

March 2016

Better Ministry for Shane by Fred Wilgenburg

I was frustrated after leaving a visit with Shane last week (*different name for privacy*) at the prison. Center of Hope has been acquainted with Shane since he was a teenager in our old neighborhood. He frequently came to our Care Center. Shane has always had an engaging personality. At the same time, he struggled much in school, including with Attention Deficit Disorder. His family was unchurched and lacked an active faith in God, yet his single mom offered a more nurturing home than many families we have known.

Six years ago, Shane went to prison. I visited him some. When he was released on parole a few years ago, he stopped in and we had a good visit. I encouraged him to make good choices and to stop in to see me again. Shane violated parole and went back to prison. At our visit, Shane told me that during the eight months he was out, two women became pregnant by him so he now has two sons.

Shane expressed concern for his two sons, and his desire to support them, which is good. He was humble and interested in God's grace. But still, I was frustrated, and disappointed --- disappointed that I had not guided Shane more in mak-

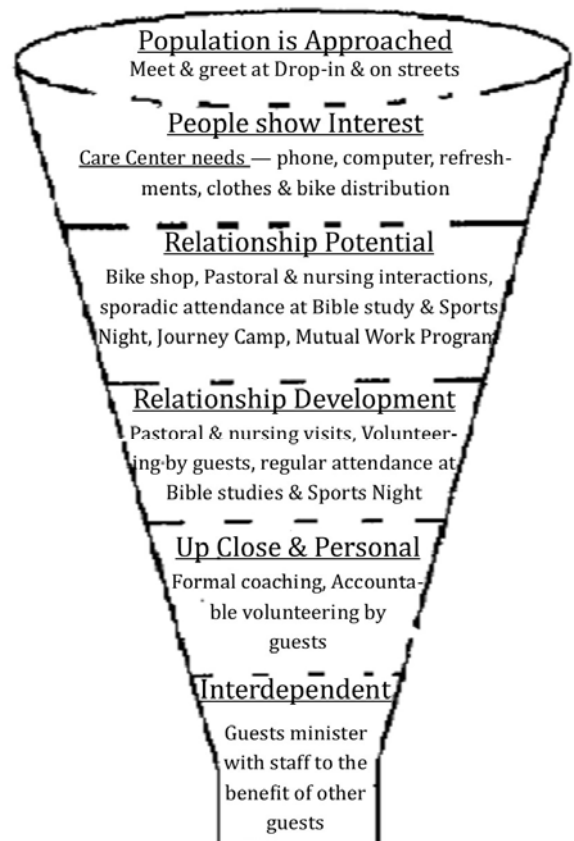
ing better choices. It's likely that two more little boys will be raised in poverty and within a broken family. Would Shane have followed my advice if I disciplined him more intentionally? I didn't do enough to know. As Shane will be released on parole in the next month, we are getting information to him about a Christian transitional ministry and home for parolees. They do much discipling and Shane seems interested.

Going forward, Center of Hope will be more intentional in offering discipling and mentoring as well. The diagram illustrates how we hope to do ministry in the future.

We have always been strong at being well-received by many people. As well, we have been able to share the Gospel with many, including through worship and Bible studies. However, we have lacked intentionality in the "Up close & Personal." Therefore,

while some people personally have come to understand God's love, they still make life choices that have big, often negative, effects on themselves and their next generation. We will offer deeper ministry, and guests can choose how far they want to go with Center of Hope.

God has been so good to us! In response, we desire to be a greater blessing to Him.



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Changing of the Guard by Fred Wilgenburg

Center of Hope has greatly enhanced my life over the past eighteen years. Two and a half years were spent planning and fundraising for a “center of hope” while I was pastor of Valley Springs Reformed Church. Fifteen and a half years have been spent with Center of Hope. I

have ministered with, ministered to, and have been ministered by thousands of people, each specially made in the image and likeness of God.

Within the next few months I will be leaving the Center of Hope to take on a new ministry adventure. I will leave my post as pastor with much love for Center of Hope. I don’t know exactly what that next position will be, but some opportunities are arising which could keep me close to Center of Hope, perhaps with possibilities for collaboration.

Please pray for Center of Hope during this transition. Brett Rockvam, a longtime staff member, will become the Executive Director. He, the rest of the staff, and the Board will see that Center of Hope continues on a path of growth in Gospel outreach ministry to people who struggle with difficult life issues.

Please support Center of Hope financially. Center of Hope will continue offering effective Gospel outreach programs (www.CenterOfHopeSF.org). As well, Center of Hope will continue to be a “ministry laboratory” of sorts, challenging itself and others toward more relevant and effective ministry --- www.CenterOfHopeSf.org/newsletter/Iron-Sharpens-Iron/. It takes support to be able to do that. ***(“Thank-you” to many people, churches, businesses, and foundations who have supported us over the years!)***

Welcome John Blok Center of Hope’s New Bike Ministry Coordinator



John is a former Center of Hope board member and has been in Youth Ministry. He is married and has 5 children. He has had a love for riding and working on bikes for many years, and a passion for sharing Christ. It is a great combination for his new role. Stop up in the Bike shop for a visit and to see him in action.

How You Can Help.

*Ministry Financial needs through the end of Quarter: \$87,465
Unmet Financial need to date: \$30,765

*Adult bikes are needed.

MEMORIAL GIFTS

Center of Hope appreciates the gifts made in Memory of...W. Jongerius, Melvin Paulson, Dan Pressler, Edward Steciak, Stephana Vander Werff, and Ruby Vander Lee

and in honor of...Bev Fischer, Randi Helder, June Schnieder, Maria Kajzer, and Jay & LouAnn Stark-Dykema,

As always, we are happy to have you on our mailing list. Please let us know if you would like to be removed from our list or have your newsletter sent electronically.



CENTER OF HOPE

Address:

225 E 11th St Suite 101
Sioux Falls, SD 57104

Phone: 605-334-9789

Fax: 605-274-0651

E-mail: info@centerofhopesf.org

Web: www.centerofhopesf.org

Facebook@: facebook.com/centerofhopesf