



Testimony
by
Catherine

I was 40 when I met him. He picked up my sister in a bar, but she wanted me to go out with him. I was a mess, trying to stand up after a huge betrayal with husband # 2. My daughter, age 14, was missing... had been for awhile. I still did not know if she was alive or dead somewhere. She had disappeared along with my mental health into a distant abyss. Thus started my new journey; for the next 18 years I lived on an emotional rollercoaster, and I've had quite a life. I have traveled the big up's and the way down's along with my husband. He traveled farther and went down harder than I, and today we are divorced. I live happily with my parents and he unfortunately is in prison. I want to title my 'someday' book 'From The Penthouse to The Prison', and I will do that one day when I am ready to relive this portion of my life.

In June of 2004, I was released on bail from Metropolitan Detention Center after spending 368 days incarcerated. I was 59 years old and searching for answers. I was starting over once again. I came to Captive Hearts in hopes of finding counseling and guidance. I was still living in fear. I had lived many, many years with mental and emotional abuse; and physical abuse as well. I had lived addicted to a man and a life style. I did what I was told to do. I was sorry when I did not. A good share of our life was spent in Las Vegas, and while I did not gamble with cards and chips, I did gamble with my entire life. Of course, a real gambler will gamble until they lose and this is what I did and it is what he did. It ended with our arrest and we both pled guilty to wire fraud.*

It's really awful what you do when you're addicted, when you feel helpless, when life is so awful that everyday all you can think about is when you are going to finally kill yourself. I was mentally unable to escape my marriage. I was not even a person I could recognize by the time we were arrested.

That 368 days I spent in Metropolitan Detention Center was the first blessing from God I received. The next was showing me the way to the doors of Captive

Hearts where Chaplain Judy and Pastor Joan slowly and lovingly guided me to our Lord God Jesus Christ. I was allowed to work in the Captive Hearts office, and did so for the next 3½ years. The love and trust shown to me permitted me to grow in self worth, allowed me to see that I was a victim as well as a criminal, and to grow past the negativity I had lived in and to become a true woman of God, to be a born-again Christian. Praise God, I AM SAVED!

And because our God is a true and loving God, I was again blessed with a talent I was unaware of. Today, I am a painter, an artisan.** I paint in oil and my work has been in several local galleries. Life is so exciting. Every morning I awake, I cannot wait to get up and live another day!

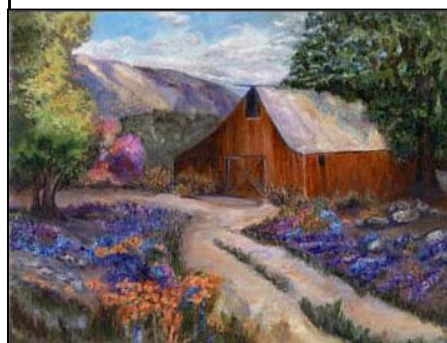
From 2004 until March 2010, I was released on bail. The Federal Government was not moving to sentence me before that. I had signed a plea agreement in 2003 that I would serve 0-20 years incarcerated, owe \$2.8 million in restitution and 5 years' probation. Well, God was working during those 5½ years. I was praying and the day for sentencing did arrive. I was sentenced to: Time Served! \$50.00 a month restitution and 3 years probation.... a miracle.

Life is just so very exciting when you are addicted to God and not everything else! When you allow Him to lead the way. When life is without fear, when helping another person is more important than helping yourself.

—Catherine Lemoine

* *Wire Fraud: I enhanced the financials of a business and faxed that information across state lines with the intent of gaining lines of credit from other businesses. The credit when received was never repaid in full.*

** www.catherinesdecor.com and www.artsobispo.org/ovad



"Spring in the Country" (above)
"Aguave Aglow" (right)



Original artwork
by Catherine:

Community Hero



When you think “Community Hero,” what comes to mind? Do you think policeman, fireman, or emergency room doctor? Well, I have met a different type of community hero, one who gives members of our community a second chance in life by restoring their dignity and faith in themselves and humanity. His name is Dr. Chalker. He is not an emergency room

doctor or a family physician, he is a Family Dentist. Dr. Chalker has changed lives of many in our community who never dreamed they would smile again.

An astounding amount of people in our community fall under the poverty level. This is a population that struggle paycheck to paycheck to pay the bills and provide food for their families. Living this way in a time where the economy has made it difficult for even the upper class citizen to get ahead, what happens to this population when their teeth have decayed and fallen out and they are no longer confidence enough to apply for even the lower-end positions, or socialize with the outside world? For those who no longer have the motivation to face the ridicule of others in the world that may look down on them for no longer appearing presentable, they are destined to live a life of struggle and despair. For many this story is all too familiar, including Dr. Chalker, who may be able to relate.

As a young boy, Dr. Chalker’s front teeth were crowded and he was self conscious, making it difficult to make friends or be the person he wanted to be. After visiting the orthodontist, he was able to have his teeth straightened which gave him a second chance at living. He became more confident and outgoing, allowing him to become class president and student body president. It was this experience that has influenced Dr. Chalker to become the gentle and caring dentist he is today.

Although Dr. Chalker is very successful and has managed to make something wonderful of his life, he has not forgotten how it feels to carry the burden of insecurity. It all started after a referral by his church pastor for a man who in any other case would not have been able to have afforded to have his teeth fixed. Dr. Chalker was able to repair this man’s front teeth and restore his dignity and self esteem. Dr Chalker describes it as being more of a blessing for him than it was for the patient. Today, Dr. Chalker works only through referrals by our agency and his church but is able to do work for a small amount of this struggling population. He wishes, of course, that this was something he could do more often, yet with the economy the way it is and him feeling it too, he does what he can, when he can.

When asking his staff to describe Dr. Chalker, they all included the words generous and caring. When visiting his office, it is such a warm and inviting atmosphere. Dr. Chalker and his staff are so friendly and gentle; they make you feel right at home. It is such a blessing to meet people in this world who still value people over the material things in life. As Dr. Chalker and I discussed; “THE MOST IMPORTANT THINGS IN LIFE ARE NOT THINGS.”

—Brandi Cuellar, Program Director

Thanks, Brandi!

Several months ago, the doctor told me I needed surgery and my first reaction was, “How can I leave the office for up to two months?” It only took a few minutes to remind myself that I am not indispensable and, that the ladies who I have trained and who God has given me, were more than capable to keep things rolling. I must say, I’m still not off and running but I know for a fact, Captive Hearts has moved to a new level.

Brandi Cuellar has done a magnificent job making sure the office is running smoothly, keeping up with the recovery home and still maintaining her job as the Program Director, and still attending her college classes. Thanks Brandi for a job well done!

—Judy Boen

Captive Hearts welcomes four new homes to our community that have beds to help those in recovery:

Women

Faith House
Joni Brewer

Restoration House

Rick/Kathy Harvey, 710-3032

Men

Coastal Recovery
Chris Lopez, 459-4097

The Potter’s House

Calvary Chapel Office
481-2330

Bible Depot Christian Bookstore



Scott & Susan Pigeon

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