

WEDNESDAY, JULY 29, 2009

Mission Tuesday #21



It was such a beautiful summer day yesterday, and it was a great day to be at Mission of Hope! Ali, Zach and I arrived around 9am, and the front part of the building was already filled with many Mission patrons. Since the Mission isn't open on Mondays, many have probably looked forward to the Mission doors opening at 9am on Tuesday! We are becoming more familiar with many of the patrons, and it's now nice when I hear them say hello to us with a "good morning" like we routinely do to them. :-)

Large totes of bread and pastries from one of the local grocery stores had just arrived. Canned and other non-perishable food items were arriving as we were, and people were already waiting to get into the Food Pantry for a bag of food. It looked like it was going to be another busy, but great day!

The kids and I began working on the bread and pastries, organizing them and putting them where they belonged. I love to see empty shelves quickly become full! :-) Zach and Ali helped people through the Food Pantry, and as one was helping a patron, the other was restocking the shelves with the non-perishable food items that had just arrived. It looked like they had a great system going!

Ali and Zach know what they are doing in the Pantry! As their mom, it's fun for me to see how they've grown in helping out there! They know now how to sign people in, and what food items and how many of each of offer them. They don't let people run over them either. They are confident in serving there, and I can see it gives them joy to help the patrons in this way. I heard Ali say to a woman she was helping as she was leaving

the Pantry, "Thank you! Have a nice day!" A smile broke out on my face. :-) It touches my heart to see them care about others in this way.

I firmly believe that in all our years at Mission of Hope, Ali and Zach have experienced so many things that they would have not experienced in any other church or ministry. They have seen the consequences of people's decisions, both good and bad. They have seen how bad choices that others have made have affected the lives of not only that person, but the people around him or her. They have seen and heard of the devastating affects of drug and alcohol abuse. They understand the concept of addictions and how people struggle with different ones. They have seen first-hand how God can transform a life and what He can do with someone who seems "hopeless." They can communicate with people who are different than they are. They have seen that not all children have been raised in an environment like Ali and Zach have. They have heard people's life stories that they would never hear any place else. They understand that God loves everyone, no matter how they look, smell or what they say. I see that they "see" people differently, just from being at the Mission. The things God has taught them through the Mission are priceless!

I'm prayerful that what they've experienced will keep them on the path that God has for them so He can fulfill His will for their lives! I spent lots of time watching Ali and Zach "in action" yesterday, even though I was so busy myself! :-) I felt like the most blessed mom on the planet!

I always seem to find my way to the kitchen. :-) I made a few pots of coffee, refilled the pastry trays, put away items that needed to be put away, and helped organized the cooler. I repackaged a 50# bag of salt that had come in, into smaller, more manageable bags. Ali and Zach helped me organize prepackaged sandwiches that had arrived, and we made space for them in the cooler as well. We put the Personal Pan Pizzas that were donated from Pizza Hut in the freezer for lunch today. I felt all day like I couldn't keep up with the things that needed to be done, but each volunteer and each staff member all just chipped away at them together.

The morning flew by! Antioch Church brought in another great meal. They served cheeseburgers, mashed potatoes, peaches and corn. They brought enough in to serve 120, but I could see quickly that they were going to run out. They substituted the cheeseburgers once they ran out with cold cuts and sliced cheese that were on trays brought in earlier in the day, made into sandwiches. They ended up serving 150 people! No one went away hungry! :-)

After lunch I helped a couple of women who needed some personal items and toiletries. Things that we take for granted, they were so thankful to receive from the Mission. I enjoy getting that reminder each time. A young college student needed help in filling out some paperwork for moving into a new apartment. I helped him the best I could...the forms were even confusing for me! :-) I talked with a man who I've never had a conversation with before. He looks healthy on the outside, but has had six heart attacks in the last seven years. He shared with me his struggles, and how he's thankful for each day he wakes up in the morning. He talked about how he'd like to move to Hawaii. I encouraged him that God must have a reason to have him here at this time in his life, but not to give up on his dream of living in Hawaii. I was impressed that he still has a dream, despite all the things that seem against him right now!!

Before long it was time to leave to go home. It was a great day for all of us at Mission of Hope. Feeling tired, yet encouraged that what we did yesterday made a difference, we collapsed once we go home. It's a good feeling to give to others to the point that you need a nap! So, I took one for 30 minutes, and thanked God again for Mission of Hope and for blessing us there yesterday! :-)