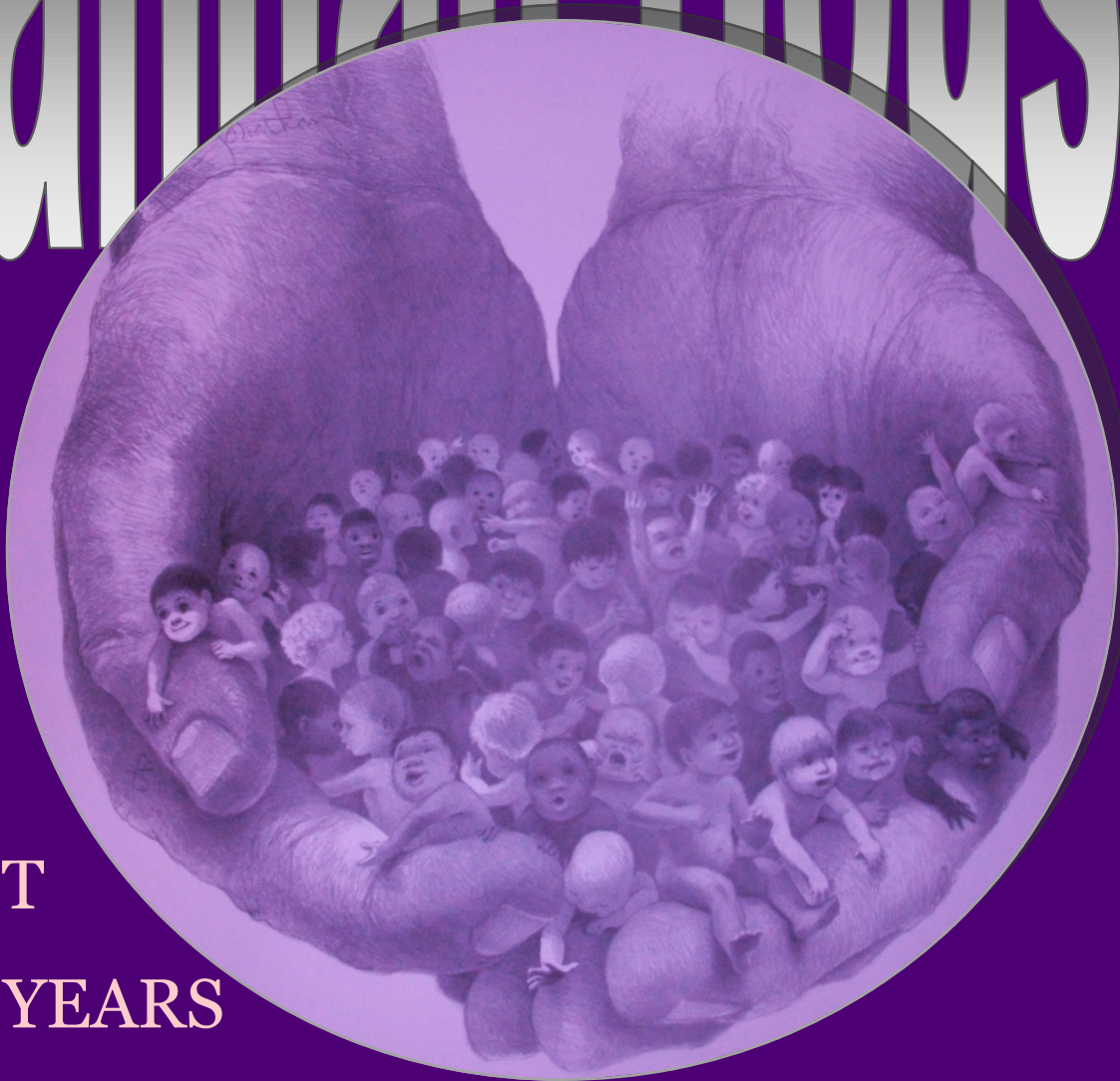


Hannah House



FIRST
TEN YEARS

Anne J. B. Skinner

INTRODUCTION

Have you ever sat and wondered what would take place in your life? Wonder where you would live? Who you would marry? Many of us have and this book is to tell you that if you have dedicated your life to Christ you have just started on the most exciting journey of your life. Where that journey will take you at first you may not know but as time goes on you will see more clearly the plan that God has for your life and how

He is putting things all together for you.

If you had spoke with me many years ago and asked where my life was headed I would have told you a completely different story, you see I thought everything was going well and I had my future planned but it didn't take too long to realize that my plans were not what God had planned for me.

This book will help you to relax and everyday just trust God for your future. He can take you places that you never would imagine and He can bring that peace that you search so desperately for.

This is how Hannah House came into being and where God has taken me over these last 10 years.

Anne Skinner

Chapter One

IN THE BEGINNING

Starting this journey is one of the best things that has ever happened to me. It has turned out way different than what I thought it would, but has been a real learning experience along with excitement and many eye openers.

It all began many years ago when I was writing to people in prison. The Ministry was called Prison Letters, of which is still ongoing. Writing about 20 letters everyday and loving it. At that time I was writing to many inmates all over America.

I had founded the Ministry when I read an article in a magazine from a guard who had left the prison after finding a young girl on the floor of her cell one morning in a pool of blood. She had told the guards the night before that she was pregnant and felt she was having a miscarriage. They just laughed and didn't listen to anything that she had to say. In the morning this guard was shocked at what she found. A 21 year old girl, laying on the floor in pain and surrounded with her own blood. She was rushed to hospital and lost the baby. This guard had quit her job and wrote an article in this magazine asking for anyone who would be willing to write to this young girl, giving an address where she could be reached.

My heart went out to Paula, who had 3 children and from a very poor black family in Illinois. Her grandmother had taken the children and Paula had received 85 to life for the murder of her boyfriend whose body was never found.

My life was so different than Paula's and yet my life seemed to be consumed with the thought of this young girl spending the rest of her life behind bars. Who would raise her children for her? Who would visit her?

This began many years of writing to inmates all over the world. Thinking this was the plan God had for my life, I did my writing with a purpose. You can read many stories in my book on Prison Letters.

Time passed and my marriage seemed to be dissolving. A wonderful man but just didn't want to serve God and asked me for a divorce. My past had not been good and of course that is another book which I wrote called "Sister Set Yourself Free". My husband told me he thought God had a call on my life and that I should move toward that calling. He said he loved God in his way and didn't want to do any ministry work. I didn't understand a lot back then and thought he may be right, we separated as friends and didn't divorce until about 8 years later.

Feeling a failure at my marriage I spent a lot of time in prayer and asking for direction. I kept up the letter writing and in my heart just wanted to spread the Gospel.

Many times I would get some artwork from inmates and poems and put them together in Gospel Tract form and hand them out on the street.

My girlfriend of many years, who had sat many times and cried with me over my past did gospel tracts too and all she wanted to do was pass them out on the street.. This began a different turn in my journey. My life was moving forward and I found that being on the streets spreading the gospel was something I really liked to do.

Joanne and myself would go out late at night and just hand out tracts. We got to know a lot of people who were on drugs and living on the streets but we also got our eyes open to a need. A need that is not talked about much in church, but a need that is genuinely there.

Being raised in a Christian home I was taken to all the services that were available. Mom played piano and was needed at each service and of course I was the one chosen to keep her company on our walk to church and back home.

So many evenings I dreaded the thought of going to church, I wanted to play but did go. I watched at the 7 or 8 people who would kneel at their chairs and pray. I used to laugh often as I checked out the bottom of everyone's shoes. Some had stepped in gum that day and it was still there, others the soles were so worn and I knew they couldn't afford a new pair of shoes. Some shoes were polished and looked like they had only been worn once or twice. That is how I spent my Wednesday night prayer meetings. Checking out soles... What a change from now, I check out souls instead of soles. God must have a great sense of humor.

Nights were fun and handing out tracts was a great part of my life that I loved. But, as I have said I saw so many in need. Real needs, food, clothing, warm coats in the winter, children in need of diapers and so much more. Joanne and I used to talk often as we ended up sharing an apartment above a soup kitchen in Niagara Falls. She had got a job there and we ended up each day meeting the people that we met each night. How could we help these people more we thought. But I still kept writing to my friends who were incarcerated and loving it.



Corissa at age 6

*A little Seneca Indian child with her whole life ahead
of her and full of enthusiasm.*

Chapter Two

BABY CORISSA

After a few years of doing the same routine each and everyday I saw a lady come into the soup kitchen where I volunteered. She was holding this beautiful baby. Now, I didn't have any children and was very content with that situation. My past will explain a lot of my feelings regarding children and what made me feel this way. But, I could not resist speaking to this lady about her little baby. The baby was only a week old, Seneca Indian and she was the chubbiest little thing I had ever seen.

I asked the mom if she ever needed a babysitter to give me a call. At first she very bluntly said NO, but each time I saw her I would speak to her and watch this little blessing grow.

Corissa was the babies name and a healthy baby. Mom was doing drugs but looked after her child well. I held Corissa a few times and of course mom made sure I didn't hold her for too long.

When Corissa was 7 months old her mom came to me and asked if I would babysit her. I was shocked as mom had never even let me hold her for any length of time and now she wanted me to babysit. Of course I agreed, thinking it would be for a few hours or so. Mom proceeded to tell me that she had been charged and was going to go to jail. I found that many girls would get 30 days and be back on the streets again. Not so in this case.

The next Saturday morning I was in the Library doing some work on their computers as I didn't have one of my own and this feeling came over me. Back then I didn't know that it was God prompting me I just thought it was strange. Inside I felt like going to the mothers home, which was a crack house and getting this baby Corissa. I knew the mom was going to court soon and that maybe that was why I had this feeling. This inside feeling wouldn't leave me so I left the library, drove over to the crack house and knocked on the door.

A man came to the door, who I recognized as a drug dealer and I asked if Corissa's mom was there. He left me standing at the door and back came the mother. She had a puzzled look on her face and I told her I had come for her baby. She started to cry and said I am glad you are here, she needs to be out of all this. She led me up a few steps into the house and I was shocked at what I saw. Clothes everywhere, beer cans, dishes, just a plain mess and in one bedroom on a mattress on a floor lay this beautiful little baby. A man was laying beside her saying she had been crying and he was just trying to keep her quiet or was he I wondered. The mother grabbed her up and another girl, who I found out later was a prostitute got a plastic bag and filled it with a few baby clothes that were laying around. I was given a bottle, a few diapers and a car seat.

A guy helped me carry out the baby things and put them in my trunk and whispered how happy he was that the baby was going somewhere else. It is not good here he said as he opened the car door for me and little Corissa.

I drove away actually wondering what had happened to make me so determined to pick up the baby that morning.

Monday came and I soon found out what was going on. That small voice inside of me on Saturday was God speaking and telling me to get that child out of that house. Corissa's mom came in that morning and her face had this look on it that was strange. She came right up to me and said "How did you know that something was going to happen, Saturday?" I told her I didn't know what she was talking about. She said half an hour after I had left the crack house a group of their enemies had drove by and threw a brick in the window. It landed right in the crib where Corissa usually would have been sleeping in. The mother started to shake, "She could have been killed" she said. I knew right then and there that God intervened in a way in which was of the supernatural. He knew what was about to take place and wanted that baby safe. Mom also proceeded to tell me that she had court in a few days and that I must promise her not to give the baby to anyone no matter how long of a sentence she got. I promised and meant to keep my promise, of course only thinking that my babysitting job would be for about 30 days max.

To my surprise and Corissa's mom her sentence was a year. Now to me a promise is a promise, our word should be good and I was determined to keep the promise I had made to this babies mom.

Didn't know how I was going to support her and honestly didn't really care too much. I knew that God had this planned and that all I had to do was trust Him through the next few months. It was His child and He would supply everything I needed to care for her properly.

I remember once needing diapers so bad. I had found a bag of depends in the donation room and had to take one out

of the package for the baby. I laid her on the bed, cleaned her little bottom and started to put this huge depends around her. Of course the tapes didn't fit so I got some duct tape and wound it around her chubby little waist. I remember so clearly saying to God that morning that it wasn't fair to this child who belonged to him to have to wear depends instead of the proper diaper. My heart was heavy as I carried her downstairs to help at the soup kitchen and actually wondering where the next diaper was going to come from or would I have to use another depends.

Half an hour later one of the men who volunteered came to me and said this old man named "Henry" was sitting outside in his car and wanted to speak with me. Henry was a man who many times came to the soup kitchen bringing gifts of ketchup, mustard, juice, and lots of canned goods. I wondered why he wanted to speak with me.

When I got up to his window of the car, he said he had heard I had this little baby and he wanted to buy her something. Pride is a terrible thing and I had it. When he asked me what I needed I said nothing. Pride, then a lie and here was God trying to help me and I wouldn't let Him. I thanked Henry for his thoughtfulness and went back inside to help. Aren't we the strangest people... We pray and ask God to help and when He tries to help us we ignore it and hope the help comes in some other way. I was so glad that day that God didn't pay much attention to me and spoke to Henry again. Within the hour Henry was back and was asking for me. I went out to his car to find the back seat full of diapers, formula, baby shampoo and anything else you could think of that a baby might need. He turned to me and said I was driving away when I thought that you must need something for that child, not knowing what, I got everything I figured you could use.

Henry said he didn't know what size of diapers she would wear so he asked the sales clerk and she got him the right size for a baby about a year old. Wow, was I stunned. God was looking after this little baby. What a wonderful dad this child had.

That day I learned another lesson in life and the power of God. I learned that when we pray, then we have to just wait on God to answer. He answered in a way that I could not even imagine and I almost tried to mess it up by my own pride and stubbornness. God didn't pay any attention to what I tried to do and just went over my head and brought the diapers anyway, with a lot more of what I needed and hadn't even asked for.

What a God we serve. Always got our back. Always watching over us and giving us what we need.



Corissa helping make sandwiches for the homeless.

After having Corissa only 4 days I fell and knew I really had hurt myself. I had Corissa in my arms at the time and held her way above my head as I fell, well I hit my side and the pain was unreal. I put up a prayer and got up walked to the apartment which was up a flight of stairs and banged on the door for Joanne to come and take Corissa from me and then help me upstairs. She took the baby and came quickly back, by then I could barely stand. Joanne helped me upstairs but by the time I got to the top I saw stars and felt like I was going to pass out. We prayed and then I told her to call an ambulance before I passed out.

The ambulance came, put me in a chair and carried me down the flight of stairs. I made it to the ambulance waiting outside and the stretcher felt better than the chair but all of a sudden the attendants couldn't find their stethoscope. What happened then shocked me. The time was late by now and dark outside. We lived in the hood, where drugs were plenty and crack heads were all around us. Here is what makes me laugh about the whole situation. I didn't laugh then but now as I look back over that night it really was funny. Picture this, here I am in the ambulance, both back doors open wide. I can't move, laying on this stretcher waiting in pain to go to the hospital and both attendants leave me to go back upstairs to look for the stethoscope. I lay there in pain wondering if some crack head would take the ambulance thinking that there may be drugs in it or even just come in and wheel me out on the streets and raid the ambulance for something to sell for drugs. I couldn't believe what was happening and the pain was so bad that I knew I needed help. About five minutes later both men come back and told me they couldn't find the stethoscope and

decided to turn me over to see if I was laying on it. Well, I was laying on their stethoscope and they both laughed while I lay in terrible pain.

I was taken to the hospital and after x-rays and a few hours of waiting was told that nothing was wrong with me and that I must have sprained a muscle. I knew different but was wheeled to the emergency exit to be sent home.

I was carried into a taxi and knew that I could not walk so went to a friends home and there I stayed for three months.

I called Joanne that night and told her what had happened and asked her to bring the baby over to where I was living the next morning with her clothes, diapers and playpen. I could not sleep flat so my next three months were mostly in a recliner. Many people told me to get rid of the kid as they put it, but deep inside I knew that God wanted me to look after this baby and that was what I was going to do.

Time passed and I remember so well the pain. After three months on crutches and not being able to walk I finally went to a Dr. I had had as a child. I asked him to x-ray me again. At first he said I was fine that I had just sprained my back, but when I started to raise my voice he agreed. He called me a few days later to tell me that I had two fractures to my hip and that I had to go to bed and stay there for at least 6 weeks. I asked him if they had healed and his reply was that they had healed satisfactory. I had spent three months in pain and each day it was getting a little better. I didn't go to bed but decided that it would heal itself as I had already pushed myself to walk and do things for the last three months so what was another six weeks.

Each day I got a little bit stronger and was able to move back into my own bedroom again. I just never understood at that time why it had happened to me.

It seemed so right at the time to take this child and yet it was so hard with this accident. I managed and started to get back into wondering what I should do with all the baby items that had been collected by so many.

I did manage to give away a few things to some of the girls who came into the soup kitchen and they seemed so happy to get something for their baby.

My life at that time was not thinking of anything except taking care of this baby and writing letters to inmates. I was very happy sitting in front of my computer and typing a letter of encouragement and doing a monthly Newsletter to those locked up.

A little time passed and the baby items still came in. I tried so hard to get rid of them but to no avail. I also got speaking engagement regarding the Prison Ministry but when I mentioned that I had taken in a baby they too started to collect baby items for me.

It began to really get out of hand and I knew that something drastic had to be done to dispose of all these clothes, diapers, formula, baby bottles, strollers, car seats and cribs. Word had spread that I had taken this baby in and those who knew me through Prison Letters Ministry wanted to help. They sure did, they collected and collected more and more baby items. I didn't see it then but God had a plan for me and my eyes were blinded to what He wanted me to do.

Another church had a baby shower for me and I got so many baby items, from newborn to 2 years old that I just didn't know what to do with it all. I kept thanking people and telling them to help others in need but no one listened to me back then and kept giving me baby items. I decided to get rid of everything and I did, so I thought.

My idea at that time was to make a flyer and advertise that I had all the baby items needed for a baby from the age of newborn to 2 years old and would give them free to whoever came to get them. The flyer was short and sweet but when I went to put my phone number on it I decided that just putting call Anne at Just wouldn't do. A great idea came to me and it was putting a name to these baby clothes. Let me think. Hannah was the lady in the bible who prayed for a child and became pregnant with Samuel. Hannah was also another name for Anne so that seemed good to me. But it still wasn't enough. Another name came to mind "House" house to me meant family and the flyer was called "Hannah House". I only printed 25 flyers up and distributed them all over. I then hung one in the Soup Kitchen where Joanne worked and was quite happy thinking I would get rid of all these baby items.

Well, it took about two days and I get a phone call from the people in charge of the Soup Kitchen and our landlords as we had rented the apartment above the Kitchen.

"Anne, we would like to meet with you this afternoon regarding Hannah House" I didn't really know what it was about and thought maybe they wanted to take the baby items. Was I surprised when I sat down to tell them I had too many clothes. They really didn't care.

All they were concerned about was the fact that I had made a flyer and hung it in their Soup Kitchen. There was a man and a woman sitting opposite me giving me the third degree. Their one complaint was that if I was starting a New Ministry it could not be done out of their building, so they politely told me that I had to move. Move? Where would I go and what ministry was I starting, all I was trying to do was get rid of baby clothes, now they had labeled it a Ministry.

I was really upset and didn't really know what to do. I never thought to pray about this just was hurt that after all the years of volunteering for them they asked me to leave because of this ministry I had started. God really used them and I did not see it at that time. Hannah House had begun and a Ministry had started and I didn't even see it.

Isn't it funny how God can lead us into something and we don't even know it. That is what happened to me that day and it all started with just 25 flyers or should I say the one flyer that got hung in that soup kitchen.

The phone rang a few times asking for things and I was grateful that I could give them what they needed for their babies. But the more I gave the more came back to me. Pat Robertson of the 700 Club calls it the law of reciprocity . The more you give the more you get and I sure was getting a lot of baby items.

Now what would I do. I needed a place to live and I had all this baggage that had to go. Then I prayed.....

Chapter Three

NEW SURROUNDINGS & A NEW BABY

Time was of the essence as I had to move by the end of the month. It gave me about 3 weeks to find a place for me and Corissa. Funny how people can be many told me to give her up to the Child Protective Services and wondered why I didn't. Even Christian people would come to me and tell me that it was just not right her mother going to jail and leaving her for me to look after. I didn't understand how people thought especially being a Christian and if they knew their Bible they would read what we are supposed to do and how we are supposed to treat people.

One day I was walking past this store front and saw a FOR RENT sign in the window. I took the phone number down and called to see what the rent was. Now, I was living by faith and just trusting God for everything. God had never let me down and I knew that He never would but still didn't know what direction to take. When you pray about things you still sometimes go through the fears and wonderings of what will happen. I did and often felt like everything was falling in on me.

My call brought some hope from this landlord, I told him I only needed the store front for a month just to get rid of all the baby items and there was a small one bedroom apartment in the back that he included with the store front. I thought all this was great and decided to move in. Life is strange and what we think is sometimes different from what God has planned.

Moving in was a relief and I found myself thinking that this was the right thing to do. I missed Joanne as we were good friends but I knew that my life was moving in a different direction. The journey that I was on had a side road and I had just turned on it.

I set up the cribs that I had and labeled them, put baby clothes in them according to sizes and painted and put up a pretty boarder that you would see in a babies room. It looked good and then I put a sign in the window.

Hannah House

Hours 9 a.m.—5 p.m.

Monday thru Friday

All Items FREE..

It didn't take long for people to come to the store and take all they needed. It actually was fun and I finally got rid of all the baby clothes.

Little Corissa was doing well, we had visited her mom in jail and she had a little more room to herself. But I didn't really expect to be open after a month. To my surprise, people started to bring baby items to me at the store telling me how happy they were that I had started an Outlet to help mothers. Had I ?



Our First Hannah House

This was our first Hannah House in Niagara Falls. We used to put the items outside as our room inside was always full and this way people could see what we had. Many items were given and many items came in, God's plan was taking effect and I just had to go along with it and I didn't even know it.

Living there only a few weeks with Corissa now going on 18 months old and my life was changing. I got a visit one day from a lady who I knew from the Soup Kitchen. She said her daughter was fat and would I come to see what was wrong with her. I usually didn't make house calls but this seemed like an exception. I stopped over to their apartment and found a lady standing there with a joint in one hand and a beer in the other and a belly that held a baby. I was shocked. I said a few choice

Words and asked if she had seen a Doctor. She asked me not to get mad and said that she had never been to a Doctor. I told her I was taking her to the Doctor the next morning and I did.

On the way to the Doctors I asked her what she was going to do with the baby she was carrying. Curious because I had known of her giving up two boys years before. She was in her late thirties and an alcoholic. She looked at me funny and said “This is your baby” .. My baby? I wasn’t ready for any baby. I had Corissa and her mother was to return home soon from jail and I wanted to get back into full time writing.

We went into the Doctors office and she and him went into a room. I grabbed a book to read and the door opened up. The Doctor signaled me to come into the room and I of course followed. He looked at me and said that the woman had just said that she was carrying this baby for me. I couldn’t believe what was going on. He then told me not to take this baby as it could be retarded or deformed. I went to say I had no intentions of taking this child when something happened to me.

A peace came over me and I changed that moment from a person who didn’t want a child to a person who would love a child even if it was deformed, no arms, no legs, and retarded. I felt the presence of God that day as I stood in his office.

I heard myself saying “Doctor, I don’t intend on taking this child but if it happens that I do, I will love it like it was my own.”

Paperwork was signed at the mother’s request and then I just went about my business with Hannah House.

It was only a week later that I got a call saying that the

baby had been born and that it was a girl.

She had come premature and weighed only 4 pounds and a few ounces.

I went to the hospital to see this baby that had entered the world and wondered what would happen to this little life that now was in contact with me. She was beautiful, I didn't think much of it at that time but a nurse told me to pick her up the next day as she was being released.

The next morning I went to the hospital and was told that another nurse had called Child Protective Services. The nurse didn't know that I had paperwork and they knew the mother could not look after this baby. I was asked if I would talk with the Agency and of course I agreed. A man came in from Child Protective Services and we sat down in a small room. He checked my paperwork and said that all was fine and that he didn't need to be there. He left and I left with this beautiful baby girl. I drove the mother home and told her to visit whenever she wanted too, wondering what had just happened.



Hannah and Corissa making sandwiches to distribute

The mother had named her Linda Crystal and I kept that name. What happened though was that when people came into the store for baby items they would look at her and call her “Little Hannah” I tried so many times to tell them that her name was Crystal and they would say “No, she is little Hannah.” So she became “Little Hannah”.

Now I had two babies in diapers and still getting baby items in every day. My life was changing and fast. The woman I once had been was no longer around I had become a mother.

Corissa’s mom got out of jail and took Corissa. I was happy that she could be reunited with her daughter but that only lasted 3 days. She was back at my door with her baby and told me she could not handle her and that the child wanted me.

I loved Corissa so much and didn’t mind taking her back. She was a chubby little girl that everyone loved. Now two little girls and a store full of baby items. God was with me and I knew it. I didn’t know exactly what was happening in my life but was just too busy to care much at that time. Never thought for one minute that Hannah House was on the move and it had been started by God. He was my boss and I was only the lady whose hands and feet were used to distribute what he wanted me to.

On our journey of life many things happen to us that we don’t understand but the most important thing to remember is that when we have a Savior who loves us and is leading then we have nothing to worry about, we just have to be willing to do what He wants us to do, and that is exactly what I wanted in my life was to do what He wanted me to do.

Chapter Four

A MOTHER FOR SURE

Only a few weeks had passed when a woman who I had known from the Soup Kitchen came to visit me at Hannah House. She told me she had to move and could not keep her grandson of four years old. Now, I had seen this child and he was a handful, a big handful. She went on to say that if I would only take him for a few days till she could find a place to live. She had a place but they didn't want him and she would be getting her own place within the week and come and get him.

My heart is often too soft and I agreed to keep him but only for a few days. Little did I know that those few days would end up years. William was a cute little boy, lovely smile and I knew in my heart God had placed him in my care along with Corissa and Little Hannah.

The grandmother never did come back and William stayed. His mom was on crack and a prostitute at that time. I often wondered what happened to children who have no one in their life and how they survived in this world without love. Time tested me and I found that not only was I a mother to two little baby girls but now a four year old boy who challenged my sanity every day. I was blessed to have friends who helped me .

Not only did I have three children but Children's Services brought children to me to watch for a week or two so they didn't have to take them into care and they wanted to give the mom time to clean up her apartment and get her life together. I wasn't

hired by Family and Children's Services and never went without anything for the children that was needed for them either. God was with me and He provided everything. What a Father.

As time passed I kept getting more donations coming in and giving more away each day. I remember an old lady with a scarf wrapped around her head walking into Hannah House, she was all bent over but carrying a little bag of food with her. She put the bag on the counter and asked if I took food, I quickly said no, that we were just a baby outlet and she looked so disappointed. She asked if I knew anyone who could use the food as she had cleaned out her cupboards and wanted to give it to someone in need. I looked out the window and saw a woman who had 7 children and told her I would give the food to her. She was happy as she left and I didn't think much more about it until later that night when I was doing my devotions.

"Dear Lord," I said "I will do what you want me to do and go where you want me to go" and then something felt wrong in my stomach. Don't ever believe that God doesn't talk to you, He spoke pretty clear to me that night. "You will go anywhere I want and you will do anything I want you to but you didn't want to take that food from that little old lady". Was I under conviction and I knew He had spoken to me. I bowed my head and said "Lord, I am so sorry, I will do what you want me to do. Forgive me".

The next few days were good and I had forgotten all about that little old lady until a car pulled up and started bringing in bags of food. WHAT! Yes that is right FOOD.....and more food. Cans of vegetables and sauces, cans of stew, cans of everything you could imagine, boxes of cereal and more and more.

When the man had finished he asked if I had a pantry. Well, I guess I did now. That day I realized that my plans and God's plans were very different, but if I wanted to really serve Him I had to do what He wanted me to do and I was willing to do anything He asked me to do. So I got a few shelves and made a pantry at the back of the store, hung a curtain to separate the clothes from the cans and went and changed a few diapers and washed a few kids and put them to bed for the night.

A few days later I looked around my store and was quite happy with what had been accomplished in it. Baby items all neatly piled in cribs, all sized from 0—3 years and looking pretty good. But, something happened.....

A man walked through my door with two bags of men's clothing. I was on the phone and he asked if I took men's clothes, I shook my head no and he just left them. I tried to explain that I didn't take them and then looked out the window and saw two homeless men walking down the sidewalk and thought whenever he leaves these men are going to get a bag each. The man left and as soon as his car pulled off, I dropped the phone and ran out to give these men their new found treasure.

How foolish we are. It was only a few days before that I had spoke to God telling Him I would do whatever He wanted and here I was saying I didn't want adult clothing. That night was a rerun of the last time I hadn't listened to Him and my heart sank during devotions. "God, I am so sorry" I heard myself say. "If you want me to take adult clothes I will do it".

The very next day a half ton truck pulled up and the guy came to me to tell me he had a truck full of adult clothes.

Hannah House has started in another new direction and I didn't quite understand.

What tends to happen with many of us is that we try to figure what God wants in our life and go with our own desires. God sits back and just patiently waits for us to surrender to His will, which is always better for us than we could even imagine.

I realized that what Anne wanted was not what God had planned and I had to be willing to die to self and my own desires and let His Holy Spirit flow through me. I was only a vessel that He wanted to use. It was nothing that I was trying to do that was making Hannah House a success, or bringing in clothes or sending people to Hannah House for help but it was the working of the Holy Spirit that did it all. I just had to be willing to be available when HE needed me to.

A lesson I learned and so glad I did. Hannah House was not mine but God's. I only worked for Him but he was the Boss.



William, Hannah & Corissa & myself (Happy Times)

As time passed I got so busy and yet enjoyed every minute of it. One day I decided to have a BBQ for those hungry from the streets. I planned it all out and figured that for \$20.00 I could do it.. It was the beginning of the month and I knew that \$20.00 would be donated sometime through out that month so I planned it for the end of the month to give me time to get the donation. Well the night before the BBQ, no donation had come in and it was time to close up the store.

Locking the door and walking away I really didn't understand why I had got nothing for the BBQ. I started to worry as to what I would do the next day when people who were hungry came to me for a meal.

All of a sudden there was a knock at the locked front door. A man stood there who I had never met before , very well dressed and said that he had heard I was having a BBQ the next day. I said yes and he handed me a \$100.00 bill. "Here, this is for the food for tomorrow," he said. I asked him for his name and he said it wasn't important who he was, smiled and walked away.

I was so excited because now I had the money to buy what I needed. I started the thank God for doing this and went to check on the kids.

Half an hour later there is another knock on my front door. I came through to find this same man standing there

With a smile on his face and a box in his hand full of hot dogs, buns, ketchup, mustard, relish , all the items that would be needed to feed at least 100 people.

I guess I looked strangely at him and he laughed and said “You know, I got thinking after I left that maybe you could use that money for something else and I went and bought everything that you would need for your BBQ” I was so shocked. I thanked that man who still wouldn’t give me his name and closed the door thanking God once again for supplying my need.

That day I learned a great lesson, when we step out and start something God will finish it even though it looks impossible. I had made up flyers about the BBQ and had posted them and then God took over to send what I needed. God never lets us down but we have to really put our trust in Him and be willing to do what He wants us to do. I knew that I was on the right track as the Bible tells us to feed the hungry.

Many times I have heard it said “How do we know the will of God for our lives” but it is right in front of us if we read what the Bible tells us to do. We can never go wrong if we follow the scriptures and there is a scripture for everything that takes place in our life. Sometimes we do not want to hear what the scripture says about our situation and try to pretend we couldn’t find anything pertaining to what we are going through, but it is there.

No I am not judging you I am talking about me... So many times I would be in a situation where I went to the Bible for an answer and got one, but it didn’t agree with what I wanted and I was always making excuses for my actions. You have to read my life story, it is like a soap opera or should I say a non fiction but it was the way I lived.

The BBQ went great and it was so nice to see so many happy faces.

The next month I had the same idea and started on my flyers. The weather was great and I just knew that another BBQ would be a wonderful idea.

You will never guess what happened. Yes, you are right another BBQ planned and no money or food for it. So many thoughts went through my mind. Why did I plan another one? Was I crazy? How soon we forget that Our Father is doing it and not us. Well the day before the BBQ I decided that it may rain and there would be no BBQ and left it at that. Same thing happened the door went right after I closed and locked the door. I never thought that it would be a Chef standing there with a big white hat and a white jacket. I guess I looked funny at him and he looked funny back. He then proceeded to ask if I took food. I assured him that I did and he said he worked at a University that had had a big luncheon that day and for some reason he had made 300 extra sloppy joes, he said they were all individually wrapped and ready to go in the microwave and could I use them?

I told him we were having a BBQ the next day and would gladly use them. It was funny though as we were unloading his car, he kept saying over and over “I don’t know what happened, I never do this, just can’t understand it” Strangely though I knew what had happened. My Father had worked another miracle and had supplied me with the food for the BBQ. What a great God we serve. He is wonderful and always looking ahead of every situation .

The next morning I woke up to a wonderful sunny day.

And I decided to put a small table which I had plenty out on the sidewalk and put chairs around them and serve people.

Pulled the microwave outside and just warmed up the Sloppy Joes. It went so well, people were happy once again. I told them what had happened and reassured them that God did care about their situation also told them that it was like being in New York City and sitting at some fancy restaurant outside and being served. They were so delighted and I once again saw the power of the Holy Spirit working in my midst.



Chapter Five

A NEEDED MOVE

Time passed and Hannah House grew larger and larger. More clothing, more food and more needs. One day the fire inspector paid us a visit and told me that I needed to get a bigger building and I knew he was right. I had only been one year there and we were in need of more accommodations.

I still had the three kids, William, Corissa and Hannah and they also were growing. I often took in other children to help mothers out and even at one time had 5 children in diapers. That was fun as I look back on it now, but back then I had them all on a schedule and early to bed so it worked out great.

It is amazing what can be done if we just take one day at a time and not worry. Every day I was learning that lesson of trusting more and more in God and letting Anne take a back seat. Those days were happy even though I got so tired at night, I wouldn't trade it for anything . I learned so much about how God really cares and He does, no matter how small our problem HE CARES....

Well, I knew I needed to move so I started to look for a place. I was living in the hood and didn't want to leave that area as that was where the need was. One day I decided to walk up and down the streets in hopes of finding a building that would

my dog.

Always remember we are not alone and every move we make God has already went ahead of us to open doors. I just happened to look up and saw this four apartment building empty. No sign was posted but I took a flyer about Hannah House and wrote my phone number on it explaining that I needed a place and soon and would the landlord be interested in renting the whole building to me.

Never thought much more about it that day and the next morning the phone rang and it was the landlord. “So you want to rent my building?” he said. “I sure do” was my reply and we met and I signed a contract for two years.

Being four apartments I decided to rent the one apartment out and lived in the other myself with the kids and used the downstairs as the Ministry area. One apartment downstairs had a room for food, a room for clothing, a room for odds and ends and a room for extras. It worked out great and the other apartment was used mainly for storage. God was working on my behalf and I loved it.

At that time I had Youthworks, a group of kids who came every Monday thru Thursday to help during the summer months and we did Vacation Bible School, Games and did many clothes giveaways and lots of BBQ's of course. The first year was great and I found that I was getting a lot of speaking engagements which helped financially to pay the bills.

The second year things changed a little and I found myself overflowing with donations again. Don't even know how it happened but they just came in all the time. So I kept giving

the items away. I used to have everyone fill out a sheet of their family and needs and last count was over 600 families. I never asked for any identification and I didn't limit any giving . I wasn't Government funded and really felt that if they came to me then they needed something. It made a great opportunity to tell them how much God really loved them as he wanted to meet their needs.

One day the landlord came to me and asked if I wanted to purchase the property for \$25,000. \$5,000 down and the rest with no interest until it was paid. I was excited about it and figured that God was really moving on my behalf.

I spoke at many churches and told them this news and one big church decided to give me the \$5,000. downpayment. They said though that it would not be right away, maybe in a few months time. I told my landlord and he asked if they would send him a letter stating their intentions and he would not list it with a Real Estate agency. I contacted them and they sent a letter to me to give to my landlord promising to give the \$5,000. by June 16th of that year. This was the end of April and it all seemed that God was blessing.

Well, June 16th came and went and on the 18th of June my landlord called to see if I had gotten the money. I had got so busy I didn't even remember the date and told him I hadn't and would call to see what happened. I called. The pastor didn't answer so I called one of the board members, a lovely lady who had helped so many times at Hannah House. "OH, Anne" she said, "Didn't anyone contact you?" I told her no and she proceeded to say that when they were just about ready to write out the check for the \$5,000. the Pastor said he thought it best

they didn't follow through with the arrangement. He had said that they wanted to build an addition and how could they ever ask for money from their congregation if they gave Hannah House the \$5,000. he said it would be best to keep the money for their addition instead and they did. This poor woman was so upset at what had happened, she kept apologizing for the way the pastor had acted. I reassured her that it was OK.

When I called my landlord to tell him the outcome, he was furious and told me that I had to leave by the end of the month as my lease was up for renewal and he didn't want to renew with me. I was so upset. First, I had no money to move and my old van was almost ready to be buried. Second, here I was again not knowing where to go. Trusting in Jesus was good, but here I was challenged again and learning to trust Him even more through the hard times.

What can we do when faced with struggles? Go to God in prayer and lean on His understanding and not our own. What we may think is best is not what He has planned and I found that giving everything over to God was the only way I could survive and of course I did.

My prayer was that God open the doors that He wanted to open and lead me the right way and He did..

Chapter Six

MOVING FORWARD

I prayed and then called my friend Joanne to tell her of the latest excitement around Hannah House. “What was I going to do?” I remember saying to Joanne. She said that the large green house on Ferry Avenue that I had liked for so many years was available. I told her I didn’t have any money to move but wished I could look at it. This was a house that I had drove by many times and just loved it. The landlord of that house that morning had went to Joanne at the Soup Kitchen and asked her if she knew anyone that wanted to rent it. She said that I would like to look through it.

Joanne and I met the landlord at the house and he took us in. There was an old lady and her two sons living there and the place was like a dungeon. So dark, needing so much work and just a plain mess. The smell of cats and the dirt made it so easy to say I couldn’t afford it, but the Landlord insisted on us going for a coffee and discussing it. We all met at Tim Horton’s and ordered a good cup of coffee and did I need it.

He was a little Chinese man and a little hard to understand.. “Well,” he said “Do you want the house?” I said no I didn’t have money and he asked what could I afford. I told him that my rent at the fourplex was \$600. a month and I had a hard time paying that much, he then said “What about \$510. a month, can you afford that?” I sat for a quick moment and thought that it was a little less, like \$90 less a month and I told him I would

rent his house.

Now where would I get the money from I thought. He wanted \$750. downpayment as a security deposit plus the \$510 first months rent and of course there was moving expenses like changing over the electric, water and gas. Knowing nothing else to do but pray that is what I did. Thank God for bringing good friends into my life. There was a Pastor Bob Franke who has always been around Hannah House from the beginning when he found out what had happened regarding the church and the \$5,000. he stepped up to the plate and gave me the money.

God knows what is best for us and God knew that what I had thought was best was not what He wanted in my life. I paid the rent, deposit and started to move.

Another shock came my way when I opened the front door of 1105 Ferry Avenue, smell, dirt and fleas. I don't know if you have ever had a flea problem but this was like an invasion., Thousands upon thousands of fleas everywhere. The people that said they would help me clean ran the other way and here I was alone again trying to think of something to get rid of the fleas.

I will never forget Donnie, a guy who had been in jail and wanted to help. I was so grateful for his help and he even told me not to go in the house until he had got rid of the furniture that was left, the cat smell and the fleas. Every morning he showed up with a change of clothing, stood on the front porch and changed into some old clothes, being sure to put elastics around each leg and wrists so that the fleas wouldn't get near his skin. He never complained and never asked for anything in return, only wanted to help. Too bad there wasn't more Donnie's around. I couldn't have done it without his help.

God is amazing because the people you think are there to help when you are facing trials and tribulations are usually the ones who leave you and God sends others to help. Another lesson I learned.

It took every bit of three weeks to clean that place up and a lot of money to spray and bomb to get rid of the fleas. I had a pile of old furniture laying in the back yard as high as the fence and knew that it was working out slowly but that God was definitely with me and leading Hannah House in a new direction.

When all was clean and we were able to move in, it all worked out. I remember that my van just couldn't take another trip with things and it started to pour rain. I only had one day to get everything out of the old house and into the new. There was a few teenagers who took shopping carts and filled them up and walked back and forth from old house to new house moving me. Well, it got to be a little later in the day and they had to leave but told me that there may be two more loads left. Small stuff they said but they didn't know if I even wanted it. So I decided to go myself and bring it back.

Now I don't know if any of you ever have seen a person walking pushing a shopping cart, but I have and I have often said "You will never catch me doing that" . Watch what you say, because the only way for me to get the rest of my things that day was to push this shopping cart. It started to pour rain and here I am soaking wet pushing this shopping cart down the middle of the road. What a humble experience and yet to think that many push shopping carts everyday, that is their lifestyle. It wasn't mine but it also taught me a lesson... Never look at anyone and judge them because you never know if one day you will walk in

their shoes. That day I walked in the shoes of the homeless and my possessions were in my shopping cart just like theirs are. My life was so different though because I could have a hot bath when I reached my destination and go to the fridge and make something to eat and know that I had a warm bed to sleep in but many don't have those luxuries.

I remember years ago seeing a man walking up the street all strung out on drugs. His hair was messy, looked like he had been in the same clothes for weeks and just staggered up the street. I remember just being back with the Lord for a short time and looking at him I said to a friend "Look at that, what a mess" and God spoke to my heart. "That could be YOU, if it wasn't for my grace" WOW, did I eat my words. That could have been me walking down the street stoned and if it wasn't for the love of God and His mercy it may have been, the book about my life will tell you a lot more. God is good, he pulled me out of the gutter where I had been for so many years and lifted me higher and is still with me today. What a God we serve, He is mighty.



Little Hannah and myself with a Missionary couple from India who stayed with us for the weekend at 1105 Ferry Avenue.

Chapter Seven

A NEW HOME A NEW JOURNEY

The house at 1105 Ferry Avenue needed a lot of work, but a lot of paint and cleaning up made it look pretty good. It is amazing what can be done with a little bit of imagination and a lot of elbow grease.

Items started to be donated and the Ministry picked up great at the new location.

Many mornings I used to get up real early and sit on the front porch drinking coffee. What started to happen was no matter how early I went out there someone came by and asked for a coffee.

For about two weeks I had this urge to make pancakes every morning for breakfast and one morning while sitting on the porch drinking coffee and eating my pancakes this man came up and asked for a coffee. I asked if he was hungry and went and got him a coffee and a plate of pancakes. That began a ritual every morning for the next two years.

I started the Pancake Breakfasts but found out that I was just too busy and needed help. As it happened a Saturday morning just after I began the breakfasts I went to the Soup Kitchen to visit my friend Joanne. I was asked to sit at a table because there was a church there who wanted to serve everyone. I sat for a moment and a lady sat across from me who I did not know. Her and I got talking and I told her about doing pancakes at

Hannah House. She got all excited and said she loved making Pancakes and could she come and help me. I was so happy and Tina became the new pancake lady. What a blessing she was to me.

Another time I was cleaning up the third floor apartment, the house was so big and had three floors. When I first moved into this house I had rented a few rooms, one to a lady who was homeless and brought to me from the Adult Protection and a man who had lived alone but a murder had taken place in his apartment and he saw who had done it and was too scared to live alone after that. He had asked me if I had a room that he could rent and I took him in. Well, both people stayed for about 6 months and then just in the same week they both left.

As I was cleaning up and thinking about buying some paint to freshen the rooms I thought back to when my mom had owned a large home and had always wanted to open it up one day to Missionaries as a retreat. Funny how things work because the next day I got a call from a Girl Scout leader saying that she wanted to bring her group to visit Hannah House and help us for the weekend. She said she had read online about Hannah House having a suite where people could stay. I didn't of course but told her to come and bring the group and we would plan something for them to do to help others.

That phone call started me thinking and I started painting the rooms upstairs, beds started coming in and I called it the Wilhelmina Missionary Suite, where people who wanted to help others could come and stay and help with the clothing, BBQ and street ministry. Wilhelmina being my mom's name and doing it in her memory.

We had groups coming from all over. Pennsylvania,

Ohio, Maryland, Iowa, New York, India, Pakistan and much more. It was such a blessing to see so many want to reach out to others.

God has a way of opening doors that need to be opened and closing doors that need to be closed. What a God we serve.

Hannah House became a place of activity and each day was open from early morning to late at night, serving the community. Many were referred to Hannah House from all agencies and many mothers were given diapers and food for their children.

I remember a man Tony who was homeless and living in an old abandoned building, he would come everyday for pancakes. One day we found out it was his birthday in a few days so the kids and I baked him a Birthday Cake. His face was beaming as he blew out the candles and made a wish.

**Tony
&
Anne**



Tony was killed in 2010 as he crossed the street. I had spoke with him about a week before in front of the grocery store and he was asking when the next pancake breakfast was. It was spring and he looked so dirty and in need of clothes. My heart went out to Tony the day that we talked and only wished that more could be done to help him out. God took Tony home just the following week and I often think that now Tony is no longer hungry, cold in the winter or sleeping on the floor of some old building but he now is walking on streets of gold and happy at last.

There was another lady named “Mary” what a woman. She only had one hand and the other was always wrapped in a bandage, never knew really what was wrong with it and never asked. She would come occasionally and just sit around on the porch but not talk a lot. One day I asked her what she liked to do and she said work in the garden. Well, I told her I needed someone to weed the garden as I only had artificial flowers all around and they of course didn’t need much tending. She smiled and said she would be happy to take over the garden.

Mary worked hard but one day I had a group visiting with us and asked two of the girls to help Mary. Mary didn’t want any help and decided to move on. Her time with us though was special and we will never forget her.

Mary



Time passed so fast and I found that days ran into weeks. Hannah House was a place where there was always so much activities going on and some people would be with us for awhile and then they would disappear for days and sometimes months at a time, but they always came back to us. Hannah House became a home to many even though they didn't live there.

One summer though, a man who we had known for over 15 years came to me. He was homeless and always in and out of jail. This day was so different as he came to tell me something. We stood outside on the steps and he started to cry and tell me that he had throat cancer and only had a short time to live. He said he was homeless and living in an abandoned building with his dog. He said he was so worried about his dog because they were bulldozing the buildings down and he was afraid that one day the dog would be in the building when it came down and be killed. I suggested that he put the dog in my back yard when he had to leave the abandoned building and it would be safe. I prayed with him as he told me his story of cancer and that began another interesting story in the journey of Hannah House.

For about a week he brought the dog and put him in the dog run and all was fine, but one morning I went outside and here was this man laying on the ground beside his dog. He said he missed his dog so much and I decided that because he was doing so much around Hannah House to help that I would buy him a tent and let him stay in the yard with his dog.

He stayed in a 2 bed tent in the backyard with his dog, planted a garden and was real happy.

Hannah House became a place where people felt relaxed and at home.

Hannah House had grown from a place where mothers could come in a get baby clothes and diapers to a Mini Mission where anyone could come and get food and clothing.

We also would help many with filling out paperwork for Social Services and applications for employment.

One lady that faithfully came everyday to help fold clothes could not read. She had come from Illinois years before with a boyfriend she had met. They had a little house and she was doing well. She had previously lived on the streets of Chicago for years and had had a rough life. Her joy was to come every day to help put out clothes and help people find what they needed.

The three children were still with me, doing good and learning the social skills to mix with all kinds of people. I used to laugh many times at them. They being so young, and yet knowing how to serve pancakes, find clothing and help give clothes to other children who came with their families for help.

Every summer groups would come and we would do many special things. Vacation Bible School, BBQ's, Clothes Give Away's and Food Distribution. Often we would go door to door and see what people needed. Many times we would do street clean up and it was so badly needed in many of the areas of Niagara Falls.

Niagara Falls is a different City than what people may expect, we have the beautiful Falls that millions come each year to see and yet just a few blocks away are the drugs, prostitutes and children in need.

I found that people living in the hood of Niagara Falls got excited when they talked about doing jail time. In jail they got

to meet old friends and it seemed to be like a little holiday for them.

Joanne opened up “The Magdalene Project” which is a Ministry to the prostitutes and “The Rose Café” which opens every month on a Saturday night to give the girls a place of relaxation, refuge and a good meal.

Hannah House is a program of Lighthouse International Ministries, a 501 c3 organization which is dedicated to spreading the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the world.

1105 Ferry Avenue was a place of change and a new journey for all of us. I learned so much being there and finding out more and more the power of God in my life and how He cared for us all, black , white or hispanic, rich or poor it didn't matter He loved each and everyone of us and wanted to meet our needs.

I remember one day we had a group from out of State visit with us. One of the girls wanted her hair done in braids. She came to me a few minutes later and said that she had found one of the girls who had come to the Outreach who was willing to do her hair. She was so excited and I thought that maybe the girl she had chosen to do her hair may not be the right choice. The girl was a girl in prostitution and on crack cocaine but I thought it might be good for her to help others also. Well, it started out great and every so often I would check on the two to make sure all was going well. I noticed as her hair was almost half done that the girl doing it started to twitch, which is a sign that the drug is wearing down and she is going to need another puff on the pipe to keep going. I got so busy and all of a sudden the young girl came in with her hair half braided and half straight. “Anne” she said. “the girl doing my hair had to run

home for a minute and said she will be right back” Well as you probably know she didn’t return and this poor girl ended up taking out the half braided hair very disappointed.

You learn when you live around people with drug problems that there can be no trust and things just happen on the spur of the moment. Many of the groups that came to help were from the suburbs and all when leaving to go home would tell me that they had learned so much and saw another world that they never really believed existed.

Another time I had stopped to get gas in my van and saw a girl who had been clean for a few months. When I say clean I don’t mean she had just had a shower, I mean she had been off drugs for that length of time. She came running over to my van and I knew by her look that she had started using again. I asked what had happened and she said she just couldn’t help it and asked me to pray for her. My heart went out to this lady as she was a beautiful person and I knew that the drug just would not leave her alone. It was only a few weeks later that her body was found in an alley. Drugs had won.,,

Diane was a lady who really loved the Lord and her dream one day was to open a Hannah House in another town. She would come faithfully to help me fold clothing and help others to find what they needed. Many times I would see her sitting on the floor In a pile of clothes. I asked why and she said years before she had been in a car accident and her back was giving her so much pain. She would talk about her life and that often she fell off the wagon, She was an alcoholic and said sometimes she got so lonely she couldn’t stand it and would have a drink. How easy it is to feel the pain of loneliness and reach out to someone

something to help people cope with their problems. Drinking, drugs and any addictions usually help them feel better and help them cope with reality. It is a superficial way of covering our problems up and it only adds to the problems down the road.

Diane had some problems that many times she had prayed about, but often told me that the church she attended would tell her to leave it at the feet of the cross and she tried but didn't know how to live without it. Many Pastors and congregations are going to have a rude awakening one day for not really taking time to love a person and help them through their problems, Diane passed away just a year ago. No one was sure how, drug overdose or murder. But, one thing I am sure of that her heart was pure and she struggled so much to try to live right, without the help of her church.



Diane

Standing over Joe's coffin brought back so many memories and tears. I had known Joe for almost 14 years and he had been a guy with a blunt mouth but with a heart of gold. He faithfully helped each day at the Soup Kitchen and I think mostly he came because he loved seeing people. He used to love to talk with the groups that came and always made jokes.

Joe passed away because he just couldn't leave the past behind him. He will never be forgotten.



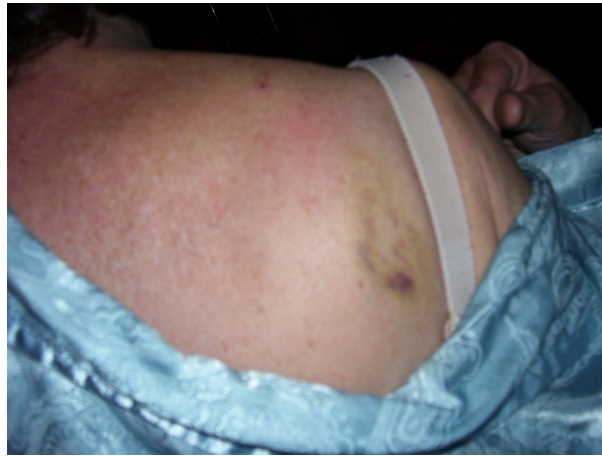
Rick was another guy who loved to help others, I remember many times him asking for extra food to give away to someone else in need.

A big heart and yet many health problems. Rick passed away after both his legs had been amputated from sugar diabetes. No more suffering now for a good man.



This lady was brought to Hannah House for a room. We didn't usually let anyone have a room but this lady was definitely in need. She also was the grandmother of one of the children that I had and I knew that it was my responsibility to help where needed.

She had been attacked by another woman and badly beaten. She also had been bitten by her. She is now in a nursing home and being cared for properly.



Bites from a lady friend.

People that Hannah House deals with are mostly people who have great needs. I used to think that at one time they had been beautiful little babies and what happened to them to make them have the problems that they now had. Abuse as children, neglect or maybe just having no one to love them. When people are loved they will be drawn to you. They will tell you their needs and usually want to help in some way because they really know you care about them.

Hannah House had many different things take place. Many people stood together to make what Hannah House became. Some did dishes, some cleaned the house, others just came for a coffee.



Duane also known as “Animal” spent most of his life behind bars but faithfully came to help when needed.

He helped bury my dog when it was poisoned.



Snuggles

Hannah House not only had people of all classes around but we were blessed to have animals. Snuggles came when only 6 weeks old and grew into a beautiful dog who protected the house.

One day I went outside to find that he had been poisoned. It wasn't too long before he passed away and many hearts were broken. I still remember him coming to me each time with a stuffed toy in his mouth, with a wagging tail and so happy to see me and the kids.

Hannah House became a refuge for many. Even a rabbit who needed a home stayed with us. I remember when a couple who were Missionaries in India came to spend a few days . The woman asked if she could see our yard. I was a little embarrassed as I was so busy that week and we didn't have a lot of grass in the back yard. She laughed as I took her outside and

said to me, “Anne I am from India” this yard is lovely compared to how we live. When I sweep my kitchen floor I am sweeping a dirt floor” I was reminded once again of how blessed I was and how wonderful God was for allowing me to serve Him.

Many people were so faithful in helping us and for years too. Donna Stockdill from Pennsylvania has faithfully made Hygiene bags out of material and filled many to give to those in need. I was surprised last year when I took a count of how many she had sent to me. Want to guess? There had been 1850 bags of shampoo, soap, face cloth, toothpaste, toothbrush and a few odds and ends that had been given to those in need. What a blessing Donna is to our Ministry, she also has a prayer chain and it is so good to be able to send her a prayer request and know that she will distribute among prayer warriors.

Thank You Donna..



Hannah House could not have been so successful if it were not for the groups that came to visit us and help.. Here are only a few that we were blessed to have.



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Sitting here looking back over the last few years I am so grateful for those who took time out of their busy schedule to help Hannah House to help others. I often would say that I was only the hands and the feet that gave out the clothes and food but it was those who prayed, and supported us monetarily and by coming and lending a hand that made Hannah House a success.

Over those years we became partners with many other Ministries in Africa, India, Pakistan, Phillipines, Tanzania and met many ministers of the Gospel who truly wanted to serve others.

I remember one day getting a call from a Pastor in Africa, we had corresponded over the internet for many years and he phoned to invite me to go to Africa to preach. It was impossible for me to go at that time and I told him how sorry I was that I could not. He said there was a way and to be up at 4 a.m. on a certain morning and he would phone me and I could speak over the telephone. He said he would arrange it all.

That day came and I had done some studying and yet not really thinking that this was possible. I went to bed and at 4 a.m. my phone rang awakening me. I answered to hear many people talking in the background and Francis saying we are welcoming you here, now you can speak, but speak slow as we have to interpret. I spoke about 10 to 15 minutes and heard many people cheering and praising God. Francis came back on the phone and said thank you to me and that he would email me the next day. I went back to bed and when I awoke didn't really believe what had happened. God is amazing and if we let Him do the leading you never know where He will take you.

Many times I would go to the jail to visit some of our friends who had stopped by for clothing.

Letters were sent also and when they came home they always would come to say "Thank You."

Often I would arrive home to find someone sleeping on my porch or on the front steps and I would have to wake them and tell them to go home. To some that was an old empty house. To others it was down by the gorge under a tree, but it was their home and they were used to the bitter cold. Drugs and alcohol had taken its toll on them and here they now were just surviving any way they knew how. But Hannah House was there to help those who asked. God cared about them and it was our job to tell them that by making them comfortable with food and clothes.

In the winter months we would put tables on the porch and let those who didn't want to come when it was light visit us at night and get warm clothing to wear, there were always coats, warm gloves and hats and blankets when we had them for many to take to keep the cold away from them.

I remember one man coming to my door about 9 p.m. and asking for food. I had never seen him before but made him a warm meal and a coffee. He started to tell me that he was wanted by the police in another town and that he was so scared. I told him the best thing to do was give himself up and get it over with. He finally agreed and I called the police. When I told them his name and what he thought he was charged with they told me to call another police station in another City close by as they had nothing. I called them too and there was no warrants for his arrest. He was so

relieved at the news and thanked me as he left that night with another sandwich in a paper bag that he could eat in the morning. I felt glad too that his worry was over and he had been running for months looking over his shoulder thinking that he was a wanted man.

It made me think how many run from God thinking the very worst and yet all God wants for us to do is call on Him so that He can bring peace and joy into our lives. Many would walk with a smile if they knew that, just like this man did when he found out that his burden was lifted.

Over and over again we heard gunshots and fights going on and yet no fear ever came upon us. We knew that God had placed Hannah House in that area and that He was with us.

Once a van pulled up and a lady jumped out to bring us some clothes, she was in a real hurry. I looked at the van and her husband was standing outside the van looking up and down the streets. I asked what was wrong and she said that they were scared to come to our area but wanted to bring clothes to help. She made a quick getaway.

I think many are afraid of things and really it is just a fear that overtakes one and we think of the worst. Fear can be destroyed by Praising God. We do have to use wisdom though in many things but to be scared of things that haven't happened yet is such a waste of time and energy.

God is with us and will always protect us and guide is in the right direction.

I remember one night going for a walk and this drug dealer who knew me well came running up beside me. "Don't go

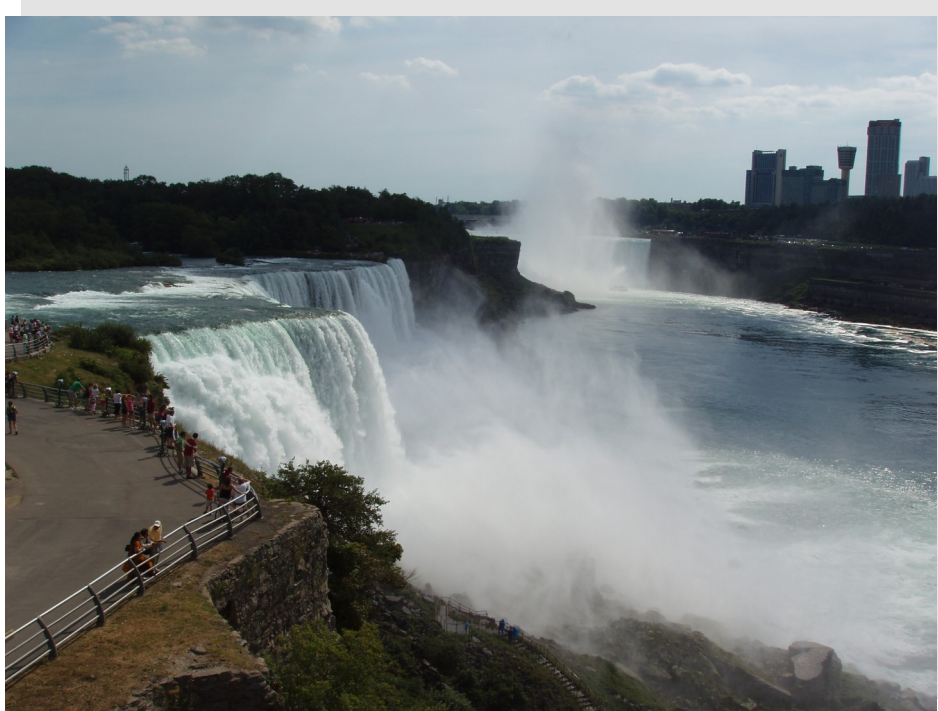
up this street tonight Anne.” as he walked me past that street to the other one. “Something is going down and I don’t want you to be hurt.” Isn’t it funny how we have this perception of drug dealers. Tough, no heart, no feelings, don’t care about anyone and yet that night this man took time out to make sure I was safe. Talk about a guardian angel that night I had one. A drug dealer used by God and he didn’t even know it.

The lives that were touched in Niagara Falls at Hannah House were many. Remembering back to the first few weeks made me wonder if anyone would receive help.

This lady for days when I opened the door would stand in the doorway and look at me and say “So, you think you are here to help us?, I think you are here to steal our husbands and don’t really care about us woman”. The majority of people I worked with were African American and me being a white blonde woman I guess they thought different of me, not all woman but a lot from the streets. She went on to say that I better watch my back and that the corner where I was located was the biggest drug exchange corner around and they may get me... she also said that us Christians always come to their neighborhoods and pretend to help and then when they get the grant money and the new van with their ministry painted on it they leave. My heart really went out to her and I told her that the guys who sold drugs many of them I knew as I had wrote them in prison and that I was only there to help because I wanted her to know that the God that I served was real and one day she would see that. I also said I was not going for any grants but that God would supply the needs. She looked a little puzzled but never stood in my doorway again. It was 5 years later that she came to me and said “I have been watching you all these years, I have watched you

Move to different locations, I have watched how you treat people and I have watched the van that you drive and I came to tell you that I see that your God is real” and she walked away. I went inside and my heart was so full of many mixed emotions, I wanted to cry because that was what I wanted people to see was that my God was real and yet I wanted to jump for joy because God had done so much for me over the years and others had seen it.

What a wonderful God we serve..If you are looking for a peace and satisfaction in life then try giving your live to Jesus. I have written a prayer at the end of this book for you to say. Pray this and start reading the Bible and find out what God wants to do in your life today. You will never regret giving your life to Christ, he changed me and he can change you too...



Chapter Eight

ON THE MOVE

In the year of 2008 my heart started to ache each time I prayed. I knew things were starting to change at 1105 Ferry Avenue, in Niagara Falls and I also knew that God was leading me to Warren, PA.

Sometimes we hear that small still voice that continues to speak to our heart and yet we don't know when or how things will take place and that is where our trust in God moves into action.

The Thanksgiving of 2008, I knew that this would be the last Dinner I would serve with all the children. How did I know just something inside told me to make it a special one as there would not be another. Thanksgiving was great that day, I set the table all fancy and the kids were so excited. They asked who was coming for dinner .. I laughed and said no one just us. See, our life had always revolved around others, the homeless the forgotten and not too often did a holiday go by that someone had sat at our table and ate with us, but today was going to be different it was just going to be us.

My heart was a little heavy as I watched the children laugh and fight and eat because I knew changes were coming, but when I didn't know.

Changes did come and it was at Christmas. Corissa left that Christmas eve and so did William. How fast things can change and sometimes we don't even see it coming. I was so

Thankful that I had made Thanksgiving a special day for the children because now it was Christmas and only little Hannah and I remained. That day we went for Dinner with Joanne and her son Joey, it was a sad day but deep inside I knew that it had to happen.

The New Year came and I wasn't sure of what was to happen but knew that prayer was the only answer to our problems in any situation so I started to pray. When we take things to God in prayer we don't always see the results right away but if we trust Him we can rest in the fact that He has everything in control and is working things out behind the scenes.

The more I prayed the more I knew that there had to be a Hannah House opened in Warren, PA. I didn't know how but did have friends there that wanted to help. In August of 2009 we had our first Street Outreach in Warren, PA.





Our First Outreach in front of Cassie's Bar

Warren, PA. August 2009

It was great, over 155 people came for help. We started to set up early and I happened to look over behind an empty building. I saw 4 ladies and a bunch of children just hanging around. Curious of course I went over to them to ask why they were there. They said they heard Hannah House had free clothes and they were in so much need, they said they had come early so they could get a good selection. They had come 2 hours early. It made me see that there was a great need in Warren, PA . Even though a few months later I was told from some Christians that there was no need and Hannah House was not welcome there.

You may wonder why I tell it like it is. You will find that when and if you have a Ministry that God will tell you something and even your own brothers and sisters in the Lord will try to hold you back. So many times I was held back by people I really loved and had known for years but I knew what God had told me to do and I did it, through my tears and heartaches.

The day of the first Outreach in front of Cassie's Bar a lady who was a Pastor in town handed me a paper with her name and address on it and told me to call her that she would do all she could to help me there. I was very impressed and excited that a Church wanted to get involved. That church is Faith Fellowship and that Pastor is Pastor Dorothy Hilliard. I spoke with her on the phone when I returned home and she invited me to come to her church and speak about Hannah House.

Each month we travelled back and forth from New York to Warren, PA and had great success with the Outreaches.

When I told the Faith Fellowship of what my vision was for Hannah House in Warren, PA. they welcomed me with open arms and gave me an office to use and the use of their gym and kitchen. Our first Hannah House in Warren now had a roof over its head and began to help those in need in the City of Warren.

We have now been there almost 9 months and each month we have well over 100 people coming for help.

Ms. Barbara Bennett, is our CEO and volunteers many hours for Hannah House. I have never in the years of ministry met a lady so devoted to Christ and to others and I thank God everyday for her. What a blessing to have someone who thinks like you standing right beside you holding the fort.



Barb Bennett, CEO of Hannah House Warren.

Once a month at Faith Fellowship, Hannah House meets in the gym of the church. We serve a hot meal and give away as much clothing and household items that are needed. We do not ask for identification for any of the Hannah Houses as we feel if they are coming to get fed then they must be hungry and we are there to meet their needs. The Bible tells us to Feed the Hungry and Give Clothes to those in need and that is what we do.

Hannah House serves others and what a joy to serve OTHERS... When you see a child smile because it has received a new toy or stuffed animal you know that everything you have done is worth it.

In April 2010 at our Outreach we started Hannah's Hour. This is for the children who come with their parents to receive clothes. Little Hannah had suggested that I do something for the kids as they got bored waiting for their moms to shop. So we did, Hannah's Hour started and now the children can go and hear a Bible Story and do some fun craft and then have a healthy snack.

My book "Cry of the Children" will tell many stories of what happened to the children that came to Hannah House. Just contact us to receive your book. This book will follow the lives of William, Corissa and Little Hannah and where they are now.

This past summer 2010 there have been three groups so far that have come to help at Hannah House in Warren, PA.

God has blessed us and it has made it possible to bless others. We take all donations and we have realized over the past 8 years that Hannah House could not do what it does if not for people who want to help us.

We have listed some of our activities and would ask you to pray for us as we take the Gospel of Jesus Christ to others.

Hannah House

The whole purpose of Hannah House is to share the love of
Jesus Christ with others.

We are a non denominational Ministry and will help anyone in
need for free.

We are a program of

Lighthouse International Ministries, a 501 c3 organization
which was formed in June of 2000.

Hannah House believes in the teachings of the Bible and the
power of the blood of Jesus Christ.

Founder is Anne Skinner and can be reached by mail at

Hannah House,

MPO Box 2813,

Niagara Falls, New York

14302

Web Site: <http://hannahhouse2002.org>

Email: hannahhouse2002@gmail.com

Phone: 814-254-3816

Hannah's Hour

Little Hannah came to me one day and suggested that we do something for the children while the mothers and fathers were looking for clothing at our Outreaches. She said that the kids needed to have fun too. Hannah's Hour was her idea it is similar to Vacation Bible School, where children can meet and have a Bible Study, Play Time and Refreshments. Children have such a wonderful mind and Hannah's Hour is now spreading overseas to other countries. Hannah's Hour began at Easter 2010.

Wilhelmina Missionary Suite

Located at our Hannah House which lets Missionary Groups reside while they are helping Hannah House reach out to others.,

The Missionary Suite started in Niagara Falls in 2006

Pancake Breakfast

Pancake Breakfasts are a tradition at Hannah House.
Started in 2008 in Niagara Falls, New York where anyone can
come to receive a free Breakfast.

Hannah's Birthday Party

A Birthday Party will be held each year in July for all children.
Giving gifts and cake and ice cream.

Beginning 2011

Gospel Tracts

Hannah House and Prison Letter have always done Gospel Tracts. Many of the inmates would send their artwork, poems and testimonies and we would put them together in tract form and send them out to those on the streets.

In 2010 we started to translate Gospel Tracts into different languages such as French, Hindi, and other languages. We are excited as we move forward with this project.

All tracts are given out free or for a small donation to help with postage and paper.

For Gospel Tracts please Email us

@

gospeltracts2010@yahoo.com

First Annual Gospel Blitz

This summer 2010 was our first Gospel Blitz in Warren Pennsylvania. Our goal was to reach 1000 people with the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

We were able to exceed well above the 1000 we had hoped for by giving our food, clothing and Gospel Tracts to those on the streets, at our Outreaches and also to the Rainbow People.

We are hoping to continue each year to have this event and we ask you to continue to pray for us as we go forth to reach those in need in Niagara Falls, New York and in Warren, Pennsylvania.

If you are interested in opening a Hannah House in your City please give us a call.

Books Available Soon..

“Cry of the Children”

The story of the children of Hannah House

“Prison Letters”

The story, poems, and testimonies of Inmates

“Sister Set Yourself Free”

The story of Anne Skinner and how God set her free
from her past.

Never Give Up

I am sure you have noticed while reading this book that I have mentioned some of the disappointments that have come my way. So true there have been many and honestly mostly from people who have claimed to know the same Lord that I do and that would make them family. I write this book today to let you know that if God has given you a job to do then follow thru and do it. Don't let anyone try to take your joy or your enthusiasm from you. We are in need of people who will stand strong in the Name of Jesus Christ and fight for lost souls, no matter what the cost may be to us. Many are striving for new cars, new homes maybe a new relationship..... All that is nice but there is one more important thing than that and that is to reach the lost with the Good News of Salvation.

Years ago I had a dream.....

I was standing before the throne of GOD.. Couldn't see His face but saw the outline. It was mighty and powerful. I was happy there. It was a very large room and it was packed of people, I realized that we were at the Judgement seat and that each one of us would be called up to see if our name was written in the Lambs Book of Life. While standing in the midst of thousands I see a short distance away an old friend, he is yelling and waving his hands. "Anne, I will see you in heaven" he said. I smiled back and nodded. Then his name was called. He went up to the Throne with a smile on his face. In the mist I saw the figure of God move and His head nodded to a large angel about 10 feet tall. This angel was standing by a very large book. The angel opened the book and his finger started to go down each page looking for my friends name. The angel looked back to the

Throne of God and shook his head “NO”

My friend lost the smile on his face and started to say please look again, my name is there.... I went to church on Sundays, I was kind to people, I never cheated on my wife, I am a good person.. Please look...

In the mist, the figure of God signaled again to the angel to look once more and the angel did..but to no avail.

The angel once again shook his head “NO”

Then all of a sudden two huge angels came from the left and each one took my friends arms and started to lead him away.. There was a big doorway and at the top of this doorway were the words “HELL” My friend was screaming and trying to get loose, but couldn’t then he turned and looked straight at me and said “AND YOU, YOU WERE MY FRIEND..... YOU DIDN’T TELL ME I HAD TO ACCEPT CHRIST AND THAT MY NAME HAD TO BE WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF LIFE....ANE NOW I AM GOING TO HELL..... YOU DIDN’T TELL ME... WE WERE FRIENDS...WE DID SO MUCH TOGETHER...BUT YOU DIDN’T TELL ME...and the angels took him away. I stood there and my joy left me and then all of a sudden I was awake.. That dream was so real and what it did to me was made me realize that I one day will stand before the Throne of GOD and give an account of what I have done with my life.

Will my friends be standing there with me on that day and waiting to go up to the Throne to see if their name is written in the Book of Life...WILL THEIR NAME BE THERE? I know my name is there, but will I stand on that day and see my family and friends be taken away and them turn to me and say “ YOU DID NOT TELL ME” I do not want that to happen...

I speak at many places and I always tell this story because we can sometimes take life too easy. We know that we are on our way to Heaven and we get lazy. We put aside the fact that our family and friends and others need to hear about Jesus. We will be held accountable for what we do and say. Their blood will be upon our hands.

I urge you today, to stop and think about what you are doing for JESUS. He did so much for us, He gave all.
If God has called you into the Ministry then GO...

We as followers of Christ all have a Ministry, mine may be different than yours but we all are called to share the love of Jesus Christ with others.

TODAY, Don't give up but go forward and ask for God's leading in your life. Don't let anyone discourage you but stand strong. God is able to do even more than what you can imagine...

Running With The Vision



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