



GROWING BRANCHES

HERE WE GROW...

As we go through life day by day, hour by hour, minute by minute, it's easy as sinful human beings to gradually allow the distractions and temptations of this world to weigh us down. There are always too many things to take care of and not enough hours in the day to take care of them all. Sometimes it seems the harder we try to get ahead, or even catch up, the further we fall behind.

As I was preparing our daily devotions for the week, I confess that I was struggling with such feelings. Thankfully, God helped change my perspective as only He can do! In selecting a hymn, I came across a familiar one: "Oh, for a Faith that Will Not Shrink." Although I am quite familiar with it and have sung it numerous times throughout my life, the words seemed to be just what I needed to hear to help pull me out of my sinful, self-centered mindset. God promises, "I will never leave you nor forsake you" in Joshua 1:5 and "He will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear" in 1 Corinthians 10:13. God gives us the faith to believe in His promises through the Holy Spirit, and it is that faith that gives us the comfort, peace and joy of knowing God is in control. With God in control, we need not worry about or fear anything!

At *New Beginnings*, we routinely encourage our residents to put their trust in God and rely on His promises. In so many ways their traumatic childhoods, continuing struggles and current situations seem much more daunting than what we as staff members have ever experienced. What a blessing it is to know that God is powerful enough to resolve even the biggest problems and compassionate enough to care about the smallest ones.

Thankfully, God loves us all the same and is always ready and willing to listen to and answer our prayers. May we all be encouraged to pray for a faith that will not shrink, tremble or complain. A faith that shines brightly, knows no fear, feels no doubt and keeps the narrow way until we reach our eternal homes in heaven. Amen. 🌸

Through Faith



By Heidi Westlund,
Home Manager

*Oh, for a faith that will not shrink
Though pressed by many a foe,
That will not tremble on the brink
Of poverty or woe,*

*That will not murmur nor complain
Beneath the chast'ning rod,
But in the hour of grief or pain
Can lean upon its God,*

*A faith that shines more bright and clear
When tempests rage without,
That, when in danger, knows no fear,
In darkness feels no doubt,*

*A faith that keeps the narrow way
Till life's last spark is fled
And with a pure and heav'nly ray
Lights up the dying bed.*

*Lord, give us such a faith as this,
And then, whate'er may come,
We'll taste e'en now the hallowed bliss
Of an eternal home.*

[Christian Worship, Hymn 405, public domain]



Stephen getting in a great nap!

“WHAT MOTHERHOOD MEANS TO ME”

Motherhood symbolizes an amazing gift, an opportunity of a lifetime. This is a blessing that many receive, many more only hope for and imagine but may not get the chance. For those who know me, this is my miracle child deemed impossible by medical professionals. I have always had a loving and nurturing motherly nature from a very small age. To be a mother was all I ever wanted and my number one dream. I cannot describe the pain and number of tears I had cried thinking that I may never have that chance whether it be natural or through adoption. For those who want to be mothers and are not, I feel your pain. So for me, motherhood is truly a blessing and a dream come true.

Being a mother is also a great responsibility. Even through pregnancy, I am quickly learning in simple ways that my life is no longer just my own. I feel God is teaching me to listen more, eat healthier, make every choice in life very wisely and consciously, and show me not only how to trust Him more but also to put the needs and wants of someone else before my own. Pregnancy is the preparation stage of physically and emotionally learning to focus on the well-being of a small, helpless life that will depend on me for every need in life and for survival. My little one has effectively overtaken my heart and body. Soon he will have my 100% time and devotion.



Judy

To me, both motherhood and pregnancy are fascinating and exciting. It is amazing to see how my mindset, attitude and heart are changing – and growing. I am in awe when I am in public and watch parents and their little children. It warms my heart bringing joy and curiosity. I find myself being more conscious of people and the things around me. I seem to have this thought in the back of my mind constantly, “Would this be good for my child?” or “I should remember this when my son is here.” One of the most obvious changes is the outward body. You can always recognize an expectant mother by the basketball belly and duck waddle or the infamous glow. Let me tell you they are outward signs of the “labor of love” our bodies are going through – a struggle and unique experience in themselves. Other traits that have surfaced with this preparation of motherhood in me at least is protectiveness, the increasing understanding of the value of family and loved ones, confidence and a lot of inner strength.

I know pregnancy is just the first stepping stone and building block on the road to becoming a good, responsible and healthy mother inside and out. It definitely is a molding and shaping endeavor mentally, emotionally, physically and spiritually. This is quite a journey I am embarking on and looking forward to. I thank God everyday for this gift, opportunity, responsibility, pregnancy, growth and journey called motherhood!

By Judy



Charisma

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Motherhood to me means that when you become a mother you mature and start to grow into someone more positive for your child. You start to learn things that you didn't know before. You are expected to take responsibility for another human being besides yourself.

As for experiencing motherhood, the process has already been life changing. Growing up, I was always used to things coming to me and everything being done for me and getting everything for myself. Now that I'm having a child I realize it's not all about me anymore. I have to make more sacrifices for my child than I had to make for myself. I also know that when it comes to a baby and the baby's mother, you have to love that child unconditionally and show affection for your child. It's already been a great experience because I have learned so many things that I know are going to be a big help to me and my child. Motherhood is truly a blessing for me, and it's opened up my eyes – not only for myself but for the world! I know that I'm going to be all I can for my son, Calil, due July 3, 2013!

By Charisma

HERE WE GROW...

Through Volunteering

By Erin Mathiak, Volunteer Resident Assistant

At the end of January 2013, I pulled up to the *New Beginnings*' building uncertain of what these next few months would hold. This uncertain feeling wasn't new to me. I had graduated from Wisconsin Lutheran College in May and had applied to medical schools in the hopes of becoming a doctor. I wasn't sure if my plans to become a doctor would come to fruition. At that point in my life, my future was unclear. I did not know what God's plan was for me, and I wondered how becoming the first Volunteer Resident Assistant at *New Beginnings* would fit into God's plan.

Two months later, I am grateful to have this opportunity to serve and grow. This experience has helped me mature in my faith and has allowed me to gain a new appreciation for the challenges these mothers face each day. Seeing firsthand how these new mothers have overcome difficult situations is inspiring, and watching them grow in their faith is exciting and encouraging! I've enjoyed the conversations we can have while at morning devotion or while out on a walk. Whether we are laughing together or having serious discussions, we can all learn from each other and also encourage each other. I hope to take these lessons with me as I work towards becoming a medical provider. I know that through this experience I can better serve others. I have learned so much from these mothers, and I hope my encouraging words have had an impact on them also.

My time here has also helped me gain a new appreciation for all the blessings in my life, especially my faithful family and my Christian upbringing and education. God has blessed me richly, and I am happy I have the opportunity to serve Him and His people at *New Beginnings*. 🌸



Erin Mathiak

Our New Beginnings Easter Dinner

Staff provided the ham, apricot stuffing, deviled eggs, veggie tray and "Resurrection" biscuits. Residents provided the green bean casserole, cheddar & bacon mashed potatoes and homemade banana pudding.

For occasional group activities we are blessed to be joined by guests. Pictured is Kurt, the husband of our Home Manager, Heidi; and Aaron, the boyfriend of our Volunteer Resident Assistant, Erin. Both men serve as wonderful role models for the residents on Christian dating and marriage.



Judy's first time
dyeing Easter Eggs



Aaron (Erin's
boyfriend visiting
from Wisconsin),
Erin, Judy, Lorena,
Charisma & Mollie
– Left to right



Kurt (Heidi's husband), Aaron, Erin, Judy,
Lorena, Charisma & Mollie – Left to right



Judy, Erin, Kurt, Aaron, Lorena,
Charisma & Mollie – Left to right





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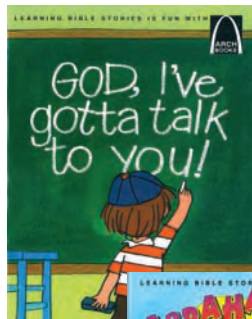


Mother and Daughter

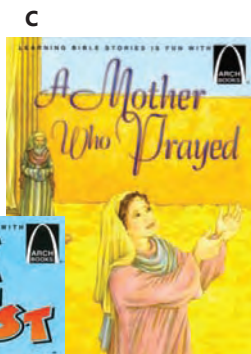
Celebrating the bond of love between mothers and daughters. A young girl wraps her arms around her mother as the mother lovingly touches her young daughters face. Size: 8"H.

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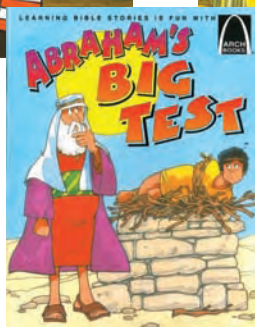
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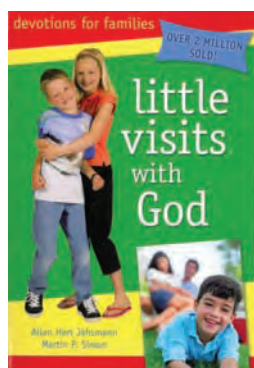
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Telephone: **303-364-0890 • 1-800-720-MOMS**

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