

Jesus said: "Truly, I say to you, as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me."
Matthew 25:40

My wife and I are in a Bible study group and Matthew 25:40 was a recent passage we delved deeply into. In it, Jesus tells a parable of what normal behaviour for God's children ought to look like. It is a way of life that takes care of the needs of those God gives us the opportunity to help, and not because we get something in return from them. This is what God has created us for.

As we approach the Christmas season, I think about all the gift exchanges that will happen. Commonly, everyone who brings a gift will receive one in return. It comes full circle. But God's gift in Christ is not that way. We can never offer something back to God as a repayment for the great gift of eternal life through the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Instead, in receiving this gift from God, He changes our hearts to now live in a similar way that our joy of giving when nothing comes in return is a real true blessing.

We are also very grateful for you, giving and partnering with us in a similar way. You don't give in order to receive, you give because it's the natural expression of having received God's gift in Christ.

As I write this I am reminded of one of the most powerful moments of our ministry this past year.

A student graduated in early spring but stayed through the end of June to finish the school year. As his dad pulled up to pick him up, his belongings were loaded into the car and this student and his staff mentor embraced with many tears.

We have been through so much with this young man and have seen God do such an incredible work in his life. He often said he didn't want to be at RSR early on, but the deep friendship and love that was formed between him and the staff and especially his mentor is more valuable than anything he could give in return.

God has truly blessed His children with so much, especially in Christ. May it be our natural response to give to the "least of these" out of gratitude to Jesus.

May you and your family know the goodness of God through the Christmas season and all through the year to come.

Thank you for your partnership!



Dallas Block
Executive Director



Chomping at the bit

Winter was fast approaching, and we didn't want anything left out in the elements... especially our gym equipment! The equipment had been moved outside for the summer due to renovations on the gym. Winter's arrival had been a concern for our oldest student here in the program. Lance, having a passion for lifting weights, has been chomping at the bit to get into the gym before the snow flies.

Being a great way for students to blow off some steam, the exercise gym is an important piece here at Rock Solid Refuge. The new gym will be heated and be able to be used for lifting weights, playing basketball, badminton, floor hockey, and a host of other activities year round!

Saskatchewan winters can feel excruciatingly long, and being cooped up in one area for too long can create tension among students. Having a place to go exercise gives everyone a healthy outlet to let out some of that tension in a healthy way.

We are thankful for the volunteers who have been working diligently to renovate that space, taking an existing quonset and giving it a huge makeover. Work has been done to replace the concrete floor, put up new end walls, install doors and windows, insulate the whole building, tin of the roof, and install a heater all before the snow flies.

We want to extend a hearty thank you from all of us here at Rock Solid Refuge (and especially from Lance and the other students!) to everyone who has donated their time, resources, and skills to this and other important projects!

We here at Rock Solid Refuge wish you all a safe and cozy winter.



What are you looking forward to this Christmas break?



James

James - I enjoy this cool time of year to chill with family and do fun activities like hockey, sledding, and getting to go to the Christmas Eve service.

Luke - Now that I'm older, presents are not as important to me as spending time with family. I really appreciate wood burning stoves and the fact I have clean water to drink, a lot of people in the world don't. I also like to watch Christmas movies, eat food, drink eggnog, and play Catan with family.



Luke

Lance - I'm looking forward to the Christmas break to spend time with family. In the past I've enjoyed horse drawn sleigh rides and eating homemade food at Grandma's house. I like a Christmas with snow and enjoy watching movies like Home Alone.



Lance

Cornelius - I'm already making a list and am excited to go home to my family. I enjoy making cakes to give to less fortunate people at Christmas, along with packing the Samaritan's Purse Shoeboxes. I value celebrating Jesus, spending time with family, and giving to others.



Cornelius

The Gift of Gratitude

People often strive to be grateful, but at times fall short. When we stop to consider everything involved in our relationship with Jesus, being thankful is the perfect way to celebrate His birth! So how do we apply gratitude to the Christmas season?

In a recent article in Turning Points Magazine, David Jeremiah writes:

*"Thankfulness is a learned skill and we learn best by seeing it modeled. That's where Jesus comes in. Just as He is a perfect Guide in showing love, compassion, forgiveness, and wisdom, He's our ultimate example of giving thanks in all things." **

A review of scripture will show that from the beginning of His earthly ministry through to the evening of His resurrection, Jesus gave thanks to His heavenly father on many occasions. Even Jesus, during the intense grief he felt over the death of Lazarus, gave thanks to God before raising him from the dead.

From everyday mealtimes to seasons of abundance and blessings, our gratefulness and thanksgiving should always be expressed to our loving God who watches over us more closely than the birds of the air or the lilies of the fields. Developing this type of grateful spirit will make it easier to say "Thank you, Jesus" during those difficult moments in life that seem to come along so often.

As another Christmas season approaches and we celebrate the birth of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, it is an opportunity for all of us at Rock Solid Refuge to reflect on the blessings of our opportunity to serve Him.

- The awesome privilege to work with the boys who come into our ministry
- The great people we get to work with as we serve Him
- Our tremendous facilities that God has blessed us with.
- Our wonderful and generous supporters who keep us going

* Jeremiah, D. (2022, November) Thank You Jesus: The Guide of Gratitude. Turning Points Magazine.

May your Christmas be filled with peace, joy, and a double portion of thankfulness!

Ministry opportunity



We're always looking for people to join our team.

Whether you're joining as a Youth Care Worker, a Teacher, a member of the administration, or in any other position, you are a part of changing lives for Christ. Even the staff who don't work with the students on a day-to-day basis build relationships with these young men and role-model Christ-like behaviour through word and deed.

Have a lasting impact on some of Canada's toughest teens.

For more information, call 306.297.3663 or visit RockSolidRefuge.com/careers

Christmas break

Christmas can be a difficult time for families. There is a lot of stress and emotion that can rise to the surface during this time of year.

Please be in prayer for the students of Rock Solid Refuge as they spend a week at home for the Christmas break. It's difficult to explain the mixture of feelings that accompanies these young men returning home. There is excitement and anticipation, but there's also a touch of worry and fear mixed into these emotions.

During this time at home, the students and their parents will be applying the skills that they've learned to better operate as a family. This also exposes a student's strengths and weaknesses regarding relational maturity and allows us to focus more attention on the parts of their journey that still need to be addressed.

Pray for these relationships being rebuilt. Pray for patience and hope. Pray for the work of restoring adolescent lives.

In Crisis? Start here!

Do you know someone in need? A family in crisis? Let them know that we're here to help! On top of our direct work with students at Rock Solid Refuge, we offer many articles and videos on our website to help teens and their families navigate the struggles of adolescence.

Our most recent series, "In Crisis? Start Here" shares the basics of positive communication which could be the little bit of correction that a family needs to get back on track before serious intervention is needed. Check it out at www.RockSolidRefuge.com/series



The Hope Catalogue

Along with this newsletter, you've received our updated Hope Gifts catalogue! It is our hope that you use this year-round to make gifts to areas of Rock Solid Refuge that are most close to your heart. Gifts given to "where needed most" are always a major blessing, but having some funds set aside specifically for items or programs that our team has identified as current needs and that also resonate with you has been so great to witness this past year that we wanted to do it again!

Flip through the Hope Catalogue and see what catches your eye, then you can give using the form on the back of the Catalogue or by visiting www.RockSolidRefuge.com/hope



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