



December 10, 2024

Dear loyal Ministry of Hope supporter,

We find ourselves at the end of a year once again. Much has been written about the unprecedented experiences our communities have endured in recent months, and this year was a unique one for Ministry of Hope for many reasons. Let's look back on all the change and progress our organization has navigated through this turbulent year...

Ministry of Hope celebrated its 25th birthday this year. Despite the staffing shortages at WCCW, we continued providing a safe space for all - recognizing celebrations, losses, healing and hope. Our chaplain of 17 years retired, and we welcomed in a new face and spirit, Susan Verbrugge. With Shannon Spencer's help, they kept their eyes steadily on the horizon of each new day - helping residents navigate the day-to-day challenges of incarceration, and restoration of mind and spirit. **We continue to "hold space" inside the gates as a gentle but constant reminder that we are all more than the sum of our mistakes, and no matter how bad a day is, it's ALWAYS possible to start over.**

It wasn't a pandemic this time. Polarized politics dominated the stage for those of us outside the gates this past year. As if that wasn't unsettling enough, causing (at times) conflict and anxiety in our personal and professional worlds, our region's very reality was flipped on its head when Hurricane Helene arrived in September. So many of you and those you love endured once-in-a-lifetime tragedies and living conditions, and are still wading through the aftermath of the geological event that has put our community years behind from where it had been just a few short months ago.

We realized that we are ALL survivors. And 2024 showed us how our communities could truly come together in time of need. Everyone put on their work boots (literally!), rolled up their sleeves and went to serve those that were suffering. It can be exhausting living through historical events, but we never lost sight of the future being bright again. Although WCCW was evacuated for almost two months, our board and staff stayed busy serving the staff that was left behind. We also volunteered and served in our community in a variety of ways during that time, and are happy to report that we are back at almost full capacity again. **There is a LOT of work to be done now that the residents have returned, "as healing is a slow crawl, but it finds you right where you are" - and that is where we plan to be for our residents and staff at WCCW as we welcome in 2025.**

Fear made our world feel like a scary place. But, we believe love will not let fear's voice speak louder than the faith and courage that is also present in the room. Fortunately, Ministry of Hope continues to be fluent in the language of love for those at WCCW. Along with our faith and courage, we will continue embracing whatever is needed to keep moving us forward in our service - providing safe spaces, trust, courage, inspiration, care and motivation for those inside - and outside - the gates. **Without your support,** we would not have the encouragement, resources, and hope required to keep facing the ongoing challenges and changes - while **being present** one day at a time - in serving the residents at WCCW.

"The work goes on, the cause endures, the hope still lives and the dreams shall never die." - Edward Kennedy

When you join our cause in making a deeper connection with our residents, we are able to make a real impact in their day-to-day lives and their future. This creates **HOPE** for **renewal, reconciliation, and restoration** - our vision statement enacted! The Ministry of Hope wishes you and yours a blessed 2024 holiday, and a healthy and bright 2025. On behalf of our Board, as well as all the residents, staff, and our chaplains at WCCW, **we truly thank you** for remembering Ministry of Hope with your support.

Lauronda Morrow Teeple
Executive Director