



the encouragement project

the STORY BOARD

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PRAYERS FOR STRANGERS

The post a few weeks ago on the special needs page I follow was short and to the point, but it broke my heart in two. Because I understood — at least in part. It read, “A friend of mine took in a 6 year old with autism last night, and he was up half the night screaming and wouldn’t eat anything she gave him. She has no information on him as he is a foster child. Anyone have suggestions on...” and she laid out a few questions for the group that might help her friend and this young boy. Most folks with autism thrive on routine, and in that moment I could only imagine how traumatized this little fellow was to be thrown into a strange situation — not fully understanding why — and what his family was dealing with at the moment for him to have to be moved. So I began to pray for him.

This touched me deeply because my (step)son, who is eight years old, also has autism. I understand the need for him to follow a fairly strict routine. I understand having my boy up half the night screaming. I understand times when he has refused to eat (and that there are only a few things that would even be on his menu). I understand becoming “mom” overnight when this child doesn’t really know why. But I cannot begin to imagine doing all this without a running start, not knowing anything about habits, what calms this particular boy, what stimulates him, who he is. So I began to pray for the woman who is taking care of this little boy.



As I am writing this story out this morning, I started thinking about all the other people who are affected by this — his parents, any siblings, the teacher at school and his classmates — and my heart has broken a little bit more. Cases like this rarely impact only a few people, and the ripples are wide and far reaching. So I began to pray for them, too.

Thoughts of this boy have surfaced so often since I learned about his situation, so I continue to pray. Although I don’t even know his name, I know the One who does, and I know that God loves him, his caretaker, and his family more than I could ever imagine.

Do you realize how much of a privilege it is to bring those around us to the Lord in prayer? Even strangers. And to be confident that God knows best how to take care of them — of all of us. Even a little six year old who simply needs to be loved and understood. Be encouraged to pray — for those you know, and those you don’t.



*Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances;
for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.*

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

2018 in REVIEW

Our hearts are full as we consider all that God has done through The Encouragement Project in 2018! He has taken our humble efforts and has brought forth so much more...

2019 VISION

There is always a sense of anticipation for what God will do in fresh, new months of a new year. Here are a few things that we are praying for and hoping to see in 2019:

3,000
HUGS AND KISSES

2,500
CHILDRENS BOOKS

1,000's
of WORDS
written and edited

countless
PEOPLE HELPED
ENCOURAGED
SHOWN the LOVE of JESUS



HUGS AND KISSES

With a goal at the beginning of last year of 3,000 Hugs and Kisses, we are so thankful to have gotten fairly close — just over 2,500 handmade hats, scarves, blankets, mittens, shawls and baby booties were lovingly made and donated by our incredible volunteers. These beautiful items were given to those in need of warmth and encouragement. Needs for basic things (like simple warmth) are far greater than we can imagine, and often much closer to us than we realize.



WRITERS BLOCK

While I had intended (out of what I thought was necessity) to set this part of The Project aside for a time at the end of 2017, God sure had other plans. There were two book projects that needed to be written and edited this past year for one of the missionaries we work with, and we've added a new missionary (from Ukraine) who has joined the group of those we help with text editing. There are so many ways to bless others, and this is one of my favorites.

THE BOOK DROP

We had around 2,500 new and gently used children and young people's books donated in 2018. Of the many books we gather and pass along to needy kids, most are given out at the end of the school year and over the summer. This gives kids access to reading materials at home (especially while they are away from school) who would not otherwise have many reading options at all. It is such a blessing to help children gain access to books, thus improving literacy and imagination.



There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. There are different kinds of workings, but the same God works all of them in all men. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6

THE ENCOURAGEMENT PROJECT is run solely with financial gifts and donations. We greatly appreciate your willingness to be a part of this team. The Encouragement Project is a registered 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. All gifts are tax deductible.

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