



# THE CENTER



MARGO HAVING A CONVERSATION SHARING HOPE! SOCIALLY DISTANT OF COURSE.



OPEN EVERYDAY FROM THE BEGINNING OF THE PANDEMIC.ELNITA: A HOPEFUL

## Hope for a COVID Christmas 2020

I had wonderful, crazy, parents. They gave me several great life lessons. I have two I often remember, one is that miracles happen so expect them, and two not everything is about you. Honestly the first one is easier for me. Miracles happen so expect them, and so I do.

This year has been a tough year for many of us, but I continue to rejoice and have hope especially at this holiday season. I have been humbled by the support and prayers that we have seen for The Centers ministries from our community. Each

donation, letter, and gift has left us with a sparkle of hope.

Why so hopeful? I have had the privilege and honor to serve this ministry for many years. And just when I cant think of a way to make the money stretch any further THE LORD shows up!

For example, in September we were forced to cancel our annual fundraiser and 15 year celebration. BUT we expected a miracle and we got one. So many people responded to our needs as we serve the poor and the marginalized in our community.

Because of your help we were able to share the HOPE of the Lord with many people. Just last month skate church had 414 students, showers: 145 people, served 635 lunches, gave out 47 clothing vouchers, and had 1256 people through the door.

That reminds me of the second lesson in life- not everything is about me. When I become discouraged with the OVERWHELMING number of people we serve I remember its not about me- but about the one we serve, Jesus the Lord.



JERRY AND HIS FAMILY SERVING



ALEX AND PASTOR JOHNSON: A HOPEFUL EMBRACE



SKATECHURCH IN PRAYER

# “Hope” by Connor LaBorde

I recently watched a video, that can be found on YouTube, entitled “Grace, Justice & Mercy: An Evening with Bryan Stevenson & Rev. Tim Keller” that sparked something in me that I can’t seem to shake (you should go and watch it). While watching this video, the Lord seemed to dismantle the boundaries I’ve put on Justice and usher in this feeling of Hope and at times when hope seems impossible, the Lord’s been reminding me to hope for hope. Let me explain...

First off, I love working at the Center for so many reasons, but mostly because I get to see the Lord working in people’s lives every day. I’m a part of a team where we have the liberty to spend our days seeing to the needs of others and pursuing a solution alongside of them. We offer showers, coffee, and a hot meal. We often times have the resources right here in the building, whether its clothes or boots, hand warmers or food, bus tokens or sleeping bags. We are here to help remove any barriers we can in people’s lives, to ease the struggle so they can make it to the next day and leave here with more hope for change than when they came. If we don’t have what they need, we usually can refer them to another agency (often times one that’s even in our building!) that does or just go out and get them what they need. We just make it work because its not about us! I get to be a part of a staff that I KNOW spends their day seeking the Lord on people’s behalf and seeking to meet the needs of people in our community. I’ve seen Pastor Johnson sitting praying over his Bible for the needs of our clients long after everyone else is gone. I’ve been pulled into the classroom by Ms. Elnita so she can tell me the desperate situation of a young lady in crisis. I’ve watched Bill Porter follow in his car a single Mom to the auto shop to get a part for her car. We have a Director who leads by example striving to keep relationships with people, some of which have extended for years and will continue for years to come.

Despite all of these wonderful things I witness, I still end many days feeling hopeless and defeated, knowing that there are people sleeping outside, or faced with criminal charges that seem unbeatable, parents sleeping in cars with their children, moms who haven’t seen their kids in decades, young men with a criminal record that will make it impossible to ever find a job paying a wage that could support their family and people with addictions so severe it will probably end in an untimely death. The Lord has put me in a position that I GET to spend my days meeting people’s needs and my evenings ministering to the youth, and yet sometimes all I can see are all the needs that go unmet or that may never be met in this life.

So when someone sent me this video and I listened to Bryan Stevenson talk I was reminded of this frequent feeling of hopelessness and how I desperately long to FEEL hopeful and was encouraged to seek the Lord to be reminded that He is good, loving, wonderful, and just. Knowing that our hope is not found in man or the government, or even the Church but in the Lord Jesus Christ

For to us a child is born,  
to us a son is given  
and the government shall be upon his shoulder  
and his name shall be called  
Wonderful counselor, mighty God,  
Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace  
Isaiah 9:6

At one time, just as God told spoke through Isaiah (7:14), God came and made his dwelling with us and the world was forever changed, in knowing Jesus as our Savior and Redeemer our lives can be forever changed and in hoping in Him our actions can be forever changed. I need the Lord to remind me always that He is opposed to the oppressor He is a refuge for the oppressed. In Matthew 11:25-30 Jesus says “take my yoke upon you, and learn from me, for I am gentle, and lowly in heart, and you will find rest from your souls” (v.29). My Hope is the Lord and I must learn from him and take his yoke upon my shoulders to find the rest, to find the hope I am looking for. We are called to do the work set before us, described in Isaiah 58, and to bring the Gospel everywhere we go. We are called to live a life that honors the Lord with our time, our talent, and our treasure. Knowing Jesus and making him known

He has told you, O man, what is good;  
and what does the LORD require of you  
but to do justice, and to love kindness,  
and to walk humbly with your God?

Micah 6:8

This is not a call to give us all of your money or to think well of The Center. If you’re like me and have been feeling hopeless then this is a call to seek the Lord with all your heart and cry out to Him for mercy that you may know Him more and ask Him what he has put in front of you. Ask Him what He is doing and how you can become more a part of it!

# Christmas Party

Fourth annual community Christmas party for our neighbors and guests.

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COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS PARTY  
DECEMBER 12 11:30-1:30

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**This event will be socially distant!**

## **Please Pray for our Celebration**

This is a community event. From the planning to the cooking to the gifts. We all do our part and it turns out to be an event our neighbors look forward to each year.

Organizations who are serving:

Asbury United Methodist Church  
Mens Group

First Baptist Church

St. John's UMW

and many individual people



## WHAT WE NEED AT THE CENTER

Please consider your end of the year gifts to The Center. We are in need of funding to end the year with a positive balance. You can also designate your gifts to a specific ministry such as; Street Team Homeless Outreach, or Skate Church, or Neighborhood Needs.

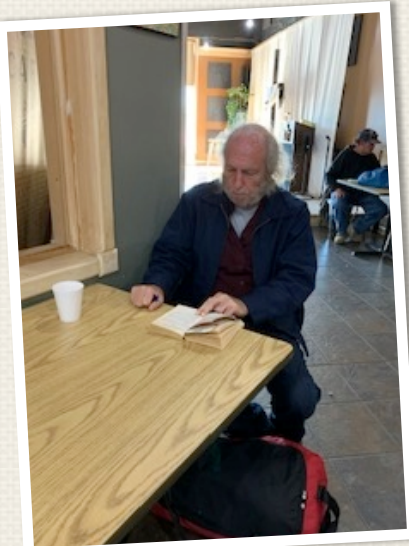
We also are prayerfully asking that you consider donating the following items:

- Hand Warmers
- Gift Cards to kwick shop, or Walmart to use to give as gifts for families
- Gloves and Hats
- Back Packs
- Coffee (please!)
- Hot Chocolate

### **(And especially)**

- Blankets and Sleeping Bags

Socially Distant moment of Peace



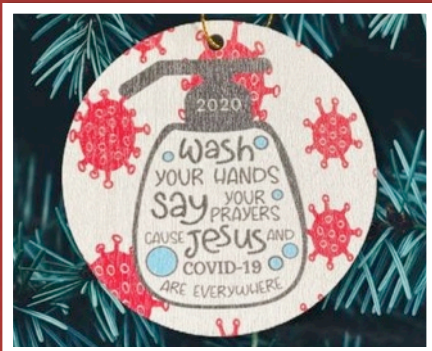
Coffee with a smile(under the mask)



COVID friendly check-in







CHRISTMAS WILL LOOK DIFFERENT THIS YEAR FOR MANY OF US. PLEASE REMEMBER THOSE WHO WILL NOT BE WITH FAMILIES! PLEASE REMEMBER THOSE WHO SLEEP OUTSIDE!

## OUR PARTNERS

1. Quad City Harm Reduction
2. Fishers of Men Kenya
3. Quad Cities United/ REFLEX
4. Quad City Alliance of Immigrants and Refugees
5. Skate Church
6. Neighborhood Connections
7. Street Team Homeless Outreach
8. Beyond the Challenge
9. Food Pantry
10. Friendly Thrift Center
11. Table Tennis Club

## WHY GIVE

More than six months into the pandemic, those that provide direct social services are finding themselves overwhelmed by increased demand, because vastly larger numbers of families now need food, shelter, health care, and other forms of basic support. Many other nonprofits in our community are simply unable to fulfill their mission during this pandemic. Some organizations are simply treading water just trying to survive. Earned income is down, while the demand for human services is up.

The Center is diligently working to keep people safe throughout this pandemic.

Please consider a financial gift to The Center.



The Center  
1411 Brady Street  
Davenport, Iowa 52803

563-323-5295

[liv4jesus77@yahoo.com](mailto:liv4jesus77@yahoo.com)  
[www.thecenter-davenport.com](http://www.thecenter-davenport.com)

Facebook: The Center  
Skate Church  
Instagram: @skatechurch.davenport