad, the grey skies were building and winds began to howl, and by the time I made it to his apartment it was "poring rain", but that didn't stop me, as one of my purposes today was to help my dad get his TV remote fixed and bring him a file organizer to give him easy access to his important papers. During my visit, he showed me some pictures of my mom and him in their youth and retold the stories of his life in the Navy, stories that I've heard many times before, but humbled myself to listen to because it made him happy and let's him know someone cares about him enough to listen. We would eventually make it to my car and head to Wal-mart for supplies and stop along the way home for lunch. By the end of the day my dad had his TV remote fixed and he had enough groceries to get him through another week, but more importantly I got to spend time honoring his life and showing him the love and forgiveness that he seeks to get him through another day.

05/28 - Day 3: [Hunger Study 2014](#) - Today I participated in my third site survey for the 2014 Hunger Study. Today's site location was The Food Center; a food pantry located in Warrensburg Missouri, where together with Claudia, Lara and Katie we conducted random surveys of clients receiving food assistance. These extensive, nationwide studies of hunger capture detailed information about those who currently receive emergency food assistance in our communities and their circumstances. The information collected will be an invaluable resource for understanding and developing programs that help support their future needs.

The Food Center is a non-profit organization that works with local churches, Faith-based organizations and community food networks; likes Harvesters, to supplement the food supply of low-income individuals and families living within the County. It also supplies food to area families in emergency situations, and today I got to see first hand the amazing work this organization does in helping those in need. The staff of volunteers and support personnel were compassionate and caring and never once treated anyone with disrespect or judgement. This is truly what it means to exemplify one's faith.

JUNE 2013

06/06 - Today I made a special trip to the [Don Bosco Senior Center](#) to visit and have lunch with my 82-year old dad. The Don Bosco Senior Center has been helping seniors age 60 and over and adults with disabilities maintain independent living by providing meals, transportation, fellowship and activities that promote health, education, and recreation. Don Bosco offers my dad the opportunity to socialize, receive meals that supplement his nutritional needs and provide a level of comfort to live out his life with dignity and meaning, and for this I am grateful.

As I sat down for lunch with my dad today, we were joined by Jackie, my dad's so-called "girlfriend". Jackie is a Vietnamese woman in her 70's, very sweet and small in stature. She really likes my dad a lot and they spend a lot of time together. I can tell that they enjoy each others company and she brings my dad great joy to have her around. As we finished up our lunches I sat and played Bingo with her and my dad, then said our goodbyes and took my dad to Wal-mart to pick-up some groceries together, a trip we make every week. I enjoy spending time with my dad and I hope that through my examples, it will reflect on my own son, as someday I too will be old and in need of care and compassion. At the end of our long day, I dropped my dad off at his apartment, gave him a hug, and told him "I loved him". Glory to God for allowing me to be in a position to share what He has given me with those in need!

06/10 - Today was my scheduled day of volunteering at the Phoenix Family Housing Organization's Mobile Food Pantry, and as usual I worked together with Karen (the site Service Coordinator), Lynn, Melanie and Dave to help unload food brought in from Harvester's Food Network for distribution to the wonderful senior residents of the Palestine Apartments; a low-income senior living community located in the urban core.

On a day that began on a disappointing note, it was once again great to see my friends and family at the Palestine Apartments and have my spirit lifted. Today I brought along a special article that I had written for Phoenix Family that I hope will be published in their quarterly newsletter. The article describes why I volunteer, and contains reference to all the wonderful senior residents and the joy they bring to me. I gave a copy of the article to Ms James; one of my favorite resident, as I had promised her that I would write about her and let her read it. She was happy that I hadn't forgot her and read the article on the spot. It was nice to see her smile. The rest of the day was filled with helping hands and conversation with all the wonderful residents and supporting staff of the Phoenix Family, they are very special group. I can only hope and pray that God will continue to allow me to pursue my mission work and be an example of how Faith can change our lives.

06/11 - Day 4: [Hunger Study 2014](#) - Today I participated in my fourth site survey for the 2014 Hunger Study. Today's site location was the St. Louis Social Services Food Pantry, where together with Aimee, and Ellen we conducted random surveys of clients receiving food assistance. These extensive, nationwide studies of hunger captures detailed information about those who currently receive emergency food assistance in our communities and their circumstances. The information collected will be an invaluable resource for understanding and developing programs that help support their future needs.

The services offered at this site are associated with the Catholic Diocese of Kansas City - St. Joseph Parish. It is a fairly small church with predominantly black Catholic parishioners and is located on one of Kansas City's wide boulevards. St Louis parish is a keystone of Catholic life in the local community with its Senior Center, Food Pantry, and Social Services and assistance office, and is yet another amazing agency that is making a difference by bringing hope to people's lives.

06/27 - Day 5: [Hunger Study 2014](#) - Today I participated in my fifth site survey for the 2014 Hunger Study. Today's site location was the KC Housing Authority - Pemberton Heights Public Housing, where together with Connie, Angela, Emily and Jim, we conducted random surveys of

clients receiving food assistance. These extensive, nationwide studies of hunger captures detailed information about those who currently receive emergency food assistance in our communities and their circumstances. The information collected will be an invaluable resource for understanding and developing programs that help support their future needs.

The services offered at this site are associated with the [Kansas City Housing Authority](#), whose mission is to develop, rehabilitate and manage decent, safe and affordable housing that promotes equal opportunity, fair housing and the deconcentration of race and poverty. Harvester's plays a key role in providing Mobile Food Pantry services to this location to supplement the nutritional needs of its residents, thereby giving them a better chance of living productive and independent lives.

06/27 - Today was also my first time participating as a volunteer for the [Greater KC Red Cross](#) - Mobile Meals for the Homeless Program, where together with Nancy, Kathy and Connie, we prepared and delivered meals to homeless individuals throughout the Kansas City Area. This was a unique opportunity that I had signed up for months ago and had finally gotten the opportunity to participate in. It was an excellent way to share my love and compassion for those who are living on the streets and struggling with homelessness and despair. It was amazing to see how many people from all walks of life are actually living on the streets. Some may argue that they choose this lifestyle, but mine is not to judge, but to provide hope and compassion. If I am able to help just one individual realize the power of faith through my example and help turn their life around, then it will all be worth while.

06/28 - Today I made a special trip to the Don Bosco Senior Center to visit and have lunch with my 82-year old dad. Don Bosco offers my dad the opportunity to socialize, receive meals that supplement his nutritional needs and provide a level of comfort to live out his life with dignity and meaning, and for this I am grateful to God.

Along the way I was going over life's daily doubts and struggles in my mind, wondering when my journey and God's purpose for me would be fulfilled. Little did I know the lessons I would be shown as God continues to fill my life with reminders of His presence..

As I arrived at the Senior Center the parking lot was packed, and so I had to drive around to find a parking spot. As I pulled into a spot around the block I was captured by a new song on the radio called "Same Love", so I sat in the car listening as the song played on. It was rap song about the struggles of being gay in today's society, the hypocrisies, judgment and prejudice they have to live with. The lyrics were inspiring and reminded me that in the end, we are all God's creation and we need only to look in the mirror to realize that none of us are without faults, and we all fall short of God's glory, but if we truly are followers of Christ, we should never judge or condemn others, but instead live our lives by example, by reaching out to all with kindness, compassion, mercy, forgiveness, and most of all with love, for it is love that binds us all together as one with God.

As I got out of the car and entered the Senior Center I couldn't help but notice the number of people here today. Dad greeted me in the lunch room and he told me it was because of the menu,

fried chicken and potatoes. As we sat together eating and socializing with the others an announcement came over the intercom...it was time to announce the "senior of the week". Each week the regulars submit a unique photo of themselves, and one person is selected by the staff to represent that weeks selection. It is a way to promote togetherness and give the people who attend something to look forward to, and on this day my dad was selected. He stood and took his bow and soaked up the attention. It was nice to see him feeling apart of something special.

After lunch I was waiting on a staff member to provide paper work that we needed to filled out annually to allow my dad to continue attending the Senior Center, and as I was waiting, an elderly gentleman approached me from behind, he was attempting to read the bulletin board schedule to see what time the band would begin playing. We struck up a conversation and he suddenly began to tell me about a near death experience he had. Apparently several years ago he was taken to the hospital and died on the table. He went on to explain that when this happened, he began to see everything that was going on from outside his physical body and "the light" that appeared before him just moments later. He explained that once he looked at the light he could not turn away from it. Suddenly he was drawn upwards into the heavens only to be stopped by what appeared to be a cloud. This cloud would not allow him to pass and expressed to him that he was still needed to fulfill a purpose. When he awoke in the hospital some 3 hours later, there was a long recovery time in which his ex-wife suddenly began to deteriorate from a long battle with Alzheimers. With no immediate family to turn to, he began the long journey of taking care of her, and although she would eventually pass on several years later, this gentleman truly believed that the meaning of his near death experience was fulfilled through the care giving he was to give to his ex-wife. He told me he had given me the short version of his story, and that many have approached him to write a book about his experience or to tell his story on the religious circuit, but he declined those offers. Instead, his message to me was "if you have a feeling in your heart that God is calling you for a purpose, you should listen to it".

With our paperwork completed, my dad and I continued our day by going to Walmart to pick-up a fan for my dad's apartment and groceries for the week, then ended or day with a hug. By the time my day came to end it was apparent to me that the daily doubts and struggles that began my day had been replaced with lessons from my heavenly father, lessons that would energize my spirit and remind me that He is always there to provide for my needs.

JULY 2013

07/01 - *Today was my scheduled day of volunteering at the Phoenix Family Housing Organization's Mobile Food Pantry, and as usual I worked together with Karen (the site Service Coordinator), Melanie and Dave to help unload food brought in from Harvester's Food Network for distribution to the wonderful senior residents of the Palestine Apartments; a low-income senior living community located in the urban core.*

Once again it was great to see my friends and family at the Palestine Apartments and have my spirits lifted. The day was filled with helping hands and conversation with all the wonderful residents and supporting staff of the Phoenix Family and Harvesters. Today I was given a special gift from Karen (Phoenix Family Service Coordinator) for recognition of the volunteer work I have been providing and a homemade lunch for which I am grateful, but the real reward

is seeing the smiles on the faces of the senior residents and the relationships I've built over the last year. What a great opportunity to share God's love and compassion with those in need.

07/08 - *When I began the Leap Of Faith journey almost 2 years ago God had blessed my life with the resources necessary to give up my career and take on the commitment of discovering the true meaning of Faith. Since that time I have come to know God personally and have seen and felt Him working in my life. Through my commitment to Faith, God has given me opportunities to share His message of hope with others, and for this I am grateful.*

As my faith continues to grow I have become more receptive to God's callings and the opportunities He has opened up for me. Unfortunately the resources in which I've been blessed with are nearly depleted, and although my trust and faith remains in God that He will provide for my needs, it is the resources required to continue the Leap Of Faith movement and its mission that is in peril.

For this reason, today I was compelled to seek the blessings of my fellow believers and followers through a special fundraiser. I have added a Donation button and [Donation webpage](#) to the Leap Of Faith website. The money raised will go towards the continued support of the Leap Of Faith movement and its mission, including the cost of travel associated with my volunteer missions, website promotion and future opportunities where I can share God's message of hope through faith. I will track all expenditures of donated funds via my personal Journal of Faith in Action webpage to ensure the confidence and trust of all donors.

07/12 - *Living a life in Faith is more than just believing that we are made right with God and forgiven of our sins through our Faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For it is only when our Faith is expressed in acts of love for one another that we exemplify the fullness and spirit of Faith and begin to experience what it truly means to have the joy and peace in our life that our heavenly father wants us to have, and today I was blessed to have the opportunities to do so.*

The day began with a trip to the local Salvation Army to drop off a box of old sporting gear that I had laying around in my garage. My hope is that these items will help bring some joy to a child or adult who would not be able to afford them otherwise, and to bring some much needed income to an organization that does so much good in the community.

From there, I made a special trip to visit my 82 year old dad at the Don Bosco Senior Center, where he can be found 5 days a week, enjoying lunch and activities that make his life easier. I sat and had lunch with him and connected with many of the regulars. One in particular was a young man I had seen once before, he suffers from a brain injury and visits Don Bosco daily along with his chaperon. As we sat eating, he struck up a conversation with me saying hello. I learned that he had been run over by a car during an altercation, and is now having to re-learn to walk, talk and use his hands. I felt compassion for him and was humbled by the difficult life and journey he has been given. I encouraged him to seek the Lord and remain steadfast in his Faith, and trust in God, then left him with the message that if he did so he would someday walk again. He smiled.

Throughout my stay at lunch, I could not help but notice the caring nature in my own dad. He was so helpful with many of the attendees; taking time to help a blind man who needed help with

his lunch and making sure his "girlfriend" had extra food items to take home with her. Looks like dad's faith is starting to shine through. Afterwards, my dad and I took our normal trip to Walmart for groceries and I helped him with repairing his vacuum cleaner before dropping him off for the day. I'll spend the rest of my day enjoying time with my own family and cherishing the blessings I have been given.

Everyday is a day to make a difference in someone's life by sharing the God-given blessing we have with those in need. I am so grateful that God has given me these opportunities today to do just that. For all I have and all that I will be is because of Him, and I praise him for letting my light so shine that other's may see and know that it is because of Him.

07/13 - Day 6: [Hunger Study 2014](#) - Today I participated in my sixth site survey for the 2014 Hunger Study. Today's site location was the [Church on the Rock Outreach Center](#) - Love's Outreach Food Pantry, where together with Aimee, Stephanie, Ann and Tom, we conducted random surveys of clients receiving food assistance. These extensive, nationwide studies of hunger captures detailed information about those who currently receive emergency food assistance in our communities and their circumstances. The information collected will be an invaluable resource for understanding and developing programs that help support their future needs.

On this day, I was the backup for the technical team, which meant I did not have to attend unless someone could not make it. But I attended anyway to have the opportunity to build relationships with the new Harvesters volunteers, offer advise and training, and to see the benefits that this amazing agency provides to our community. Today I got to meet and get to know several new volunteers, like Ann; a retired counselor for Johnson County Community College, and Tom; a Harvesters ambassador and representative for Black & Vetch (a local architectural firm), I also got to know a little more about the Church and its role in the community.

The pantry services offered at this site are one of several programs associated with the Church on the Rock, whose mission is to "Raise Up an Army of Believers to reach the lost and disciple the found", and the one things that captured my attention when I arrived was the volume of people who were there for assistance. On every second Saturday of the month over 120 families from all walks of life arrive to receive assistance, and the need was great today.

Harvester's plays a key role in providing Mobile Food Pantry services to this location to supplement the nutritional needs of its residents, thereby giving them a better chance of living productive and independent lives. It never ceases to amaze me how many great organizations and agencies are exemplifying the true meaning of Faith. I am honored and privileged to play a small part.

07/17- Day 7: [Hunger Study 2014](#) - Today I participated in my seventh site survey for the 2014 Hunger Study. Today's site location was the [Evangel Church](#) - Food Pantry, where together with Kelcey, Michelle and Willa, we conducted random surveys of clients receiving food assistance. These extensive, nationwide studies of hunger captures detailed information about those who currently receive emergency food assistance in our communities and their circumstances. The information collected will be an invaluable resource for understanding and developing programs that help support their future needs.

Today I got to work with and get to know a new Harvesters volunteer, her name was Willa, she was a one time school teacher for the KCMO school district, who now teaches English lessons to corporate employees and creates learning curriculum at her home office, while still finding time to volunteer for Harvesters in her spare time. I also got to see an old acquaintance from Harvesters Volunteer Outreach Center; Michelle, who I've worked with before on another Harvester's event. What a great group of people.

The pantry services offered at this site are one of several programs associated with the Evangel Church, whose vision is expressed with the following quote "Together we will Love God, Love One Another, and Serve the World.". One of the things that captured my attention when I arrived at this site was the positive energy that was present. From the moment I met Bill and Pam (the organizers of the Food Pantry) I could tell their genuine commitment and compassion for what they were doing, and this spirited energy permeated to all the pantry volunteers who were there to help, including myself.

The food pantry itself began with a group prayer, and from there each pantry volunteer worked together with enthusiasm and passion to make sure everyone who needed food got it. As the cars rolled up, each pantry volunteer was there to greet and offer them bags of food with a smile. The energy was so high that I even jumped in to help during the lulls in the Hunger surveys. During this time I also got to connect with a few of the pantry volunteers, like Clara; an elderly African American woman who worked for the Juvenile Justice System for 42 years and now spends her days volunteering. Her energy and enthusiasm were a sight to behold, and you could tell that the love of God shined like a light through her actions. There were many others as well, like Judy, another senior lady who was there with her son, who was working as a pantry volunteer. She told me her whole medical history and how much she enjoyed just being there to witness the wonderful work being done. I could tell she just wanted someone to listen to her, and I was more than welcome to oblige.

At the end of the day the pantry had served over 100 people, and we completed approximately 10 client surveys. But this site will remain one of the most memorable for me, as the genuine spirit of love and compassion could be felt and seen in the actions of it's organizers and volunteers, and for that I am truly grateful for having witnessed and to have played a small part in.

07/22 - *Today was my scheduled day of volunteering at the Phoenix Family Housing Organization's Mobile Food Pantry, and as usual I worked together with Karen (the site Service Coordinator), Melanie, Lisa and Dave to help unload food brought in from Harvester's Food Network for distribution to the wonderful senior residents of the Palestine Apartments; a low-income senior living community located in the urban core.*

The pantry began late, as a new delivery driver had replaced our usual driver, but the seniors were very patient. While awaiting the delivery I got a chance to catch up with my friends from Phoenix Family; Karen has been battling a knee issue for many months now and is scheduled for knee replacement surgery in the next few days, Melanie just got back from a family vacation to Galveston and had pictures to show us, Lisa was struggle with the demands of her position with Phoenix and wondered how she was going to get it all done today, and of course Dave, who continues to be engulfed in his work at Phoenix Family and his goal of becoming a history

major. What an amazing group!

It has become common practice for the last few pantry dates to have Dave and I handle the north building residents, and today was no different. I have become accustomed to these residents and know many of them by first name. After unloading and setting up the food, we had Wilma (a resident) help us call out the names in groups to allow them to begin sacking up their food. Wilma has become a very good helper of late and promised to save me a piece of her famous peach pie that she'll be making from the peaches brought in today. Afterwards, I had time to spend talking and getting to know many of the residents. It was a wonderful opportunity to connect with them and let them know how much I love serving them and caring for their needs. I look forward to visiting them again in another 3 weeks.

07/25 - *As a child, I was fortunate to have both my mom and dad there to love and care for me. Something I would not fully appreciate until later in life. Unfortunately, like many families, my dad had his own demons and issues, that when left to their own device, would catch up to him and cause him to lose his family's trust, respect and eventually his marriage.*

Since my mom's passing almost 2 years ago. I have been given the opportunity to rebuild my relationship with my estranged dad, and have come to forgive him for the actions of his past. I now talk with him on a daily basis and visit him often to tend to his needs and help him grow in his faith.

Today, we had lunch together at the Don Bosco Senior Center, where he can be found 5 days a week, enjoying lunch and activities that make his life easier. Because of my frequent visits I have come to know the staff and many of the people who attend the daily meal program, and all of them speak highly of him. My dad tells me often how much he enjoys my visits and how much he appreciates the attention that I give him, but although his praise is appreciated, I tell him, and believe, that I'm not doing anything special, it's just the right thing to do. After our lunch, I took him and his companion (Jackie) back to his apartment so I could shampoo his carpet, then off again to make our weekly visit to Walmart for supplies.

After my visit with my dad, I would attend my scheduled volunteer commitment with the [Greater KC Red Cross](#) - Mobile Meals for the Homeless Program, where together with Kathy, Molly and her daughter Isabelle, we would make meals for the homeless and parse the streets of the city to hand out hot meals for the forgotten ones of our society.

Everyday is an opportunity to make a positive difference in someone's life, and for today I give praise to God for His grace and the opportunities He has given me to grow in my Faith. Although my life is still filled with struggles and doubts at times, it is my trust and faith in Him that gives me the quite confidence that no matter what He will provide me with what I need.

AUGUST 2013:

08/06 - *There are many families who start a tradition that they carry on from year to year, and for our family it began with taking a family vacation every year as a way to celebrate our son's birthday's while enjoying the togetherness that comes with spending time together as a family.*

Today we returned home from this years family vacation trip to New Orleans, a city best known for it's food and celebration, but is also steeped in history, music, architecture and its religious foundations, most of which we got to experience while there. And although our trip was not without its ups and downs, the experience was one that I will cherish and will forever be engrained in the memories of our lives.

Enjoying each day and every moment in your life is a message that I learned from my mom, and re-enforced by the knowledge and wisdom I have gained from God's word and my personal relationship with Him. Today I give praise to God for giving me the opportunity to have a loving family to be able to spend time with, and I pray that He will continue to bless me and my family and give me the patients and endurance to fulfill my purpose through Him.

08/07 - *Today I made my weekly trip to visit my 82-year old dad, only this week was unique. Rather than our normal lunch at the Don Bosco Senior Center, my dad had called me a few days earlier with urgency in his voice, to ask if I would pickup him and Jackie (his so-called girlfriend) and take them by Walmart to get a ring re-sized.*

For some time now my dad has taken a liking Jackie, a small stature Vietnamese woman who has a slight resemblance to my late mother. He met Jackie at the Senior Center, and lately he has been talking about getting married. He had purchased a ring a few weeks ago and was unable to get it sized at the time, so today was the day he wanted to get this done.

When I think back to the time when my mom passed away after a short battle with cancer, I remember the anguish I felt over her loss, and how I questioned my faith.

Little did I know that God was using this event in my life to bring me closer to Him, to see and feel the awesome power and glory of a loving God.

Little did I know that I would learn to forgive and show the love and mercy towards others as my loving God has shown me.

Little did I know that I would be given the chance to rebuild a relationship with my dad that had been lost to anger and resentment, and for that I am grateful.

08/10 - Day 8: [Hunger Study 2014](#) - *Today I participated in my eighth site survey for the 2014 Hunger Study. Today's site location was the St. Mary's Episcopal Church, where together with Connie, Sandy and Ann we conducted random surveys of clients receiving food assistance. These extensive, nationwide studies of hunger captures detailed information about those who currently receive emergency food assistance in our communities and their circumstances. The information collected will be an invaluable resource for understanding and developing programs that help support their future needs.*

The Food Pantry services offered at this site are associated with [Downtown Outreach](#), which works closely with social service agencies throughout the KC Metro. They are a secular 501(c) (3) organization, operating on the premises of St. Mary's Episcopal Church on the East Side of Downtown KC, and every Saturday they provide a hot lunch and groceries to those in need.

Their policy allows anyone who is struggling, regardless of income or geographic location, to find hunger relief once a week. One of the things that stood out for me today was the volunteer staff running the pantry. In particular a lady named "Roz", who was so full of energy and exemplified the true meaning of compassion, her spirit lit up the room as she served each and every client, greeting each by name, connecting with them on a personal level, and treating each person with dignity and respect. What a blessing it was to watch. At the end of the day she had served over 60 people, sending them all home with a smile and hope. Yet another amazing agency that is making a difference in people's lives.

08/12 - *Today was my scheduled day of volunteering at Phoenix Family Housing's Mobile Food Pantry, but today was a little different. Karen, the site coordinator was not there, she has been battling a knee problem for some time now and finally found relief with a knee replacement, and so today she was at home recovering from surgery. And so today it was up to Lisa, Melanie, Sterling and myself to help unload food brought in from Harvester's Food Network and distribute it to the wonderful senior residents at the Palestine Apartments; a low-income senior living community located in the urban core.*

Once again the pantry began late, as our new delivery driver was late getting his delivery to us, but the senior residents were very patient. Eventually our delivery driver showed up, and while we were unloading, my senior friend Wilma, who's been helping us out lately, greeted me at the North building entrance and promptly told me how she had saved me some of her famous peach cobbler that she promised me during my last visit. I smiled, told her much I was looking forward to it all week, and gave her a big hug, what a sweet and thoughtful woman, I can't wait to get home and try it!

Over the past year and a half I have become very close to all of the senior residents at the Palestine Apartments, and it fills my heart with great joy to see them and serve their needs. It's amazing to see how a simple act of giving a small portion of your time, a smile or just simply sitting down and listening while someone shares their life experiences with you can impact someone's life. As true believers and followers of Jesus Christ, we must never forget that we are to live or lives by the examples set forth by our Lord and Savior, through acts of tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and forgiveness. And above all, with LOVE for God, and one another, for it is LOVE that binds us all together in perfect harmony with our heavenly father.

08/22 - *Today I made my weekly trip to visit my 82-year old dad at the Don Bosco Senior Center, where he can be found five days a week enjoying the food, activities and companionship this wonderful organization has to offer.*

On a normal visit, I would sit down and have lunch, but today my purpose was to just spend some quality time with my dad and interact and connect with the some of people who attend on a daily basis. From the moment I walked in I could tell that today was Bingo day, and as I approached the table where my dad was sitting I could see that he was very much into it, with his girlfriend Jackie sitting across from him I could see that both were intensely focused, scanning their boards at the call of each number with anticipation of winning the big prize.

But before sitting down, I noticed my friend Manuel sitting at the end of the table with his

chaperon. Manuel is a young man recovering from a brain injury that he suffered after being run over by a car during an altercation. He is now having to re-learn to walk, talk and use his hands, and he visits Don Bosco on a daily basis to help him along his journey. But before I could greet him, he flagged me down, telling me that he wanted to make me a gift; a painting of sorts, using calligraphy to write out the names of me and my dad, he wanted to confirm the spelling of my name so that he got it right. As I sat down to talk with him a bit, I offered him some home grown tomatoes I had brought from my garden and I let him know just how much I appreciated his kindness and thoughts of me. We sat and had conversation, and after a while I left him with words of encouragement, letting him know that I had been praying for his recovery, telling him that he would one day walk and talk like before. He smiled and said "I hope so". As I walked away, I couldn't help but be reminded that it's moments like this in our lives that make you realize the importance of our connection with others, and how the simple act of listening and reaching out in compassion and love towards those who are in need can make a difference. This is what living a life in faith is all about!

As I made my way down the table, I stopped to greet a few of the visitors whom I've come to know and handed out the remaining tomatoes from my garden. Eventually I made my way to my dad, and I sat down to greet him and Jackie with a smile. I sat there watching and listening as the Bingo games ensued, with both my dad and Jackie winning a game. I told them I brought them good luck, since the last time I was here on Bingo day Jackie had won, they both smiled and agreed. After bingo, I took them both to Walmart for groceries and then took them home to finish up our day.

Over the past year I have been blessed with the opportunity to build many relationships with both the staff members and those who attend Don Bosco for the food and activities, with each person having their own personal story of how life has molded them to become the person that they are today, and each one giving testimony to the common struggles and difficulties we all face in life. But just as important is the opportunity that I've had to rebuild my relationship with my dad, for if not for the grace of God, and my choice to surrender myself to His will and glory, I would not be able to see and experience the true meaning and spirit of living a life in faith.

08/30 - Today was the final day of the [2014 Hunger Study](#). This extensive, nationwide study of hunger, conducted every 4 years, was a collaborative effort between [Feeding America](#); the nation's leading domestic hunger-relief charity, and regional food networks from across the country. It is one of the largest volunteer-driven surveys of any type in the country and is designed to capture detailed information about the agencies and people who receive food assistance in our communities. The information collected from this study will be used as an invaluable resource for understanding the issue of hunger in America and allow our leaders and advocacy groups to design, develop or improve existing programs to get food to the people that need it.

During this 4+ month study I was blessed with the opportunity to be apart of a dedicated team of volunteers and staff members from [Harvesters Community Food Network](#); one of the largest regional food networks in the Midwest, where together we were able to successfully conduct a total of 94 different site visits and complete more than 500 clients surveys.

However, this amazing journey was so much more than just statistics. This opportunity has given

me new insight into the issue of hunger in America today, and has opened my eyes to the giving spirit of the human race. The sheer number of agencies that are helping to fight hunger in our communities alone was nothing short of amazing and a true reflection of the goodness and giving nature that I believe lies within each of us.

But more than that it was the personal stories and the relationships that were built during this effort that have made a lasting impression on my life. Time after time I saw agencies struggling to make ends meet, but continued their efforts to help those less fortunate with little more than hope and faith in their cause. I met volunteers, who despite their own struggles, gave their time and efforts to help others. I met some amazing people who have dedicated their entire lives to helping others and I got to see and hear the stories of people just like you and I who found themselves struggling to make ends meet and just needed a helping hand to get them through. It was not only humbling, but inspiring, and it is these experiences and memories that I will cherish the most from my participation in this study.

SEPTEMBER 2013

09/09 - *Today was a my weekly trip to visit with my 82-year old dad. Although I talk with my dad almost everyday, these weekly visits have become rather special for both of us, but rather than our normal routine visit, where I would visit him at the Don Bosco Senior Center for lunch and make a trip to Walmart afterwards, today I visited my dad at his apartment instead.*

There were two reason for this change in our normal visit, for one my dad had recently received a bill from his apartment manager and was concerned and worried about why, he was adamant that he had payed all his bills on time and just couldn't understand way he was getting this bill. It had gotten so bad that he started getting paranoid about all the possible reason why he was being targeted, and called me several time since receiving the bill to relay his latest plot. Seniors are like this sometimes, they have nothing better to do then to sit, worry and complain about the world around them, and my dad is no different, but rather than get frustrated with him, my job is to honor and love him, to treat him with patients and understanding, and that is what i did. Unfortunately for the both of us, his apartment manger wasn't there today, and so that part of today's agenda will be continued.

The second half of our day was set aside for the purpose of getting my dad to a personal appointment, which went off without a hitch, and with our time together running to a close we made a special trip by the local Salvation Army to drop off some un-used items that I had gathered from my garage, then eventually dropping him off at Don Bosco for his daily meal and socializing.

All in all it was a good day for the both of us, we were able to share some quality time together and continue to rebuild our relationship that was lost so many years ago. My hope and prayers are that someday I can regain the relationships with my brothers, which were lost after the passing of my mom.

09/19 - *Today was my scheduled volunteer commitment with the [Greater KC Red Cross](#) - Mobile Meals for the Homeless Program, where together with Nancy, Helen, Orville and Richard we*

cooked, packaged and delivered hot meals to the homeless who live on the streets of our cities urban core.

Our evening began with the arrival of Richard, a very special volunteer who has been volunteering his time to the program for over 7 years. As we began to prepare the meals I had time to connect with him, discover his story and build a relationship that I hope will continue. Richard has a unique story of struggle and pain, but finds comfort in Faith and giving back, something we both share. Not long after my conversation with Richard, Nancy, Helen and her husband Orville would arrive to help out with the preparation and loading of meals into the SRV vehicle, and during that time I was able to connect with them as well and found a common thread that we all hold; the gift of compassion and giving.

At the conclusion of our tour together, we were able to feed 28 homeless people in our local community, the forgotten ones of our society, each having their own story of struggles and pain, However I pray that the compassion and love that we showed them today will allow them to see and understand the power and glory of a loving God and bring hope into their lives.

09/21 - *Today I signed up for this years Check-Out Hunger event. This event is sponsored by the Retail Grocers Association in collaboration with Harvester's Community Food Network and utilizes scanable coupons and promotional posters; delivered and setup by volunteers, to help raise awareness and money to feed the hungry throughout our community. Last year alone we raised over \$350,000, and we hope to raise even more this year.*

09/23 - *Today was my scheduled day of volunteering at the Phoenix Family Housing Organization's Mobile Food Pantry, and as usual I worked together with the Phoenix family staff and volunteers to help unload fresh foods brought in from Harvester's Food Network for distribution to the senior residents of the Palestine Apartments; a low-income senior living community located in the urban core.*

Today also marked the return of Karen (the site coordinator), who was unable to attend the last few MFP events due to a recent knee replacement. It was wonderful to see her again and know that she is feeling better, and to make things even better, we also got help from several new volunteers; Neecy, Deanna, Rita and Amy, employees from the local United Missouri Bank who were there today to share in the experience of giving back.

09/26 - *My morning began with anxiety and anticipation as I looked forward to taking a scheduled test exam, one that I have been studying for several weeks now, and one that will give added creditability to potential employers as I continue my journey to find ways to provide for my family.*

But with each passing minute the excitement of the morning began to give way to doubt, I began asking myself, "did I study enough?, will I pass? what happens if I don't pass?. Eventually this doubt brought about fear, the fear of failure, the fear of lost time and money, the fear of not being able to show the world a prize for my hard work.

But my anxiety and stress were soon lightened and dissolved as I sat down, as I usually do every morning, to read and study God's Word. His message of hope through trust and faith brought

home the insignificance of worldly desires that can lead to selfish pride and opened my eyes to true meaning of success in life; giving glory and honor to God. And as I allowed this message to soak into my heart and mind, I began to experience comfort and peace in knowing that no matter what happens today, pass or fail, I need not worry of fear, for God's loving grace is enough, and He will find a way to provide for my needs.

This feeling of comfort and peace would stay with me on my journey to the testing center, and as I sat in the testing center to begin my exam, I reached out to my Lord and Savior to ask Him to hold my hand, and together we would pass the exam, but more importantly it was the test of Faith that means the most to me.

And so today I give special thanks and praise to God the father, for His loving Grace, for giving me pride, not in self, but in the glorification of Him through me. For all I am and all that I will become is because of Him!

09/27 - *Today I spent the morning volunteering at Harvesters Volunteer Outreach Center helping sort donated food items that will be distributed to agencies that help feed the many children, seniors and families in our community.*

Because of my involvement in the recent Hunger Study 2014 it has been a few months since I've had time to spend volunteering at the VOC, but today brought back all the memories of why I give my time to this amazing organization. As I entered the facility I was greeted by the receptionist who greeted me by my name, not something I expected after a few months of absence. And as I made my way onto the warehouse floor I saw all the familiar faces of staff and volunteers whom I've come to know and love, each sharing their gift of compassion and love for fighting the issue of hunger in our communities, I learned of long time volunteers (like my friend James) who are no longer there and of new staff members and volunteers who have joined the ranks, like Jen and a group from UMB bank, I saw old friends like Doris and Laura, all joining forces to give back.

When the afternoon rolled around and my volunteer time ended, I spent the afternoon attending the Hunger Study 2014 recognition luncheon. This special event was setup to recognize all the volunteers and staff who made the Hunger Study a success. We spent time together recognizing the team and individual efforts, the importance of the study and statistics. But for me this amazing journey was so much more than just statistics. This opportunity has given me new insight into the issue of hunger in America today, and has opened my eyes to the giving spirit of the human race. The sheer number of agencies that are out there helping to fight hunger in our communities alone was nothing short of amazing and a true reflection of the goodness and giving nature that I believe lies within each of us.

But more than that it was the personal stories and the relationships that were built during this study that have made a lasting impression on my life. I saw agencies struggling to make ends meet, yet continuing their efforts to help those less fortunate with little more than hope and faith in their cause. I met volunteers, who despite their own struggles, gave their time and efforts to help others. I met some amazing people who have dedicated their entire lives to helping others and I got to see and hear the stories of people just like you and I who found themselves struggling to make ends meet and just needed a helping hand to get them through. It was not

only humbling, but inspiring, and it was these experiences and memories that I will cherish the most from my participation in this study.

OCTOBER 2013:

10/04 - *Today I made my weekly trip to visit my 82-year old dad, where together we would make a trip to the local Walmart to pick-up some needed groceries.*

Upon my arrival I noticed that he brought along a large envelope, and within the envelope where pictures from our families past, most of them were photos of my mom and him in their younger years, but there were also photos of his days in the Navy and relatives. I could tell it brought great joy to his spirit as he sat there reminiscing about the days of his youth and the good times he spent with my mom.

You see my dad is a lonely and isolated man, for the choices he made as a younger man still haunt him, and he remains imprisoned in his mind by the actions of his past. This is where I come in, I have made it my purpose to help him to lean on his faith in his times of need and have learned to forgive him, for just as Christ has forgiven us, we must learn to forgive others, and so it is that I spend the time I have remaining with him by honoring him and showing my love for him in my words and actions. For as a children of God we are called to "honor our father and mother" with the promise that when we do so, things will go well for us, and we will have a long life on earth, but not only that, it is the right thing to do.

As we drove on to our destination our conversation continued, we spoke about our memories of the cars he use to own, his daily trips to the Don Bosco Senior center and the upcoming move from his apartment; something that he is very concerned and nervous about, but I assured him that I would be there for him to handle any concerns he may have, words that eased his mind and brought him comfort.

After our trip to Walmart we would drop off the groceries at his apartment and share the last minutes of our day traveling to the Don Bosco Senior Center, where I would drop him off to spend the rest of his day sharing a meal and conversation with his senior friends.

I love you dad, and I hope and pray that God continues to bless our lives and allow us to continue to grow together in our faith in Christ.

10/09 - *Today marks an emotional milestone in my journey in Faith as I conclude my volunteer time with the [Phoenix Family Housing Organization's](#) Mobile Food Pantry.*

You see God appears to be taking me in yet another direction as I have been blessed with an opportunity to re-establish my IT career, and although I have been reluctant to return to the corporate world, I believe that this will give me the best opportunity for now to relieve the stress of being able to provide for the needs of my family and will open new doors of opportunity to give glory to God.

And so it is with mixed emotions that I begin this new course, for I have been truly blessed to

have been given the opportunity to work with this amazing organization and share in their vision of a day when everyone can achieve their potential.

I have been told that during my time with Phoenix Family I have helped to serve 111 residents, over twenty times, and deliver close to 50,000 lbs of food to the senior residents at Palestine Apartments, a true testament to how the power of Faith can change peoples lives.

But more than that it was the personal stories and the relationships that were built during my volunteer time that have made a lasting impression on my own life, and although my regular volunteer visits to Palestine Apartments have come to an end, I will continue to support Phoenix Family in other ways as I open a new chapter in my journey in Faith.

10/10 - *Today I visited my 82 year old dad to help finish up his apartment move. You see my dad's old apartment has seen better days and the owners of the building had finally decided to remodel it, giving him a new apartment to move into while the the work is being done. And so, for the past few days my brother and I have been working hard to make sure that the move went smoothly. It has been a stressful time for dad, as the elderly (and most everyone for that matter) are not always receptive to change, but I've tried to be there for him every step of the way to ease his mind and bring comfort and assurance that we would get through this together. And so today marked a milestone, as we were finally able to get all my dad's belongings moved out of his old apartment and into the new. The coming days will be spent ensuring that his telephone gets re-connected and everything gets unpacked so that he can get back to his routine.*

It was nice to be able to spend this time with my dad and my brother; whom I haven't seen or spoken to since the passing of my mom almost two years ago. I have to wonder if somehow God is using this opportunity to re-build the sense of family that seems to have been lost after my mom passed away. But either way, I will continue to pray for both of them, that God will bring joy and peace into their lives and continue to bless them.

10/17 - *Today was my scheduled volunteer commitment with the [Greater KC Red Cross](#) - Mobile Meals for the Homeless Program, where together with Richard, Nancy, Helen and he husband Orville we cooked, packaged and delivered hot meals, hats, socks and hygiene kits to the homeless who live on the streets of our cities urban core.*

The evening began rather slow, as many of our routine stops would only produce a handful of needy folks, but it would soon blossom as we came across a large group gathered in the heart of the city. In fact, the group was so large that we ran out of food before we could serve them all. But as sad as it was to leave some without, we found comfort in knowing the at the end of the evening we were able to feed 28 people who may have gone without on this day. In addition, we can now add this new location to our normal route so that those left behind on this day may be blessed tomorrow.

Unfortunately for me, this may be the last time I will be participating in the Mobile Meals for the Homeless Program, as God is leading me in another direction. And so it is with mixed emotions that I will be leaving this opportunity that God has given me to work with this amazing organization to pursue another path. A new path that will enable me to find new ways to serve others, but with the same purpose, to Glorify God and inspire others to become a living example

of how the power of Faith can change our lives and the lives of others.

I will cherish the memories and relationships that I've made over the past 2 years and I pray that those whom I've shared the commitment of love and compassion for those in need with, will continue to be blessed all the days of their lives.

10/28 - *Today I made a special trip to Harvesters to "pick-up" promotional material for this year's upcoming Harvesters "Check- Out Hunger" event. This yearly event is sponsored by the Retail Grocers Association in collaboration with Harvester's Community Food Network, and utilizes scannable coupons at each check-out line to help raise awareness and money to feed the hungry throughout the community. I am honored to again be able to play a small part in this effort by volunteering my time helping those in need. In addition, what makes this effort so special is that Harvesters is able to provide five meals for every dollar contributed.*

NOVEMBER 2013:

11/01 - *Today I spent the morning "delivering and setting up" promotional material at two local grocery stores for Harvesters "Check- Out Hunger" event. This yearly event is sponsored by the Retail Grocers Association in collaboration with Harvester's Community Food Network and utilizes scannable coupons at each check-out line to help raise awareness and money to feed the hungry throughout our local communities. This year's event runs from November 2nd - January 5th, and our goal is to surpass the \$350,000 that was raised last year.*

Also today, I made a trip to visit with my 82-year old dad, where together we had lunch and spent some quality time together. In addition, I helped him out with several tasks that he needed to get done around his apartment, like checking out the batteries in his TV remote and going through some old mail that he was unsure whether to throw out. At the end of our visit, we jumped in the car and I took him by the local Wendy's to pick-up some of his favorite chili so he could have it for supper later this evening.

As I reflect back on today's events I realize that everyday is an opportunity to make a difference in someone's life through an act of kindness, compassion and love. And when we do so, we soon discover that the life we change may just be our own.

11/07 - *Today marks the second anniversary of the passing of my beloved mother, who fought the good fight against cancer twice in her life but could not overcome her final battle. It was a day that I will never forget, a day that marked the end of 4 months struggle of watching my mom suffer and deteriorate before my eyes, a day that I sat by her side and watched as her spirit left her body and she took her final breath, a day that changed my life forever.*

For it was on this day two years ago that I would make the decision to put my corporate career on hold and take a leap of faith that would begin an amazing journey of discovering the true meaning of faith, a journey that has led me down a path of discovering God's loving grace and His message of hope for those who are willing to accept it.

Over these past two years God has opened doors and blessed me with many opportunities to

share His message of hope through faith in our lord and savior - Jesus Christ. But more than that, I have learned that living a life in Faith is more than just believing that we are made right with God and forgiven of our sins through our Faith in our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. For if we truly are faithful followers of Jesus Christ we are called to express our Faith with acts of tenderhearted mercy, kindness, humility, gentleness, patience and forgiveness. And above all, with LOVE. For it is Love which binds us all together in perfect harmony. For it is only when our Faith is expressed in acts of love for one another that we truly exemplify the fullness and spirit of our Faith. And so it is, that through this blessed wisdom that I have received that I have been able to share with others this unfailing truth through my website and actions.

Unfortunately the time has come when the resources in which I've been blessed with are nearly depleted, leaving me no choice but to seek work to provide for my family, and once again God has not let me down. For it seems that God has opened yet another door to enable me to provide for my family and continue my journey...I learned just yesterday that I have been offered the opportunity to re-establish my career in the computer industry that will provide more abundantly than before. Ironically, I will be starting back my career with the same company that I left almost two years ago, and two years to the day when my beloved mother was buried.

I know not where this next phase of my journey will take me, but I do know that I will use this opportunity that I have been blessed with to find new ways to continue my service and life in faith to give glory to God!

11/17 - *Today marks the end of my first week working at my new job, a path that I chose with open arms, an opportunity that I felt was God-given and an answer to my prayers to begin providing once again for my family and their needs.*

However, as I reflect back on this first week of work I am reminded that some things never change. The corporate career I left over two years ago, and somehow found my way back to, has brought about the same feelings of struggle and doubt. On the one hand I am grateful that God has opened a door of opportunity for me to provide for my family, but on the other hand I find myself working at a company where I have no sense of belonging or purpose, where expectations and responsibilities are demanded without regard for the human toll, and the words of their mission are not exemplified their actions. But I must find a way to overcome these thoughts and feelings and rise above them. For God has a plan and purpose for me and He has lead me down this new path for a reason, and so I must continue to persevere with patience and trust.

Today I found some solace in knowing that because of the income I was able earn this week, I could now make a difference in someone's life by sharing this blessing with others. It began with a special donation to my friends and family at [Phoenix Family Housing](#) (specifically Karen and the residents of Palestine Apartments), who have made such a tremendous impact on my life during the past few years of volunteering. In addition, I was able to join with my family and friends to purchase items for [Operation Christmas Child](#); The worlds largest Christmas project of its kind which sends shoe boxes of gifts to needy children around the world. This year round project of International relief and evangelism is organized by Samaritan's Purse, a nondenominational evangelical Christian organization that has been providing spiritual and physical aid to hurting people around the world since 1970. We are excited to be apart of this effort and look forward to following our packages as they reach there destination, and into the

hands of a needy child. What a wonderful way to share God's message of hope and let a child know that someone cares!

11/29 - *It has been over two weeks since God blessed me with an opportunity to go back to work so that I can provide for the needs of my family. But it is with mixed emotions that I sit here today, wondering how God will use this opportunity to fulfill His purpose for me.*

You see, although I am grateful, I find myself wondering why God has chosen this particular opportunity for me to go back to work for a corporate business that I left years ago because of its lack of respect for its workers, and its focus on profits, and to lose the joy that came from serving others through my volunteer work.

But the more I think about it, the more I reflect back to my journey of faith that began some two years ago, and the lessons and knowledge that God has given me. You see, we don't always know how God will use us, For His ways are not our ways, and our plans for ourselves don't always align with His plans for us. But when we put our complete trust and faith in Him, we begin to realize just how truly blessed we are.

Today I made a special trip to visit my 82-year old dad to bring him a Thanksgiving plate and take him to the local Walmart for groceries, and because of the extra income that I earned from working, I was able to stop by the shoe store to purchase a new pair of winter shoes for my dad. He was so happy and grateful, that he called me several times on the phone to express how much he appreciated his new shoes and the time we spent together on this day. In addition, because of the extra income that I earned from working, I will now have an opportunity to give generous donations to the organizations and people whom I've come to know and love during my journey of faith that began some two years ago.

And so today I have learned that there is a season for everything, and when we focus on having an attitude of gratitude, we begin to see things as God wants us to. And although the work opportunity that I have been given once seemed so futile and vain, I have come to realize that I am working for God and His glory, and not for a corporation with limited vision and I must use this blessing to find new ways to honor and glorify His name. For the day will come, when the door of opportunity will open once again to a life that needs no money or gain, if I just have faith.

DECEMBER 2013:

12/12 - *"Blessings from God we are to share, so that when the time comes we shall not fear". There is nothing more important in life than giving praise, thanks and glory to our creator; the living God, whom through His loving grace has given each of us the opportunity of salvation and hope through FAITH in his son Jesus Christ, our Lord and Savior who came into this world to serve, teach and become the ultimate example for all humankind by conquering sin and death, so that we may recognize the awesome power and glory of our creator and see the fulfillment of a promise foretold by our heavenly father centuries ago, a promise of a Savior who would come into this world to sacrifice himself for the sins of all humankind so that we could be born again as children of God, regain a personal, loving relationship with our heavenly father and be filled*

with his spirit to live a life for His glory. It is the message of the season!

And so it is today, that I am compelled to give praise and glory to my heavenly father, for blessing me with prosperity and abundance, and allowing me, on this day, to share these blessings in the form of donations to my favorite charities. Charities that I have come to know and love during my journey in faith, and who are making a positive difference in this world by reaching out to those in need, so that those who are poor and weak in spirit can recognize how the power of love and faith can change their lives. Glory to GOD, and "thank you", [CBN](#), [Harvester's Food Network](#), [Samaritians Purse](#), [Salesian Mission](#) and [Smile Train](#) for the wonderful work you do in the name of our LORD!

12/19 - Today I learned that the special gifts that my family and friends purchased to help the children of Operation Christmas Child, had reached their final destination.

[Operation Christmas Child](#) is the worlds largest Christmas project of its kind which sends shoe boxes of gifts to needy children around the world. This year round project of International relief and evangelism is organized by Samaritan's Purse, a nondenominational evangelical Christian organization that has been providing spiritual and physical aid to hurting people around the world since 1970.

And so it is, that on this day we learned that our own special shoeboxes full of gifts, which began their journey over one month ago, were finally delivered to the children of Togo, Africa, a small west African country where forty-one percent of its 7.1 million people are 14-years-old or younger, a place where the organizers of Operation Christmas Child will work with local churches, ministry partners and volunteers to distribute thousands of shoebox gifts to local schools and orphanages.

But more importantly, along with their shoeboxes, these young children will receive the life-changing gift of the good news of Jesus Christ, as each child will be offered a Gospel storybook that contains colorful illustrations to explain the Good News of Jesus Christ in a simple and engaging style.

In addition, Operation Christmas Child will offer a voluntary follow-up discipleship program to each child who receives a shoebox gift, allowing them to learn who Jesus Christ is, what it means to follow Him, and how to share this exciting message with others. And to help these boys and girls continue to grow in their faith, Operation Christmas Child will also provide them with their own copies of a special edition New Testament, that includes select Old Testament stories, a dictionary, and a section that encourages the children to memorize Scripture.

What a wonderful and exciting way for my family to share God's message of hope with the children of Togo, and exemplify how the power of faith can change our lives and the lives of others!

12/20 - Today I made a special trip to visit my dad at the local [Don Bosco Senior Community Center](#) with the goal of having lunch with my dad and taking him to the grocery store. But as I entered the building, I discovered a full blown Christmas party in full swing, with volunteers and seniors from all walks of life who were there to attend this special gathering. It was such a

wonderful site to see all the seniors, many of which would have no other place to go and share this very special holiday with if not for the hard work and dedication of the Don Bosco staff and volunteers.

As I sat down at the table with my dad, I was greeted by several of the seniors whom I've come to know during my frequent visits, each expressing their joy at seeing me again and their excitement in telling me all about the events of the day, including live music, dancing and a special gift giving event.

As we sat together watching the days events unfold, I couldn't help but feel a sense of togetherness and love among the crowd. Then suddenly I realized how ironic it was that I had brought along my own special Christmas gift today, which I planned on giving to my dad, and when I presented it to him it brought a smile of thankfulness and joy on his face, a moment that I will never forget. As our day drew to a close at Don Bosco, my dad and I would eventually jump in my car to take trip to the local Walmart to pick-up some items to get him through week, and finally back home.

It was nice to spend this time together and share this very special time of year with my friends and family at Don Bosco. I only wish that the feelings and sentiments of the season could last throughout the year.

END OF YEAR SUMMARY

It has been 2 years now since I began my personal journey of discovering the true meaning of Faith. A journey that began with the tragic loss of my mother and mother-law to cancer, a time of deep sorrow and pain that would eventually open my eyes to a new life, a life that is now filled with hope and the promise of a glorious day when joy and peace will reign, and the struggles of this life will be a thing of the past.

This year began on a sad note, with the loss of my beloved friend Chuck, who passed away suddenly from a blot clot in his lung. Chuck was a long time companion of my mom's, and over the years I had gotten to know him very well. After my moms passing, we would often get together for lunch and enjoy each other's company. His loss was sudden and tragic, but served to solidify that our wordily lives are numbered, and we are all but a breath away from death. However, in the sadness of his loss, I found comfort in knowing that during his final months, his interest in God's word and the Christian Faith had begun to take hold, and I thank God for allowing me to be apart of his life, and to be there to share the wisdom and truth of His word with him before he passed.

As the year progressed, I found myself struggling with my declining resources and concern about providing for my families needs, which opened the door to an opportunity to use my passion for writing and volunteer experiences to launch a writing business. And although my plans did not work out as I wanted, God would be there to provide for my needs as the year would come to a close.

This year also served as a season of thankfulness for the relationships and special moments that I've come to appreciate through my Faith, the special moments spent with my aging dad,

vacation time spent with my wife and son, and opportunities shared with friends are a constant reminder of how truly blessed I am.

And most of all, this year was a year to give praise and glory to God, for opening the doors of opportunity for me to share His message of hope with others, and exemplify what it means to live a life of Faith by serving the poor, the old and weak in spirit with acts of mercy, kindness, forgiveness and LOVE.

As I reflect back on the many lessons of the year, one of the lessons I've come to realize is that I will never be perfect, and although this year was not without its spiritual struggles, I have come to understand that our Faith is growing process, which grows with the each difficulty and struggle we face. For just as the pressure of the earth forms a diamond, so it is with our Faith. However, when we put our complete trust and Faith in God, in good times and bad, we can endure and persevere.

As I look forward to the coming year, I see a new season beginning, one of renewed hope, change and growth. A new year, that will bring new opportunities to share the wisdom and blessings that God has given me with those I love, and to continue to inspire and encourage others to become a living example of how Faith can change our lives.