Why HOPE? Why NOW?

Donna Rollins, Wisdom Builders Director

Some have asked me why I wanted to start HOPE, Inc. (Home Of Parent-directed Edification). In truth, I did not want to do it. Wisdom Builders was doing well, and I could see the fruits of our labors that we were blessing families. In my prayers, I would pray for Wisdom Builders and for God to lead and direct me as I guided the families who came our way. Thoughts would come into my mind as I prayed to God. I asked the Lord, “How can families, their children, and their grandchildren be helped in homeschooling? How can the good work that You are doing continue? Is there a way for me to assist and support Christian ministries and homeschoolers beyond Wisdom Builders?”

Thoughts and ideas began swirling in my mind that homeschooling needed a base, a building—a home—so more opportunities and support could be utilized. I saw how God raised up many churches and believers to join together to build Heritage Christian School, where I first taught. I wondered if the same could be done with the homeschooling community. Could we join together to raise up a center for many homeschooling groups and ministries to use and share the costs? Each group doing its own thing would remain small, but groups joining together could accomplish much as we all would seek the Lord for guidance.

However, I kept telling God that I was inadequate for this task. It was too great for me, it was beyond my abilities, it was too hard, and I was too busy. How could I take on more responsibilities? I kept pushing the idea away, but it would not go away.

In addition, the gentle insistence of the Holy Spirit kept nudging at my mind and heart. Do you believe the Scriptures? Yes, Lord. Do you believe that I take pleasure in using the weak to bring about My plans? Yes, Lord. Will this not cause you more growth, for you will need to depend on Me more? Yes, Lord. Will I not get the glory, for we both know you cannot do this without My leading? Yes, Lord. Will you be obedient and serve Me in this way? Yes, Lord, I will try.

I wrestled and prayed over starting HOPE, Inc., for many years, and finally surrendered and asked the Lord to guide and direct us, to bless our humble attempts, and to move the hearts of His children to aid in the next steps.

Faithfully, God has brought people alongside me. Ray Martin, an experienced lawyer from Wisdom Builders who has worked with other not-for-profits, helped us establish all the documents and filings with the government. Two moms from Wisdom Builders joined us, Christine Russell and Kelly Linedecker, who helped us start the process.

The need for HOPE became more and more evident as I saw homeschooling groups disband or struggle to find places to meet. Calls would come to me, asking for ideas on where to meet. Also, I saw how homeschooling kept growing and growing and how our classes were becoming filled. Some families have been turned away due to lack of space, and I knew that if we had a building, we could minister to more children and families. God has shown me how Wisdom Builders has made a difference and an impact on families and that God is using the tutors and aides to come alongside parents to instruct and nurture their children.

Next, the initial HOPE board members wanted to be a part of the board only to get it started; after that, they preferred to step back — still supporting the vision, but not from a board member position. Once our paperwork was in order, I prayed for God to lead others to join us. Next came Jerry Good, Keith Passwater, Nathan Rollins, and Jan Eyster. With this board, our focus was to implement our procedures and documentation. We also worked on a building design and established our desires in a homeschooling ministry center.

Realizing we needed to raise money, the board asked me to send a letter to Wisdom Builders families asking for $20,000 in two weeks, right before Christmas. As I typed the email letter and was about to click the send button, I prayed to the Lord, “Am I crazy? How can we raise $20K in two weeks from our families? Am I doing what You want me to do, Lord? My faith is feeling weak, Lord. If You want us to keep following this path, I need a sign. I need a clear answer from You.”

After praying, I clicked to email all the WB families and rested in God’s hands. Shortly after I arrived at Wisdom Builders the next morning, a parent approached me with their checkbook, ready to write a check to HOPE for $20K. I was blown away. God had clearly answered, and I did not have to pray twice! Tears came down my face as I praised our great God, Who works through His people. I could not wait to tell the board that night at our meeting. We rejoiced and praised and thanked our Father.

Currently, our board is made up of Marilyn Rowlett, Jim Eibel, and me. With the new board came the desire to start implementing ways to make the vision a reality. So, we have entered our fundraising initiatives, which involve defining and presenting our vision. So far, we have had restaurant fundraisers and a Christmas craft bazaar, some families have put on fundraisers for Wisdom Builders using their talents or businesses, and we hosted our first gala fundraising dinner and silent auction.

The need for a homeschooling center is great, which is why the time for HOPE is now. Due to the exponential growth of homeschooling, the dwindling availability of space, and the increasing need to support the homeschooling and ministry communities, we believe the Lord is directing this vision. We are excited to see what God will do and how He will work through His people. We hope you will join this incredible journey and impact our communities and churches in raising the next generation! To God be the glory!