



AROUND the FIRE

Fall 2019

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

SIMILAR MINISTRIES

BY EMMA JANSSON

My name is Emma and I have the awesome privilege of working with the Similar Ministries department at Crystal Peaks Youth Ranch. My favorite responsibility is to call our ministries throughout the world and connect with them to offer prayer and resources. I have the honor of hearing how the Lord is working around the globe through so many of these amazing people. This remains the greatest reward of my job. I'm always more encouraged by these hardworking individuals than I could ever provide encouragement for them. I'm constantly moved by stories of redemption, growth, tribulation and character-building. Every time I clock in, I get to laugh, cry, and prayerfully shoulder burdens with these warriors.

Within this newsletter, I wish to share a powerful encounter of the miraculous nature of our God through a wonderful similar ministry out of Michigan, Hope Well Ranch. Jodi Stuber and her husband's story is one that starts with great sadness but ultimately leads to powerful redemption and hope.

I pray this testimony will fill you with encouragement from our loving, all-powerful God.

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HOPE WILL RISE AGAIN

by jody stuber

HOPE WELL RANCH, MICHIGAN

God can turn all things for good. Seemingly dark, impossible things can be brought to the light of His precious love and healing balm—and good can come from all of it. What once was lost will be found, but maybe not in ways we expect. Challenges that threaten to stop us—can propel us into a future we had no idea existed.

This is what happened to us. God, in His infinite love, took our broken hearts and restored them to a place of wholeness—a new depth of wholeness we had no idea could happen.

In January 2003, my husband Ty and I found out we were pregnant. This was a complete surprise to us as our daughter, Jessica, was 14, and our son, Richard, was 12. A new little one was not part of our plan. Yet, with a mixture of excitement and nervousness, we began the journey that would change the course of our lives forever.

Our little girl was very active in the womb. We'd laugh and joke that she was going to be a runner. The heartbreak of our journey began when I developed very high blood pressure, called Toxemia. During this time, I spent 17 days in between two hospitals.

On June first, our sweet baby girl died. On June second, I gave birth to her. She was tiny and perfectly formed.

Through the fog of anguish, I remember looking at my loving husband and saying, "We need to name her." Ty's response was, "Okay, but what?" I answered, "What about Hope?" Immediately, I heard the Holy Spirit speak to my heart, "Hope will rise again."

I vividly remember thinking, "Thank You Lord, I so needed that word of encouragement to go home and be a wife and a mother." I knew God was the only One who could sustain me as I walked through that valley of the shadow of death. Clinging to His matchless strength was the way I navigated the mine field of grief that threatened to swallow my family whole.

After coming home from the hospital and burying our precious daughter, I began taking long walks with our dog, Traverse. I spent hours in long conversations with God in prayer. In my daily readings, articles about horses and Christ's healing kept showing up. I distinctly remember saying to the Lord, "God, I want Your healing for myself."

Horses had always been present during pivotal moments of my life. Realizing my deep love for these four legged creatures, riding lessons and Horse Camps soon dotted the landscape of my youth. During my tumultuous high school years, I encountered a very difficult and dark season. Although I was only a junior in High School, it was within this phase that I was offered the opportunity to take a college level equine class. Time with the horses through this class helped me regain confidence and purpose for my life.

After saying to God those life altering words for healing, He responded in an unexpected way. A saddle, fence posts, and two helmets arrived on our property. Hope began to rise within me. I believed that joy could once again be restored.

"FOR I KNOW THE THOUGHTS THAT I THINK TOWARD YOU,
SAYS THE LORD, THOUGHTS OF PEACE AND NOT OF EVIL,
TO GIVE YOU A FUTURE AND HOPE."

JEREMIAH 29:11

In April of 2004, I drove to a local Tractor Supply Store and as if it were illuminated just for me, I saw the book “Hope Rising” by Kim Meeder, on a shelf.

I purchased the book, brought it home and read it cover to cover. The amazing stories of hope and healing made me cry tears of sorrow and of joy.

Ty came home one evening after work and noticed that I had been crying. He thought perhaps they were tears for our baby daughter. Some were, but most flowed because of the stories that had spoken directly to my heart. I recounted some of the chapters to Ty and as I shared them, I could feel a stirring in my spirit. A stirring that God was up to something greater than anything I could’ve thought or imagined.



The Lord knew what we needed—and when we needed it most. After sharing the life-giving stories with my wonderful husband, he looked at me and said, “Jodi, I think this is what we need to do.”

On the heels of Ty’s words, Hope Well Ranch was conceived and born—in memory of our beautiful daughter Hope—and for the glory of Jesus Christ.

His grace is sufficient for me. I am humbled beyond words at the gifts He has brought to our lives. We began Hope Well Ranch with a vision, a plan that was set in motion from the Father’s heart to redeem a broken husband and wife’s shattered dreams. He brought the pieces together and created a completely different picture of what we thought our future would look like.

Today, 15 years after reading the book *Hope Rising*, Hope Well Ranch is serving and providing hope for hurting and traumatized children, families, individuals, and veterans. Our continual goal is to offer each participant the unconditional acceptance of a caring person and one of our beautiful horses—all in the name of the redeeming love of Christ.

Jesus, in His infinite care and wisdom, brought our family out of tragic circumstances into victory. Do we miss our little girl? We do. But we rest in knowing we will see Hope in Heaven and because of that—we rejoice.

Day by day, we see her in every child’s smile. We hear her voice through those who say, “I will fight to live another day.” And we feel her love in every hug that is offered.

Hope will rise again.

Daily, I thank God for allowing us the privilege of leading a ministry that brings healing and hope to others. What a wonder to see the ripple effect of Jesus’ hope extend past the fractured perimeters of crushed hearts and shattered lives. His love is breaking through every boundary and extending beyond the borders of our state, our nation, and is impacting our entire world.

I’m grateful for every opportunity—both painful and joyful—that the Lord has set before us. Through them all, we’ve experienced that there is nothing His love, His hope cannot redeem.

Right now, will you choose to reach for the hand of Jesus that is extended to you? Will you receive the, “future and hope” He is offering your heart today? I pray that this will be the moment that HIS “hope will rise again” . . . within you.



Photos by Jodi Stuber

DOUBLE BLESSING

By Wendy Moore

Participating in my first Information Clinic at Crystal Peaks this year was a “double blessing.”

God always knows just what we need in every season of life. Being surrounded by Christ’s love through other believers—and shored up by the power of prayer in community—gave me His strength to sustain this season.

“I pray that out of His glorious riches He may strengthen you with power through His Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord’s holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God.”

Ephesians 3:16-19 (NIV)

During my first season on staff at the Ranch in 2018, I couldn’t be a part of the Information Clinic. The Lord had other plans. My young adult daughter, Ashlee, and I flew around the globe during the same time the clinic was taking place. We traveled to Germany for a very specialized and intensive medical treatment for Ashlee to address her recent diagnosis of chronic Lyme disease. The Lord was faithful. He sent an Angel of protection and healing over Ashlee through each step of the treatment. Jesus revealed His love and spoke to each of us in very special ways during those three precious weeks away. He drew us closer to Him, to others who were

battling the same illness and to each other as mother and daughter.

These past two years, my mama’s heart has grieved as we’ve navigated the roller coaster of Ashlee’s chronic and complex illness. I’ve watched my daughter suffer with a multitude of perplexing symptoms.

Yet, I’ve been humbled by God’s goodness to direct our path. I know He has a plan and purpose for all He has brought us through.

He is leading us.

“So be strong and courageous! Do not be afraid and do not panic before them. For the LORD your God will personally go ahead of you. He will neither fail you nor abandon you.” Deuteronomy 31:6 (NLT)

In early spring of 2019, our co-founder Troy was speaking in Colorado. During the trip, the Lord impressed on him to connect with Charlie and Cindy at their ranch before he returned to Oregon. While visiting these dear friends, he learned of Cindy’s personal health battle with a very similar diagnosis as Ashlee. Troy shared my daughter’s story with Charlie and Cindy, who instantly began to pray for her. Cindy knew the battle and the suffering all too well. She had also experienced years of suffering and constant searching for answers and treatments.

About a month before the May Information Clinic, Charlie was traveling through Oregon on a business trip and spent a day at the Ranch volunteering. Hearing he was present, I reached out to make a connection in anticipation of their longer upcoming visit.

Unfortunately, he was already on the road but we were still able to share by phone the similarities of Cindy and Ashlee’s stories. There was a deep connection of knowing the unconditional love of being the primary caregiver of someone battling chronic illness. Charlie shared how he and his wife had already been praying for Ashlee and we were excited to meet in person. He prayed with me over the phone and offered sweet words of encouragement and trust for God’s provision.

I was eager to be a part of this year’s Information Clinic. Full of anticipation of serving others and experiencing what God would do, I was excited to be a stepping stone to shore up others in ministry.

Initially, I was part of the registration team. This crew delights in greeting attendees, hearing where they’re from and welcoming them to the Ranch. My heart leapt when Charlie and Cindy spoke their names—our smiles met—and we

were finally together in person. We embraced, filled with excitement for the quality time and conversations we knew were coming over the next few days.

Throughout the clinic, we had many opportunities to share, listen, cry, and pray for one another. Their words of hope and encouragement were held close to my heart. One of the most impactful things that Cindy shared was how important it is for Ashlee to have a vision of the future. Within her heart, she needed to know that God has a plan for her life. Ashlee needed to cast a vision of dreams and make it real by creating a vision board with pictures of what her life will look like in the future. God calls us to have hope for our future and to trust Him for that.

One of the most beautiful things Charlie conveyed during our time together was that he didn’t know it was possible to love someone—the way he loved Ashlee—without meeting her. Simply praying for her

daily had created a love within him that is only Christ’s love. To hear a Godly man say this about your own flesh and blood brought such joy to my heart.

I know that God orchestrated our meeting, a special connection of walking through something so similar to one another. We now have our own “Similar Ministry” for each other and have built each other up in Christ. I’m so grateful and so blessed that He called these dear friends to bridge the gap in such a special way for Ashlee and I.

“So Christ Himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip His people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up . . .”

Ephesians 4:11-12 (NIV)

Since our meeting in May, God has continued to do a work in Ashlee’s body, heart and soul. He has answered so many prayers and has given her new opportunities to develop a vision for her future.

In July, she moved into a new home she can call her own. Here, she can set roots and look forward into this next season of healing.

Although we don’t often understand illness, we do know that hard circumstances in our lives draw us deeper into humility and closer to God. And for this greater dependency on Him, I am grateful.

Jesus completed the ultimate suffering for us and has paid the price so—one day—we will have no more suffering in heaven. He is the Master Healer. I trust and believe in His continuous miracle of redemption. The more we surround ourselves with others who believe this, the more strength we have in those weary moments.

I feel doubly blessed to be part of this ministry. In this place, I get to offer Christ’s love to others, to become a listening ear, to give words of encouragement, to share life with others, and to lift each other up in prayer. It fills my heart to see that God has placed brothers and sisters in Christ in my life to encourage me, strengthen my faith and receive His love through them.



Photos by Wendy Moore

Resting on the Waves

BY ALY HINKLE

In July, Crystal Peaks surprised the interns with a fun day of whitewater rafting. It was my first time rafting and our river guide did a great job at making the entire trip really exciting. Our guide was very experienced and had taught many of the other guides about how to safely have fun while fully experiencing the river. We all loved learning from him as he educated us about the ecosystem of the river, plant biology and the energy of the waves in the lower Deschutes River.

One of our first lessons was to figure out how to effectively paddle our 15-foot raft with nine people in it—in rhythm—as a team. Our guide would call out instructions of when and how hard to paddle.

As we began to get the timing down, our combined strength allowed us to paddle back upriver to repeat some fun rapids.

My favorite part of the day was “Riding the Bull.” Each intern was given the chance to take a turn sitting on the very front of the raft with their feet hanging down into the river. In this position, we would hold on to the bow line like a bull rider. After we double checked our life jackets, the team would then paddle hard into the rapids and try to “buck off” the rider. The effect was lots of squeals, laughter and fun while getting the “bull-rider” soaking wet with each crashing wave.

Towards the end of our rafting ride, we paddled hard in unison, aiming for a spot behind a large rock. The river was roaring on either side of the boulder but right behind it, the water was calm. We learned this is known as a hydraulic eddy. Our guide explained that the eddy was created by an extremely strong water force that plunges over the rock and down towards the bed of the river. Because of the generated energy of this process, when the water reaches the surface again, it backflows behind the rock and is actually pushing against itself. This creates a quiet eddy right behind the rock.

To reach this eddy, we had to paddle our 15-foot raft through the rushing force of the whitewater to arrive at the calm water in the middle of the waves. Under our guide’s skilled instructions, we began paddling hard. With great effort, we broke through the large waves and finally reached our destination behind the boulder.



In this place, I was in awe. The river was roaring past us on both sides—and yet—we were held completely still. It was mesmerizing

As we gazed out at the rushing torrent all around us, the Lord spoke to me. He reminded me that this is what it means to be in the flow of His Spirit. On top of the hydraulic wave, we were still in the middle of a rushing river. We could feel the power of the river running underneath our raft and yet we were calm

atop the waves. We could see the whitewater push up forcefully beside the rock and beside our boat. And yet we could not be shaken. It was peaceful and beautiful. Resting in the flow of the Spirit is much like resting in the effect of that wave.

We’re all busy with jobs, families, desires and “stuff” on the inside. Often, we strive to do more, to be better, to paddle harder. But the Lord calls us to *rest in His Spirit*, even though all those tasks still exist and the waves of our “stuff” are still there. He is greater. And when we choose to rest behind the Rock of His presence . . . there is peace. In this place, we can grow and daily become more like Him.

Sometimes, I struggle with feeling overwhelmed by all the waves. And yet, the Lord gently lets me see that when I position my heart behind His, it’s not stressful—no matter what waves roar around me. Instead of paddling hard against the waves, when I choose to rest in His power and His timing, life becomes enjoyable rather than exhausting.

On the eddy in that river, I saw the busyness and the stresses of life pulse all around and under me on the waves and yet I was at peace in Him. This made me think about one of my favorite Hillsong worship verses:

“I will call upon Your name,
And keep my eyes above the waves.
When oceans rise,
My soul will rest in Your embrace.
For I am Yours,
And You are mine.”
(Oceans, Where Feet May Fail).

While rafting, I also learned that we must *listen* to the still, small voice of the Spirit. As I sat in the boat, I had to listen for our guide's voice. He was the only one who knew when to paddle, how hard to paddle, which direction to paddle, and when to stop paddling and let the river do the work.

Likewise, with all the cool rafting tricks we did in rushing water, we had to trust our guide's experience to keep us safe. Often, he asked us to high-side the boat to go around large rocks that we could potentially get stuck against—go through rapids backwards—and sometimes, ride the whitewater while all of us sitting in one place, forcing those on the bottom to be in the river.

What seemed scary at first, taught us how to ride heavy water in ways we previously thought were impossible. What was before fearful—became fun. We had full faith that what our guide asked us to do was not so wild that it would become dangerous. His experience drew the line between excitement and stupidity.

It's the same with the Lord. He calls each of us to listen to His voice (John 10:27). Are we following where He is leading? Are we moving in sync with His commands or just rushing ahead, paddling furiously? Our Guide, our Father desires that we pray, listen and obey His voice.

“Do not fear what they fear; do not be terrified. You are to regard only the Lord of Armies as holy. Only He should be feared; only He should be held in awe. He will be a sanctuary . . .” Isaiah 8:12b-14a, (CSB)

Jesus used the rafting trip to remind me that He wants us to enjoy His creation and have fun paddling this journey of life. Our rafting trip wouldn't have been nearly as exciting or memorable if we simply sat, coasting down the river, fearing the unknown that lay ahead. The enjoyment came from pressing into each moment fully, appreciating what He has made and resting in His power. Jesus desires that we engage Him in the same way, through every bump, rapid and eddy of this life.

On this day, will you choose to trust Him by listening to His voice and follow Him stroke for stroke through your life? Like that day on the river—if you do—it will be more exciting, fulfilling and restful than you could ever imagine.



All stories written in "Around the Fire" newsletter are true. Some of the names have been changed to protect individual privacy. "Around the Fire" newsletter stands on the Word of God. All translations of the Holy Bible are used to assure clarity for our readership. Each author is afforded the right to choose the translation that best suits their submission.

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

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refuge



2019 Refuge Dates:

October 8th—November 12th—December 10th

After nearly three years of prayer, hard work, and an army of talented sub-contractors, the new Refuge Barn/Ranch conference center has opened its doors. This incredible place—a remodeled 80-year-old dairy barn—has become the focal point of powerful worship, simple sharing of God's Word and the gathering of the beloved. In addition to our Refuge Gathering, the center will be used for CPYR conferences, Similar Ministry Conferences and other Ranch events.

The Refuge Gathering is open to all. We would love to have you come and visit us. Everyone is invited. Refuge is held the second Tuesday of each month starting at 6pm. We gather as family with no separation of adults and children. We hold dear a core value that families worship together. In a world where family unity is under attack, we are committed to provide a place where ALL worship together.

For everyone who have prayed for—worked—and generously given to see Refuge into completion . . . we humbly say . . . *thank you.*

