

Fall 2011

A God of Many Chances

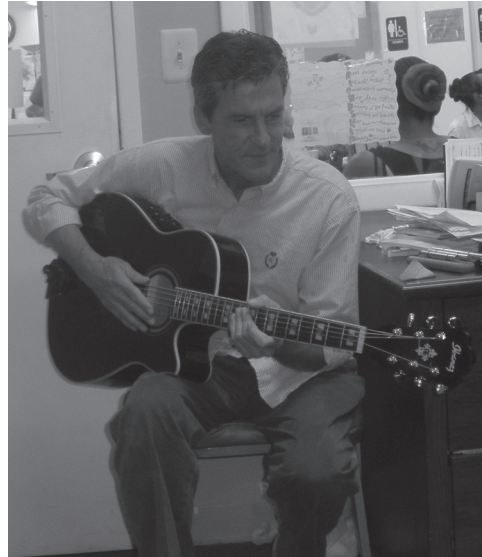
By Dave Larrabee

Suppose one of you has a hundred sheep and loses one of them. Doesn't he leave the ninety-nine in the open country and go after the lost sheep until he finds it? And when he finds it, he joyfully puts it on his shoulders and goes home. Then he calls his friends and neighbors together and says, 'Rejoice with me; I have found my lost sheep.'

Luke 15:4-7

Many times at the Lamb Center Bible Study table, I have heard someone say that we serve a God of second, third and many more chances. But what if someone has had so many chances that you lose count? The shepherd will go after the lost sheep until he finds it, but how long will the shepherd search, especially if the sheep has been lost on a continual reoccurring basis?

James is currently at Cornerstones in Chantilly and has been sober almost two months and he is well familiar with many other programs. The road to this point has been extremely long and winding. James turned 48 on Independence Day and he first came to



Thanks to our friend Pablo, James is able to bless others with his talent from God.

the Lamb Center in 1998 when we were above the Pawn Shop on Lee Highway. His story, however, began long before he became part of our community. After living overseas with his family as a young boy, he started drinking and smoking pot at the age of 12 after his family moved to Virginia.

As with most alcoholics and addicts, trouble and

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Be a Lamb Center Partner

- \$50 a day or \$250 a week provides water for showers and laundry.
- \$100 feeds 25 of our guests.
- \$250 provides bus tokens for 20 people for a week.
- \$1,500 keeps our doors open for one day.

Please make checks payable to The Lamb Center and mail to
P.O. Box 1385, Fairfax, VA 22038-1385

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Our young friends from Canada and the Midwest were willing to pray with James before doors opened for him.

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burnt bridges quickly become a byproduct of drinking and drugging and then he would find himself drinking and drugging over failures and the pain caused to others. With each lost opportunity and failed relationship, it became easy to view his situation as hopeless. On his 48th birthday, James had been homeless off and on for almost three decades and it was hard not see himself as someone other than the person who sleeps under a bridge or on a baseball field.

The Good Shepherd, however, looks at James and each one of us as beloved and He always sees in us the talents He has given us and the miracles we can become. The Good Shepherd also uses people to search for us in our “lostness” such as the youth from Canada and the Midwest who impressed James with their sincerity and willingness to pray for him, Lamb Center volunteers who have spent

countless hours at the table with James guiding him along the winding path of spiritual growth and the Fairfax County outreach angels, such as Wendy Murphy, who are willing to walk side by side with James along a path on newness.



Wendy and other Fairfax County outreach angels walk side by side with our guests.

While I don't know where this new journey will take James, I can see he is on a path leading to “foundness.” A week after James celebrated one month of sobriety, he was in my office thoroughly enjoying a Spanish guitar our friend Pablo had given him. While years of homelessness had made James a little rusty, I could tell he was rediscovering a talent God had long ago given James. Part of this rediscovery is starting to see yourself the way your Creator sees you. In the words Wendy shared with James, “Get used to miracles as a natural way of life, for they are your true inheritance. Miracles are expressions of love, for they bring more love to both the giver and the receiver.

The Executive Director's Corner

By John MacPherson

"This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live by the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from sin."

1 John 1, 5-7

We get a lot of volunteer groups at The Lamb Center in the summer. Many of these are youth groups from both local churches, and others from all over North America who travel here to the metro area to do service work. Often this work is not about what the volunteers can do for The Lamb Center, but what The Lamb Center ends up doing for them. Like many of our volunteers of all ages, they come to The Lamb Center to do good deeds, and they do, but what they didn't expect is that they themselves would be blessed.

Don't get me wrong. We love having groups come. Dave and I have been known to "fight" to see who gets to do the orientation. Groups can bring a change of routine, and a certain energy to the center. One day when a group of teens from Canada and the

Midwest were visiting, our meals coordinator, Charlie Hoover, commented about just this phenomena. The kids were doing a great job of engaging with our guests. Charlie said, "For a few minutes maybe they can forget they are homeless."

This energy works both ways. One young lady, Tricia, spent an hour speaking with a long time guest named James. This guest has had a long struggle with alcohol. James has been through recovery programs on at least four occasions, and yet he continued to drink. Tricia said her time with James "changed her life". Tricia later that day accepted an invitation to pray with James, even though this clearly was far outside her comfort zone. James was about to enter into a new treatment program. We don't know if James will make it this time, but he has been sober for over one month now, and when he was at The Lamb Center the other day, he looked better than we had ever seen him. Maybe this time he will make it.

I am excited about the seeds that have been planted this summer at The Lamb Center. God only knows the ripple effect of these young people as they grow up and become leaders both here and around the Northern America. I have no idea what the future holds for them, but I know they did not leave The Lamb Center unchanged. You know how many seeds are in an apple, but not how many apples are in a seed.

The Lamb Center

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THE LAMB CENTER

Annual Banquet

October 20, 2011 – Thursday

Registration & reception start at 6:30 pm
Dinner begins at 7 pm

WATERFORD AT FAIR OAKS

12025 Lee Jackson Memorial Highway,
Fairfax, VA 22033

TO RSVP OR MORE INFORMATION
703-745-1038



Save the Date