



## MINISTRY REPORT & UPDATE, FEBRUARY 2020

We thank the Lord for His continued care of the ministry of New Song Mission. God's grace is sufficient to meet our every need. We're so grateful for how the Lord is working through our board, staff, volunteers, and financial supporters so that we can provide the love and stability our kids need in order to heal, grow, and thrive.

### Ministry Overview and Purpose

New Song Mission is a children's home campus which holistically cares for at-risk children, providing them with loving homes and a quality education in a beautiful, safe, nurturing campus environment on 100 scenic acres in Brown County. The purpose of New Song is to equip children for life through the love of Christ Jesus, with the hope of holistic transformation in all areas of their lives.

New Song receives kids directly through parents who are experiencing significant family difficulties including unstable housing, poverty, addictions, difficult family dynamics, children who are struggling in school, and other substantial challenges. Parents directly enroll their children into New Song's care, in most cases free of charge as we typically help kids from broken homes and impoverished backgrounds. Over the past twelve months or so we have cared for 8 girls on campus, some of whom remained in our care for 18 months, while others for a 6-month period. We currently have two girls living on campus, with a third girl whose enrollment is pending. We are very excited about the prospect of finding more children in need through a new Enrollment Advocate position we have created and just hired a gentleman from Indianapolis to fill.

### FINANCES

End-of-the-year giving was relatively strong, but down slightly from a 3-year rolling average:

- Total end of year gifts: \$112,000
- # of gifts: 239
- # of givers: 150

Cash on hand: \$230,000

Budget Projection for next 12 months: \$336,000, (based on 10 children living on campus)

### ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS

**New Board Member:** Toni Kanzler, CFO of Heritage Christian School in Indianapolis, joined New Song's Board of Directors this past December. Toni brings to New Song a great deal of experience in school budgeting, accreditation, and vouchers, as well as a host of other executive administrative experiences.



**New Staff Member:** In early February, Tim Blanchard joined New Song's team in a new, part-time role we have created called an Enrollment Advocate. With Tim's solid background in working with children in need, his godly disposition, and his desire to help New Song grow so that our campus is more fully utilized, we are very excited to have Tim with us and are optimistic that he will play an important part in helping us locate more kids we can serve. More about Tim and our outreach efforts to find at-risk children is shared below.

**Houseparent's Have Baby!:** Walter David Stoner was born on February 3<sup>rd</sup> to New Song houseparents, Logan and Olivia Stoner. Walter is Logan and Olivia's first child, and the three of them are doing well!

**Fiber Optic Internet!:** We feel extremely blessed to now have fiber optic internet throughout our campus provided by our local REMC co-op! This is a long-awaited and major improvement that helps with our online connectivity for school courses we stream in by video, online research, online bible lessons, and recreational television shows and (very limited) video games.

### ACADEMICS, PROGRAMS, AND SERVICES

**Classroom Update:** The girls have recently earned enough in their classroom reward system to have an off-campus school day at a local yogurt shop, followed by eating out at Taco Bell and concluding with playing at the Play Area at the Commons Mall in downtown Columbus. While both girls are working hard and being successful in their course work, one of the girls is making great strides in her social studies, moving toward independent test taking and showing perseverance in note taking!

**Academic Summaries:** Our two girls are doing very well academically, earning the excellent grades below.

Avery's Grades: Bible- 98, Language Arts- 92, Math- 91, Science- 85, Social Studies- 92

Lilli's Grades: Bible- 98, Language Arts- 97, Math- 94, Science- 95, Social Studies- 86

**Literature:** Grace Flint, our teacher, is currently reading the book *The Ark, the Reed, and the Fire Cloud* (a fictional story based on the Biblical account of the flood) by Jenny L. Cote.

**Bible Class:** In addition to their regular core subjects, Grace is leading them through a Bible class on the prophets. Currently they are studying the prophet Ezekiel.

**Chapel Services:** In our 20-minute daily chapel lessons we have been studying the book of Luke, interspersed

occasionally with some engaging video series from Right Now Media, including *Beauty By The Book* (by Laurie Cole), *Not A Fan* (by Kyle Idleman), and a series on the persecuted church from *Voice of the Martyrs*.



**Current Events:** These 15-minute, fun and interesting daily presentations include discussions, videos, and handouts on a range of topics that fall into the categories of the medical field and other sciences, arts, natural resources, and animals. Recent presentations have been on worldwide ocean cleaning, the fight against animal poaching in Africa, patients playing the guitar during brain surgery, artists whose art is balancing various stacked objects, and learning about the International Ink Library of the Secret Service. The students are very engaged during Current Events.

**Student Activities:** Activities our students have participated in off-campus over the past several months have been a fall outing at an apple orchard, a service project to veterans during Christmastime, roller skating, indoor ice skating, visits to our local library to check out books, playing sports and painting at a youth center, shopping at Goodwill, attending the movie Little Women, and many more. The girls have also worked hard earning money on campus by making post card notes that were purchased by some of our staff members. The girls have enjoyed meals with larger gatherings of staff members and others, as well as game nights, with some frequency.

**Social/Relational/Emotional Growth:** We work with the girls on a daily basis to help them mature and grow in their social and relational skills, while also teaching them healthy, biblical ways to deal with their emotions. One of our students is developing greatly growing in her social skills. Most recently we have worked with the girls on conflict resolution using James 4:1-2.

**Family Devotions and Memory Verses:** Recent evening family devotions and memory verses have been on 1 Corinthians 13, about how to love others.

**Parent issues:** Another facet of our ministry is the privilege we have in working with the parents and caregivers of our students. While children are at New Song, we act as the children's "co-parents" and we strive to have a very good partnership with their parents or guardians. We are exploring better ways of involving and equipping parents so they can strengthen their parenting skills, while also developing new ways of encouraging them spiritually.



**Student Discipleship and Counseling:** We are providing discipleship and counseling to our students on a wide variety of needs and issues. Some of those include insecurity, conflict resolution, and life experiences, as well as struggles and issues of the heart. Our process of working with students through dialogue, mentoring, training, and the use of God's word in a loving, gentle, conversational manner is oftentimes a foreign way of dealing with issues for some of our students. They seem to really appreciate the calm, caring, and patient way we work with them.

**Church Attendance:** The girls continue to attend church with their houseparents, Logan and Oliva, at Athens Church in Columbus, Indiana. Athens is a good bible church that exalts Christ and encourages believers in their walk and is full of young people. The church meets at a middle school, and the pastor is currently teaching through the book of Genesis, while taking occasional breaks to look at other topics such as the current one, "Resting in God".

**Student Outcomes:** In 2019 with the help of our board we developed a number of student outcomes to guide our programming efforts. This year we will start tracking those outcomes.

**Challenges:** Some challenges we are currently facing or will face in the near future are locating a tutor to assist the students, locating a part-time respite care couple to provide houseparents with some monthly relief, and ensuring that all students will receive weekly counseling once our campus is nearing its full capacity. In addition, we are having difficulty finding piano and flute teachers for the girls.

#### CHILD ENROLLMENT ACTIVITIES

**New Staff Member:** Tim Blanchard from Indianapolis has joined the ministry as its first Enrollment Advocate. Tim's sole goal is to conduct outreach to various agencies, schools, churches, and ministries in Indianapolis and its surrounding communities to locate children who are in need of New Song.

**Referral Source Outreach Plan:** With Tim's help, we are putting together a new outreach plan to referral sources that will guide the marketing efforts that Tim, as well as Bob Schloss, make to organizations that can refer the parents of at-risk kids to New Song. We have recently reviewed our referral records and have found that the best sources for kids so far have been school guidance counselors, social workers, churches, juvenile probation officers, and our support base. Meetings with individuals from these organizations are ongoing, with several scheduled in the next few weeks.

**New Referral Partner:** After a lengthy process, we have established a way in which we can potentially receive children whose parents have come into contact with the Indiana Department of Child Services (DCS). DCS contracts in local communities with agencies they call Community Partners. Community Partners work with parents who have been investigated for abuse and neglect but who didn't get formal charges filed against with the court. New Song has been approved to be on the list of community resources with Community Partner agencies. This path to children holds some good promise for us.

**New materials:** We are designing and printing some new brochures tailored to particular referral source groups to let them know how we can meet their needs.

**New monitoring tool:** We have developed a new online spreadsheet tool to help us track and monitor new referrals of children.

**Pending students:** We have one potential student whose enrollment application is pending as we work with her guardian. We have received calls or web contacts from four other parents or caregivers since the first of the year, but none of these have completed an application yet.

**Challenges:** Locating the parents of children who need our care continues to be our greatest challenge. We are hopeful that the substantial commitment we are making to our referral outreach activities through the hiring of an Enrollment Advocate, and also through the execution of a new outreach plan which other staff members will be involved with, that we will be able to enroll several children in the coming months.

#### COMMUNICATIONS AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

**General Outreach:** We are writing new stories for our website and putting together a new slide show of pictures, both of which should be completed by mid-February.

**Website Enhancements:** We have made some small enhancements to our website that should help us better connect with supporters and parent considering placing their kids.

**Grant Proposals:** In early February we submitted a grant proposal for \$10,000 to a foundation for help with funding our Enrollment Advocate position and supporting our Children's Scholarship Fund.

**Designated Gifts:** We received two designated gifts totaling \$15,000 to help support the Enrollment Advocate position.



**Challenges:** It's difficult to sustain and grow our support base with the small number of kids (who are making great strides!) on campus. We hope to grow the number of students to 10 by this fall. We also feel like if people knew the depth and quality of work we have done with the girls we are caring for, they would be very encouraged to support us. It's challenging to communicate the depth of our work, which literally involves the smallest of details in the daily lives of our children. From discipling and mentoring them through conflicts they might have while getting ready for school, to the joys of helping them succeed in the classroom and providing them with new experiences, God is working in incredible ways in the lives of these amazing girls! The deficiencies some of our students have in their social/relational/emotional skills are quite substantial. We have much ground to make up with them, and we are so very grateful to God and our contributors for the great privilege we have in working with our students.

#### FACILITIES AND GROUNDS

**Volunteer activities:** Volunteer activities on campus have been somewhat limited because of the winter season. However, we have had a wonderful office volunteer come in a couple times since the first of the year to help with administrative activities. We hope to have mission trip work teams help us with campus groundskeeping throughout the spring and summer months—we could never manage the campus without their sacrificial help.

**Volunteer needs:** Before spring we are really wanting to have a group of men come to campus one or two Saturday mornings to help with some light chain sawing and brush removal while the foliage hasn't come up yet. This spring/summer/fall we hope to have volunteer groups every 2-3 weeks to help with grounds keeping and other outdoor projects.

**Campus Improvements:** Late last fall a local church made some incredible donations of time and labor to build a fire pit by the pond, put in a walking bridge over a ravine on our trail through the woods, and purchase and erect a four-seat swing set in the park—praise God! We are really hoping to put up chain-link fence back stops on our basketball court and baseball/kickball field this summer.

**Challenges:** Our greatest challenges on the facilities and groundskeeping side are the maintenance of our lawncare equipment and campus vehicles, as well as continuing to receive help throughout the spring, summer, and fall months through volunteer work teams who take missions trips to serve on campus.

#### UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

**College Intern:** This summer New Song is hoping to host its first official college intern on campus! The student will be in her junior year of studies in Taylor University's Orphans and Vulnerable Children's program. We also have a meeting with professors in the Education Department of Boyce College to explore whether New Song might be a good option for student teachers to complete their teaching practicums.

**Pursuit of Accreditation:** In 2020 we will begin to dive into the research and application process to see if we can have our classroom receive the status of an accredited school. There are several accrediting bodies for New Song to choose from, and we will be seeking which one is the most advantageous for us and the most likely one to grant us accreditation.

**Expansion of Outreach for students:** As stated above, we are very excited about the great potential of attracting several new students through an expanded outreach through our new Enrollment Advocate and outreach plan that will involve all of our staff in various ways.

**Growing our Board of Directors:** New Song revised its process of identifying and recruiting qualified board member prospects. We have several people we are currently reaching out to with the hopes of adding three board members by the end of this year.

### PRAYER REQUESTS

Please keep the above items in your prayers. If you know of any potential supporters, respite care couples (perhaps retired missionaries?), or church small groups/youth groups or businesses who might want to serve on the New Song campus, please encourage them to reach out to us at [info@NewSongMission.org](mailto:info@NewSongMission.org)!

Thank you for reading this report and supporting us through your prayers, financial support, service on campus, and referring us to others who may want to know about our ministry. We praise the Lord for the tremendous opportunity we have at New Song to love, care for, and educate at-risk kids here in beautiful Brown County—to God be the glory!