



## Brent Bernard kneels beside the creek that almost swept him away in a flash flood last fall.

He was living alone in the woods and suddenly, in the middle of the night, he awoke and realized that the noise of the water was louder than normal. Trees were floating by his make shift tent. Before he could grab a few of his precious belongings the water was almost chest deep as he plodded to dry ground with only his book bag. *Brent just survived a flash flood.*

*Turn to page 4 to read the rest of Brent's inspiring story from homelessness to hopefulness!*



*You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you.*



REFUGE *of* HOPE  
MINISTRIES

Volume 7 Issue 4

November 2014

WWW.REFUGEOFHOPE.ORG

REFUGE *of* HOPE  
MINISTRIES  
P.O. Box 9361  
Canton, Ohio 44711



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# Amy Bryant

## Financial Manager



Amy Bryant has accepted the position of Financial Manager for Refuge of Hope and it is a pleasure to welcome her to our organization. She began October 13 and is replacing Jeff McDonald who is retiring.

Amy is responsible to make certain Refuge of Hope remains the best possible steward of our financial resources. Her duties include budgeting, maintaining standard accounting principles, practices and procedures and ensuring that financial reporting and records are accurate and timely.

A graduate of Kansas State University with a Bachelor's of Business Administration in Accounting, Amy and her husband, Beau, reside in Canal Fulton with their two children, Hailey, age 4, and Garrett, age 1.

The Refuge of Hope staff wishes Jeff the very best in his retirement. He has been instrumental in providing insight and structure to upgrading Refuge of Hope's financial and purchasing activities. His presence and sense of humor will definitely be missed.

### SHARE GOD'S LOVE BY PRAYING FOR THE HOMELESS/POOR.

Life on the street with exposure to the elements, violence and lack of purpose can drain a person's confidence and self-esteem. Pray that God will break through the despair and sense of futility that engulfs so many who live in dire circumstances every day. He can and will heal and bring broken people to Him. Believe and pray...it works!

### SUPPORT RESCUE MISSIONS IN YOUR COMMUNITY.

Rescue missions (Refuge of Hope in Stark County) and other local social service agencies are committed to making a long term difference in the lives of those in need. The focus is to help people become productive community members with the ability to care for themselves and their families.

The bottom line is this - God loves us as we are so we in turn can reflect God's love by serving and helping others. In other words, God blesses us so we can bless others. You can value the homeless/poor by helping them realize others do truly care and, as such, are willing to offer a helping hand up.



*Jesus tells us, "Again I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them"*  
(Matt. 18:19-20).

We are looking for individuals or prayer teams to be available to pray with dinner guests and shelter residents privately between 5:00 – 7:00 p.m. Monday through Friday during the evening meal.

Contact Dawn Bowman today at  
[dbowman@refugeofhope.org](mailto:dbowman@refugeofhope.org) or 330-453-1785 ext. 207.

## THINKING ABOUT THE POOR

*When you see an obviously poor person, what do you think?  
For many, the picture in their minds is not a pretty one.*

A Princeton University study recorded brain activity of people reacting to the poor. Results showed the poor were often regarded with such disdain they were actually dehumanized to many being studied. Or, as a frank quote from the article put it: "Brain activity suggested that very poor people were viewed more like repugnant piles of garbage than people."

We can make excuses for not assisting the poor. They're lazy and won't work...they're addicts or criminals and the list goes on and on. What a sad commentary on our society today. The truth is many are in poverty due to lack of opportunity rather than lack of effort.

So, how should we treat the homeless/poor? **Here are three guidelines to consider:**

### TREAT ANY PERSON WITH COMPASSION AND RESPECT.

The golden rule applies - treat others, including the homeless/poor, as you want to be treated. Be courteous and respectful as that conveys a sense of civility and dignity toward others. Jesus addressed the homeless/poor this way; so should we.



# EVANGELICAL COUNCIL FOR FINANCIAL ACCOUNTABILITY (ECFA)



A higher standard.  
A higher purpose.

It is important for you, our faithful donors, to know that Refuge of Hope adheres to strict financial accountability through the guidelines of ECFA. We strive to be the best stewards of everything that God has provided for this ministry through your donations.

ECFA enhances trust in Christ-centered churches and ministries by establishing and applying Seven Standards of Responsible Stewardship to accredited organizations. Refuge of Hope is accredited by the ECFA. You can learn more about them by visiting their website [ECFA.org](http://ECFA.org). Each year Refuge of Hope files required tax forms, submits to an audit by a local CPA firm and then we produce our annual report. All of these important steps assure our donors that we are completely transparent in our operations and in handling all contributions.

If you would like to receive our annual report card from 2013 please contact Jo Ann Carpenter, Refuge of Hope's Director of Development, at 330-280-2153 or email her at [jcarpenter@refugeofhope.org](mailto:jcarpenter@refugeofhope.org).

## THANKSGIVING

Call it nostalgia if you will...the happy memories of Thanksgiving pasts. Family and friends crowded around a table loaded with favorite foods that surround a golden brown turkey waiting to be carved.

### WE WISH YOU A BLESSED THANKSGIVING.



For many of our dinner guests those memories have long faded or possibly never existed. For them Thanksgiving is just another day without enough food to feed their family. Over 24% of our children in Stark County struggle with food insecurity, in other words, "consistent access to adequate food is limited by a lack of money and other resources at times during the year."

But at Refuge of Hope we are planning a Thanksgiving feast and every hungry man, women and child is welcome to join our tables full of turkey, mashed potatoes and all the traditional trimmings, provided by First Christian Church heading up the event with other local churches.

Faithful volunteers will be serving the meals complete with delicious pies from Hartville Kitchen. "Thanksgiving at Refuge of Hope is a real family affair," said Scott Schnyders, Shelter Director. "I have had the privilege to help serve on this special day for several years and good memories are being made for so many hurting people around our dinner tables!"

Russell Milbrodt a 94 year old veteran says, "You will get your belly full here." That is true not only on this special day, but every day throughout the year, when Refuge of Hope is here to provide meals and more to those who have so little in our community.

We are so thankful to you, our donors, who provide the meals, shelter and hope to make every day one of thanksgiving to the poor and needy in Stark County! *From all of us at Refuge of Hope, we wish you and yours a most happy and blessed Thanksgiving Day.*

## WORDS TO LIVE BY



**Feel you need more money?**  
*Many people are living in poverty.*

**Missed lunch and you're hungry?**  
*Many people are unsure of where they will get their next meal.*

**Deciding where to go on vacation?**  
*Many people have no safe place to sleep tonight.*

**Be thankful!**  
*Many people have serious needs much greater than ours.*

Yes, I want to help people like Brent (pictured at right) and the 20,000 other Stark County residents who lack a healthy food supply! Please use my gift to provide hot, nutritious meals, safe shelter and hope to our neighbors in Stark County.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

#### How you can contribute to Refuge of Hope Ministries:

\$50.00     \$150.00     \$100.00     Other: \_\_\_\_\_

Credit Card:  Visa     Master Card     Expiration date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Card Number: \_\_\_\_\_ Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

*Thank you on behalf of those who benefit from the work of Refuge of Hope Ministries made possible through your generous gift. Tax deductible information will be mailed with donation receipt.*



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For your convenience, Pay-Pal on-line donations are accepted on our website [www.refugeofhope.org](http://www.refugeofhope.org)

*continued from front cover*



**Today this is Brent as he volunteers in the Meal Ministry at Refuge of Hope. He has recently been released from Cleveland Clinic after having cancer surgery and receiving chemo and radiation treatments.**

Brent first came to stay in the Men's Shelter at Refuge of Hope in the fall of 2012. He became homeless because the business where he was employed closed and he could not find work. His money was soon gone and he lost almost everything he ever owned.

Brent struggled with depression and living in a shelter was emotionally challenging. He soon found himself living in the woods. He was successful and found employment, but also was sick spending time in the emergency room for sore throats and complaining of his ears hurting. He thought most of these nagging ailments were attributed to allergies from living outdoors.

After the flash flood Brent returned to Refuge of Hope. Scott Schnyders, Shelter Director, connected Brent to a local clinic which immediately referred him to the Cleveland Clinic. Brent received the disturbing news

when doctors explained that he had throat cancer. Surgery was scheduled and, after months of treatment, Brent is a cancer survivor today.

"Most of us who have stayed here have experienced hard times with financial, health, addictions, and other serious issues," Brent said. "I have survived it all, homelessness, flash floods, addiction, depression, and cancer. I am so thankful to have found Refuge of Hope where I received so much more than just a bed. I found people who genuinely cared about me and helped me overcome so many of my problems. Not only am I loved by the Refuge of Hope family, I know my Heavenly Father has a plan for my life now."

Both Scott and several of our volunteers played a big role in not only taking Brent to appointments but by visiting him and bringing friends along to help Brent pass the time while recovering. That assistance continued after Brent moved back to his apartment when they would bring him food and his medication.

"When I felt like I wanted to end my life I asked God what He wanted me to do," Brent emotionally explained. "I have the time now so please show me how to be useful. Shortly after that prayer Scott asked me if I would consider being a volunteer in the kitchen. I believe that is how God answered my prayer and now I have a chance to give back and help others."

We all have something to be thankful for this Thanksgiving Season. Brent learned how to be a survivor, humble himself to accept help and now he is able serve God by serving others. **Thank you dear friends for your faithful prayers and financial support which allows Refuge of Hope to be, according to a grateful Brent Bernard, "a true refuge offering hope to the hopeless!"**

## DID YOU KNOW...?

- Walgreen's in North Canton is donating free flu shots to our shelter residents and meal guests.
- First Christian Church will be providing a traditional Thanksgiving meal at ROH on Thanksgiving Day at 5pm.
- ROH accepts new and gently used winter gloves, hats and scarves for men, women and children.
- ROH **NEVER** asks individuals to collect donations door-to-door. Please call ROH at 330-453-1785 if you are so approached at your home or business.
- A number of area corporations will match your financial donation to Refuge of Hope. Please check with your employer to see if they have a matching gift program.

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