

June 2016

Dear Sustaining Partner,

“For by HIM all things were created... (Colossians 1:15)

I just returned from driving cross country---well, pretty much, if 4,200 miles is sufficient to define cross country. The primary focus was to visit my brother and his family in Indiana, the state where I was born and lived until my family moved to California when I was nearly 13. My older brother was diagnosed with Alzheimer's a couple years ago. Despite the recent death of my son which created a serious doubt whether I should make the trip, my sister-in-law encouraged me to visit now while Bob still knows me. So, I chose to move forward with the plans I've had for about a year. I looked at maps, talked to friends and family I wanted to see, made plans, booked hotels, packed, gassed up the Jeep and took off. Built in to the plan was time alone to process the events of the past few months. No, I wasn't frightened traveling solo. I figure God is present in my life anywhere. Trust doesn't always come this easy for me. I think in this case it was a pure grace.

As I drove, I thought about remarks people made to me about various places in the country. Texas goes on forever, Kansas is flat and boring, drive the desert at night to escape the heat---you won't be missing anything. I heard the words, but determined to enjoy it all. Of course mostly I drove Interstates which do tend to be monotonous, but from time to time had the opportunity to use state highways and business loops. I've traveled before, but not with the same level of awareness. These days everything is significant to me. I look for meaning and purpose in the smallest things. On this trip I noticed how many very small non-descript towns there are in our nation. Lots of dusty little dots for which I'd slow down (Can we say "Speed trap?"), look around and consider. Paul cautions us in 1 Corinthians 1:28 to be careful since it's easy to apply value to people, places and things according to size and appearance. Our perception of importance is often skewed, but we can deliberately choose to acknowledge the preciousness of especially "little" non-descript places and people.

While driving I'd see small children playing in a field, or an older woman tending her front yard. I'd wonder, "What's the story there?" It occurred to me every child is a significant part of someone's life and at her age the woman has tended countless plants and most likely many people who cannot imagine life without her. I realized during my observations my knowledge of a person walking along side the road doesn't determine value. God's plan is uniquely designed to accomplish something rare, beautiful and meaningful even in a tiny little town in the middle of no where. Every place is somewhere and every one is special and necessary to His plan. There is no such thing as an insignificant life. Each of us is loved, perhaps for reasons I will never understand. My failure to recognize a great story in the man who served me a chicken lunch in his tiny little café calls to question my limitations, not his value. At the very least I appreciated his kindness to this stranger and the food he prepared for

me. His pleasure from my compliment and thanks seemed excessive at the time. In retrospect I recognize the mutual gift from one sojourner to another.

My belief that God has deliberately connected us all grew stronger and more solid during those three weeks on the road. I accept I was created to make a deliberate difference in the lives of people in my world. I don't need to know someone to value a life. God has the story already written which included a chance encounter and brief conversation at the nearly deserted Quick Stop in New Mexico. I appreciated the kindness of fresh coffee brewed just when I needed it. Maybe the little girl my granddaughter's age will remember the encouragement from a stranger as she proudly helped her mom. I hope so.

I've never doubted all human life is created by God in His image and therefore sacred. All those who serve with me at Pregnancy & Family Resource Center agree. Each person---born and unborn--- with whom we come in contact is important to us because every life matters to God and to us. I know you agree because you partner with us. You enable us to demonstrate to each one God's love through us as we reach out with an offer of much-needed FREE services. Who'd have ever thought the gift of a packet of diapers and some baby wipes could be a catalyst for change? Because you give and you pray, we see lives of women and families transformed. One recent mind blowing example is the young pregnancy woman who came in with her mom. The parents of the girl both thought abortion was "an unfortunate solution, but the best in this case." Until the ultrasound. Without hesitation the mom pulled her phone out of her purse and placed a call. She said, "I'm looking at our grandchild. Abortion is not an option."

Truly an unforgettable moment for us, and for that family as they see God writing their story with the inclusion of a sweet new baby---unplanned, but wanted and valuable. Thank you for allowing us to continue to serve in our community in this way.

Ladies---Coming soon!! Our annual tea: "***You're a Beautiful Bride.***" Save the date: ***Saturday, August 6, 2016.*** 11 AM to 2 PM. \$25 donation per ticket. Seating is limited, so we ask guests be 16 and older. Tickets available through employees, and committee members or call our office---909-382-4550.

Come for the vintage wedding gown fashion show, yummy food, shopping from Emma's Vintage Paris tables and the silent auction. As if all this isn't enough, it's my great pleasure to announce the speaker for only this one afternoon is my friend, ***Christine Wyrzten.*** She is a speaker, writer, singer, musician and the founder of ***Daughter's of Promise.*** We have a rare opportunity to spend an intimate afternoon with Christine who generally accepts offers only for weekend or full day events. Come to fall more deeply in love with your Groom as she shares with us. You will be sorry if you miss this event.

Have a great summer! Have some fun, stay hydrated and remember each person who crosses your path has a unique story. Read it!

For Life!

Lisa J Stiefken
Executive Director