

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 15, 2009

Mission Tuesday #7



Yesterday was another busy day at Mission of Hope. Phyllis is on a much-deserved vacation, so it was just Steve, who is a staff member, and a handful of volunteers, like me, there. Tina was busy in the office, and Tom, another staff member came in at 2pm.

Some people may say this is weird, but I see little glimpses of God's work in people's lives when I'm there volunteering. I have to say this week, though, that I was just a little nervous going in with Phyllis not being there. She's like the glue that holds the place together. Her patience is never-ending. Her love for people amazes me. I never see her get upset or angry. She is one amazing woman of God! Watching her each week gives me a glimpse of God's grace!

I can always count on keeping myself busy at the Mission. After walking in the door at 9:00 AM, it was non-stop. I made probably twelve pots of coffee throughout the day, the first one starting shortly after I arrived. Most of my morning was taken up by helping people receive non-perishable food items in the food pantry. One woman I hadn't met before worked not far from the Mission, but lives at least an hour away. She was dressed nicely, as she was stopping by on her way to work. She said she lives with a friend nearby during the week, as her husband and two children are at home during the week. She commented they are trying to make ends meet since her husband has been laid off from his job, so cutting costs of driving back and forth has helped. I couldn't imagine living away from my family during the week! She was very thankful for the bag of food she took with her. I was blessed hearing her story, and thanked to God for the Mission of have a food pantry to help her.

I enjoy helping people with food in the food pantry. I get to know them, and get to hear a little about their lives. I enjoy the conversations I have with people while they are picking out their food. It's actually now my favorite thing to do at the Mission!

Steve asked if I would tidy-up the clothes closet upstairs. So during a slower food pantry time, I quickly went upstairs and organized some of the clothes items and put them where they belong. The Mission takes mostly men's clothing, since men are the majority of the people that come in and need clothing. I have to say it looked pretty good after I was finished! :-)

Another church made and brought in lunch...which I was so thankful for! When we are down to make lunch for the day, that takes up most of the morning with preparation, and most of the afternoon with clean up. I don't mind those things, but if I had my choice, I really like to be interacting with people while I'm at the Mission, rather than being in the kitchen preparing food and cleaning up. :-) This church always makes great lunches! They brought in chicken strips, some awesome mixed vegetables, mashed potatoes and gravy, fruit salad and cookies. We served around 60 people lunch.

I'm now seeing many more familiar faces come through the lunch line. At one point, I was in the kitchen making coffee again as people were going through the line. I hear a voice coming from behind me in the line say, "Hi Julie! How's it going today?" I turn around and it's Mike, a man I met in the food pantry a few weeks ago. I mentioned him in an earlier post. I responded with, "Well hi Mike! I'm doing great, how are you today?" He shot me the biggest smile and said, "You remembered my name!" "Of course I did, Mike! I won't forget you!," I added. He smiled and went on his way with his plate of food. He came back later and thanked everyone for the meal. His faced was scratched up, and he looked tired. I don't know much of his story, but I'm hoping one of these days to find out a little more about his life. :-)

Before I knew it, it was 2:00 PM and I had some errands to run before heading home. Before leaving, I said goodbye to Tina and everyone else. As I was walking out the door, I thought how refreshing it is for me to come here each week. I leave feeling physical tired, but I'm emotionally and spiritually excited. This is one of the things I look forward to each week! I am thanking God today for Mission of Hope!