

## Testimony by Heather



I was a lost child on a wide and winding road, searching for anything to fill and make me whole. I tried to end my internal pain with anything that would numb my emotions and make me think it was taking away the pain. There was nothing that I could take that would take away the pain and heal my heart. I lost everything—my kids, my house, my car, my spirit and almost my life.

Really, I was dead—lifeless and senseless—and I tried to escape this life.

On Mother's Day 2002, I felt that I wasn't even worthy to be with my kids and that they deserved to have someone else as their Mom. I had a spiritual awakening that day. God moved me like He had never before, and I remembered what my purpose was. I was here to be: #1, a mother *and* to be a midwife. I had a reason to live and knew if I didn't get help, I would die.

I got into a local recovery home and that evening Captive Hearts came to bring us dinner, minister to us and lead us in worship. There was a woman with them named Linda. As soon as we saw each other, we were drawn into each other's arms without a word. When she hugged me, I felt God's love through her. I felt God hugging me through her arms and telling me, "*Daughter, it's all going to be okay. You just have to surrender it ALL to me.*" I completely broke and cried in the arms of my Father for several minutes. I had to be completely broken so He could use me and mold me the way He wanted to. I knew right away that God was what I was searching for all my life. I always believed in God but didn't know I could have a real relationship with Him. I continued to study with Chaplain Judy and Pastor Joan. They showed me unconditional love and compassion. I never felt any judgment, only love. Soon after, I received Jesus Christ into my heart and felt true freedom.

God is a God of restoration, and He restores families and lives. I got both of my children back and received a life in Christ better than anything I could have imagined. I have been raising my two children as a single mother for almost seven years now and have worked really hard to take care of them and be a full-time student. I have a strong support group of sisters in Christ, my home church family and other ministries that are part of my family. I love my life today and wouldn't change it for the world. But I do want to SAVE the world. I really want to help others have a relationship with Jesus and to know Him as a friend.

I have been studying to fulfill my calling God has put on my life to be a midwife. I knew over a year ago that He was going to send me to Africa to "catch" babies, but I felt in my spirit that I would be a grandmother at that time. He continued to confirm to me that I would go to Africa, and just like I always tell Him, "*Just give me the itinerary and I will go when You say.*" Well, I thought I had everything planned out very nicely with my schooling and was planning to go to the Philippines. But God had other plans and said I was going to Kafountine, Senegal, West Africa. I thought I had 1½ months to prepare (it turned into one month) and to raise \$4,000. I knew that this was impossible for me but knew that if God wanted me to go, He would provide. He told me to just persevere and believe the word that He told me. I knew that I was going and He would open every door—and He did.

Everything came down to the wire, as it usually does with Him. I was accepted into the training as an extra student, and the money came just in time to get my airline ticket. I was filled with His faith and it just grew, even though some people were in such amazement of how I could have the faith and not worry about getting my airline ticket and other very important details (like my passport that came in five days). I just knew it was going to all be taken care of; I just didn't see it at the time. The finances all came from blessed people who saw my passion and love for serving the Lord. I also received medical supplies and baby supplies from an amazing community of people who love to give and make a difference. As I prepared for my trip to Africa, I knew that this was not really about me at all, but about loving people the way Jesus does. I knew that this would be one of many trips to Africa. *(continued)*

## **BBQ** **Fundraiser**



**When: Friday, May 28<sup>th</sup>**  
**Where: Ramona Gardens**  
**Corner of 10<sup>th</sup> & Ramona**  
**Grover Beach, CA**

Jason Hardy is responsible for sponsoring this wonderful event. **Tickets are available now for \$10 each, which includes: ½ chicken, salad, beans and a drink.**

*All proceeds go toward our outreach.*

*Thank you Jason, Jacque, Sheila and Jack Hardy!*

*(continued from front page)*

As soon as I arrived in Africa, I knew God had something greater than I could possibly accomplish in 3½ weeks. I connected and began growing relationally with a lot of people. I was able to gain valuable skills in midwifery, but that was small compared to what I really gained in my experience. I was able to love these women and babies even though I couldn't speak their language. I got to show the local midwives gentle, natural childbirth and connect deeply with them. Clean and repair the clinic; we stocked the Maternity with a year's worth of gloves, gauze and other needed supplies. After seeing first hand, I know what they really need. I was able to show Jesus' love and pray with people on the streets. I see an open door to minister in this town that has a great need to know Him, with a predominant 92% Muslim population. I knew this was only the beginning.

Heading back to Kafountine in May for a love mission, to water the seeds and spend time with people God put in my path and called me to open my heart to and grow with. We will stay with my fiancé's family and have lots of ministering opportunities with them daily and during our celebration. We will be bringing supplies for the Maternity and for the babies. A big need is Vitamin K since the birth process isn't always very gentle there, and it will help stop possible hemorrhages. We will be doing work projects and volunteering in the clinic, working on plans of a birth center, which would make birth safer for a lot of families. The only small Christian church in the area we visited has invited us to come and minister to them, consisting of the pastor, his wife, 5 children and 8 members. We are feeling a strong call to release a new thing that God has for them. God has commissioned us to go and share His Word and love with the people. We will also go and visit my missionary partner Launi's child who she sponsors in Gambia. Her family is also Christian and we have an opportunity to minister to them. When God calls me out and sends me on a mission, it is only possible by a loving and supporting community. When I go, I go with every person who sows with prayer, sows with gifts, and sows with financial provision. I can't do this alone, as He has created us to be in relationship and in unity. It is the strong unity in which I live in with my sisters and brothers that helps to encourage me and build me up and then He sends me out.

I am currently working on presentations for the new birth center in Kabar, Senegal. This birth center would help women not have to walk several miles to get to a midwife while in active labor. Because of the distance, some women don't make it in time and complications and emergencies arise. Without proper care, this could be a life or death experience. There are no ambulances to get to a hospital which is several hours away—no doctors, taxis will not give rides to women in labor in fear that they could die in their car. My heart is to help them have a safer way to give birth. Hopefully, funds will be raised before the end of the year and I will go with my family, and we will help to build the birth center together with our new family there.

I will then work to finish my education in midwifery and become a licensed midwife. I will continue to take trips to help in birth centers and gain more experience. After I am licensed, I plan on being a partner with a local midwifery practice. I will also be taking at least a one-month trip a year to share all of my skills with other midwives in training. I will be helping to train midwives to be practitioners in America and helping indigenous cultures learn valuable skills. Within the next couple of years, I plan to spend half of my time in Africa and the other half in America. I will go wherever He sends me.

I owe it all to God. He is the One who puts the desires in my heart and Who will fulfill what He has promised.  
—Heather Larsen

### *From the Desk of Chaplain Judy...*

Someone asked me recently what the success rate of Captive Hearts was. I thought about it a long time before answering. I don't think I can answer that fairly as graduating our program doesn't necessarily mean success. For some women, it takes years, and they go around the mountain time and time again until they are free from their addiction. We don't always see the results when we want to, so we keep planting the seeds of love, support and grace when we instill in these precious ladies hope for their future. Below are a few of the women who have been through our program or entered our doors over the years. We are so proud of them.

Carol – in 3<sup>rd</sup> year of nursing school

Ronda – Assistant Manager at a retail store

Rosie – Full-time valued employee

Shannon – Medical Assistant in a doctor's office

And many are in school to become Drug & Alcohol counselors. And the list goes on....

## *Upcoming Events*



*Interview with Chaplain Judy and Brandi Cellular*

**Sunday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 5:30 PM (PST)**

*Will be local and possibly nationally broadcasted.*

*Don't miss it!*

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