

FINDING RUTH

I really wasn't even looking for her when I found her. I mean, I was praying for her to be found, but there wasn't an active search. The fact was, I had given the entire responsibility of finding her to God, and had quite let it rest in my heart, even though the need for her help was becoming overwhelming. I was waiting on God's timing, and oh, boy! did He exceed everything I had imagined!



Let us hold
unswervingly to the
hope we profess, for
he who promised is
faithful.

Hebrews 10:23

My daughter, Aveline, had been asking to go to the park down the street all afternoon that first Sunday of the New Year, and we finally made it happen not long before dinner. "You have 10 minutes to play," I told her, "then we have to get back home before dark and dinnertime." She was content with that much of an outing.

With two minutes left of the ten allotted, a car drove up and a mom and her young daughter got out to play. "What timing," I thought! Aveline loves to play with other kids at the park, so I mentally gave her five extra minutes. Surely that small amount of time wouldn't make the evening routine run too much too late, and she could have a short time to make a new friend.

I started lightly chatting with the mom, then one bit of conversation led to another. They lived nearby. She was looking for some work she could do at home, I shared about what I do with TEP. She was excited to hear more. I asked her what kind of work she was interested in doing. We exchanged numbers. I offered her a job.

That last part, the offering of a job, just kinda popped out. It's not the kind of thing I would ever say or even consider thinking during a first conversation with a stranger. But it was kind of a "what do I have to lose" sort of comment. And somehow I could tell that Ruth was no ordinary stranger. Besides, the whole meeting was a setup. Of that I am completely convinced.

As I walked home with Aveline...a whole hour later, hungry and in the dark...I asked God that if there was to be more to this interaction than just a random, encouraging conversation, that He would help me know how to proceed.

By the end of the week, Ruth had agreed to work part-time for TEP as Assistant to the Director.

I was in shock. You know, the kind of shock you experience when that thing you had really needed, prayed for, and hoped for for years had suddenly and unexpectedly been so graciously and generously arranged and provided by God. You can only imagine my prayers of praise and thanksgiving then, and how they continue daily as I learn to work with an incredibly gifted helper.

You know, when we lay our lives down before the Lord, and allow God to have control over what happens to and with us, what He leads us to and provides is always, ALWAYS beyond what we could ask for or imagine. And His guidance is always for our good and His glory — even when we can't quite see it, or when we have to wait.

As I get to know Ruth, and work with her to learn the TEP ropes, I am discovering far more extensive ways she will impact TEP than simply the basic skills I had asked God for in an assistant. Not only is she a pro at admin things (what I asked for), she is also happily willing to figure new things out (even over her own discomforts), she has great ideas (big, dreaming ones, like I do), has a heart to serve, and a growing love for God and His ways.

It never ceases to amaze me how God does things. His provision and timing are always perfect. And my gratefulness for His goodness runs deeper than ever. [You can read a bit more about Ruth in her own words on the reverse side of this letter.](#)

AN INTRODUCTION

To everyone making the great cause of The Encouragement Project possible,

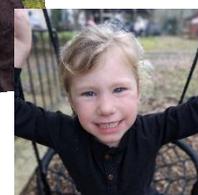
My name is Ruth Young, and I am a mom to three little ones - Jaxon (5 in March), Lydia (3) and Jan (almost 2). My husband, Trenton, runs his own construction company. And in the middle of it all, I am right where God wants me, as a stay at home wife and mom. I was born the sixth of eight kids (six girls and two boys). My dad is a skilled handyman, and my mom dedicated her time to homeschooling and raising her kids up in God's Word. My husband, kids and I recently moved back to our hometown of Fairmount, and we can't thank God enough for this blessing, as well as all the rest.

One laid back Sunday afternoon in January, my middle child, Lydia, had her heart set on going to our "new park" to play, but the rest of the family was not quite up for the venture. Surprisingly, she and I got a rare, but *much* needed, mommy-daughter outing. During that time out, God introduced me to even more blessings: Stephanie, her great kids, and her selfless project of encouraging others to share even more...you guessed it, blessings! I knew immediately that Stephanie was doing God's work, and I was overwhelmed with His grace and by His divine appointment to connect us.

Since becoming a wife and mom, I have known that God wanted me to make the most of sharing my gifts and passion for His goodness - not only with my family, but outside of my own home as well. I have a rooted passion for seeing and helping others follow their passions and trust what God can do with them. When I met Stephanie, I had been searching for a role I could fill within my community, following God's purpose, while still having the opportunity to homeschool our three kids and make our house a home.

I do not know all that God has in store for the future of The Encouragement Project or how He plans to use me as Assistant to the Director for its betterment, but all I have is gratitude for this humbling yet exciting opportunity. Both Stephanie and The Project have so deeply touched my heart and impacted my life already, and I thank God for His blessings and encouragement. Amen.

~ Ruth



CONNECTIONS/A RESOURCE FAIR

Earlier this month, TEP was invited to be a part of a resource fair that included over seventy organizations that serve in northeast Georgia. This event was a fantastic way to make connections with others who serve locally that we can get resources to — children's books, warm items, stuffies, and other encouragements. It was also the first working event that Ruth was a part of. And what a help she was!

We are always grateful to find new places we can share the things that are so generously donated through TEP! The "ripples" in the water continue to expand!

~ Stephanie