

# connections

Working Together to Grow the Kingdom

LEADERSHIP NETWORK

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## When God Opens Doors

### REACHING OUT TO WOMEN AT RISK

#### FEATURED CHURCH:

LifeBridge Christian  
Church

#### LOCATION:

Longmont, Colorado

#### ESTABLISHED: 1891 as First

Christian Church and later renamed LifeBridge  
Christian Church

**SERVICES:** 5 weekly services

**AVERAGE ATTENDANCE:** 3,500

**S**ometimes God speaks in a whisper. Other times, a shout. Sometimes God challenges his faithful to take a leap of faith.

Several years ago, Cheryl Peterson felt God giving her that nudge. Although she felt she was doing God's work through her full-time job for a Christian publisher, she knew something was missing. She felt a deep and persistent calling to give more of her time to those in need.

She knew her home church, LifeBridge Christian Church in Longmont, Colorado, would support her. In fact, LifeBridge's culture is based on supporting others. As a member of Leadership Network's Externally Focused Churches Leadership Community, LifeBridge reaches out to its community.

#### A NEW ROLE

Answering God's call to service led Cheryl to a part-time position at LifeBridge, where she also serves as the volunteer coordinator for their women's

ministry service projects. This position allows her to work directly in the ministry while increasing the amount of time she can give to the community.

Every year, the women's ministry selects one community group as its main service project. A few years ago, the women chose Mother House, a facility in Boulder, Colorado, that provides support and housing for single, pregnant women at risk. As the project coordinator, Cheryl visited the facility and quickly realized it could use a little "mothering" itself.



(Above) Cheryl beams while visiting with former Mother House residents Susan and son Ian, and Stacy, holding baby Jacob. (Right) Mother House's "Sunflower" room.

Although Mother House was clean and functional, it wasn't very "homey," so the women at LifeBridge took it upon themselves to make the House feel more like a home. They redecorated five bedrooms and got to know the residents while doing so.

After the redecorating project, Cheryl continued to work with Mother House. In fact, she was asked to join the organization's board. But her involvement goes far beyond administration.

## STACY'S STORY

Cheryl has become personally involved in the lives of the residents. Her open heart, kind spirit and unending willingness to help draws the residents to her.

One young woman, Stacy, will forever be a part of Cheryl's life. Stacy asked Cheryl to become her "Big Sis." Cheryl supported Stacy throughout her pregnancy. Their bond grew so strong that Cheryl was in the delivery room when Stacy's child was born. "It was an incredible experience," Cheryl says.

Recently, Stacy shared with Cheryl that she wants to come back to her faith and make it an important part of her life. Cheryl is supporting Stacy in both her spiritual journey and her journey into motherhood.

## LIFEBRIDGE CHRISTIAN CHURCH WAS FOUNDED WITH A HEART TO SERVE THE COMMUNITY AND A DESIRE TO REACH LOST PEOPLE.

### SUSAN'S STORY

Cheryl's faith has also impacted the life of a young mother named Susan. When Susan was ready to move out of Mother House, she asked Cheryl for help. She had witnessed Cheryl's design talents during the redecorating project and asked for Cheryl's help decorating her own apartment.

But Cheryl did more than make suggestions about paper and paint. She recruited her son (handy at hanging shelves) to help Susan move.

Susan admired Cheryl's willingness to help and

## WHAT LEADERSHIP NETWORK MEANS TO US

LifeBridge urges each church member to spend one hour in worship, one hour in study and one hour in service each week. Through our involvement with Leadership Network, we have set goals and looked at new methods of achieving this plan. Leadership Network has helped us build relationships with other externally focused churches, while energizing and motivating our team.

—Bobette Berger, Outreach Ministry, LifeBridge Christian Church



**"M**y passion is for those less fortunate. I distinctly remember the Christmas season I was preparing for the decorating project at Mother House. While I love and cherish my children (then in their late teens/early twenties),

I found so much more joy in making the purchases to get this project rolling than I did in buying gifts for my children—who already had everything they needed and about anything they wanted."



Mother House provides a safe haven for pregnant women at risk.

—Cheryl Peterson, Ministry Assistant, LifeBridge Christian Church

how she gave so freely of her time. She also witnessed how important the church was in Cheryl's life. Susan has since become a Christian and regularly attends church.

Cheryl reports that many of the women from Mother House have attended services, not because of pressure or a specific invitation, but because they are so moved by the work the members have done. They want to see what LifeBridge is all about.

And residents aren't the only people God has touched through Cheryl. The administrator of Mother House started attending LifeBridge last year, was recently baptized and is now an active member.

### A LIVING TESTIMONY

LifeBridge's mission to serve their community is an essential part of the church culture. Members participate in countless community efforts. The church sponsors large outreach programs around major holidays. And its sports programs are heavily attended by the community.

Cheryl says the members of LifeBridge gladly give of their time and try to lead by example—without expecting anything in return. This quiet ministering works in so many ways. When someone tells Cheryl, "I'd like to go to church with you sometime," she knows God has opened another door and someone is telling her "I need your help." **LN**