

December 2015 Update from the McCrackens in Portland



## Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!



### Updates and Prayer Requests



#### Good Neighbors and...more...

The couple across the street from us have been such a blessing to us in many ways.

He has helped us with a leaky roof on a few occasions and introduced Scott to shuffleboard

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=xpNTY-0fhps](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xpNTY-0fhps)!

She has made meals for us, given us produce from their garden, attended our neighborhood Bible studies, and (most



#### Angel Tree

This month our church hosted an "Angel Tree" party where we were able to share a meal and provide gifts for children/families who have loved ones in prison. Our family sat with this beautiful family (pictured above) and were so blessed to get to know them, hear part of their story, and see how delighted the sweet little girl was to get a gift from her daddy!

We are so blessed to be a part of a



#### Helping Hands in Athens

The refugee ministry we started many years ago in Greece continues. **Many of you have invested heavily in that ministry.** I received a very encouraging report from the executive director Nikos Stefanidis, and it included this report from team member Liisa Puhalainen:

*“On Saturday when we were still waiting for the (refugees) from (the camp) and were*

importantly) has become our dear sister in Christ!

Here is what she wrote in a recent Facebook post:

*I don't post very often on facebook anymore. I'm way busy showing up for life, but there is something I needed to share. God is amazing! Not just sometimes, but every minute of every day. I didn't see this before, because I was blinded by addiction. He freed me and showed me a better way. Now I feel the Holy Spirit living within me. WOW, what a gift! The Lord blesses me all the time. Big and small. I know I sound like a fanatic, but I don't care. Through Him I was able to have a conversation today with a friend whom I love very much, but I had to make a choice that could have ended our friendship. God opened our hearts and minds and we were able to make it through that friendship, love still intact!!!! Every day he shows up in me and for me! Thank you **Scott McCracken** and **Vicki Bilderback McCracken** for being the messenger that planted the seed. Thank you **Heather Clark** for your understanding and friendship. Thank you **Lynda Williams** for inspiring me so long ago, so that when I was ready I knew where to go! I am just feeling blessed and loved today and wanted to share it! Merry Christmas to all of my friends!*

Thanks for your continued prayers for her growth in the Lord and for our efforts to be encouragers to her and to her husband who still needs to know Jesus.

church that, while not very large in numbers, is making a big impact on the community and the world around us. You can read more about our church in this online article:

<http://www.pamplinmedia.com/go/42-news/276717-152540-hope-for-the-future>

**Currently, we are getting to know a trafficking survivor who has 3 beautiful grown children. Her youngest daughter just graduated from a Christian college and wrote this poem:**

**No good thing has ever come. out. of Nazareth.**

**Like me, Jesus...**

**Lombard Street. Lombard Street? Yes, Lombard Street in the heart of North Portland That's where my family finally landed. After years of wandering all across the country We landed on Lombard Street.**

**My mother was 13... a prostitute . My father was older... a pimp. No, This ain't a movie. Or catchy lyrics to some rap song. These are the facts of my life... Like me, Jesus' mother was a teenager wandering the streets looking for a home. And yeah, dad was around but what does "around" actually mean?**

**Nothing erases that moment in time When I heard the phone ring. I was 3...**

**"My kids know I use to be a Hoe" "I don't hide anything from my kids!" "I'd rather they hear it from me than somebody later on in their lives" "They know their mom was a hoe and their dad is a pimp. I can't change that"**

**Well if she can't change that then I can't change that! Right?**

**My history has chapters Chapter 1 "pimps and hoes"**

*talking with people who were staying at the tables we were assigned to host, **Kallie from the neighboring table asked me to come and translate for her and one elderly Afghan lady at table 1. For some minutes the lady shared how difficult her situation was now when her son was deported back to Afghanistan from Turkish border and she had no money to pay her part of the rent to the Afghan family with whom she was now staying at and she was not able to easily go to eat at places that offered free food or stay at the camps as her hips were in so much pain that she could hardly walk and all the places to go required a lot of walking, etc.***

*There was not much in that situation where we could help and I knew the program was starting soon. **So I asked the lady if we could pray for her with Kallie and she said "yes"** (I have, by-the-way, not yet met any Muslim in my 7 years working with them who would say no....), So we simply prayed with Kallie for maybe a couple of minutes bringing her difficult situation and particularly her pain to the Lord. She had just visited the Doctors of the World too but they did not really know what to do with her and she was still in pain. **As soon as we said "amen" she opened her eyes and she looked like the man in the Jesus movie after he is healed. Her eyes were open wide (amazed) and she kept touching her hip saying "Aram shud, aram shud!" meaning "it became calm, it became calm"** And her looks really showed she was surprised. **We said thanks to the Lord and praise the Lord.***



Thank you for continuing to pray for the following:

1. For the young Congolese man Scott has been mentoring to get into college next month
2. For healing of Vicki's father (he was taken to the hospital last night with a very serious UTI, and will be there several days); he is still paralyzed on his right side and has very limited speech
3. On Wednesday, Dec. 30th, 500+ Cru kids will do survey work in Rockwood which will lead to some spiritual conversations (and hopefully some people deciding to follow Jesus)
4. On April 10th, we will have a Collaborative Worship Event in Rockwood, like has never happened before. Thanks for praying for UNITY!

Chapter 2 "dyslexia and special ed"  
 Chapter 3 "the blame game"  
 Chapter 4 "pretty for a dark girl"  
 Chapter 5 "figure it out".

I hate this book!  
 This is not what Greatness looks like!  
 I knew, from moments of fulfillment that Success looked like determination, hope and being blessed. This book is halfway read and I need some new pages!

Then I come here...  
 To this place.  
 To this Bethlehem.  
 To this Mt. Moriah.  
 Where my history, my heritage and my home address are the passwords to unlocking my new story.  
 A story being written.  
 And each day I let my history get rewritten.  
 No no no, each day I rewrite my history.  
 No no no, each day i look back at my history - everything she said and he said and they said  
 ....and I choose to write my future!

See, Nazareth is where Jesus started.  
 But it's not where he finished.

Like Jesus, I step a little bit more into who I am everyday.  
 Everyday greatness is a little closer  
 Everyday success is a little nearer  
 Everyday i learn that a mistake is not who I am  
 A mistake is what I learn from and stand on as I walk forward to who I'm meant to be.

If something good can come from Nazareth. Then something good can and WILL come from Lombard street.

*Out of the moments when there's been a situation like this in the ARC it seems that God really is healing people just like that. Naturally supernaturally just like that. Great!*

On our last Christmas day we have seen God doing it again. **Seven refugees accepted the Lord** right there at the ARC!"

Thanks to "Heart of the Savior Ministries" for having us on the radio show to talk about all that is happening in Rockwood!

You can listen here

<http://heartofthesaviorministries.org/broadcasts/>

(10/24 and 10/31...Brad Ketch and Team - Rockwood CDC Update)



FRIEND ON FACEBOOK



FORWARD TO FRIEND

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\*\* Ellie's Blog (<http://elliebomccracken.blogspot.com/>)

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