

HOPE FOR THE FAMILY

SPRING 2024

AROUND the FIRE

RESCUE *the Equine* ★ MENTOR *the Child* ★ HOPE *for the Family* ★ EMPOWER *the Ministry*

Hope's Gift

BY KIM MEEDER



Throughout the years of working with and around countless kids and horses, one truth remains. I experience every child like a unique flower set within a timeless bouquet. Kids are amazing. Each one is so special. Each one is such a gift. Each one reflects something beautiful.

Years ago, I had the privilege of spending time with an extraordinary “flower” such as this. Although she was in her late teens, her slender build and sweet, childlike voice made her seem much younger. This particular beauty was blessed with glossy blond hair and dazzling blue eyes. Yet, as lovely as she was—that it was when she smiled—that the brilliance of Heaven streamed to earth and ignited all in her presence. Her smile carried a matchless and genuine radiance that had the unstoppable power to make others look up from their struggles and beam as well.

Although her outward appearance was stunning, it was what poured from her heart that made her truly glorious. Despite her unique challenges, she was filled with a rare anointing of joy. And what made her joy so powerful was that it was not dimmed by her equally rare autoimmune affliction. Instead of focusing on her suffering—she chose to focus on all that it could build within her.

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From the world's point of view, she had every reason to be negative, bitter and to blame God. But not this rare blossom. She chose to allow her pain to become the Refiner's fire—a necessary tempest that melted away all but the true golden joy which she embodied.

She was one of the purest reflections of this truth:

"That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. For our present troubles are small and won't last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! So we don't look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things that we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever."
(2 Cor. 4:16-18, NLT)

Looking forward to the fulfillment of God's promises—is foundationally—the very definition of hope. My young friend understood this truth. And she proved it every day with her matchless joy.

Because she knew Jesus as her Lord, she *knew* what was coming. She *knew* that she would spend eternity in the immeasurable love of God . . . and no suffering this side of Heaven could ever change that fact.

She knew Jesus—the Author of hope—the Author of her—for her name *was* HOPE.

One of Hope's goals was to learn as much as she could about horses. She wanted to train a few of her own so she could help kids know the love of Jesus during their own seasons of struggle.

Even though Hope's body declined with illness, her desire to own horses and help children did not.

Armed with a heart full of joy and a meager budget, Hope and her family traveled east to the Burns Oregon Mustang corrals. Their collective intention was to see if she might connect with any of the horses that needed adoption. During their time at the corrals, one large colt completely captured Hope's heart.

Like her, he was a rare beauty. His unusual color pattern—a buckskin pinto—was so unique that he had already been slated for the national Mustang adoption auction. This handsome yearling was guaranteed to sell for a very high price—a price Hope could not manage.

So, the small family left Burns with no horse for Hope to love and train.

Hope's mother, Joyce, called the Mustang Adoption Agency multiple times to inquire about the colt. Sadly, she was never able to get beyond their answering machine.

During one such call, Joyce quietly left a brief message about her daughter's health struggles and her dream to own and train a horse.

In the season that followed, Hope's family received a very special phone call. It was from the Burns Mustang Corral. After hearing the story of her illness and dream, it was unanimously decided—to sell the rare colt—to the rare girl—for an adoption fee of \$125 dollars.

To ensure that her new four-legged friend would not be alone, Hope rescued a second horse from a kill pen. She learned that the frightened bay mare had only two days left before she was scheduled to be shipped to a slaughterhouse in Canada. The new horse was also an unusually beautiful Azteca mare.

In deference to her waning health, the strong-hearted but frail-bodied girl went to work. Every remaining ounce of energy she owned was poured into the care and training of her two four-legged friends. Her dream never faltered. She was determined to use her horses to help hurting children step forward into the healing love of Jesus.

When the time finally came to host a few children, Hope was no longer strong enough to carry a saddle. Undeterred, she helped her tiny friends ride bareback. It was a glorious breakthrough for Hope, the children and the horses. She had successfully trained her once unrideable horses into mounts gentle enough to safely carry kids.

Yet, during this season, even though Hope's joy remained constant, her body continued to slide into irreversible oblivion. She had a deep awareness that her time on this earth was winding down. Hope sensed she would not be able to complete her "race" in its fullness—but would need to pass the baton of love forward—to others who would finish what she had started.

Within this timeframe, the Ranch received a somber call from Hope's mother. After much prayer and many tears, it was the family's desire that Crystal Peaks receive the treasure of Hope's horses. The rare girl was extending the rare "baton" of her horses—to us—that they might go on to fulfill her loving dream of helping hurting children.

After taking this request to the Lord, an equally prayerful, tearful decision was made. We all agreed that Hope's horses needed to stay *with her*. These faithful friends were needed to lovingly walk her into the arms of Jesus. Only then would they be ready to enter their new life on the Ranch.

In the meantime, the Ranch sent teams of staff, interns and volunteers to support their family by delivering hay, cleaning paddocks, grooming the horses—and praying for Hope and her family.

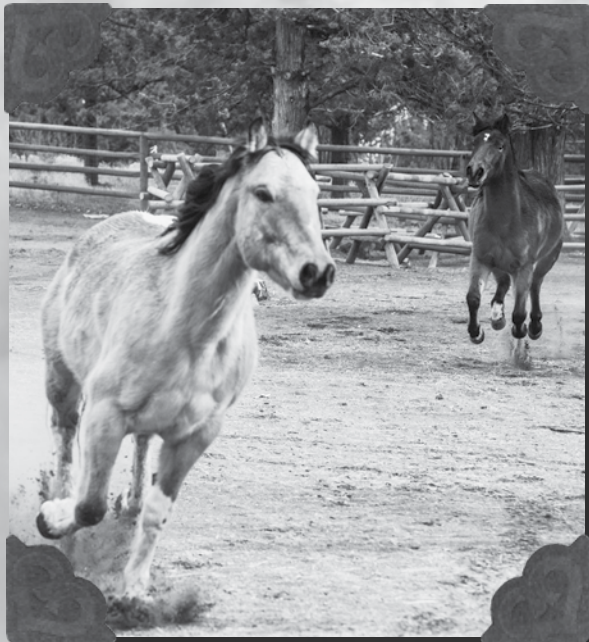
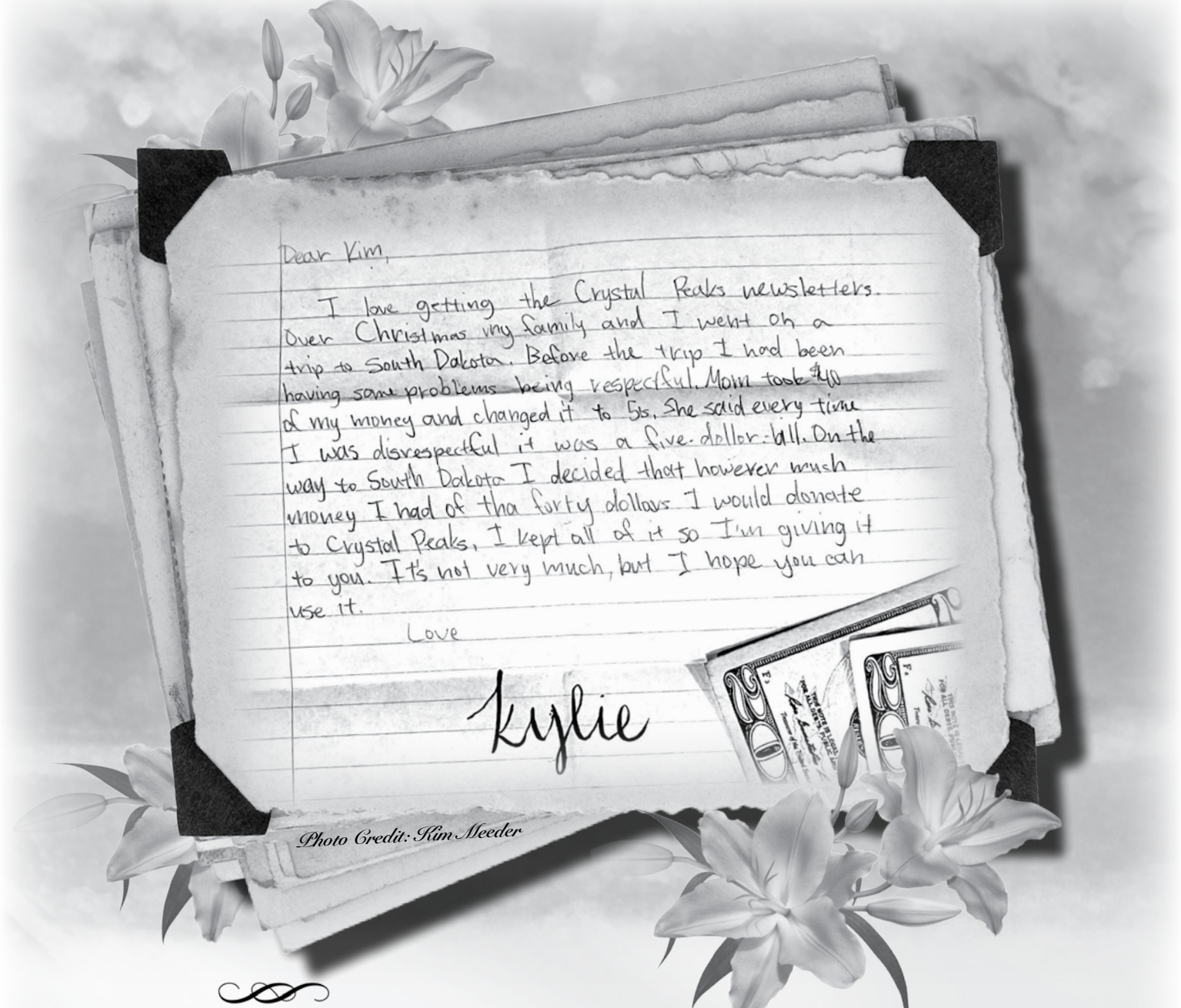


Photo Credit: @emilygreen



Dear Kim,

I love getting the Crystal Peaks newsletters. Over Christmas my family and I went on a trip to South Dakota. Before the trip I had been having some problems being respectful. Mom took \$40 of my money and changed it to \$5s. She said every time I was disrespectful it was a five-dollar bill. On the way to South Dakota I decided that however much money I had of the forty dollars I would donate to Crystal Peaks, I kept all of it so I'm giving it to you. It's not very much, but I hope you can use it.

Love

Kylie

Photo Credit: Kim Meeder

The dry heat of summer gave way to the cool nights of fall. Soon, the Ranch was transformed by the unmistakable vivid color of our trees' last flurry of worship before rest. Our Thanksgiving table was set, and cleared. The scent of pine filled our log home as a glorious Christmas tree was brought in and adorned in celebration of Jesus' birth.

With Christmas completed and the New Year fast approaching, I gathered my personal mail from the Ranch office. Each card, letter and picture heralded its own kindness, encouragement and joy. Every piece was such a precious gift. I thought I was finished for the day, but one smaller envelope slipped out of the stack and fell to the floor.

When I picked it up, I immediately noticed that it was hand-written . . . in pencil.

The envelope was small but fat, as if something was tightly folded inside. I carefully opened the letter and saw a single paragraph message that appeared to have been written by a young girl . . .

With it came a slightly mangled smaller envelope. Carefully folded inside was the full amount of choosing to honor others over self—\$40 dollars.

All I could do was stare. I wanted every word to find its mark in MY heart. What I held was priceless. It was a clear teaching—from a kid—of what we can *all* do.

Every heart has this choice . . . we can lay aside our self-ISH-ness . . . and press into self-LESS-ness.

One hurts others—one helps others.

We can choose to use the vessel we live in to do good things. And those good things can be given as gifts to others. And every time we do this—in honor of JESUS—a tiny part of Heaven pours into earth and impacts all present.

This girl not only understood a truth few ever learn—she was taking ACTION.

A wise friend once shared that genuine obedience isn't one thing . . . but three:

1—Immediate action. 2—Our best action. 3—Done with a joyful attitude.

If any of these true actions of obedience are missing—we are missing true obedience.

Kylie had chosen to immediately move forward. She applied genuine respect. And she did it with a good attitude. By doing so, she earned forty dollars—a solid amount that she could spend any way she wished. But in keeping with her growing heart of honor and gratitude, she chose to use it for something bigger than herself . . . something that would help others.

Still holding the simple letter and donation, I prayed, “WOW Jesus! What is *Your* desire for this powerful and precious gift? Please show me how to encourage Kylie forward. Help me know how to honor her because she is honoring You.”

Two days later, the Ranch staff received a message—beloved Hope Noel—had entered the arms of Jesus.

Upon hearing the news, my thoughts circled. Hope did not live a long, full life. She was barely an adult who spent most of the last ten years suffering in bed. Her life was not moving forward. How could I support this devastated family? “Lord Jesus, please show me what to do.”

Sensing a familiar draw, I went and sat in the chair where I read God's Word. It is where I go every morning to meet with the One who has redeemed me. The chair is positioned before a giant window that faces the pure glory of the Cascade Mountain Range. On this day, the peaks were shrouded in a thick snow storm. I could not see them, nor could I see what to do next. In that moment, I could feel tears welling up in my eyes as I thought about our dear friends who had lost their child.



Photo Credit: *Slim Seeder*

In the silence, I observed the deep gray that had covered the mountains. Although I could not see the peaks—I knew they were still there. The fiercest weather could not diminish a single stone of their permanent presence, nor their herald of truth. The fact that I couldn't see them in the moment—didn't change a thing.

As if looking at a dim mercury glass, a reflection started to emerge. The fiercest illness could not diminish a single smile of Hope's presence, nor the herald of joyful truth her life carried. The fact that I could no longer see her—or understand the moment—didn't change a thing.

Because she reflected such a strong measure of Jesus' compassion—her selfless love for others would go on—no matter the storm.

Indeed, Jesus' TRUTH in LOVE is more powerful than every storm in this world.

Quietly rising within my heart, I could hear His voice, “*Daughter, do you trust Me for what you cannot see? There is always a way. Follow Me . . .*”

Glancing down, I wiped my eyes. That's when I saw it. Only inches from my knee, the letter was laying in the windowsill. I knew that I was to pick it up—and read it again.

And there it was. Held within the single paragraph message . . . Jesus highlighted one word . . .

“It's not very much, but I HOPE you can use it.”

HOPE.

While staring at the word, a picture formed in my heart. The young woman named Hope was literally passing what Jesus had entrusted to her—the unstoppable baton of selfless love—to the next little girl who was already reaching for it.

And just like that . . . the pass was made.

I knew what HE wanted the forty dollars to do.

Half of it would buy four bundles of *pure white* flowers. I was to arrange these as a gift from Kylie—and give them to comfort the grieving parents. The bouquet was to be accompanied with this message, “These are to match Hope's new outfit.”

The other half of the gift would buy fuel for the Ranch diesel truck.

I would use this vehicle to pick up our horse trailer and drive the 45 minutes to Hope's home. Once there, Deirdre and I would deliver the flowers and then carefully load the horses. It would be Kylie's gift that would pay for moving these two incredible equine additions into their new home at Crystal Peaks.

In this way, a girl's gift of hope to the Ranch—became the baton—uniting Hope's gift to the Ranch.

In her absence, Hope's parents would be brought a small measure of comfort from another little girl with a growing heart of selfless love. And, Hope's beloved horses would be transported into the fulfillment of all she had trained them to do. Hope wanted her horses to love children toward Jesus—and they are—beginning with a girl named Kylie.

Beloved, not even death can stop Jesus' love, joy or peace. Throughout human history, His redeeming baton of hope has been passed through generations to ALL who have been reaching for it.

“Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a huge crowd of witnesses to the life of faith, let us strip off every weight that slows us down, especially the sin that so easily trips us up. And let us run with endurance the race God has set before us. **We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith.**” (Heb. 12:1-2a, emphasis added)

Hope understood this truth. She knew that no matter what dark storm shrouded her race—it was Jesus who waited for her at the finish line. She knew she could finish it by doing one simple thing . . . keeping her eyes on HIM.

And because she did this, her hope did not wane, *it grew stronger.*

Hope knew the source of her hope. She knew the Author of her hope. She knew who she was in HIM. She overflowed with confident hope until her last breath this side of Heaven. And now, she is handing the same baton of faith to you . . .

“I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you **trust in him**. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit.” (Rom. 15:13, NLT, emphasis added)

No matter what dark storms we face, we all have this choice—to TRUST IN HIM through it.

“Rejoice in our confident hope. Be patient in trouble, and keep on praying.” (Rom. 12:12, NLT).

Just like a little girl named Kylie, we can receive the baton of His hope with confidence. We can be patient when it's hard. And we can all keep on praying through the storm. Because Kylie did this—the disrespect that threatened to break her family LOST—and the respect that promises to heal her family WON.

Hope in Jesus did that.

It makes me smile to know that Kylie is reading this encounter—like you—for the first time.

Dear Kylie, I pray that your next family trip will take you through Oregon so you can see the fulfillment of your gift of HOPE and meet the horses your gift brought here—Elion and Noel.

Experience tells me to end this encounter with, “to be continued.”

Because of Jesus—genuine hope never ends.

Friend, no matter what storm you face, I pray that *today* you will reach for the immovable hand of hope—the hand of Jesus—and ask HIM to lead you home.

This is the unstoppable power of HOPE'S gift.



Photo Credit: *@emilygreen*

Yes! I would like to shoulder with Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch to support children, horses and families in need.

Please use my donation for:

- Where it is needed most
- Rescue the Equine
- Mentor the Child
- Hope for the Family
- Empower the Ministry
- Refuge

Payment Method:

A check payable to Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch or CPYR for \$ _____

Send donations to: Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch, 19344 Innes Market Road, Bend OR 97703.

You can also make your donation at www.crystalpeakseyouthranch.org with your credit card or PayPal account.

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OUR LITTLE LINKS OF HIS BIG HOPE

'HE IS THE LORD OF
'LOAVES AND FISHES.'
WHEN WE PLACE OUR GIFTS
INTO HIS HANDS,
HE IS THE ONE
WHO MULTIPLIES THEM
INTO EXACTLY WHAT
IS NECESSARY
TO BRING HOPE TO
THOSE IN NEED. "

By Kim Meeder

From its beginning, Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch has been founded on four pillars of service—RESCUE the Equine, MENTOR the Child, EMPOWER the Ministry and HOPE for the Family.

Over the past 29 years, those of us on the Ranch staff have learned that “HOPE for the Family” can embody far more than we ever thought possible.

Sometimes, the idea of offering hope to others seems daunting, overwhelming, even frightening. Individuals often feel ill-equipped and believe they lack what’s necessary to genuinely help others. Frequently, at the end of the day when we thank all of our volunteers, we hear things like, “All I did was pull weeds.” Or, “We only harvested potatoes today.” Or, “I hope you can use the canning jars I donated this morning.” Perhaps because of their deep humility and kindness, most believe their gift of service is a small or insignificant thing.

But God’s Word says something else. HIS bigger picture looks something like this:

*“He makes the whole body fit together perfectly. As **each part does its own special work, it helps the other parts grow, so that the whole body is healthy and growing and full of love.**”* (Eph. 4:16, NLT, emphasis added)

Indeed, in our physical body, no two types of cells are identical. Each one does its *own* work. And when all those “works” are combined together, the entire body is healthy, growing and full of life. Think about it . . . EVERY part of the body *serves* EVERY other part.

And so it is with hope.

Like a beautiful puzzle—not one person is the whole picture—we’re only a single piece. As a single piece, our greatest gift to the bigger picture is to interlock seamlessly with those around us. THIS is how the picture of hope is made perfect.



Photo Credit: Kim Meeder

“For we are God’s masterpiece. He has created us anew in Christ Jesus, so we can do the good things he planned for us long ago.” (Eph. 2:10, NLT)

Notice how God’s Word says, “we.” Not, “you.” We—all of us who call Jesus Lord—are a vital part of the masterpiece that HE is making. And this happens when we’re diligent to DO what He has asked from each of us.

Few times in the history of the Ranch have we seen this, “everyone doing their own part as unto the Lord . . .” puzzle-piecing-together, more clearly than this last fall.

Daily in the Ranch gardens, we watched individual links of a human chain come together. Some built fencing. Some planted. Others watered and weeded. Even more united to bring in the harvest.

In addition—others beyond the Ranch heard of the produce that would soon be poured back into our community for those needing extra support—and more strong links arrived. One local farmer donated approximately 2000 pounds of pumpkins and winter squash. Another orchardmen gave 14 heavy crates filled with heritage apples. Still, another selfless link delivered over 300 canning jars in the hope that they would be filled with organic goodness and delivered to those who would benefit from such a precious gift.

Another one of our staff contacted a local grocery outlet store. The store also joined in the beautiful chain and started to donate meats—hundreds of pounds every week—to Crystal Peaks for delivery to families who would be blessed by it. In addition, even more stood shoulder to shoulder and processed ALL the donated pumpkins—about 1400 pounds worth—into usable puree just in time for the holidays.

More links came together and processed *every* apple. Half were chopped and dehydrated into healthy kid snacks—the other half were cooked and canned into delicious spiced applesauce. Another friend was so moved by the outpouring that they donated finances to possibly help build a special place on the Ranch to store all the food before delivery.

All these beautiful hearts united together to simply give what they could . . . so that others would be supported and blessed.

Then, these blessings went out like countless, well-aimed arrows from Heaven itself.



Photo Credit: Kim Meeder

The day before Thanksgiving, I had a meeting scheduled with Deirdre. She lives on the Ranch and is the assistant to the Equine Director. Deirdre helps in everything needed for horse care and training. She is also a lioness of a woman warrior.

Deirdre climbed into my truck. She was heavily dressed in Carhartt coveralls, gloves and a fun homemade cap made from the wool of our own sheep. As a rancher, she couldn't have looked more ready for action . . . or beautiful. Our meeting was to be a two-edged sword of discussing horse-related challenges—while we ran errands for the same.

I had not even pulled out of the Ranch driveway before I was completely stopped by the Holy Spirit.

Urgent streams of information poured into my heart. In response, I could feel my foot pressing the brake. I turned and looked at my friend and simply said, "I know what Jesus wants us to do—RIGHT NOW!"

In minutes, we had filled two large boxes with a variety of meats, carrots, onions, potatoes, home-canned soups and applesauce. We also added several packages of frozen pumpkin puree. Together, we drove the short distance to the home of some of our beloved neighbors.

We carried the heavily laden boxes up the couple's stone steps and into their home. Deirdre placed her box on the kitchen counter and went to the dining table to engage the elderly gentleman. I went into the kitchen to help his wife put a few of the items away.

Once we were relatively alone, she turned and looked straight into my face.

Her eyes were wide as she told me how the day before, her husband had fallen headfirst down the stone steps. Gratefully, other than a nasty scrape on his arm, he was alright. She then spoke of how his injury and subsequent care prevented her from dashing to the store to pick up anything for Thanksgiving dinner.

In a serious tone, she shared, "I just told him this will be our first Thanksgiving . . . *without a pumpkin pie.*" She looked down into the box full of blessing and continued, "Kim, our cupboards are bare."

I could feel rising within my heart the sweet combination of wanting to laugh and cry at the same time. Looking directly at my dear friend, I reached into the box and lifted up a one-quart bag of . . . *pumpkin puree.*

I glanced at the bag and then back at her. In wordless fashion, I communicated that she now has all she needs to bless her wounded husband

with a Thanksgiving dinner . . . including . . . pumpkin pie.

As the reality of the box of miracles found its mark, in the poignant silence that followed, two women hugged in a tiny kitchen on the day before Thanksgiving.

In the stillness of that same night, I recounted the blessings of the day. While thinking of all the hands and hearts that were involved in the making of this single gift—the Lord allowed me to see each individual as a sturdy link in the chain of HIS purpose.

Of the many who were involved, not one did *everything*—they just did *one* thing.

Because they were faithful to do ONE thing, the Lord blessed their gift. Then, He linked it with other heartfelt gifts—into an unbreakable chain—of His love.

Even though most who gave felt what they did was insignificant in the moment—it wasn't insignificant to Jesus. He is the Lord of "Loaves and Fishes." When we place our gifts into His hands, HE is the One who multiplies them into exactly what is necessary to bring hope to those in need.

Jesus doesn't ask us to understand the outcome of our service—He only asks that we will do our best—and trust HIM for it.

"Work willingly at whatever you do, as though you were working for the Lord rather than for people." (Col. 3:23, NLT)

Indeed, when we work willingly to serve others for Jesus—He turns our little links—into HIS BIG HOPE.



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OUR NEW INTERN TEAM IS COMING . . .

Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch will be welcoming five new Interns for the 2024 Season. They will be arriving from across the West Coast and Midwestern regions of the United States. Together, each of their strong hearts will become an addition to the beautiful tapestry of those called to serve Jesus through this ministry.

The Ranch Interns support our team for a period of eight months. They are the only volunteers we teach to work one-on-one with the children & horses in our session program. Each Intern called to Crystal Peaks does so through their own financial means. Every year, we see God provide for these humble servants in amazing and awe-inspiring ways.

If you're interested in learning more about our Internship Program, please visit our website and click on "Join the Cause." For those of you who are our prayer warriors, please join us in lifting up these five outstanding new team members.

During their time at Crystal Peaks, we pray:
Each will learn to **trust Jesus in every area of their life.**
Each will be encouraged by how **He always provides.**
Each, through their service, will experience **breakthrough for the Kingdom of God.**

We are so grateful for this new addition to our team.

Many blessings to you,
The CPYR Team



Photo Credit: @emilygreen