



UNDER THE UMBRELLA

STABILITY FIRST FALL 2020 NEWSLETTER

Gala 2020 – Virtual IMPACT

It's September... time to get your tickets for the always lovely Stability First Gala. WAIT! Haven't you heard, the Gala this year will be a VIRTUAL GALA! Mark your calendars for the evening of Friday, September 25th and join us on for a brief, but powerful, update on all that God is doing through the ministries of Stability First. The IMPACT Gala will live stream at 7:00 p.m. on the Stability First Facebook page or through a link at our website at www.stability-first.com. Pop some popcorn and join us from home or attend a viewing party at any one of the following churches: Eastview Christian Church, Faith Church, First United Methodist Church, and Prince of Peace Lutheran Church.

Hosted by Luke Helmer, the event will include interviews with community leaders and partners, and an update on our ministries. The Gala's featured presentation will be from a former Magdalene House resident. Aundrea grew up in Monrovia and now lives with her family in Mooresville. She thought she'd overcome a traumatic childhood when a series of circumstances and decisions sent her life into a tailspin. Her transformational story will inspire everyone.

Support Stability First while you shop at our Silent Auction. Register at www.bit.ly/SF-Auction. There are several wonderful items to bid on including a Florida condo stay, local golfing, beautiful purses, exquisite jewelry, sports memorabilia and much more. Register now and check the site frequently for new items. All bidding will end at 8:00 p.m. on September 25.

Please join us and invite your friends to watch too!

**THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS STABILITY FIRST SPONSORS
YOUR IMPACT is IMMENSE !**



Mr. and Mrs. Craig Fenneman



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Standing in the Gap with Justin Helmick

At just 28 years old, Justin Helmick truly understands what Jesus meant in John 8:32 when He said that His disciples, “Will know the truth, and the truth will set them free.” He agreed to share his story with the world because he wants to bring glory to God and to encourage others who are hurting and held captive by a life of addiction. He understands what it feels like to be in a very dark place without hope, but by the grace of God Justin has learned that,

“If you turn your life over to God, no matter how good you think that life can get, God can outdo it.”

Justin did not have a normal childhood. He was raised by his grandma and uncle because his mother was incapable of raising a young child and he doesn't even know who his father is. As he was growing up he was bullied by other kids and he struggled to find acceptance, which led him to experiment with drugs at a young age. He was getting high by the time that he was in junior high school.

Justin found some solace in sports. He played football but he really excelled in wrestling. When I asked him why he liked wrestling so much he told me, “I liked the feeling of power when I dominated another wrestler during a match.” Justin dominated many wrestlers on his way to becoming a two-time semi-state qualifying wrestler for Cascade High School in Clayton Indiana.

Although Justin excelled in sports, he did not apply himself like he should have in school because he wasn't thinking about his future at the time. His abuse of alcohol and drugs accelerated during high school. He was arrested for minor alcohol consumption and theft of alcohol when he was a senior in high school. When he turned 18 years old he went to live with his mother. Justin told me, “My mom was my best friend, I told her everything.” Although his mom had many issues, she still had a caring heart, and she was like the neighborhood mom to all of the other broken kids in her neighborhood.”

After graduating from high school, Justin went to Arizona to learn how to weld, but instead of taking advantage of this opportunity, he hooked up with some more lost people who introduced him to even heavier drugs like crystal meth and heroine and he squandered the opportunity to learn a new skill. Justin returned to Indiana to live with his mother again with new, more dangerous addictions, which he transferred to his mother too. As Justin was telling me his story he stopped talking for a moment to fight back emotion, and then told me that he “ruined her life.”

Because of Justin's addiction to drugs, his life continued to spiral out of control and he was in and out of jail on multiple felony charges. He said stealing was like a game to him and as he walked out of a store with stolen goods to sell for drug money he found himself hoping that someone would stop him so that he could start a fight. He tried hard to get a gun, and he now knows that it was only by the grace of God that he never obtained one, because if he had a gun during that time in his life, he said that he is sure that he would be dead right now.

One evening when he was on his way to steal some more goods from a store, his mom kept calling him to the point that he couldn't ignore her anymore, and he answered the phone to see what she wanted. His mother was frantic and told him that she wanted him to come home right away to help her take care of his 10 year old niece who she was babysitting at the time. She didn't have anyone else to call except her son because she was at a point in her life where she had no friends and no hope. She was under tremendous stress just trying to survive with her alcohol and drug addictions. When Justin went home to see his mother, she started complaining about pains in her arm and chest. Justin told me that he wanted to call 911 to get an ambulance to help his mother because he was getting very concerned about her, but she didn't want him to call. He didn't call for help right away which he regrets to this day.

As Justin watched his mom struggle, he tried to comfort her the best that he could, but she eventually collapsed with a heart attack. At the moment, Justin finally called 911. He carried his mom's limp body out of the house that they were both staying at because he knew that there were drugs there and he didn't want the authorities to find them when they arrived at the scene. While Justin waited for help to arrive he started CPR on his mom and he said that he can still remember the feeling of her teeth touching his teeth as he tried to save her life. He remembers kneeling on one knee looking at his mom's head propped on his other knee. He said he will never forget that his mom gathered all of her remaining strength for one more act.

“My mom turned her eyes to look directly into my eyes, and in those last three seconds of her life she told me everything that I need to hear. Then she looked away and she was gone.” When I pressed Justin to tell me what she “told” him with her look, he replied, “She told me that I love you and I'm sorry.” He said that his mom carried around a lot of guilt about the way that Justin's life turned out and for not being there for Justin and his siblings.

The months after his mother's death were an extremely dark time for Justin, and he ended up in jail again. But through it all, he now sees that God was still at work in his life. When he entered his cell he was shocked to discover that his cellmate was his former drug dealer who was reading a Bible. The time that he spent in jail was different this time, and God began to get through to him. “My heart cracked just enough for God to put his finger into it, and I hit my knees and told God I don't know what you want from me, I don't know what to do, or what to say, but I'm done.” And just like that Justin surrendered his heart to Jesus.

While in jail, Justin began to grow in his faith. He found the support that he needed through addiction programs like the Residential Substance Abuse Program (RASP). God also sent spiritual mentors like Kevin Mock, a board member of Stability First, to come alongside Justin too. Now Justin is helping others overcome their addictions through the power of Christ as the director of the Reformers Unanimous addiction program at Martinsville Baptist Tabernacle <https://mbttcm.org/mbt/ru>. He is also on the advisory board of Foundations, the Stability First Men's Ministry <https://martinsvillechamber.com/foundations-stability-first/> and is starting his second year of college at the Indiana Baptist College where he is pursuing a degree in Biblical Studies. Justin said that he loves Martinsville, and ministries like Foundations are exactly what is needed. “So many programs tell you that you can do it but you can't. But God can.”

When I asked Justin what he plans to do after he receives his Biblical Studies degree he said, “I don't know what tomorrow holds, but I know who holds my tomorrows.” He prays that he will be a man like the one that God is looking for in Ezekiel 22:30.

I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it but I found none. - Ezekiel 22:30



Some of the newest Magdalene House residents recently gathered for this photo. Behind their cheery smiles are some scary stories about their situations during a pandemic.

NAVIGATING HOMELESSNESS IN A PANDEMIC LOCKDOWN

When the Governor issued a “shelter in place” order in March Stability First leaders had a difficult decision to make. In the Magdalene House four women share a bedroom. All sixteen residents share the same dining room, common living room, bathroom and shower facilities. Social distancing is just not possible. To protect the health of all residents and staff a temporary moratorium on any new admissions was put into place. Some residents moved on, but for six weeks no one was admitted to fill those beds.

In early May specific protocols were established and a short-term quarantine space was utilized as the shelter was repopulated. Quickly the shelter was full again! Many of the women who entered over the last few months have interesting stories to share about their experiences during the lockdown period. Here are a few:

Miss J. started 2020 as the caregiver of a friend who had diabetes and a heart condition. She provided care for her friend in exchange for housing. They lived in a crowded four room home, containing 5 adults and 8 animals. Drug use was common. Miss J was not only a caregiver but also the only one concerned about any cleaning. Someone in the household contracted COVID and it spread throughout. Her friend did not survive and Miss J was quarantined with the rest of the household until her symptoms advanced to the point she needed hospitalization. The hospital released her to a treatment center and eventually she came to the Magdalene House where she is thankful to be continuing in her sobriety over the last three months.

Miss T had her own home and an in-home hair salon. A year ago she experienced a TIA and had to slow down a little. She took in roommates to help with the expenses. But as the pandemic spread her business came to a halt and she lost her home. A customer offered her a room to rent and she located work somewhat close by. But she had to walk several blocks in second-hand shoes that had cracks in the soles. Walking and being on her feet all day in such poor shoes resulted in Miss T developing sores on her feet that became so severely infected that she had to be hospitalized. It took strong IV antibiotics to clear the infection and a skin graft to heal the wound. She was transferred to a nursing home to complete her recovery. But when she was ready to be released she had nowhere to go. The nursing home made arrangements for her to come to the Magdalene House where she volunteers at the Maggie Bag center and reports that she is happy to be growing closer to God.

One of our younger residents is Miss J. Her parents and their seven children moved from Indiana to Florida in February. Miss J was unhappy about the move and left to live with her grandmother. When she received her stimulus check she decided to move into a shared housing situation. But the COVID situation dried up Miss J’s restaurant jobs at the same time her landlords needed the space for their own family members. With no place to live Miss J moved back to Indiana and slept on the couch of a former boyfriend’s family. When this didn’t work out she reconnected with her pastor who helped her find a few nights of housing until a bed at the Magdalene House was available. She’s happy that everyone at the shelter made her feel welcome and they are working with her to help her achieve her educational goals.

Miss T, a widow, had a job for a home healthcare agency as a live-in caretaker for a lady with multiple sclerosis. But early in the year the woman’s health care needs advanced beyond the skills Miss T’s agency could provide. She lost her job and her housing. She moved temporarily into a shelter and found a few home healthcare jobs. But when the COVID lockdown went into effect those jobs vanished. Families became wary of “strangers” caring for their elderly relatives and many adults were working from home and could assist with the care themselves. With her daughter’s help, Miss T moved to Indiana to stay with her sister. But this situation proved to be very difficult, as her sister’s adult children were also living in the home and were very disrespectful of their mother and her sister. Because of the pandemic risks Miss T stayed, sleeping on the couch at her sister’s home for 8 weeks. Tired and fearful, she left as soon as the lockdown ended, but she really had nowhere to go. With most shelters closed or full she slept in her car, and looked for jobs during the day. But the heat was unbearable many nights. When a generous pastor gave her \$300 she had to choose between food, gas, and a good night’s sleep. Exhausted she checked into a low cost hotel, but decided to spend most of her time on the phone again, looking for housing. She prayed God would open a door. This time she decided to start in the middle of the list, and her finger landed on the Magdalene House. In what she describes as “an answer to prayer” the shelter was just re-opening and they could provide a bed for her. She speaks frequently of God’s faithfulness in the midst of many trying days this year.

Miss K was living with her son in rural Morgan County when he died in an accident earlier this year. Another son and his wife agreed to take her into their small home, along with their six children. But the tight quarters during the COVID lockdown eventually caused tensions to rise. Her daughter in law was working two jobs and trying to keep her kids on track with e-learning plus keep the household going. She just couldn’t manage caring for her mother-in law too. The daughter in law took her to a local motel for a few nights, but when check out time came, life was too chaotic and she couldn’t come to get her. The police talked with Miss K and decided that the Magdalene House would be a good place for her. She is thankful for the calm stability she has experienced there and for all of the help she is getting as she applies for public assistance.

There are many other stories to share... a woman who was traveling across the country by bus and got stranded overnight in a downtown bus station where all of her belongings and id were stolen; another woman who had been successfully serving a sentence in jail and working on projects with the Community Corrections crew, but quickly became confined full time (and discouraged) as the pandemic cut off all outside activities; a woman who moved into a rural home with multiple adults, where the situation turned violent, but without any transportation she felt trapped.

The common thread in every woman’s story is gratitude for safely arriving at the Magdalene House. Each one has expressed how thankful they are for a safe and welcoming place to stay and a program that helps them put together a plan to ensure their future stability. “Thank you” or “God bless you” has been the reoccurring message at the end of each conversation. They want all who support this ministry to know how appreciative they truly are.

LEGACY GIVING

Looking for a way to have a positive impact on your community? Consider legacy giving. Legacy giving involves providing for your most beloved charities in your estate plan. It is an effective way to give to those charities or non-profits which mean the most to you. Legacy giving can take many forms. Some options allow the donor to continue receiving lifetime income while also feeling secure that their gift will go to the charity of their choice. From a charity's perspective, legacy gifts are invaluable and frequently provide the funding to undertake vital projects that otherwise would not be funded.

This may leave you wondering, "Do I need an estate plan?" Here is the short answer: everyone needs an estate plan. An estate plan simply means you have prepared and planned for who will assist you if you become incapacitated or otherwise unable to handle your own affairs during your lifetime, and what will happen with your assets after your death. If you do not set up an estate plan, the State of Indiana, or in some cases the financial institutions where you hold accounts, will decide for you how your assets and property passes.

Whether legacy giving is right for you is an individual decision that should be discussed with your financial advisors, tax consultant and estate planning attorney. If you have additional questions this information was prepared by: Julie Fred, Attorney at Law, Law Office of Julie Fred, LLC, 202 W. High Street, Mooresville, IN, 46158 Julie.Fred@FredLawOffice.com (317) 831-6606

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