

November 2014

# Days of Hope

*Passionately communicating the love of God to hurting kids in a gentle way*

## New Opportunities

I am excited to share with you that Days of Hope has been invited to provide chaplains to a new facility in our area! After a series of meetings with the leadership of the Piney Ridge Treatment Center, we have been asked to come out to their campus and provide pastoral care services to the residents on a weekly basis! Our chaplains will continue to provide the same level of services we currently offer to kids and staff out at the Great Circle campus in St. James, as well as contact hours with youth in the residential drug rehabilitation program at Pathways in Rolla.

Piney Ridge Center is a 96-bed residential treatment center located just down the road in Waynesville, Missouri. They are a part of Woodbridge Behavioral Health, an organization that runs treatment programs in Tennessee, Arkansas, and here in Missouri. The local campus provides group, individual, and family therapy, education plans, nursing care, and psychiatric treatment to the children and teens in their care. Their programs include a pre-adolescent (ages 6-12) co-ed strength-based program, Sexual Offender Programs (ages 12-18) in male and female units, Psychiatric and Behavioral Programs (ages 12-18) in male and female units, and a bridge program that helps transition older adolescent clients out of care and into society. The Waynesville school district provides teachers for all of these children, who attend classes in a school building on the grounds.

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[daysofhope.net](http://daysofhope.net)

We are currently scheduling speaking engagements for 2015. We would love to come out and speak to your church, class, or community group. Contact us for more information!

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*Our October newsletter was published online only. If you want a hard copy to be mailed to you, please contact us, and we would be happy to send one out.*

# Her Mother is the Devil

The attendance to the girls chapel service last Thursday was strong. Aaron was speaking to the girls about Heroes and Villains, and I had stepped out to the foyer to dim the lights for a video clip when I heard some one call my name. Seated there against the wall was a little girl and a staff member from her cottage. Maddie (*name changed to protect privacy*) was new to the campus. She had become upset in the chapel before staff assisted her out to sit in the quiet foyer. She was jerking, shuddering, and occasionally shrieking. The staff informed me that she was hearing voices and responding to them. I pulled up a chair, sat down across from her, and asked her permission to hold her hands. Maddie placed her tiny hands in mine, and kept them there for the rest of our encounter.

"What's going on, sis?"

"The demons are bothering me, they make me do things. They want me to break my fingers."

"I want to pray for you. Can we pray?" Maddie nodded.

I began to pray out loud. As I invited Jesus into our presence, Maddie began speaking her own prayer.

"Sometimes I get angry. Jesus still loves me when I am angry . . . Jesus, you still love me when I am angry . . ."

Over the next half-hour, Aaron finished the service in the chapel while I sat with Maddie in the foyer. We talked, we prayed, she wrung my hands. Several different times Maddie began conversing with some unseen person in the middle of the room. I asked who she was interacting with, and Maddie patiently explained.

"Who are you talking to?"

"A little girl."

"A little girl?"

"Yes. Her mother is the Devil. The little girl is sad. Her mother burns her with very hot water . . ."

"What is she telling you?"

"She says I will be OK now , but she is very sad . . . Her mother hurts her . . ."

Maddie and I continued this way for some time. She told

me more about the little girl and her vicious mother. Soon Pastor Aaron closed the service in the chapel and the girls started filing out. When Maddie saw the rest of the girls leaving the chapel, she escalated, shrieking and shuddering. Another staff member who works in her cottage emerged from the chapel and confronted her.

"No ma'am. We are not going to do this. You can hold my hand and stop all of that right now."

Maddie immediately stopped, took his hand, and waited quietly as her cottage mates lined up and prepared to leave. As I watched the line of girls return to their cottage, questions filled my mind. *What to make of Maddie?*

A child psychologist will tell you that Maddie's presentation that night was one of active psychosis; a break with reality including auditory and visual hallucinations.

A behavioral specialist might inquire as to whether Maddie's fits are simply learned behaviors, perhaps a complex manipulation to help her manage her environment and relate to those around her.

A psychiatrist would place the blame on misfiring neural synapses. She would note that Maddie's anti-psychotic meds were not sufficient to manage her hallucinations, and would probably inquire about the dosage and timing of her medication regimen.

A good therapist would immediately focus on the brutal trauma that Maddie has suffered, recognizing that children who experience severe abuse learn to disassociate from their painful experiences.

Any pastor worth his salt would note that Maddie has an enemy; one who comes to steal, to kill, and to destroy. He would be aware of a spiritual battle; that our fight is not against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers in high places.

So who is right? Is Maddie actively psychotic? Is she hallucinating? Is she acting out in response to trauma? Are her synapses misfiring? Is she manipulating others with her outbursts? Or is she sitting at ground zero in a horrific spiritual battle?

*Her mother is the Devil Continued . . .*

I am learning that the brokenness of sin runs deep. People are capable of doing horrific things that profoundly affect a victim in a multitude of ways. Such trauma leaves these children emotionally scared, mentally delayed, and unable to engage in healthy relationships. The suffering they face early in life leaves them developmentally stunted, with maladaptive behaviors and chaotic responses to those around them. Sin is ugly, vicious, and pernicious. The depravity of an abusive mother has left Maddie affected in every part of her being.

Hers is a battle on every level.

Please pray for Maddie, and so many others who share a similar story. Pray for our chaplains as we come alongside and minister to these hurting ones. Pray for the staff at these facilities who are asked to work with kids like Maddie every day.

It is our hope that these children can experience the healing presence of Christ even in the midst of their dark battles.

*New Opportunities Continued . . .*

The leadership at Piney Ridge have graciously offered to allow our chaplains to join in a training group with their teachers over the next several months to familiarize us with their model of care. Aaron and I have already begun spending time with staff and children on that campus. Like other residential campuses that we have visited, the children and teens at Piney Ridge have all experienced severe trauma, neglect, abuse, and pain in their lives.

This is truly a big next step for Days of Hope, one that will allow us to impact the lives for so many more hurting youth. Please pray for Aaron and I as we adjust schedules and learn how best to serve the children and staff at this new location.

# Christmas Day Celebration

We have already received a few donations to help cover the expenses of our Christmas Day Celebration this year. **Thank You!!**

We expect to have a large number of youth at the St. James campus who are unable to go on a pass over the holidays. We hope to provide a fun time for each child as well as a stocking full of small gifts. Each stocking will include small toys, hygiene items, treats, and a special gift to help them grow in their faith. For many of the residents, this may be the only gift they will receive on Christmas Day. Perhaps the most important gift is just being present with the kids on a very difficult day.

Every year this event is a great success, and we are hoping for a similar experience this year. We will be including a service project as part of our programming on Christmas Day; this has proven to be a favorite for many of the kids. This year we will again be teaming up with Sole Hope; creating patterns for shoes to send to needy kids in Uganda.

The Christmas party itself includes game and inflatable rentals, food, and activities. Are you interested in being a part of this special event? We are looking for volunteer families to join us on the 25th, folks who can prepare food for the party, a clean up crew to help at the end of the evening, as well as financial sponsors to help offset the cost of this event.

If you are able to help meet any of these needs, please contact JoAnn at:

[Joann@daysofhope.net](mailto:Joann@daysofhope.net)



*Playing games on Christmas Day*

*Our chaplains provide pastoral care to children and teens in residential psychiatric facilities throughout central Missouri.*



## *The services that our Chaplains provide are:*

***Voluntary:*** We freely offer opportunities to worship and learn; we accept the choice of others to decline

***On Site:*** Rather than bringing them to a church, we bring church to hurting people where they are at

***Needs Based:*** We believe the pain and struggles of our clients are more important than any lesson plan or agendas of our chaplains, and intentionally defer to the needs of those we serve

***Experiential:*** Games and activities help our clients to grasp spiritual truths in a concrete way

***In Tune:*** Music is a powerful tool that helps us communicate to wounded people, and worship is carefully woven into all of our programming

***Age Appropriate:*** We tailor our presentations to be age and developmentally appropriate

***Bible Based:*** Setting aside fringe doctrinal differences, we continue to insist that a relationship with Jesus Christ is God's core solution to the problems that individuals face

***Propositional:*** Our chaplains are not combative or argumentative. We do not defer to our own authority as spiritual leaders; rather, we invite hurting people to take a leap of faith, take ownership of their own walk with God, and find out for themselves that God is good!

