

Place of Promise

A Multi-Service Advocacy Center

"I will walk among you and be your God, and you will be my people." Leviticus 26:12

June 2011

"I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me." Matthew 25: 35

Dear Friends,

Do you ever wonder whether the money, time, prayers, talents you give to Place of Promise are a good investment or not? Place of Promise is such a relational ministry; building relationships with God and with each other as a people of God. It's all about men, women, children who were once lost and all alone becoming part of a family of God. It's about those enslaved by sin; in bondage to addictions finding freedom and forgiveness through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. At Place of Promise we are learning to live completely new lives as Children of our God who eternally, unconditionally and sacrificially loves us and promises to never leave us or abandon us! We still sit in darkness at times, but we are not alone. God is a Light in our darkness today and your gifts help make that possible. We continue to stumble and fall, but you lend us a hand and help to pick us back up. We still struggle with disease, pain, temptation, and despair, but you continue to give, to visit, to worship with us. People come to Place of Promise from prison and have nothing. You clothe us! Many come thin and wasted from a life of death and destruction. You feed us! Best of all, you allow us to give back to you. Everyone who comes to Place of Promise to serve, to fellowship with us, to volunteer to help us, is always blessed by being with us in our God's glorious, healing, loving, Presence!

Jesus said, "Whatever you do for the least of these my brothers and sisters, you do unto me." (Matt. 25: 40) Are you making a good investment? Absolutely **YES** and it's an investment in both the temporal and the eternal! Thank you from all of us for being part of us!

The Lowell Sun recently published an article about Place of Promise and we'd like to share it with each of you because it's about all of us. If you would like to see the article on-line, including pictures, please go to the Place of Promise web site (www.placeofpromise.org) and click on the News button.

Keeping a promise

Local ministry offers shelter and a chance to mend broken lives

LOWELL -- Rosita Hernandez had all the societal labels. Thief. Heroin addict. Prostitute. Abused child. Mother who abandoned her children. Ex-convict. AIDS victim.

By time the disease had ravaged her body, the woman with all the labels came to see that "God is greater than the devil and can make us strong," according to her written testimony before her death in May 1992.

Hernandez considered herself a "testament of God's greatness," mainly because she had the good fortune to meet Beth Kidd, whom, she wrote, "God must have sent to me."

Kidd, a registered nurse who had worked at Boston City Hospital, started a Christian outreach mission in the low-income neighborhood on the Roxbury-Dorchester line where she and her husband, Jeff, felt called to live and raise their children. The couple had relocated from outside of Philadelphia so Jeff could study urban ministry at Gordon-Conwell Theological Seminary, Beth Kidd explained.

The couple founded Jesus Hopes Church in their home. Beth tended to the physical and spiritual needs of her neighbors within five blocks, describing herself as "everyone's neighborhood nurse."

As Hernandez lay in a hospital bed, doctors asked Beth Kidd to visit. Through those visits, Hernandez wrote, she "received Jesus into her heart and started to pray, and I wasn't so scared anymore." Her death, which came after living with and being cared for by the Kidds, shattered Beth Kidd, who had come to see Hernandez as a member of the family.

From the pain of that loss, Kidd was inspired by a "vision to see everyone as God's creation -- not their brokenness, their crime or their sin." The result is Place of Promise (POP), a 12-year-old Christian nonprofit residential program designed to help those who are hurting, lost and broken to choose and find a new life.

POP owns four residences in Lowell, where men, women, children and families are housed separately. The staff provides case management and advocacy, while the residents do the cleaning and cooking, except for Sunday dinner, which Kidd prepares herself using ingredients donated by a board member.

With her children now grown, Kidd leaves her home in Dorchester seven days a week at 5 a.m. and heads back around 8 or 9 at night. The long hours do not bother her or her husband -- "the man behind my scenes" -- as they both see God's guiding hand in everything she does, Kidd said.

That includes the fact that two homes previously owned by POP in Dorchester appreciated so significantly over time that they were able to sell them and buy the first two Lowell homes without a mortgage. They also rely on private donations and receive no government assistance.

On a recent humid afternoon, women from the women's residence gathered in their living room for Bible study, while men from the men's house across the street joined them. Their structured days require that they meet five times a day for prayer, chores, learning activities and fun. They are eager to talk about life at POP.

"Because of my age, I want to learn the word of God before I am delivered to him," said Marianne Carey, who earlier sat on a swing in the yard studying her Bible. "This is a beautiful place where I feel very welcomed."

James Atherton, 49, was released from prison just six months ago, not sure where to go, he said. He was referred to POP, where "I feel I've done a lot of changing. Before I had no future, and now this is like a second home to me. She (Kidd) is the most wonderful woman and I feel it must have been God that led Beth into my life."

Lynn DeWolfe, a recovering alcoholic who is now rebuilding her relationship with her children, ages 7, 9 and 12, has been with POP for 16 months. She says it has saved her life. Doors are now opened and dreams are coming true.

"I can't thank Beth and Terri (Lawrence-Durant, staff mentor/systems advocate) enough for showing me the way, helping me to come to God, and to learn how to deal with a problem without picking up a drink," she said. "I realize now that there is someone always with me and his name is God. He can help me anytime, as long as I ask."

Marianne, a native of Kenya, fell unconscious on a snow bank as a result of a brain tumor, where she lay for eight hours before being rescued by nuns. She was later med-flighted to Beth Israel. To fight her cancer battle, she asked to be placed within a Christian community. At POP, she has "gotten to know Jesus, my Lord, more than ever before. Since I've been here it's so wonderful. She (Kidd) has been an angel to me. God has given me this second chance."

Lawrence-Durant is the licensed substance abuse counselor at POP. After she met Kidd in Dorchester, her own life changed from relying solely on government assistance for herself and her seven children to one of self-sufficiency.

"She has been my mentor, teaching me the Christian way to live. I just kept following what she told me to do, and everything good started to happen," she said. "It all comes from wanting to choose a new life."



Beth Kidd, Director

Corrections to the Article: The name of the church that met in our home for 22 years was "Jesus Helps Church," and it was started by Jan and Paul Bothwell, a couple from The Conservative Baptist Home Mission Society.