



**Dear Friend,**

**February 4, 2008**

**John Sturm** walked into Hope Street in May of 2006 with his social worker. He was looking for a "safe place to be" after going through detoxification and 90 days of residential treatment for chronic alcoholism. His mother had passed away in 1981 and his father died from his own addiction in 1983, triggering drinking binges that went on and on and on for John. His siblings were still actively drinking at home so he knew that was not the place for him. He was looking for God to intercede and direct his path, and God used his social worker to do just that.

He fit right in at Hope Street. He quickly made friends at the in-house bible studies that are required here. His relationship with the Lord has blossomed. He started volunteering for work in the office and general building maintenance. He is always willing to lend a hand. He said, "I know God has a purpose for me - Helping other people to better understand the Word of God, like I'm doing here at Hope Street". He is eager to help anyone in need and has become a 'go-to guy' for us. He helps new residents move in, assists with the food pantry and bread donations, shovels snow, encourages newcomers, volunteers at our church soup kitchen next door AND prays for Hope Street residents and staff daily, among other things...

Ending my conversation with John this morning, he said, "I feel good about myself now." Leaving my office, he offered to take my garbage out, as usual. We feel good about him too.

This story is repeated many times here. We share these stories so you will know that we are making a difference. A real difference in peoples' lives. And you're giving makes it all possible.

God is truly transforming lives here at Hope Street Ministries!!! We have the great privilege to see firsthand what God is doing in the hearts, minds, souls and lives of so many men and women who find their way to Hope Street. Finding out who they are in Christ as new creations is a major emphasis here. To shed the old life and live in the new man or woman God is creating. Only God can bring about this kind of transformation. Many fail here and return to desperate situations. We continue to pray for them often and we know that sometimes we are planting seeds that will grow later. But for many, being here gets them firmly grounded in Christ Jesus and on the road to living full lives serving the Lord by having their minds renewed by the Word of God.

The past year has been difficult for all of us here. My accident last September and subsequent colon surgery had me off work and others picking up the load. Our fund-raising efforts lagged behind in both direct mailings and grant writing but we were blessed again to end the year a little above break-even, as in all of our first 8 years of operation. We praise the Lord for that!

Our focus this year is not on growth but on doing the best job we can with the residents we have and to continue to focus on our classes, teachers, curriculum and cultivating more mentors and volunteers to work one-on-one with our residents or to lead weekly bible studies. This has been a huge success for us. We also are creating a classroom which is almost complete. We had desks and computers donated and we will start classes by March 1<sup>st</sup> in basic Computers and will add other classes as we find teachers.

To accomplish our goals and meet our 2008 budget we will NEED your support. So please pray and see what the Lord puts on your heart to help us this year. Please send back the enclosed giving card with any amount you feel led to give. We will greatly appreciate small and large gifts of all kind. Every dollar helps and is needed.

We again thank so many of you for your continued and faithful support of our work here. May the Lord bless you for your generosity.

Sincerely,

Pastor Scott Martin