

July 2016

Dear Sustaining Partner,

"How obvious it is now--the gift you gave him. All those letters, they were you... All those beautiful powerful words, they were you! The voice from the shadows, that was you... You always loved me!" Roxane from *Cyrano de Bergerac* by Edmond Rostand

Finding someone to speak on your behalf has been going on for ages, especially in junior high...or middle school---whichever you call it. Do you remember locking eyes with someone in the hall between classes...and dang---it was LIKE at first sight. But wait! What if that person doesn't like you back? It's a big risk to just walk up and say hello. So, what to do you do ensure you don't make a complete fool of yourself? You ask a friend who you hope will present you in the best possible way to represent you. Sometimes your pal delivers a note which includes "Check 'Yes' or 'No'" at the bottom. The goal is to open communication and test the water.

Generally we ask another to speak for us when we want to avoid rejection. In the case of, Cyrano---who was convinced one look at his very large nose, would preclude Roxane from hearing his words of affection for her. So, he had friend, Christian deliver the letters written he'd written to her. As is often the case, Roxane fell in love with the heart of the man who wrote and not the appearance of the one who delivered the words. Really it's fairly easy to dismiss a pretty face, but hard to forget words of love which ring true and make your heart beat more quickly. By the time Cyrano and Roxane came face-to-face (or nose-to-nose) the heart of one had won the love of the other.

Who knows--perhaps Roxane would have not been put off by Cyrano's appearance? We don't know. Most of us are biased according to what we see and our preconceived ideas. We are all guilty of making assumptions based on what we see or hear in the news---for substantiation consider how people vote based on biased media sound bites. However that's a discussion best reserved for another time, although certainly something to think about right now in this election year.

I speak from experience because at one time what I believed about God was based on what people told me. As a child I never associated the word "love" with GOD whom I had heard was judgmental and always watching to catch me doing (or thinking) something wrong. Before I came to know God intimately, life was a constant "dance" to stay out of His bulls-eye. (Good luck dodging the "King of the World!") How did God communicate His love to me and win my heart? He sent Jesus to represent Him, and Jesus used others to amplify Words full of grace, mercy and hope. God approached me indirectly, so I would hear his heart. He had others whom He trusted to communicate His Word for Him, and like Roxane I recognized and responded to love.

I am pleased that we have the privilege to facilitate Truth to our clients, many who have no understanding of God's love, grace and mercy. They have heard only about rules and judgment...that's what people usually focus on most isn't it? He desires we know His heart---that's why He sent Jesus who said, "...You can trust my decision because I'm not out to get my own way but only to carry out orders. If I were simply speaking on my own account, it would be an empty, self-serving witness...."

Thank you for joining us in our mission to speak truth in to the lives of people who have believed lies about God, life and their value. Your partnership enables us to be here every day to stand in the gap for the marginalized regardless of ethnicity, economic status, religion or political affiliation. Transformation by the power of God's love is the only hope for any of us regardless of politically correct rhetoric. You can't clean up the outside only, think happy thoughts and expect change, which only happens when a heart is regenerated by The Gospel---the law of love. Our constant prayer is that we will be trustworthy spokespeople who communicate in love what God has done---sent His son to speak truth in a way that will break through all the built up fear and opinions. May we never do anything to hinder our Father's love affair with the world.

We have some needs I'd like to communicate in hopes you will speak for us in your sphere of influence. Donated furnishings in our reception area and consultation rooms have served us well, but need to be replaced. We're looking for gently used furniture, specifically sofas, love seats and chairs.

Our staff and board of directors are working together to beef up security. We will need volunteer manpower and material donations to reconfigure our front office, install better doors, reinforce walls and replace regular service windows with thick or bullet proof glass. If you can help with any of this or would like more information, please contact me and I'll put you in touch with our board chairman, Ron Johnson, who is spear-heading the project.

August 6 is our annual ladies' tea. Tickets are still available at this time. Call for information...even at the last minute. We will try to accommodate all requests for seats.

Save the date: Friday, October 21 so you'll be at our Annual Fall Gala featuring Lauren Roman. "Life Matters!" It's never too early to begin to invite guests to join you. Contact me for information about being a Table Host and/or event underwriter.

I am still on the search for a volunteer event coordinator who will work with me to oversee, supervise and organize a group of willing event committee members who seek direction for our few events each year. Again, call me for more information.

"Be kind to one another, tender-hearted, forgiving each other, just as God in Christ also has forgiven you." Ephesians 4:32 This seems an especially important reminder in these days. And while I'm on the subject I want to thank each of you who have written me personal notes, prayed for me and other kind acts over the past few months. Please continue to pray as I move forward. It's been hard.

Until next month...

For Life!

Lisa J Stiefken
Executive Director