A Legacy of Gratitude!

The insistent prayer of a righteous person is powerfully effective.
James 5:16

SFH VOLUNTEERS!

I want to take the next few pages to bring you up to date on those folks God has sent our way to do a variety of things that support and encourage SFH and me personally with their love, time, talents and skills AND without receiving any compensation in return.

Our SFH Board members are all volunteers.
That includes our general board members and our advisory board members;
Steve and Heather Farmer, Jana Lechner, Jonathan and Michelle Walterhouse,
Vandora Henderson and Blair McCorkle, Judy Sullivan and Liza Bush.
Charles and I are also volunteer board members.
So thankful for all of you and your love, encouragement and prayers!!

First Group of SFH Prayer Warriors

In August of 2009, seven years ago, I followed through on what God had been leading me to do for a while, after Rachel's encouragement to do so. I sent out an email to 12 special local friends asking them to become prayer partners with me, for me and the infancy phase of Signs for Hope. Those were the days of cluelessness and uncertainty as to what all God was really calling me to do. Some times those long ago feelings show up even, today! That group prayed, in person on a monthly basis and/or whatever way God led for 2+ years.

Below is a portion of that initial prayer-seeking email I sent on August 3, 2009. Notice how long, unfortunately, I procrastinated in following through on His leading. So many unknowns and uncertainties in those first few years! Then so many answers because of those early prayers!! ONLY GOD!

"You are receiving this email because each of you holds a very special place in my heart. I find it very interesting...there are 12 of you. Since November of last year [2008] I have felt the Lord leading me to invite a core group of my most precious praying friends to come together for the sake of deaf orphans scattered around this world and the establishment of Signs for Hope. After much procrastination, for reasons I thought were legitimate, I have surrendered to His leading; hence this email."

Judy Sullivan

I have known Judy more than 25 years. She was one of those 12 and she and I, during the summers pray together at our Fairview Mom's-In-Prayer group. In February of 2012, she committed to pray for SFH and me on a regular basis. This was a strongly suggested requirement presented to us by the fundraising training Charles and I attended that month in Birmingham, AL. That commitment, for the most part, was to call and pray with me for an hour every Monday morning. We have missed some mostly because of my interpreting or my being out of the country, but the vast majority of Monday's between 8:30 and 9:30AM we are praying by phone! Judy also helped at our family retreat in June, willing to do whatever was needed. ONLY GOD!

Note: There are so many more local friends that helped in a variety of ways with our SFH family retreat in June. God alone will be the one to adequately bless them for what they did and have already committed to do next year. Please thank Him for all these precious folks and ask God to show you if you should join us for family retreat next year!

Liza Bush

God used the Internet to connect Liza Bush to us in 2012. Have you thanked God for technology, today? After a chat with Liza by phone we quickly found a way to utilize her love for organizing and she has spent countless hours organizing and double-checking the vast number of websites, research articles, blogs posts, educational toys and materials and the like, shared in our SFH DeafAdopt Families FaceBook group. This plethora of information is updated regularly and made available within that group.

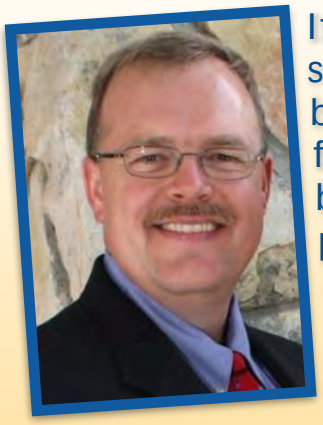
Liza has now started doing the same with our newly opened FB group for Parents of DeafBlind Children. I pray the Lord uses these resources in ways beyond what we think and imagine. I have been in Liza's home in Jacksonville, NC and then last month in Virginia Beach and she and her sweet family joined us for dinner here last fall. We have spent hours in prayer for one another over the phone and His Spirit within both of us has bonded us in ways He only can. Below is her first connection to SFH from our website in July of 2012. Shared with permission. Our first phone conversation came not too long after. Thank God for Liza, please, and ask Him to bless their missionary family as they serve Him in the military!

"Hello, I am so interested in learning more about your ministry and how [I] might support it! I am a children's attorney from Louisiana, currently working in the DC foster care system and expecting a move to Jacksonville, North Carolina in the next year (with my military husband - thus, the many moves!). I am also a student of sign language and a member of First Baptist Deaf Church in Alexandria, VA. My husband and I are both hearing, but have so enjoyed our involvement with the Deaf community here in the DC area and hope to find other churches and ministries to join in North Carolina. I am also very interested in how my new (and still developing!) ASL skills might be combined with my children's advocacy work. I share your passion to defend the cause of the orphan and would love to learn more about your work with Deaf orphans, particularly. I am wondering where your organization is located? North Carolina? and just eager to learn more. Thanks very much for your time and answer to God's call! What an amazing ministry. God bless you, Liza Bush"

Melissa Lloyd

If you check out the SFH Newsletter Archives tab on the Signs for Hope website you will quickly notice how their appearance improved greatly with the July/August 2012 issue. Since then, Melissa, my sister-in-law, has been graciously sharing her magical expertise and time to create these for us. It is exciting each time I send her the text and photos to see what striking creation she will send back after working her magic. If it were not for Melissa I am afraid my excessively wordy newsletters would be far more boring without the amazing graphics to catch and keep your eye. Join me in thanking God for Melissa, please!

Tom & Karen Lloyd Rogers



If it were not for Charles and his family, my life would be much more stressful and chaotic. Karen, Charles sister, and her husband,Tom, have been a wonderful support for us from the very beginning. Karen was the first family member, aside from Joseph, that I shared God's call with, way back in July of 2008. Yes, even before I told Charles. This was not planned; it was just how it happened. I still remember the tears streaming down her face that July 4th weekend as we sat sharing for hours at Jason's Deli in Knoxville, TN. Both she and Tom have taken ASL classes since then and were such a great help at our first annual ASL-Immersion family retreat in June. Karen's experience working for Joni & Friends in Knoxville has been of great benefit to us, for sure. She has also spent numerous hours, over the past year, along with Charles as they worked together to transfer SFH over to Quick Books, more about this later. Please thank God for Karen and Tom and also pray for Karen's ongoing health challenges, which impact her life often on a daily basis.

Last, but certainly not least...Charles Lloyd

As I shared already, Karen and Charles have been working many hours, with multiple trips for both between Knoxville (Maryville) and Asheville, for over a year now trying to transfer and maintain all of the SFH bookkeeping into QuickBooks. It has not been an easy task. In fact, it has been nothing short of a labor of love!

God has now lead us all to realize, the time for us to turn this completely over to someone else has come. Charles will still make the deposits, but everything else will be handled by whomever it is God has prepared in advance to do this with us. This will also become a new ongoing expense for SFH, but will be well worth the cost, for so many reasons. We did meet with our accountant on Thursday last week to let her know of our desires and needs. This accountant has been our personal and the animal hospital's accountant for years. When Signs for Hope came along, she began providing her duties for SFH at no charge. She is amazed at what God is doing through Signs for Hope and is seeking a bookkeeper for us. Please join us in praying God will provide the right person to do this for us and they will do their job well and above reproach.

Becoming approved by the Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) has always been my goal. Not until just recently have we received $50,000 in annual revenues which is the minimum required by ECFA for initial application for approval. Their standards are stringent, as they should be. Lord willing, Signs for Hope will achieve this approval soon; if not this year, 2017.

Over the years, long before God's call in 2008, I observed women "called" into public ministries and I often wondered about their husband's; how they felt and what role they were playing. I find it interesting how this is such a common occurrence these days. The Lord knew me well enough to know He would have to "call" Charles to this ministry just as He "called" me to it. And He has! It is with a willing and not a begrudgingly attitude Charles serves Signs for Hope and alongside of me, since the beginning.

Charles has been my greatest source of support since I first told him I felt God leading me back to school in early 2000. It seems God also informed him of my calling, even before me, to "coordinate the adoption of deaf orphans in the world" in 2008 as he was "not surprised" by it, while I was in shock for quite some time. Charles never questions my trips away from home, in fact those I present to him have so far been confirmed with, "Of course you should do that." He joins me at conferences every time his work schedule permits and He has joined me in Liberia twice, where it is not easy or comfortable for him to do so. I pray he will soon be able to join me in Vietnam to see what amazing things God is up to there. Join me in thanking God for His work in and through Charles to support SFH and me and ask Him to continue to lead him in the days to come. ONLY GOD!

SFH CONTRACT PARTNERS/SERVICE PROVIDERS

Rhonda Quade

July 1st we entered into our first ever contract with someone. This is for a trail period, July – December. It is with a highly skilled and motivated young woman, Rhonda Quade, to help me better plan, organize and accomplish the many tasks and projects God has led me to do. I have known Rhonda for years and am so thankful God has brought us together for 'such a time as this'. Working alone the past 8+ years has had its benefits in some ways, but the challenges are all too evident. Trust me, I have asked God to provide co-laborers since 2009 and I will continue to ask Him for them; join me, please. Rhonda also provides the needed accountability to help me stay on track with certain projects and events. The way God brought all this about has been fun to watch Him unfold. We met multiple times before we decided to move forward in this way. Be assured, Rhonda is providing much more support for me than what we are paying for, as God has caused her heart to become inspired and fascinated by what He is doing through Signs for Hope. Pray for us as we continue to seek to identify the exact tasks and projects Rhonda can best support me and SFH in. I do not even know how to begin to thank God for Rhonda!

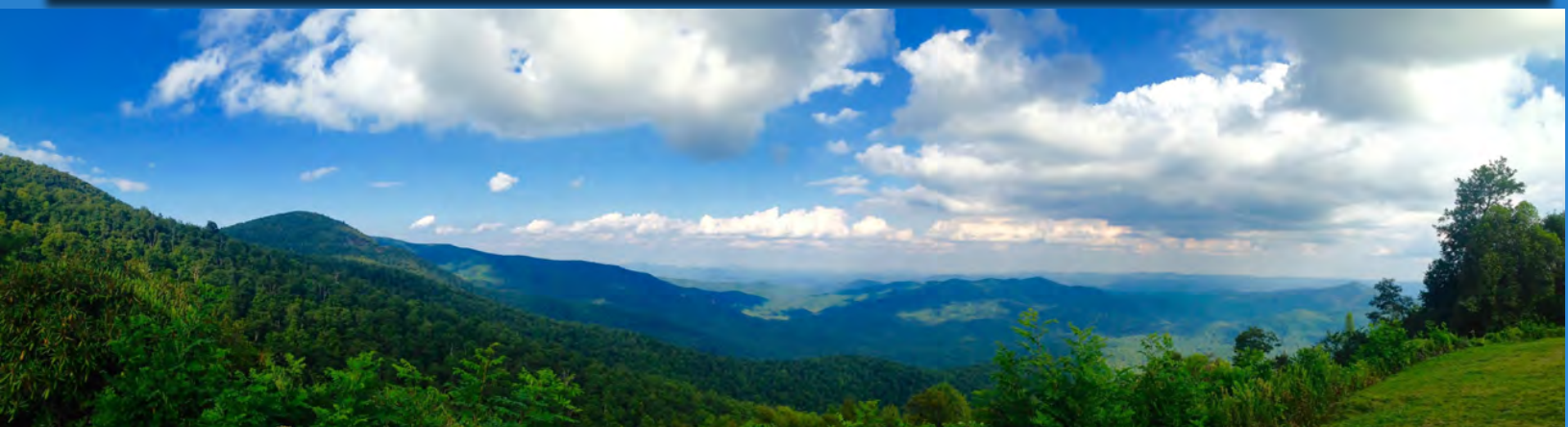
Evan Dykes

Evan is a new God-connection via Rhonda. He is the Director of Services and Production at North Asheville Baptist Church. I have spoken several times by phone with Evan and met with him once. We are contracting with Evan for his time, skill and expertise and the use of their "green room" for filming and editing the ASL translations that will be added to the Parenting Is Heart Work video series created by the National Center for Biblical Parenting (NCBP). Evan is providing all of this at a special rate. All the ASL interpreters involved in this project are doing so pro bono, by the way. Thank God for their skill, their hearts and their time! Evan has also encouraged me to move forward with the filming of a SFH promo video to share all God is doing. This is something we have prayed over for 5+ years. Please pray with us as we work towards the completion of these two projects over the next few months with Evan.

Then there are those of you who God touches your hearts to support us financially, in addition to praying and/or volunteering! It is HUMBLING and AMAZING to watch God do this in such a variety of ways. In the early years, 2008 - 2010 I never really thought about the need to begin "asking" people to donate funds to do this with us. It was hard to even think beyond what was happening on a daily basis, back then. Sometimes I still feel that way! It was in late 2010 when we realized Signs for Hope truly was developing into a full-blown and full time ministry and we could no longer support it fully from our own pockets. More importantly God did not desire for us to do that alone.

The first few times someone called me a missionary; I was caught off guard, honestly! With that realization came God's leading us to begin to share the vision of SFH with individuals and churches and seek financial partners, as well as prayer partners. Today, we do that most often by asking God to touch hearts who learn of what He is doing through Signs for Hope. Please join us in asking God to continue to do this.

In the beginning Charles and I just paid for everything out of our own pockets. That became impossible to do, of course, especially as the reality of the economic downfall hit Charles' business hard in 2008/2009 and still today. While much of what we do through SFH does not require money, more and more of what we do is requiring more and more money. I guess that comes naturally as God continues to grow the ministry. We are still an all volunteer-run organization and I pray God continues to allow that for many reasons. ONLY GOD!



Signs for Hope ASL-Immersion Family Retreat 2017!

Staff Training – May 30 - 31 & Families – May 31 – June 4

I asked Blaire McCorkle to write a report for our quarterly SFH board meeting last month, about her experiences at our first ever ASL-Immersion Family retreat. Below are some excerpts from her report.

The ASL immersion retreat was a blessing to me. I knew going into it that it would be a weekend of many blessings, but I did not expect what I got. As a board member, Becky allowed me a lot of freedom to help where I saw a need and observe. And observe I did. I observed relationship building in many capacities: the children with one another, parents with one another, and staff with everyone. I was most impressed when it came to watching older, mostly, hearing siblings helping in the children's rooms as well as with their own newly adopted deaf siblings.

As Becky likes to say, God connections happened! It was also a blessing to see a team come together for the planning of next year's retreat. I am excited to see the team that He has selected and feel positive about it (again, God connections, y'all!) I am really looking forward to next year and have already spoken with a few friends to recruit them to volunteer.

After going to Liberia, I felt like I had a stronger understanding of SFH. However, I realize I only had a very limited view after attending this retreat and meeting the people we hear about in Becky's emails and interacting with them and listening to their desires for their children. It was an incredible blessing to see this side of SFH, the things that happen on a daily basis.

Blair also shared a few presentations with the Deaf adoptive parents and was willing to step outside her comfort zone on many occasions. I look forward to what God has planned for Blair at family retreat 2017! Thank you, Blair!

HANDS FOR VIETNAM

Hands for Vietnam, one of our partner organizations has a Matching Donation Challenge going on! Please do not miss this opportunity to provide transportation for deaf children to finally attend the Deaf school and be exposed to sign language for the first time and allow the Haney family to continue serving in Danang. Scooters are the most popular mode of transportation in Vietnam, but it is tough to transport three children and needed supplies on scooters. Their family vehicle has long since served its purpose (I rode in it in March) and this van will be used for both deaf students and the Haney family. To maximize the $13,000 matching donation, over $5,500 is still needed. Charles and I have already personally donated to support this amazing opportunity, to have our donation doubled (I love this!) as have a few of you, but I am praying God will touch more of you to give to such a needed and worthy cause! Click here to donate securely online or mail a check to:

Hands for Vietnam, 170D East Main Street, #241, Hendersonville, TN 37075. They are an IRS approved 501c3 based in Hendersonville, TN.

Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition,
with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.
And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding,
will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.
Philippines 4:6-7

Additional opportunities for prayer:

- Jana Lechner and her daughter Ashley will be traveling to Vietnam to work with our partnering organizations there, Orphan Voice and Hands for Vietnam, August 7th – 19th. They have other destinations prior to and following their Vietnam visit. Prayers for travel safety, health and the ability to accomplish all God desires while they are there are appreciated.

- DeafBlind Weekend Training, August 5th -7th – Vandora Henderson and I will be attending this training near Greensboro, NC. This conference will give me my needed hours for maintaining my NC license for interpreting and only God knows what connections He will make that weekend.

- Charles and I have the great pleasure of visiting with Joseph and Kate in Denver, August 24th – 31st. We are so excited!!

- I will be joining a family for their China Deaf adoption trip to bring their deaf daughter home, September 1st – 15th. Their three biological children are joining us. I will try to update you while we are there. You know what and how to pray!

- Lord willing, I will make a stopover in Manila, Philippines to visit with the Papadopolus family, following China. Then returning to Asheville the 20th or 21st. We met Mike Papadopolus at CAFO (Christian Alliance for Orphans) in May; he joined us for our family retreat in June. Charles and I spent about 5 hours chatting with he and his wife, Malen, July 4th weekend in Hendersonville, NC. They serve with an orphan care and adoption ministry in Manila and they are fostering a deaf boy named Mateo. Their family is learning sign language along with Mateo and they have been connected to a school for the Deaf and a thriving Deaf church. Please pray for the details of this trip, China/Philippines 2016, to be finalized this week. ONLY GOD!

- Charles and I will be attending the GA Baptist Conference of the Deaf in Toccoa, GA, September 23rd – 25th. I have been asked to present on *adoption* and *giving*. It was in 2011 at SBCD (Southern Baptist Conference of the Deaf) IN Toccoa, when I first shared a Signs for Hope exhibit booth. This place is also special because it was there and then God began connecting families desiring to adopt deaf children to us on a consistent and regular basis. We now have over 180 families who have connected to us and remain connected to us in our FB group, SFH DeafAdopt Families. Please pray my health and stamina for this conference will be strong after my Asian trip and pray for God's clear leading as I tweak my *adoption* presentation (2- 90 min. PowerPoint's) and create the one on *giving*.

From my heart to yours...

I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people — for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Savior, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.

1 Timothy 2:1-4

I am absolutely in awe of your prayers for me, as I watch God continue to do things that cannot be explained! I look back over the past few months and years, it is so very obvious that apart from your prayers, none of what God is accomplishing through me or SFH would be possible. Every single prayer, no matter how long, short, often or rare, you breathe for me...HE.IS.ANSWERING!

You know what this feels like, too! You've experienced it! Those times when you and I find ourselves in situations, where we feel so inadequate. Maybe it's a conversation with another or maybe it's an experience or maybe it's when His Spirit leads us to reflect on the past. It is that surreal feeling of, "Did I just say that?" "Where did that come from?" "Did she just say that?" "Did that really happen?" "Did God really protect us in the midst of that and we did not even realize we needed His protection?" "How did that happen?" How is this even possible?"

Our questioning, of course could go on and on...but...GOD! Then there are the infinite God-connections that seem to come out of nowhere! I have begun to expect them. My expectation or anticipation of them does not minimize their impact on me whatsoever, though. I am still in awe, every single time He does it!

He will be the only One to adequately thank you for your prayers and your obedience to do whatever He leads you to do as you walk this road of adventure with us, this adventure we call Signs for Hope!

I delight in knowing about your lives and having the opportunity to pray specifically for you. Some of you are good at keeping me informed. Thank you! Please do share what it is God is doing in your lives. I find sharing with others is strengthening and healing and the prayers of others...there is nothing that can compare. Share your opportunities of prayer with me, too, please.

I do love you, but He loves you so much more!

Becky

Stay in touch with SIGNS FOR

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