

“Just a South African Girl Living in an Alabama World”

“If we are faithless, He REMAINS FAITHFUL – for He cannot deny Himself.” – 2 Timothy 2:13

2018 most definitely started with a bang for all Grace Klein Community friends. We sadly said goodbye to two staff members and dear friends to many, Amaris Joy and Scott Elliott, who felt the Lord call them both into new seasons. Although their families are still serving closely with Grace Klein Community, through volunteer opportunities, many already miss seeing their smiling faces, embracing their warm hugs, and hearing their words of encouragement at the office each day.

With big shoes to fill and further responsibilities upon our shoulders, worry naturally set in, however God has proven Himself faithful, as always! Grace Klein Community friends have been such an encouragement to our hearts. Many volunteers have come forward to help, using their God given abilities to serve, trusting in the Lord to use them as He sees fit to bridge the gap.

Many have committed to “man” the Grace Klein Community office, welcome volunteers and guide them in ways they can serve around the office, and equip friends to serve the Greater Birmingham. Others have committed to host the Sunday Trade Market providing opportunity for those who cannot collect food to share during the week due to work schedules, to receive fresh food items received through weekend donations. Early morning and late night donation pickups were soon covered by friends of Grace Klein Community who were praying for ways to serve their community during hours they had available. Other friends have taken their lunch hour to organize donations in the Give and Take room, help unload the box truck, sort and distribute food, and clean where necessary etc. Wow God!

We recently received an email from a staff member of one of our business partners, Precision Chiropractic. *“I would love to offer my time and love to your organization. I am available on weekends starting from 2pm on Friday afternoons. I am looking to offer many, many hours, so if you need help planning, setting up, or organizing events: I AM YOUR GIRL.”* How faithful is our God?! Without hesitation, our new friend Anna dove right in during our first serve day of 2018 working alongside students from Dawson Family of Faith with such enthusiasm. Not many will jump at the opportunity to clean a bathroom used by many, but Anna and “her girls” scrubbed down the community bathroom and organized donations like champs! **“Work willingly at whatever you do, as though working for the Lord rather than for people.”** (Colossians 3:23) is what Anna and her team of students beautifully reflected while cleaning the bathroom without a word of complaint. Our friend Jeni Gonzalez also jumped in to help wherever the need.

I am a firm believer in God ordained moments, not random coincidences. January has been a month of many God moments. Our recent changes did not take God by surprise. In December 2017, two churches reached out to Grace Klein Community, looking for ways to plug their youth in serving opportunities in January 2018. Coincidence? I think not. That’s my Jesus!

We were blessed to have over 100 students serve at various Grace Klein Community assigned sites on January 13th. The students were divided into groups that served at the Grace Klein Community house and the Grace Klein Community office, as well as with ministry partners, Metro CME, Forward in Faith Ranch and Liberty Church Birmingham.

Students and adult volunteer leaders braved the freezing weather and gave their all! At the Grace Klein Community office, a group of young men, led by some of my awesome Jesus family (Mr. Oliver, Jason, Gracie, Denver and Ashleigh) loaded a trailer filled to the max with cardboard for recycling, and swept the recycling area at the office as well as the driveway. Only boys know how to make a game from loading cardboard! My heart was encouraged to see how much they enjoyed serving together no matter the task. Others got their hands dirty in the community garden, cleaning the beds to prepare for spring, while another crew raked leaves and cleaned the chicken coop, ready for our new babies in the warmer months, Lord willing. Others walked the perimeter of the property, taking care of all trash, building material remnants and general clean up.

While the men served outside, a group of ladies served inside the building in various capacities. Students helped sweet Mrs. Gayle Gilbert in the Give and Take Room by sorting donated clothing and other items while placing them in the correct bins for families and individuals to easily find their specific size. Others helped our dear friend, Melissa Womack downstairs in the basement. Melissa's team preserved bananas ready for making banana bread, cleaned refrigerators, sorted and organized bread and cookies, washed out bins for donation pickups, moved donated items to different freezers, washed windows, cleaned counters and swept the floors.

Another team was led by one of my adopted grandmamas, Mrs. Zonia Waltman. Mrs. Zonia and "her girls" sorted and organized non-perishable food items received from various donors in preparation for our monthly food delivery ministry taking place on January 20th. The ladies very quickly brought order to the main room, bringing a sense of peace for our crazy week ahead.

While a team of young men, led by community friends, Rainman, Bishop and Andrew, took care of general yard clean up at the Grace Klein Community house, Brittany and Marcello (our friend visiting from Brazil) served alongside another team who organized and cleaned the garage, the basement living area and the main floor upstairs, ready for community events.

Others had the opportunity of grooming horses and taking part in a rock challenge at Forward in Faith Ranch, while another team served alongside Mrs. Sheila Parks at Metro CME helping prepare for an upcoming event, sort donations in their clothing closet, as well as assist with general clean up around the church.

If you have heard of Dana Owens, you know she's an AMAZING cook. Together with the help of dear friends, Shannon Haskins and Helen Brock, Dana and her team of girls made 8 family size servings of healthy vegetable soup as well as 10 family size servings of delicious chicken burritos to care for families in emergency situations. A big thank you to Liberty Church for graciously allowing us to make use of your kitchen during serve days.

As I write, we are preparing for a very busy week with our monthly food delivery ministry only a few days away. We are also preparing for another serve day on January 27th with the students from The Church of Brook Hills. We certainly have a busy few weeks ahead of us, but I am excited!

Looking back, not only on the Lords provision of helping hands this month, but over my entire life, I'm reminded of the many times the Lord has proven Himself faithful. Often we may expect His faithfulness to look one way, but God knows what is best, not only for you or me, but what's best in light of eternity. His nature is to be faithful.

Are you going through a time of despair, worry, or discouragement? I encourage you to look back and ask God to remind you of those moments when you were faithless, and He showed Himself faithful. Be encouraged my friend! He is good.



Will you get on your knees for me?

The road ahead is uncertain and we must lean close into Jesus. He has a plan for our staffing changes and we need continued faith to trust and enjoy this journey.

Thank you for your love and support!