

NEW HOPE HOUSE

Support for People on Georgia's Death Row and Their Families



Project Dream Guesthouse

This summer I asked for both donations and labor to help me give the guesthouse at New Hope House a much-needed facelift. The response I received was incredible: heartfelt thanks to everyone who contributed money, time, sweat and expertise! My heart sings when I think of each of you who helped make this project a success.

Anyone who has attempted home renovation projects knows firsthand the ups and downs of such an undertaking. There were some days when I sat in the middle of the floor and cried, overwhelmed by the task at hand. But there were many more days when I felt exhilarated as the work flowed easily, and I could picture Christ in the guise of our death row families being welcomed and comforted by a warm, beautiful space. I scoured thrift shops, discount stores and Goodwill, never knowing quite what I was looking for, but always recognizing it when I found it. Like the painting of "Love Lives Here" that I found at Marshall's – I knew the moment I saw it that I wanted that to be the feeling that the guesthouse would convey. Much of the furniture and decor is new, but there were two things I could not part with – the rocking chairs on the porch and the large wooden dining room table. Those items are especially sacred to me, filled with the memories of shared meals (extensions of the Eucharist), conversations, laughter, tears, deep sadness and joyful celebrations. I am excited to share these photos of my progress so far, and I invite you to come stay here and experience this sacred space for yourself.

Mary Catherine



The freshly-painted living room and dining room at the guesthouse. The walls are avocado green, with a blue sofa and orange accents; there are also ocean-scented candles and diffusers, and an angel to watch over all who enter.

Honoring the Precious Life of Keith “Bo” Tharpe

By Mary Catherine Johnson



It was one of those phone calls I’ve always dreamed of receiving. “BO GOT A STAY!” exclaimed Ellie Hopkins, one of Bo Tharpe’s investigators from the Georgia Resource Center. I screamed Ellie’s news to everyone who was gathered at Bo’s execution vigil on September 26 outside of Georgia’s death row, which caused a huge eruption of cheers, tears and hugs. The stay came 3 ½ hours after his scheduled time to die of 7:00 pm, and until then we had been hoping for the best, but bracing for the worst. In the end, it was the words of a racist juror from Bo’s original trial that made the highest court in the land want to take a closer look at his case.

The days leading up to that extraordinary moment, while Bo was on death watch, were some of the most intense I can recall. Being among those accompanying Bo during this difficult time was one of the great honors of my life. Many of my dear friends, including New Hope House board members Robbie Buller, Al Lawler, Mary Shellman and Suzanne Hobby-Shippen, were a part of the close circle of friends surrounding Bo for the last few weeks – a continuation of many years of countless visits, letters, emails, phone calls, and legal support for Bo. I am so grateful for this amazing community of people who surround me and support me in this work.

As this newsletter goes to press, Bo’s fate is in the hands of the U.S. Supreme Court justices, and we should have a ruling by October 10. No matter what happens, all of us who love Bo are grateful for this extra time with him. Every breath that Bo takes is precious to us, and we continue to treasure every moment that we can experience his incredible life force.



Friends and family members of Bo Tharpe gathered at New Hope House following Bo’s clemency hearing and visitation on September 25, the day before his scheduled execution.

FALL WORK DAY 2017

When I scheduled the Fall Work Day for September 16, I had no idea that it would be such good timing. The week before, Tropical Storm Irma had come through here, leaving a huge mess just days before Bo Tharpe's friends and family members were scheduled to arrive. An amazing group of volunteers cleared branches, mowed the lawn, eliminated weeds, raked leaves, cleaned cabinets, lined kitchen shelves, and painted the front of the guesthouse a gorgeous color called Aruba Blue. And they did it with smiles on their faces and love in their hearts for our death row families. I can't thank y'all enough! - Mary Catherine



RIDING IN STYLE

Members of Adrian Hargrove's family enjoy riding to and from visiting Adrian on Georgia's death row in the minivan that was gifted to New Hope House by our dear friends at the Open Door Community.



**DONNIE HULETT,
¡PRESENTE!**

On October 1, Donnie Hulett took his own life in his death row cell in Georgia. We are deeply saddened by this sudden tragedy, and grieve with all who love him.

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Fall 2017

OUR MINISTRY

New Hope House is a Christian community offering hospitality to families of people on Georgia's death row and support to people whose family members are involved in death penalty trials. We also visit people on death row and work to replace the death penalty with just alternatives.

New Hope House is part of Possum Trot Ministries, a nonprofit (501c4) organization. We are financially dependent on gifts (not tax deductible).

Contact New Hope House:
Mary Catherine Johnson
404-273-0621
mcjohnson78@yahoo.com



HONORING THE SERVICE OF LORA SHAIN WEIR & ED WEIR

On July 29, friends and family members gathered to celebrate the life of Ed Weir, who died on January 7, and the retirement of Lora Shain Weir after 28 years at New Hope House. Prisoners visited by the Weirs over the years provided moving testimonies about how Ed and Lora influenced their lives, which were read aloud at the party. For a copy of the slide show from the party that chronicles Ed and Lora's ministry, please contact Mary Catherine.