



# HANNAH'S HAVEN, A Teen Challenge Center

*"...and the Lord remembered her." -1 Samuel 1:19b*



**Dawn Hendley**

## God Reached Down and Picked Me Up

Fifteen months ago I didn't want to live. I had dug myself into a pit and didn't see a way out. I spent all my life searching for love, for somewhere to fit in and be accepted, all the while falling deeper and losing the very thing I was searching for- my identity. I was a walking paradox. From a very early age I sensed that I was different. I felt like no one understood me or could possibly know the depth of my feelings. I had a loving family that held me close but I still felt very alone. I developed anxiety that led to depression and a terrible fear of abandonment. I felt like I was incapable of loving or being loved and tried to numb my senses with anything I could get my hands on. I was an addict.

I went to my first psychiatrist at age six and continued seeing doctors up until last year. They diagnosed me with every mental illness in the book and I was convinced that I was just "born this way", that I had chemical imbalances, and that the only way for me to lead a normal life was to take medication. Some of the medication I abused, some I didn't take, and some I welcomed because it helped with the numbing effect. There were times when my pain and fear would be so great that the only way I saw out was suicide. I attempted to take my own life numerous times. Somehow, in spite of the chaos- that was my

life, I managed to become very successful by the world's standards. I had a good job, a home, took frequent trips, and afforded myself every luxury and drug that I wanted. My success had become my identity and my cover, when it was gone, I crumbled. Within a 3 month period I lost my job, my aunt whom I adored, and my mother refused to see or speak to me. This was my breaking point, I thought.....

One morning after an all night binge I came home in a total blackout. I assaulted my mother and woke up in jail. Upon release from jail I came home to find my mother gone. My greatest fear had come true, I was all alone. I left home with the intentions of buying a gun. Thank God there was a problem with my background check, and I was forced to wait. I continued using without reservations and without fear. I couldn't tell you how many times I ended up in the E.R. during the following months because that part of my life is a blur.

By this time I had pushed everyone away. No one could stand to be around me. I lied, I cheated, I stole..... I did unthinkable things to the people I love most, but worse than that was what I did to myself. When I knew I couldn't face another day, God reached down and picked me up. He placed people in my life that lead me straight to him. Through their love he showed me that he was there and that he had been there all along. I left my home in Georgia and moved to NC to attend Hannah's Haven. While there I found what I had been searching for my entire life, my identity. I discovered that I was a child of God and realized that he wanted to have a relationship with ME. He loved me and would never leave or forsake me! I didn't have to be alone ever again. I've been sober for almost 15 months and God continues to amaze me! My worst day now is better than my best day was then. God is restoring my relationships and blessing me with new ones. My mother and I are great friends again and my brother and I have begun corresponding through email. And although I may never get to make amends with my aunt here on earth, I know I'll see her again. My anxiety and depression are gone and I think more clearly than I ever have before without any medication. I feel like I've been given the chance to start my life over again, and I want everyone to share in my joy, my joy that comes from the LORD!

Dawn graduated from Hannah's Haven in March 2009 and has relocated to Greensboro where she attends Grace Community Church. She has just started a new job and is doing well.

Hannah's Haven, is a 501(c)3 organization.

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# Will you Consider Hosting a Table of Eight?

Save the Date Now for our 3rd Annual  
Hannah's Haven Fall Appreciation Banquet  
Monday, September 28, 2009  
at First Presbyterian Church

## **"Beauty for Ashes" From the Founder & Director.....Bonnie Harris**

The ladies at Hannah's Haven have been creating a praise dance to the song "Beauty for Ashes" from Isaiah 61 which says <sup>1</sup> The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to preach good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, <sup>2</sup> to proclaim the year of the LORD's favor and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn <sup>3</sup> and provide for those who grieve in Zion to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of gladness instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendor.

At Hannah's Haven, we want to follow this loving example, to bring the good news to those who are hurting and to lead people to Jesus for their healing. We know that it is in giving that we receive. So this year the students at Hannah's Haven have been assisting with After School Tutoring at Grace Community Church, helping prepare breakfast and a message for our friends at Urban Ministries, helping feed the community and homeless at Grace Community Church on Wednesday nights and this summer we will be volunteering at a nursing home to paint the residents' fingernails. When we have the opportunity to speak in the community and share our testimonies about what the Lord has done we want to bring a spirit of praise to those who are in despair.

**Also, we need your help at Hannah's Haven.** Will you consider helping us with one or more of the following ministry needs: Praying for the ministry ☞ Mentoring a student ☞ Financial help on a monthly basis—we know we have to trust God for this—but we know that God holds the economy in His hands. ☞ Buying the home for Hannah's Haven—we are currently leasing the ministry home and would like to purchase it. We are praying for these funds and God's direction.



**Hannah's Haven**  
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