



NEW DIRECTION Mustard Seed

October 2020

PO Box 18745 Asheville NC 28814 (828) 206-0495



Dear Friends,

This is a wall hanging given to us by a special friend of the ministry soon after we moved into our office a few years back. What makes this gift so very special is not only is it a magnificent work of quilted art, it was handmade by our friend taking into special account the various birds and creatures indigenous to our neck of the woods.

There is another interesting piece to this story. Our friend had never been to our new office. Little did she know there was a six foot by 3 foot section of a plywood covering over the ITT equipment that was left blank. We knew not how to cover such a space. Her quilt fit the area perfectly. Perfectly!! And there couldn't be any more befitting scripture than that which is sown into the trunk of the tree to signify the work of New Direction Mustard Seed. Hard to know how many clients have taken a photo of this piece as it has so moved and resonated with their hearts.

There are times when the work of the Holy Spirit is tangible and palpable. For this piece to have been a work of such inspiration and perfect dimension is such an example.



Woven into the trunk are these Words of life:

*“And now, just as you trusted Christ to save you
Trust Him, too, for each day’s problems.
Live in vital union with Him.
Let your roots grow down into Him
And draw up nourishment from Him.
See that you go on growing in the Lord.
Let your lives overflow with joy and thanksgiving
For all He has done.”*

Colossians 2:6-7

We have, so very often, witnessed the Lord’s provision in such formfitted manner in the lives of clients with whom we have worked over these past 23 years as well as in ours, personally. In the majority of cases there has been an obvious movement of the Lord on the heart of an individual to respond to a need of another. Oftentimes the need has never even been verbalized to another human being. But our Heavenly Father was aware and working behind the scenes for the perfect timing for a prayer to be answered.

*“This poor man cried, and the Lord heard him
and saved him from his troubles.” Psalm 34:6*

Each of us have our own personal tapestries which are in process of being woven. Our life narratives. The dreams we had as we stepped into a future... ..a marriage.....children.....There is not a one among us who would write a script whereby that dream would be shattered to pieces. And so it seems, the beautiful weaving is forever ruined because all that can be seen is as the underside of a tapestry with knots and dangling threads. Unnoticed is the Hand of The Master Weaver still at work pulling together all of what seems like useless pieces and recycling them into His masterpiece.

Right as Covid 19 hit America, we were to have an event at the Cove entitled Tapestry. Four of the ladies who have been clients of the Mustard Seed had put together their testimonies to share. Cancelling the event has not deterred their stories from being shared with you. There is a similar thread in each of their narratives: a snare, release from the snare (Psalm 107) and the strength that has been wrought in each of them as they have been refined through their adversity. We, of the Mustard Seed Project, know, and they know as well, it has been the Providence of God that knit us to walk together out of their chaos and into a life of hope and thriving.

This is Ashley’s story

“2016 was a horrible year. I ended up getting on drugs which was something I swore I would never do. I lost everything.....starting with my four children; then my car. My husband and I split up in April then I lost my house in June. I even lost every bit of furniture, clothing and toys that belonged to my children when I lost my home. I had nowhere to go. I was homeless.

I went through a season of hopelessness. I didn’t think I could ever get through it. It was like the enemy just grabbed a hold of me mentally and physically and wouldn’t let go. No matter what I did I couldn’t come out of it. It was like I was locked in a cage. I just wasn’t me anymore.

DSS got involved. They gave my parents guardianship over my children. I went through drug rehabilitation and ended up in a halfway house and stayed there for a few months. Then I was able to stay at my parents’ place with my kids. I went through all of the RHA (area mental health) classes and passed all the drug screens and was able to get custody of my children back when I went to court. I won full custody. It was hard but I knew God was with me because what I knew to be true about Jesus and redemption from my youth, once again was quickened in my spirit. On my own I could do nothing. However *“I could do all things through Christ Who strengthens me”*. I went through all of this for 2 years.

I met a woman named Heather when I was working in Walmart. Someone in her home bible study group invited me to join them. She has become a good friend to me. When Heather heard about my situation and that me and my four children were among 12 living in my parents’ double wide trailer, she gave me the number for the Mustard Seed. They had helped her along with her children break free and move forward in life. I called and began meeting with Bridget and Dave on a regular basis. They understood how important it would be for

my children and I to get into our own housing and told me they were committed to walking with me over the next number of years until I was strong enough to walk alone.

My children and I moved into our own home. I got a full time job. The car I was driving was unsafe for transporting my children. They helped me to buy a good used van. A donor met with me and helped provide Christmas for my children. Sometimes my paycheck was not enough to make ends meet and they helped fill in the gaps. My responsibility is to be faithful to do my part; God is faithful to do His part; and the Mustard Seed will walk with me filling in the gaps until I am strong enough to walk without help. I am responsible for filling out a budget and accountable for how I spend my money. I never had kept track of money in the past. I didn't really know how to do a budget.

I am on the other side of my horrible yesterdays.....out of the trap of drugs and now learning how to be a woman who can set strong boundaries that are healthy rather than falling into the trap of fear of man. At one time I was going to AB Tech studying Engineering. My life goal has always to work with NASA. I do have a desire to go back to school one day. I know that all of the broken pieces of my life, God is able to use for good. That is His promise given to me in Romans 8:28. He is the great recycler of our broken lives.”

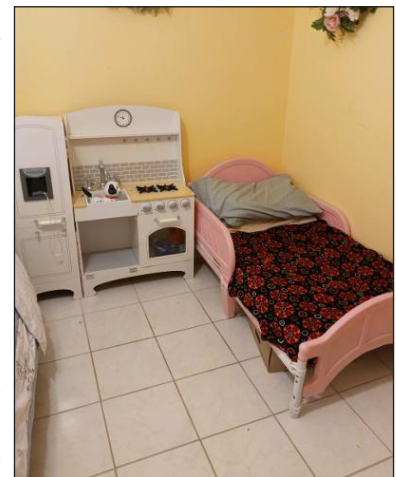
Ashley was doing so well staying on top of things, in momentum with a new structure in her life. And then her entire world turned upside down with Covid 19. Overnight she was faced with the task of being a full time stay at home mother managing four children 24/7. For the majority of parents the sudden shock of adjustment to being a teacher was extremely difficult. For one who was just beginning to learn how to take authority in managing a chaotic household it was a case of entering survival mode; doggy paddling right at the water line and often going under.

We were able to stay in regular contact and carry them through financially as well as talking through and encouraging but we knew this family needed so much more in order for there to be wellbeing in their home. We and our board as well as many others were lifting them up in prayer.

This is where the beautiful formfitting work of the Lord becomes apparent: an aunt came to visit Ashley's parents in June. It was placed on her heart to offer for Ashley and the children to move into her home in Florida so she could help them. She could offer structure and consistency and co-parent with Ashley. And Ashley could get a job and share expenses. It was such one of those obvious “God has been working behind the scenes” movement. And totally in sync with “you do your part, I'll do my part and the Lord is faithful to do His part.”



So in August, the Mustard Seed provided finances for the family to move to Florida. Upon their arrival we began getting photos texted: four children with big smiles at the beach; the children in new school clothing with supplies on their first day of school (Florida opened up their schools to students in late August. This, too, is such an example of the perfect formfitting as it has allowed Ashley to begin a job which works around her children's schedules). Another photo of a bedroom neatly arranged with the words “we now have structure and order in our lives.” Other than the tangible physical change there has also



been a change in the children's respect toward their mother (the aunt is old school and a much needed coach for such a time as this in their lives).

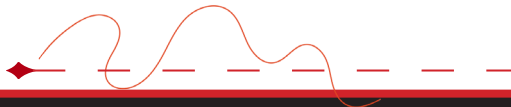
We will continue to work with Ashley for a season or two until they are stronger. She will need monthly supplementation of income for now as she has begun a part time job that fits with the schedule of her children. Her desire is to become totally financially independent which, of course, is the plan for all of the Mustard Seed clients.

On the note of the desire of her heart to one day work for NASA. She now lives only a few miles away. Wouldn't surprise us in the least if she is one day working there.

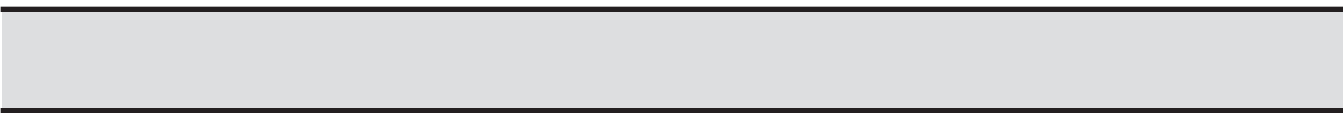
On behalf of Ashley and her children and the many other families who have been restored: thank you. It is through the generosity of the many of you who are sowing into their lives they are breaking free. You are woven into their tapestries!

With Great Appreciation
All of us at the Mustard Seed

Expansion of Mustard Seed



We are opening an office in Blowing Rock to serve Watauga, Ash, and Avery counties. We (Bridget and Dave) have bought a small condo within walking distance. Clients in the Asheville area (Henderson, Buncombe, Haywood, Madison, Yancey counties) will continue to be served as well. The experience of this past six months of meeting via phone with Mustard Seed clients as well as other counseling clients has shown us that not a beat of momentum was missed. Just as clearly as we heard the call of the Lord back in the late 90's to quit our jobs and find a place set apart for a therapeutic boarding school in Madison county.....so too, we have heard that same voice, leading us to this new chapter in the continued work of New Direction Mustard Seed. The Asheville office will remain open with us coming in regularly. Contact information in Asheville will continue to be the same. Thank you for walking with us as we have been walking with these women and children.



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Encompassing Hope and Care For Families.