



# HANDS of COMPASSION

*A ministry of the Rochester Church of Christ*



Rochester, Minnesota

Winter/Spring 2011



## *A Place Where One Feels the Presence of God*

As the time drew near for our departure, Bill and I felt the Holy Spirit graciously leading us to the House of Compassion through our son's partner in medicine, Dr. Jim Smelser and his wife Karen, of Huntsville, Alabama. We were to stay in Rochester while Bill received radiation and chemotherapy at the Mayo Clinic for stage-four pancreatic cancer.

From our very first contact with the House of Compassion, we were impressed with the staff and administrators. Prior to our arrival, Meagan was helpful in advising us on what we would need during our stay. Her advice was particularly helpful since we were coming from Huntsville, Alabama, where the winters are mild.

**Bill & Mary Ann Walker** We shall never forget the sincere, humble greeting we received upon our arrival. Clearing the parking lot with a snow-blower, Stacy quit his work to greet us, gave each of us a bear hug, and carried in our luggage. Standing outside in the freezing snow, Meagan welcomed us with a warm smile and kind words.

We found everyone at the House of Compassion to be joyful, friendly, and accepting, immediately putting us at ease. Moreover, we found each staff member to have specific, yet different, strengths and gifts which combine to make the House of Compassion run smoothly.

Debra made sure we started our mornings with a hug, which always seemed to be delivered at just the right moment and helped melt away any tension we were feeling. Additionally, Debra has a considerable knowledge of health food, so she could offer dietary suggestions as well as direct us to the appropriate stores to meet our needs.

Stacy made himself available to help us any way he could. His help began the moment we arrived, and we witnessed this helping spirit day after day as he cleaned snow off our car, bought and delivered furniture, and he and Toni saved us from our Southern naivete by taxiing us to and from the Clinic when we were planning on walking in subzero temperatures. Not only did Stacy attend to our physical needs but also to our spiritual needs. Thanks to his non-intimidating presentation of the scriptures, we were nourished with the Word of God through his Bible studies. This was especially critical for our spiritual health as we were unable to attend traditional church services while Bill was undergoing his treatments due to his suppressed immune system and his doctors advising him to avoid crowds.

Meagan is a precious, humble servant of God whose gift of compassion, coupled with a strong work ethic, makes her a vital member of the House of Compassion staff. Because of her own medical battle, Meagan has vast medical understanding. We enjoyed conversing with her about Bill's condition and sharing with her the information we learned as we met with various doctors at the Clinic. Many times her comments and questions during these discussions made us realize things we needed to ask Bill's doctors during his appointments. Her calm and gentle countenance always seemed to melt away any stress or tension we were experiencing.

We found the House of Compassion's facilities to be clean, well-maintained, and stocked with all of the comforts one needs in a home-away-from-home. Having a full modern kitchen was a huge blessing, supplying us with every necessary item and appliance needed to prepare healthy meals to aid Bill's fight against cancer and meet his needs as a type-1 diabetic. Having access to an in-house laundry facility was a blessing as well. All these needs could not have been met in a traditional hotel or suite.

By the end of our stay, we had come to consider the House of Compassion staff and administrators to be like family. On the day of Bill's last radiation treatment, Debra, Stacy and Meagan accompanied us to the Clinic to take pictures of Bill ringing the bell, signifying the end of his treatments.

Being among the kind and loving Christian staff and enjoying the wonderful accommodations of the House of Compassion allowed us a peaceful and restful lifestyle that greatly contributed to our overall comfort and Bill's healing. We could truly feel the presence of God there.

Sincerely, *Bill and Mary Ann Walker*, Huntsville, Alabama





### "Truly A Blessing"

On a trip to Mayo Clinic in January 2011, we had a consultation for Doris with a neurosurgeon about a brain tumor. We were very stressed as we did not know how long we would need to stay or what the results would be. A friend from the church of Christ in Michigan called and told us to contact the House of Compassion. We did and the wonderful and caring folks there made us feel so welcome and comfortable. We can't praise them enough for all the good things they did for us. They truly were a blessing. I (Doris) had surgery to remove the brain tumor. We stayed at the House throughout my surgery and recovery. We know God opened all the doors for us; we are forever grateful and have made wonderful new friends in Christ. Thank God for the House of Compassion.

**LeRoy & Doris Vahovick**

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*LeRoy & Doris Vahovick, St Johns, MI*

### "Great Comfort"

Mark had received an artificial heart valve almost 22 years ago. Now this valve needed to be replaced. As we prepared for our trip, we saw evidence of God working. We learned of the House of Compassion from friends at church. During our stay, we saw the staff and family demonstrate God's love by touching people's lives. The knowledge of a home to come to each night after tests and doctor visits was a great comfort. We felt humbled for the blessing of seeing God at work in this place. The spiritual and emotional support found here made our trip easier.



*- Mark & Dawn Hayden, Jackson, MS*

**Mark & Dawn Hayden**



**Xie Juan, Liangle & Aida**

### Working Together in the Kingdom

For a number of years, Aida Chen has been a Christian Chinese interpreter for China Mission. She has accompanied four different Chinese families to the Mayo; the most recent was 3-year-old Liangle and his mother Xie Juan. Thankfully, Liangle experienced successful heart surgery. Their stay at Rochester also allowed for the mother, Xie Juan, to have a number of Bible studies led by Stacy with Aida interpreting. Xie Juan and her son are now back in China, and though she did not obey the Gospel, she was taught it, and we pray the day will come for her obedience.

In past newsletters, Aida has been pictured with the other Chinese families who have come to the Mayo Clinic. Her wonderful Christian character and gift to interpret has helped lead three to Christ. However, this time marked Aida's last to work with Stacy in teaching the gospel since she has chosen to pursue a degree in nursing in Orlando, Florida. Hands of Compassion ministers to people in numerous ways, always with the desire to share the knowledge and compassion of the blessed Lord. Our thanks to the China Mission ministry and to Aida for working together with us in the Kingdom. Aida will be greatly missed. -

*Stacy*



### \$13,500 - Dollar Campaign Big Success



Thank you to all who contributed to our dollar campaign. Over 42 congregations and 75 individuals participated in this our first annual Dollar Campaign. We have set the first Sunday in November to be our annual dollar campaign date. Therefore, please mark Sunday, November 6th, 2011 as Hands of Compassion Dollar Sunday. A little given by one, and duplicated by many, can provide a much-needed resource for caring for the hurting. Thank you again for your encouraging participation in this effort.

**Please Note**

\* Please use the 840 W. Center Street Rochester, MN 55902 address when sending checks or correspondence and not the 830 address.

\* In an effort to reduce our postage costs and be more efficient with our bookkeeping process, we are going to be making some changes. Be assured that everyone who sends in a donation, memorial contribution or honorarium contribution **will** get a tax letter. However in most cases, we will only be sending an annual letter at the end of the year. If you donate monthly or multiple times a year, your letter will include a list of all donations made in the calendar year. If you need a letter right away or prefer something more frequent than an annual basis, then please call, email or write us, and we'll be happy to assist you.

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**Stacy Sikes**

(Is. 58:10)

*If you give yourself to the hungry, And satisfy the desire of the afflicted,  
Then your light will rise in darkness,  
And your gloom will become like midday.*

Just as the Word found expression in becoming flesh (John 1:1), and John says we heard, saw and handled the Word of life (1 Jn. 1:1), so the Word of His fast (Is. 58:6-12) is to be made visible by His children to those who are hungry and afflicted. Jesus gave Himself to be our shelter, our food, our clothing and our salvation. Are we not to love others with the same love we have known? Isn't meeting the physical needs of the afflicted an essential way for us to show that we truly know Him? The purpose of the Hands of Compassion ministry is deeply rooted in this precept. We want people to know that He is the source of such expressed compassion. The needs of the ill are great as they seek answers to their health issues. Pray that we can continue to minister to their needs as He has so graciously ministered to us. To all who have joined with us to support this ministry, thank you!! God's blessings be upon you and this ministry. *-Stacy*

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