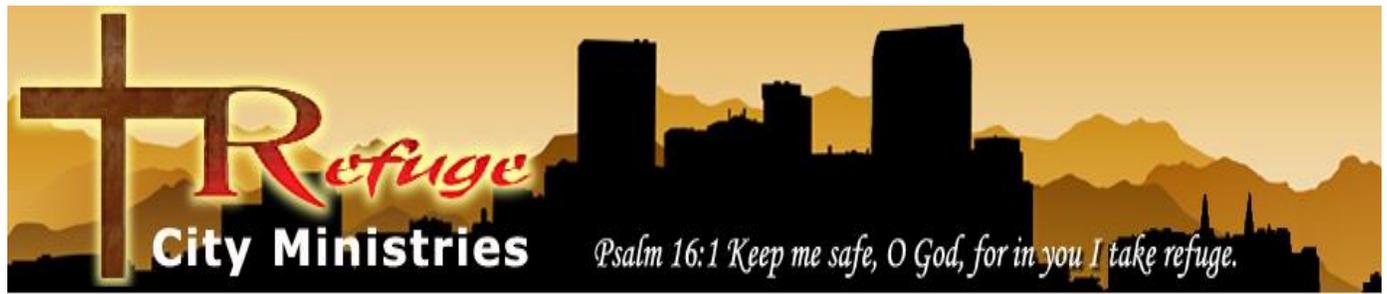


This day



PRAISE REPORT

March 23, 2017

Monday, March 23, 2017

PRAISE REPORT

A Day in the Life of the Community Center

This day began as normal. I opened the Center at 7am and a few youth were already waiting when I arrived. They helped me move the food from my car to the kitchen and then helped reorganize the furniture for this day's events and programs. When finished, they were the first ones to get some coffee and donuts!!!

For the next two hours, more youth came to the center. I was pleasantly surprised to see Susan. She used to come regularly and loved to go on our mountain trips. I had not seen or talked to her for over a year. The last I heard was that she had returned to her family, which is what we hope for in most cases. She came with her boyfriend, Robert. We talked for a few minutes, and then she and Robert mingled with the other youth. Susan seemed very reserved and sad and I noticed that Robert would never let her leave his side. I hoped that I could find a time when she was alone, to talk with her.

About an hour later, another youth, James, who I also hadn't seen in a while, asked, in a serious tone, if he could talk with me. I knew he had completed the Urban Peak program (Urban Peak is an organization that works with homeless youth to help them build a stable life and to get housing and a job). We went to our quiet room to talk. I was not prepared for what he said. In tears, he told me that his roommate, Pedro, had raped his girlfriend. The police had been informed and his girlfriend had been given a rape test and interview. It was determined that she had been raped and they were waiting for the results of the rape test before arresting Pedro. James said he couldn't go back to his apartment, because he would "kill" Pedro. He had no place to go, as the police did not want James to have contact with his girlfriend, until the rape test results had been determined. He spent last night on the streets. First I prayed for him and then I helped him find a temporary place to stay, until the test results were provided. He spent the day at the center, and his mood seemed to improve as he mingled with some of his old friends. At closing, he thanked me and agreed to call me as soon as he had the results from the rape test. After a quick prayer, he left to go to his temporary housing for the night.

Susan had to leave for work at 10:30 am, and asked if I would give her a ride. Normally I don't like to give rides, as they take away valuable time better spent at the Center. This request was different. Her eyes told me that this was a plea for help. The moment I drove away from the Center, she began to sob. Out of view of the Center, I pulled to the side of the road. I gave her a compassionate hug and asked her what was wrong. After she regained her composure she told me that Robert would hit/beat her almost every day. Once she calmed down, I prayed for her. Then I told her that "The beatings stop today!!!" We talked about alternative places to stay. She told me that her mother had been pleading for her to come home. While in the car, she called her mother and told her what she had been enduring. Susan's mother agreed to come get her in the late afternoon, after her sons came home from school. I dropped Susan off at work and returned to the Center. By then, Loyce, one of our Christian Counselors, had arrived. I told her about Susan, and asked her to find alternative housing for her, in case her mother did not come through. While Loyce was looking into a place to stay for her, Susan called and said she wasn't able to work and if I could come and get her. I agreed and brought her back to the Center. Luckily, Robert was not there. I took her to see Loyce, who by then had been successful in finding alternative housing for her. They talked for a while, and they also communicated with Susan's mother, who confirmed that she was on her way to pick up her daughter. After Loyce left, Susan stayed in the quiet room waiting for her mother to arrive and hoping Robert would not find her. As closing time neared, Robert was frantically looking for Susan. Unfortunately, another youth told him where she was. As he rushed upstairs to get her, I blocked the way. I told him she did not want to leave with him. He became furious, yelling, threatening and calling for Susan. Fearing that he would hurt me, Susan came out and agreed to leave with him. I saw the fear in her eyes, and told her that she didn't have to leave. I knew she was only doing this to protect me. As they both left, we notified the police of the situation. They said they were on another call, and that they would be there in a while. This is where GOD intervened, within minutes the police arrived and arrested Robert, Susan's mother arrived, and after many hugs and kisses, took her home.

May GOD bless you and we thank you for your prayers and support.

Skip Starr