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# Editors' Notes



*"A friend is someone who makes it easy to believe in yourself."*

—Heidi Wills

Marci was my first Bismarck friend. We clicked from the very beginning; within minutes of meeting me, she invited me to her wedding. I was absolutely not prepared for my job as a television reporter, but Marci's friendship gave me the confidence boost I needed. Twenty years later she is still one of my dearest friends.

Maybe that's why I've been so looking forward to this friendship issue. It's given me a chance to reflect on my friends and realize how blessed I've been with so many great ones. And how lucky am I to take on this magazine with one of my best friends?

This month we have so many great stories; I wish I could tell you why I love each story, but I'd rather you just read them and we can visit about them in person someday. Seriously, I love talking about the magazine everywhere and anywhere! And speaking of everywhere and anywhere, we have been working hard to bring you stories from beyond Bismarck and Mandan. In this issue, we have stories from Minot, Lake Metigoshe, and Dickinson. You'll be hearing a lot more from western North Dakota, thanks to our new friend Stephanie Fong. Stephanie will be contributing regularly to the magazine and we couldn't be more excited!

Who is your friend that gets you through the tough times, who believes in you, who loves you unconditionally? Shoot her a text, call her, or take her out for coffee and tell her thanks for always being there for you.

*Jody*



The theme verse we chose for this issue has been on my mind a lot lately: *This is My commandment, that you love one another, just as I have loved you. Greater love has no one than this, that one lay down his life for his friends.*

This was among the lessons I learned in Sunday school at Trinity Lutheran Church in Douglas, North Dakota. During my childhood innocence I didn't have a full understanding of what "greater love" was; what it meant to lay down one's life, and I remember thinking, 'God is asking a lot from us to be willing to die for our friends.' As I got older, I understood the verse didn't mean loving a friend means dying.

Reflecting on these words again as a woman in her mid-40s I see that my closest friends have truly laid down their lives—they show great love when they make time to be with me, encourage me in my efforts, and give words of comfort and support. My friends have, at times, dropped everything to help me. One of my best friends recently lost her father very suddenly and unexpectedly. Whatever was important on my to-do list that day no longer mattered. Being with my friend and her family, comforting them with hugs and warm food is what really mattered. Greater love.

This is issue number 12 with my beloved friend, Jody. I'm deeply blessed to work with someone for whom I have that greater love. I hope you are inspired by the stories on the pages here and give thought to the friends for whom you lay down your life, and friends who do the same for you.

*Marci*

***The mission of Inspired Woman is to celebrate, encourage, empower, educate, and entertain women.***

# Fairy Gardens:

## DIRT, GLITTER, AND SMILES

by Jody Kerzman



I do not have a green thumb, yet every year I spend way too much money and time planting flowers that I know I'll forget to care for. Now that my youngest two kids are 10 and seven years old, they've taken over the flower watering duties. Thanks to their efforts, for the past couple of years we have actually kept flowers alive all summer.

But this summer, flowers aren't enough for my little gardeners. This year, we jumped into the world of fairy gardens. In my mind, it was a simple project: buy the flowers, dig out the flowerpots from storage, buy a few fairy accessories, and boom you have a fairy garden.

Boy was I wrong.

Fairy gardens are a real thing, a real project. Who knew?

Lucky for me, I have a great friend (if you're a regular reader of this magazine you might know her. Her name is Marci.) who knows lots and lots and lots about fairy gardens and was willing to help my girls plant theirs.

Ten-year-old Lizzy scored an old fire pit from the neighbors, giving her lots of space to plant her garden. Morgan, age 7, just had a large flower pot (and argued for hours about how her life is not fair. Sisters are awesome.) We filled both with potting soil, laid out their flowers, and then got creative. My dear friend Marci brought the entire contents of her craft room to our driveway where she set up a fairy garden station.

While there really are no rules when it comes to fairy gardens, we discovered a few tricks that make the project a little more fun. Here are our top three fairy garden tips, in case you decide you want to create your own:

### 1. Raid your craft supply and closets!

You don't have to buy your fairy garden accessories. Use what you have on hand—buttons, wire, ribbon, wooden skewers, popsicle sticks, tulle, wine bottle corks, glitter—anything you have on hand. Use your imagination! And don't forget some glue, paint, and markers. The garden itself can be in

whatever you choose—a bucket, old wagon, or a wooden barrel.

**2. Start with a basic plan.** Plant selection and placement is part of the planning, but think about the story or theme you would like for your fairy garden. Will it be a fairy picnic? Does it tell a story of a fairy's life with a pathway, duck pond, and tiny lights? Use your imagination! (Or make Pinterest your friend!) Your plan might change as you go, but it will help to know what you will need to make for your fairy garden and what you need to save room for.

**3. Let it happen!** If you tend to be a perfectionist, this is a project to free yourself! It's all about imagination, getting glue on your fingers, some dirt and paint on your hands, and not worrying about making mistakes. Just have fun; maybe even allow yourself to imagine your fairy garden from the fairy's perspective.

In the interest of full disclosure, those tips were from Marci. My role was to glue stones onto a plastic cup for Lizzy's fairy house. But as I glued, I learned a few important lessons that apply beyond fairy gardens.

**Pinterest is dangerous.** So is Marci. She's like a walking Pinterest/Martha Stewart. It's one of the things I love about her. I hope my daughters realize how lucky they are to have her in their lives. She is patient, kind, creative, and funny. Watching her help Morgan with her glitter bomb of a fairy garden made my heart happy. Good role models are so important for girls and my girls have one of the very best.

**When it comes to glitter, you can't have enough.** I don't buy glitter because I hate the mess it makes (I'm really not a neat freak, I just don't have time to clean up a glitter mess and the men in my family don't appreciate glitter on their hunting gear.) Morgan's fairy garden is a glittery mess. She sprayed her fairy house with pink glitter spray paint (there's a patch of pink glittery grass in our front lawn that will likely be there all summer) and then





dumped more glitter on her flowers, along with a jar of play sand. It's not what I would have done, but it is exactly what she wanted, and who am I to suppress her creativity? By the same token, Lizzy's fairy garden looks nothing like what I would have done, but it fits her personality and so it is just perfect.

**A little dirt is good for the soul.** We had the best afternoon creating fairy furniture, planting flowers, and giggling. The girls are already planning more craft days with Marci, and I'm not sure who is more excited, them or Marci. I'm excited because it will force them to put away the iPads, logout of Netflix, and use their brains, hands, and creativity.

As for the fairy gardens, so far, so good. The girls have been able to keep their flowers alive. But some of the things they put into the fairy gardens might blow away (All. That. Glitter.) If that happens, it means we get to do it again. And with any luck, round two of the fairy gardens will be another chance to spend time with Marci, and that's worth a little glitter mess. *M*



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# IN HONOR OF FRIENDSHIP

By Claudette M. Reno, Ph.D.

What defines a friendship? How do I know if I have good friends? I am so busy, is it worth it to use what little free time I have to spend with friends?

In psychotherapy, when I recommend women spend more time with friends, these are questions they sometimes ponder. One research study indicated that women on average now have only two or three close friends as compared to four or five in the 1970s and 80s. We are much more likely to be spending our free time on Facebook. While this might seem as if we are connected to other women more than we ever were in the past, this is not necessarily true. If we define friendship in terms of seeing each other face-to-face and spending time together, these online friends would not really be considered actual friends.

As a practicing clinical psychologist for over 25 years, I believe that the quality of our lives is determined by the quality of our relationships. It saddens me whenever I meet a woman who acknowledges not having any close friends, missing out on what I believe to be one of the most fulfilling connections in life. One study found that the more friends a woman had, the less likely she was to develop physical problems as she ages and the more likely she was to be leading a joyful life. Only another woman can know what it is like to be a female going through various developmental stages in life and dealing with other relationships as a wife, sister, mother, or daughter. It can be extremely gratifying to have a friendship that spans decades. Witnessing each other's lives change, as well as walking together through the victories and challenges is extremely rewarding.

Definitions of friendship include such descriptions as *the state of being friends, attachment, close relationships,*

*understanding, companionship, and closeness* to name a few. A friendship is as unique as the two individuals it comprises. Some friendships are present for a season in our life. These tend to end once we relocate or drift away from each other. Other friendships may last a lifetime.

In healthy relationships, caring is reciprocated between two individuals. Typically, a close friend will make time to be with you and listen. Not only is there love, honesty, and respect in a flourishing friendship, but the freedom to be vulnerable. It is through being vulnerable and sharing parts of ourselves that our friendships can strengthen and deepen. While we might unwittingly hurt each other through careless actions or words, there is also a willingness to apologize and own our mistakes. In a thriving friendship, there is no room for criticism, manipulation, dishonesty, possessiveness, or controlling behaviors.

There may be people we know only casually who would be considered acquaintances. These are individuals that we may meet through our children's activities or our own interests, but the conversations tend to be more superficial. We can also have as mentors other women more experienced in living life, offering trusted advice and wisdom gained through their own life's journey. These relationships may be time limited or be with someone whom we can travel through life and turn to for ongoing

guidance. Mentoring friendships can be especially beneficial for those who may not have a positive relationship with an older sister or mother. Close friends are the ones who are like "family" or even seem closer than some of our family members. These are the "sisters" we choose to have in our lives.

While some of us have a best friend, others would say they do not have one specific best friend, but rather several close friends. It depends on us as individuals and what best meets our needs.

I have been honored to have friendships that have lasted decades and others that have developed in recent years. These devoted friends have been there to celebrate my children's births, challenges of parenting, birthdays, my children's weddings, and starting a private practice. During the darker times, they walked with me through the death of my father, the near loss of my mother, and my son's frightening hospitalization several years ago. I cannot imagine my life without the gift of each and every friendship and the investment they have made in my life. In honor of all the wonderful women who celebrate life with us by their ongoing friendships, thank you! *TM*



*Dr. Claudette Reno has worked as a licensed clinical psychologist in Bismarck for over 24 years, providing individual and group therapy. She specializes in treating eating disorders. Other areas of interest and professional experience include treatment of anxiety disorders, depression, chronic pain, life adjustment difficulties, and women's issues.*



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**APRIL LUND**

Two years ago April Lund was, as she says, a “hot mess.”

“I was 65 pounds heavier. My body fat percentage was 44.8 percent,” she recalls. “I wanted to get back into shape. Running had always been my passion, but I thought it would be a whole lot more fun if my friends ran with me. So there was a group of eight of us that ran together in what we called our ‘track club.’”

April’s “GYS Track Club” (GYS is short for Get You Some, whether it’s motivation, exercise, or friendship) has now grown to 87 members. Practices are held at the Bismarck Community Bowl on Wednesdays at 6:15 p.m. and Sundays at 7:00 a.m.

“On Wednesday nights we do speed work. That may be 15 second burst of running. You may run 100 meters or a half mile. Sundays are our longer runs. We run anywhere from one mile to 22 miles,” April explains. “We have people at all levels, some who don’t run. Instead, they walk the track. It’s all about increasing your fitness level, whatever level you’re at. People of all shapes, sizes, ages, and fitness levels are welcome.”

April, who is a certified personal trainer, says the track club is about more than just getting in shape—it’s also about friendship.

“We have all kinds of people who come run with us, everyone from the CEO of Basin Electric to the janitor at McDonalds. We welcome everyone and we’ve all become friends.”

Get more information on Facebook—just search GYS Track Club.



**JESSICA HUMBLE**

Bismarck rocks. And so does Jessica Humble. The Bismarck artist’s latest project is designed to spread positivity. She calls it, simply, Bismarck Rocks.

“I painted a bunch of small rocks. Some I made into bees and ladybugs, and others I just added a positive message. Now I’m placing them around town for others to find. When you find a rock, you can do two things: either move it to a new place for someone else to find, or keep it and paint a new one to place somewhere.”

Jessica got the idea online—cities in Tennessee and Texas have similar projects.

“It’s an inexpensive, quick project and it’s a great way to spread some positive vibes.”

Jessica says rocks that can fit in the palm of your hand are best, in case the finder wants to keep it. She says if you don’t want to search for the perfect rock, you can buy them at dollar stores and craft stores. A few more tips from Jessica: acrylic paint works best, paint pens make writing easier, and don’t forget the sealant (without it, the acrylic paint will fade quickly).

“Once you make your rock, place it where you know someone will find it,” explains Jessica. “If you find a rock, take a picture and post it to our Facebook page.”

Learn more, and follow the rocks, on Facebook at Bismarck Rocks. Jessica posts pictures of the rocks she does there, as well as clues to help you find them.



## LONI HARPER AND ANNIE BECKLER

When it comes to eating healthy, it's important to have a plan. But sometimes it's difficult to find time to meal plan. That's where Annie Beckler, Loni Harper, and their new business, GR8 Plates, come in. GR8 Plates provides healthy, home-cooked meals for busy people.

"We offer eight shake flavors and each meal replacement shake has 11 grams of protein and about 150 calories. We also offer eight plates, including dishes like salmon, shrimp stir fry, stuffed peppers with ground turkey, and even chicken alfredo. All of our meals are under 500 calories. Chicken alfredo has been our most popular meal so far. I think it's because when you're watching what you eat you tend to avoid pasta," says Annie. "But we use a chickpea pasta so it's a little healthier. It's also gluten free and high in protein."

Meals can be picked up at the store, but delivery is also available. GR8 Plates is open Monday through Friday, but Loni and Annie spend seven days a week at the store. Saturdays and Sundays are spent preparing food for the following week.

"We have people order a whole week's worth of meals. If you place an order Monday through Friday, it will be ready to pick up the following Monday. We also have a microwave here so people can stop in and order a meal and eat it right away. It's so much healthier than traditional fast food, and price-wise, our meals are about the same price as a value meal."

GR8 Plates is located in the food court of the Gateway Mall. Follow them on Facebook; just search GR8 Plates Bismarck or visit their website [gr8platesbismarck.com](http://gr8platesbismarck.com).



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## LASTING BONDS THROUGH RESILIENCE

by Monica Hannan | Submitted Photos

Kids are tough. “Resilient” is a word often used to describe them, especially those who live through adversity yet go on to do great things.

I thought of this during a recent trip to the The GOD’S CHILD Project’s Casa Jackson Hospital for Malnourished Infants and Children in Antigua, Guatemala. I hoped for that resilience as I watched a baby girl named Sagibi struggle to learn to swallow. Sagibi was born to a young girl who was herself malnourished and undersized. Birth trauma left the baby brain-damaged and very possibly blind. When I first visited Casa Jackson on Monday, Sagibi, now 18 months old, was being fed with a syringe. Washburn nurse Jill Weise gently squeezed her cheeks while Bismarck nurse Teri Brandt fed her drop by drop, massaging her throat

as Sagibi cried and choked. They never gave up, talking to her in loving tones, persisting through a six-ounce feeding that took more than an hour. And when it was over, they rocked her and cuddled her until she fell into exhausted sleep, only to wake her two hours later to feed her again. But one week in, a miracle. Sagibi began to swallow!

We watched a tiny toddler (just 13 pounds at nearly two years old) named Jennifer struggle to walk. She hasn’t had an easy time, but she’s a tease and a flirt with a ready smile who wormed her way into the hearts of all of the North Dakota volunteers.

There’s something about taking part in victories like these that can forge lasting bonds. Though we knew each other before the trip, we learned more and in

(LEFT)  
Sagibi gets a breath of fresh air at the window of Casa Jackson.  
(RIGHT)  
Feeding Sagibi one drop at a time is a labor of love for North Dakota volunteers.





a different way. Jill was one of the first children I met when my parents moved me to Bismarck in the fall of 1971. At times I felt as if I'd been dropped onto the moon, that's how different everything felt at the time. Jill was kind to a strange kid even then. I saw that girl again as we waited on a very crowded Sunday street where people from all over the world were lining up to watch the Lenten processions. She had promised to buy a carving from an Antigua artisan, and she found him in the crowd, then agreed to watch his wares as he went in search of just the right piece for her. That wait was a long one. Anybody else would have walked away, but Jill was not about to let her new friend down. When he returned he earned a hug for his efforts, along with the quetzals she spent. Bismarck teacher Donna Fricke makes

“

We may never know what happens to Sagibi or Jennifer, or the other babies we met and loved at Casa Jackson. But if the employees of The GOD'S CHILD Project are any indication, the children just might go on to do great things.

(ABOVE)  
(LEFT) Jill Wiese, Washburn, snuggles Sagibi close after a long day. (RIGHT) The author squeezes Sagibi's cheeks so she can't spit out the formula that she desperately needs.

(BELOW)  
(LEFT) After eating, Sagibi falls into an exhausted sleep. (RIGHT) This baby loves to be held.





(ABOVE)  
(LEFT) Dressing  
for the day.  
(RIGHT) And the  
feeding begins  
again.

(BELOW)  
(LEFT) Teri  
Brandt, Bismarck,  
celebrates when  
Sagibi learns to  
swallow.  
(RIGHT) The  
feeding and  
hugging finally  
pay off in a smile.

new friends everywhere she goes. And I mean everywhere. Her friendliness radiates from her. And when the chips are down, you want her with you. She was called on early in the trip, when her Bismarck roommate, Deb Grabow, came down with a nasty virus. The circumstances weren't great, but Deb had to take comfort in knowing that Donna was keeping careful watch and forcing fluids on her as she shivered through the night.

Spending time with the poor in Guatemala sweeps minor annoyances away and puts life into proper perspective. Wicked weather meant some of us spent the night on the Minneapolis airport floor. Yet it's hard to complain about a cancelled flight when you've seen a barefoot woman walk miles into town for a chance



at farm-fresh vegetables handed out once a week at The Dreamer Center.

We may never know what happens to Sagibi or Jennifer, or the other babies we met and loved at Casa Jackson. But if the employees of The GOD'S CHILD Project are any indication, the children just might go on to do great things. Just like the lawyers, the doctors, the teachers, and the administrators who were brought from the streets of Antigua into The Dreamer Center classrooms, who overcame great odds and now do their part every day to change the world. Resilience. *M*



*Monica Hannan is an Emmy-Award-winning television news manager, anchor, and talk show host at KFYR-TV in Bismarck, North Dakota and is also the author of several books, including her latest, Gift of Death – "A Message of Comfort and Hope." She holds her friends close, and believes they are also gifts sent by God.*



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# GOOD FRIENDS, GREAT ADVENTURES

by Stephanie Fong | Submitted Photos



Wonder if your friendship can survive through thick or thin? For friends Kristen Preszler of Dickinson and Anna Busta of Medora, international travel has proven their friendship can survive just about anything.

In 2008, the adventurous duo took a four-week group tour through Egypt, Syria, Jordan, and Turkey. They added an extra two weeks to visit Bulgaria and Romania. The next year, the friends journeyed for nearly three months to Australia, Malaysia, Borneo, Thailand, Vietnam, and Cambodia. Stephanie Fong visited with the traveling friends about their adventures and their friendship.

**Stephanie: How was your friendship strengthened or challenged during your travels?**

**Kristen:** (Laughing) We never fight, except for when we travel! It was more the frustration with certain situations or discomforts, not necessarily with each other, that came up. Those environmental comforts you're used to are gone. You're a little more on edge because you're hot, or hungry...

**Anna:** ...or can't find a bathroom!

**Kristen:** ...or lost. The first place we ever went together was Egypt. The first three days we were on our own before joining our tour. We probably made more mistakes those three days

than all our travels combined.

**A:** Yeah, we'd see something from a distance in Cairo and decide to walk there and it would end up being miles.

**K:** We were also on a budget; we didn't have much money. Even though a cab ride would cost only five dollars, we were cheap and thought we could walk. We've learned when to pay the five dollars!

### **S: How did your personalities factor into your planning?**

**A:** Kristen's always the planner!

**K:** I'm 'Type A.' Actually, our first trip [Egypt through Turkey] was pretty much laid out by the tour, except for those first three days...

**A:** ...and I thought that [unplanned time] was exciting, just winging it!

**K:** (shakes head) Not me!! We did also experience kind of a rough time in Romania...

**A:** (grins) Romania was my country to plan. I didn't plan! We winged it. And we had quite a few things that could have been disastrous. Like hitting a pothole and losing the hubcap off the car; it bent the rim so the tire deflated. We limped back into Bucharest, and parked near a hostel. We asked if they had a room. They didn't, but they had a shed, so we're like, 'We'll take it, whatever you have!'

### **S: Any tips on how not to irritate each other and keep friendship intact?**

**A:** I think that planning is probably a key to that. Then you're at least on the same page rather than trying to figure it out when you're standing in the street. And go with the flow as much as possible.

**K:** It's a give and take. You have to figure out what's most important to that person on the trip. I had no interest in Transylvania, but Anna was really excited about it. Know the priorities of the other person because they may not be the same as yours. Value that for them, so you're not ruining it for them.

### **S: What safety tips do you give other women travelling internationally?**

**A:** We did every single thing together. I didn't even go to the bathroom myself.

**K:** I know there are women who would love to travel by themselves, but I'd advise to travel with a friend or a small tour group. Being alone as a female in a lot of places in the world makes you vulnerable, especially if you look like you don't belong or don't know what you're doing. Don't pull out your map on the street. Duck in somewhere or ask for help or stop in a bathroom and then get your map and get reoriented. You have to learn the customs of where you're going.

### **S: What are your favorite memories?**

**K:** I'm a planner, but I liked welcomed surprises. When we were part of a tour, we didn't have to plan anything, so every day was a complete surprise. Seeing Petra was one of those in-the-moment surprises. And riding camels to the pyramids the day after we landed was just really fun and surreal.

**A:** We went to an elephant festival for five days in rural Thailand. I don't even know how to explain it. It was amazing. Everyone brought their elephants into town. Elephants used to be a big part of their livelihood so they celebrated them. It was awesome.

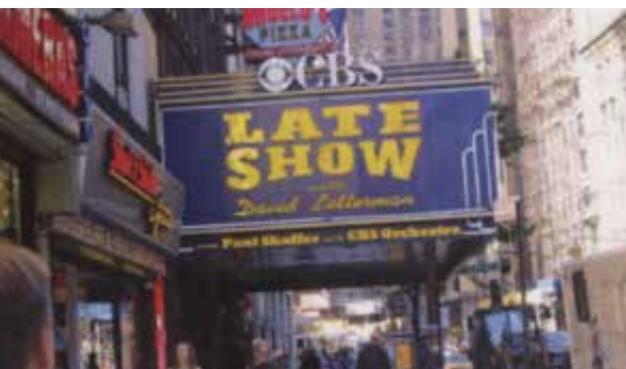
**K:** I honestly don't think we'd be as close today if we wouldn't have travelled.

**A:** It's a definite bonding thing. You find out if you're compatible as friends.

**K:** If you can survive travel together then you'll probably enjoy life together. *M*



*Stephanie Fong lives and works in Dickinson. She is lucky enough to run into Kristen and Anna from time to time and reminisce about years they all spent working in Medora together.*



# Inspired

TO TRAVEL TOGETHER

by Marci Narum | Submitted Photos



Paging through a memory book of shared photos, keepsakes, and ticket stubs from a 2013 tour of New York City, Tracy Mertz and Korrine Sailer smile and giggle.

"It was so much fun and the ladies we met were a lot of fun too," Tracy says with a smile.

"We have stressful jobs," Korrine adds. "It was a nice getaway and we were able to take that time off together."

Tracy and Korrine are foster care case managers. They became office friends when they worked together for Burleigh-Morton County Social Services. Thanks to an article in *Inspired Woman* magazine, they discovered they had something else in common: they like to travel but prefer it most when someone else does the planning and guiding.

"Usually I would pick up the *Inspired Woman* magazine on a lunch break and read it," Korrine explains. "I came across the ad for the trip and walked across to Tracy's office and said, 'Hey look what I found in this magazine. Would you be interested in doing this with me? It looks like fun and I've always wanted to go to New York City.'"

Tracy said yes in a New York minute. The tour was beyond their expectations.

"All the tickets were purchased for us so there was no waiting in line or having to worry about renting a car, Korrine says. "And we had an awesome tour guide."

The highlights of their trip were the Empire State Building and the World Trade Center Memorial. But the lasting impression is the people they met. Tracy and Korrine have been on every tour *Inspired Woman* magazine has offered, seeing San Francisco and Boston together, sometimes with repeat fellow travelers.

"Some of the same people have gone on the other trips," Tracy explains. "So it's kind of building friendships with them too. I'll run into some

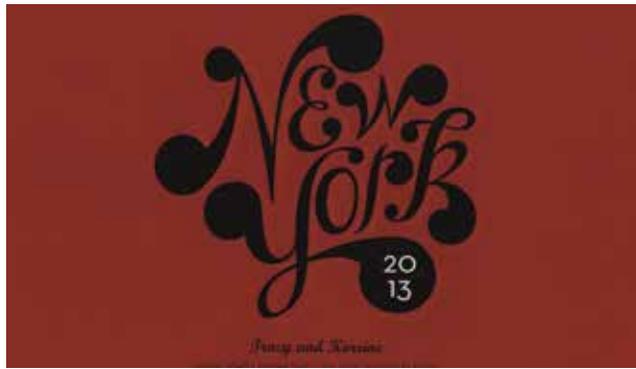
people once in awhile. We reminisce about the trip and ask, 'Are you going on the next one?'"

"I think it's just fun to meet the other women and get to know their backgrounds and where they're from and what other trips they've done," Korrine says.

Tracy and Korrine were among the first to sign up for the next Inspired Woman tour this fall. It will be the first time to Chicago for both of them. But with all the travel experience they have gained, The Windy City will be a breeze. And these two friends are already looking forward to reconnecting and making new memories together, especially since a hallway no longer separates their offices, the Missouri River does. The agencies they work for separated in 2015.

"I really miss working with Tracy," Korrine says.

"The trips have helped keep us in contact and keep building our friendship," Tracy adds. *TM*



Join tour hosts Jody Kerzman and Marci Narum for the 2017 Inspired Woman Chicago trip September 27-October 1

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# Tracy Brandjord

BREWING FAITH & FRIENDSHIP

by Marci Narum | Photography: Dwayne Walker





With a paintbrush in one hand, and a watercolor block in the other, Tracy Brandjord tells a small group of women, “The most common question is, ‘How do you start?’”

The women have gathered around a table covered with paintbrushes, watercolors, ink pads, and small watercolor blocks. It’s an introduction to Art Worship. Tracy tells them there are no rules for getting started; the women have the freedom to choose a favorite devotional, a journal, or even pages of their Bible as a place to paint or draw images that give meaning to the words on the paper.

The pages of Tracy’s own Bible are covered in artwork. She opens it to Second Timothy, where the page is embellished with colored pencil drawings; flowers, flourishes, and a sketch of a woman wearing a long, flowing skirt. The word “Entrusted” is the focal point; the words of chapter one, verse 14 are handwritten across the page:

*Guard, through the Holy Spirit who dwells in us, the treasure which has been entrusted to you.*

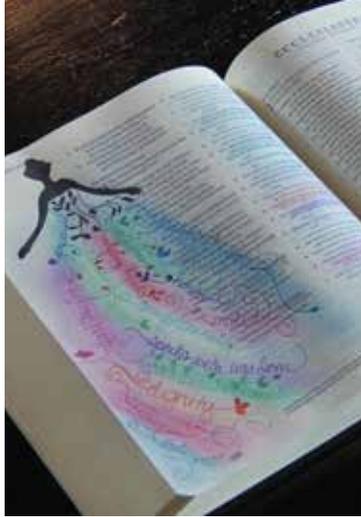
“It speaks to me about what He is calling me to do,” Tracy explains.

## **A DREAM UNFOLDS**

For many years, Tracy has been listening closely for that calling. She is the mother of four children and is married to a farmer. They live north of Bottineau, North Dakota, on Lake Metigoshe. Tracy says when her kids got to a certain age, they didn’t need her as much; her job as a mom slowed down considerably. Tracy suddenly didn’t know her purpose.

“I got lonely. When you’re doing your kid thing you have those moms and when you’re not doing that anymore you just don’t have that connection.”

That’s when her husband, Wally, asked her to describe her dream job. Tracy told him it would be to have a women’s ministry and a coffee shop. Wally encouraged her to go for it. After



years of dreaming and planning—her kids are now old enough to help with some of the work—Tracy opened Penelope's Place on June 1, 2016.

One wouldn't expect to find a coffee shop in the basement of the Sawmill Corner Stop—a gas station and convenience store on the road to Lake Metigoshe. But as it turns out, people are finding much more than coffee at Penelope's Place.

### COMMON GROUNDS

"I think if you put coffee between two women there is warm conversation and time to linger and talk about things."

Tracy says the conversations at Penelope's Place come naturally, and as a result, faith and friendships have been brewing along with the coffee and lattes.

"I probably stopped on my way to town six to eight months ago," Jodi Keidel shares. "I did not know Tracy. I had just heard a new place was opening up and I love coffee. The more I stopped the more I got to know Tracy. She's such a delight. She invited me to different things which was nice, being fairly new to the community. I have met a lot of fun, new people."

"I don't want people to think they are coming into a church because I think that is intimidating for a lot of people," Tracy says. "But when you come in here conversations are free

to go in those directions if that's what they're needing and it's amazing how many people do go there.

"There are people who come in quite frequently and sit in the corner with their headphones on and do their thing. And they've become friends because they've had that conversation."

Tracy says there is a common theme for those who find comfort and connection while sharing their stories over a cup of coffee at Penelope's Place: they are hurting.

"A lot of women resonate with rejection. They have felt not welcome or not good enough to come to a church. I'm very passionate about speaking to the loneliness and the rejection they have. As women we want to do all the right things for our kids and our marriages, and when those things don't go exactly as you planned, it's hard to walk back into a space of saying, 'I can do this.'

"They ask, me, 'how did this work for you?' I tell them a lot of it is grace that I didn't know was available to everybody. I didn't know that was part of religion. I thought it was obedience all the time. And if there was no obedience then you didn't measure up and there was no redemption."

### ANSWERING THE CALL, FINDING FRIENDSHIP

Tracy has developed new



friendships with the people who have made Penelope's Place a regular stop. She also discovered her purpose and calling.

"There are so many things I didn't know about church and about God. But as my Pastor told me, He doesn't call the prepared, He prepares the called. He is using me in all my brokenness. He can use all of us."

Women are discovering the truth of God's grace as they hear His word in Bible study groups with Tracy. She also leads weekly study groups with high school students from her congregation, Metigoshe Lutheran Church.

"One of the groups is grades nine through 12 and it's all girls. We call it GIRL—God in Real Life. These girls don't just need to do church on Sundays, they need to know who God is on Monday afternoon when they're in the lunchroom and somebody's being left out.

"And then I have seventh and eighth graders. I told the kids you need to name your group. They came up with GLOW. They wanted to be the light. GLOW stands for God Loves Our World."

Metigoshe Lutheran supports the youth group ministry while the women's ministry programs are funded in part by a grant from the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

"We're buying Bibles and we're

“

"A lot of women resonate with rejection. They have felt not welcome or not good enough to come to a church. I'm very passionate about speaking to the loneliness and the rejection they have. As women we want to do all the right things for our kids and our marriages, and when those things don't go exactly as you planned, it's hard to walk back into a space of saying, 'I can do this.'"

doing Art Worship with women. It is amazing and moving and fantastic. It's a safe place for people to go. It's a coffee shop that you can go and get in the Bible."

"It's special," Kim Kvernum says with a smile. "A fun place to meet new people. And half the time I don't know what I'm coming up here for but it ends up being a blast!"

Even for those who aren't sure about where to start when picking up a paintbrush to embellish their Bible, there is grace.

"A lot of people think they are not creative. But I tell them we are made in God's image and He is very creative; He makes beautiful sunsets and all kinds of beautiful things. So we are creative. We start slow with paintbrushes and do all sorts of things in our Bibles, and they're really beautiful.

"We've started Bible studies for moms and daughters, moms and sons, and new mothers. When you can speak into a woman and change her life, she changes those around her." *M*

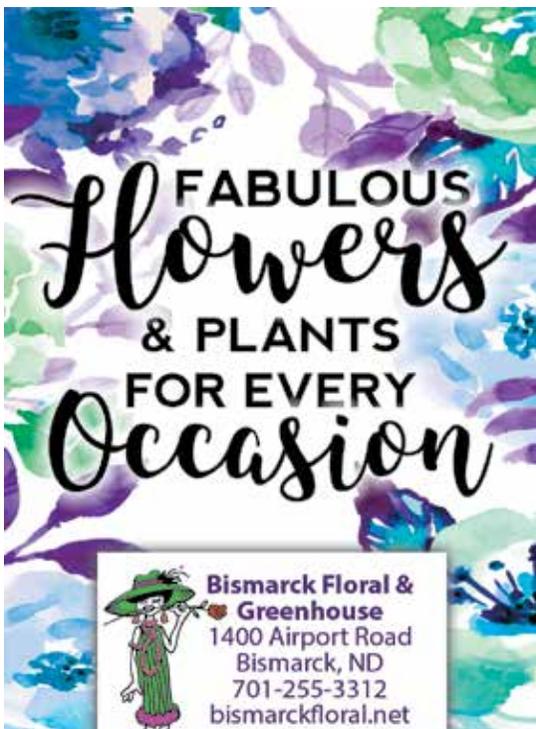
INSPIRED? There's more to Tracy's story! Hear her share how her coffee shop got the name, Penelope's Place, by visiting our website [inspired-womanonline.com](http://inspired-womanonline.com)



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## THRIVENT CELEBRATES WOMEN OF GENEROSITY:

### Sara Medalen

by Jody Kerzman | Photography: Carley Schiele

Great teachers think outside the box, and are always thinking of ways to help their students. Sara Medalen might just be one of the greatest.

Sara is a Title 1 teacher at Minot's Sunnyside Elementary School. Last winter when a student showed up without her hair fixed, Sara's motherly instincts kicked in.

"This little girl's hair always looked so nice but one week it was kind of a mess. She told me her mom was out of town so there was no one to fix her hair in the morning," recalls Sara. "She was the only one in my small reading group that day so I told her if she would read aloud to me, I would braid her hair. It was so soothing to both of us. It was just a wonderful time."

That sparked an idea: Sara started offering her braiding skills to other students. Books and Braids became a regular part of her before-school routine.

"I made a cute appointment book and changed my room a little so it felt more like a real salon than a classroom. I wanted it to be a stress-free time for kids to read. During the school day I focus on phonetics and vocabulary and comprehension. I wanted the kids to enjoy a book without worrying about all those things. I wanted them to attach reading with something really joyful and I wanted them to feel confident about themselves and give them a really good start to their day."

A few weeks after Sara started her program, a professional consultant who was visiting Sunnyside posted a photo of Books and Braids to her Facebook page. The post quickly went viral.

"It was so overwhelming! I wanted to

reply to all the comments, but I couldn't keep up. So then I thought I would just 'like' every comment. There were so many comments, Facebook wouldn't let me 'like' anymore. They thought I was a spammer!"

Sara has no formal hairstyling training, but she is a mom and an aunt; she fixed her daughter's and niece's hair regularly while they were growing up. She says it was a natural thing to do for her students. And naturally, good ideas catch on.

Books and Braids attracted the national media's attention; CBS stations across the country carried the story. Sara has received generous donations from local businesses, including money to buy hair ties and a stool, so her classroom feels even more salon-like. But Sara says the best part is seeing her students become better readers, and getting emails from teachers all over the country, asking if they can use her idea in their schools.

As for Sara, she's got even more ideas up her sleeve. She's hoping to get some magazine subscriptions for her older students to read, which she says will add to the salon feel. And, she's not limiting herself to just fixing girls' hair—she has told the boys at her school if they'd like their hair fixed, they are welcome to schedule an appointment. Sara does just one student's hair each day.

"I don't want to rush through the students. One each morning makes it a special time for both of us. It's the best part of my day," Sara says. *M*



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Take a moment to think about your middle school years. Let's make a list, shall we? New classes, friends, skin issues, surging hormones, regulations, boys, stress, embarrassment, drama, body image, choices. "Does my (fill in the blank—shirt, notebook, jeans, hair, headband, purse, flute, Mom, locker, jacket, cat) look okay? Puh-leeze tell me!"

The release from elementary school and the call of high school puts middle schoolers in a twist and tug of brain development and emotions. Middle schoolers make new friends, join new clubs, and form social circles that impact them and perhaps even set the stage for what is to come.

It's a challenging, prickly time for both boys and girls. Thousands of

# THE SOUL SISTERHOOD: GIRL, YOU ARE BEAUTIFUL & LOVED

by Paula Redmann | Photos Submitted



research-based doctoral dissertations and a billion years of parenting, however, *will* tell you that there is a difference between middle school boys and girls. Let's not journey to the center of the Earth on this difference. Let's just acknowledge that girls—and women—in general, could use some extra support, understanding, acceptance, strength, and belief in their own worth and place in the world.

What if this kind of safe haven and sanctuary could be offered at church?

Enter Nicole Fehr, Children and Family Ministry Coordinator at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Bismarck, North Dakota, and her desire to have a special ministry for middle school girls.

"I went to a conference for children, youth, and family ministry and I saw this booth about a program called The Soul Sisterhood. I visited with the Minneapolis-based creator and author of the curriculum, Amanda Berger, and I just loved the idea of this Christian-centered program for middle school girls. I thought, 'Wouldn't it be wonderful to provide a program and a positive place where sixth, seventh, and eighth grade girls would know that they are all special and they are all beautiful?'"

Nicole pondered the idea and tried to figure out how it could be implemented at Good Shepherd.

"I talked with our pastors," says Nicole, "put together a proposal for the church council, got everyone's full support, and now Good Shepherd has the first established chapter of The Soul Sisterhood in North Dakota."

Having an official chapter means Nicole has access to the curriculum, which contains thoughtful reflections based on Scripture, project and journaling ideas, as well as craft and recipe ideas.

"We announced the program and started meeting in October for three hours each Sunday afternoon," says Nicole. "The time just flew by. We

sometimes would meet at the church and sometimes out in the community at a coffee shop so we could have some fun drinks and treats. We've also done a community service project for patients of the Bismarck Cancer Center."

Nicole says one of their weekly projects and discussion is based on each participant's Good News Book.

"The Good News Book is such a neat part of this program," Nicole explains. "It's essentially like scrapbooking. The girls created their own Good News Book and they add to it at their own pace, with their chosen images. They put together pictures of all the people who love and care for them followed by 100 things that they love, and another page of the reasons they are beautiful. We just keep adding positive pages."

“

“Being open and welcoming to all is a very important part of our overall church culture. Any middle school girl is welcome to be part of The Soul Sisterhood.”

—Nicole Fehr

"Girls know they are loved by their parents. They know they are supported by their teachers. But it's not often that they hear from their peers how special and beautiful they are, and that God doesn't make mistakes," says Nicole. "This message is repeated week after week after week when we meet. We want to have positive internal and external messages, and we want those

messages to stick.”

Nicole says The Soul Sisterhood program provides another layer in Good Shepherd’s offerings. Church school and confirmation are very valuable and The Soul Sisterhood is an additional piece that speaks right to young girls where they are and the specific issues that concern them.

“These girls have met new friends and so now, if they happen to attend the same school and they see this new friend in the hallway, they have a connection, another guide and mentor in their life.”

The Soul Sisterhood will meet in June for a lock-in and will get together again in July. The weekly

program will kick off in October, and Fehr stresses that all middle school girls are welcome.

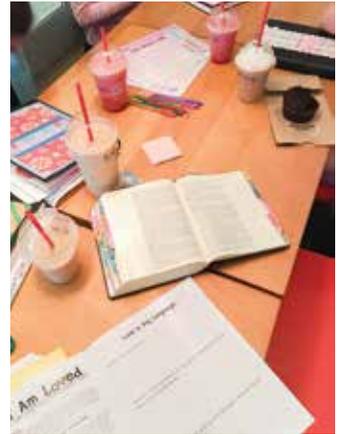
“Being open and welcoming to all is a very important part of our overall church culture,” Nicole says. “Any middle school girl is welcome to be part of The Soul Sisterhood.”

Those interested should contact Nicole at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church at 255-1001 or Nicole@goodshepherdbismarck.com.

Sisters, unite. *M*



*Paula Redmann is the Community Relations Manager for Bismarck Parks and Recreation District. She likes to run, walk, play, sing, putter in her yard, laugh with family and friends, and count her blessings. She married her high school sweetheart, Tom. They have two grown sons, Alex and Max.*



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# BECAUSE GUYS INSPIRE TOO!

# OH MAN

## BEN BERG: LIVE LIKE BEN

by Jody Kerzman | Submitted Photos

Ben Berg was the kid every parent dreamed of having.

"Ben graduated with above a 4.0 grade point average. He had taken so many advanced placement and dual credit classes that when he graduated high school he already had a semester's worth of college credits," says Ben's mom, Carrie. "Ben loved baseball. He started playing when he was six years old and he was so happy to be playing baseball at Bismarck State College."

Carrie's pride is evident as she talks about her son's academic and athletic achievements. But she beams a little more when she talks about Ben's personality.

"Ben was a people person. He was happier when he was around people," she explains. "He never met anyone he didn't like. I was always thankful that he could make friends easy. I'm not an only child, but Ben was an only child and I can imagine that could be really lonely."

A hunting accident last fall brought Ben's life to a tragic end. He was only 18. The outpouring of support from the community showed Carrie and Ben's dad, Jim, just how much Ben was loved.

"You would not believe the amount of cards that came in the mail everyday. Stacks and stacks to go through," recalls Carrie. "We're just everyday people—we both work, we live in a ranch style house, we drive regular cars. We're nothing special. Why God picked us to have this happen to, I don't know."

But what she does know, and continues to witness every day, is the number of lives Ben touched during his 18 years. Bostin Svihovec was Ben's best friend from middle school on.

"Every weekend we hung out, typically at his place. He was always perfectly fine with having people at his place, even if it was two nights in a row or every weekend for a month," says Bostin. "Every time the weekend rolled around, we didn't ask one another what each other was doing, it was rather 'what are we doing.' It was just automatic that we were going to hang out."

Bostin and Ben pushed each other to be better. Ben dreamed of being a pharmacist; Bostin is studying to be a doctor. They also challenged each other to try new things. As seniors, they joined the tennis team at Century High School.

"We both pushed each other to do something we had never previously thought we would ever do," says Bostin.

But baseball was Ben's first love.

"I think part of the reason he liked baseball so much is because he could entertain. For Ben, if it could be funny, it was better," Carrie explains with a smile. "In baseball, there's one person up to bat, the rest of the team is in the dugout. I think that was a real reason why baseball became his favorite. He could really bond with those boys. Some of those boys were pallbearers at his funeral. We are still friends with them now. We love when they come to the house, but it's really hard when they leave."

The friendships Ben built have helped Jim and Carrie through the most difficult time in their lives.

"Some of his friends' parents are some of our best friends; they are our baseball family," says Carrie. "We spent

so much time with them when Ben was playing baseball and we really got to know those families. I consider that a huge gift. Without them, this would have been a lot different to go through.

"I guess you never imagine that this is something you have to do. It's in the wrong order; to find out what kind of person he was and to us he's just our kid."

Ben had saved money from mowing lawns and working at a gas station to pay for college. He even started his own 401K when he was 16 years old. Carrie and Jim decided to use that money to help others.

"That's what Ben would have wanted."

They set up a scholarship through the North Dakota Community Foundation. That will be given to a Century baseball player. The Bergs also donated to the Sanford Power Baseball Academy—a portion of that money will be used for equipment and the rest will go toward a scholarship to help a young athlete cover the expense of going to Power.

"Hopefully we can help kids at several different levels this way. Ben was very dedicated to his workouts at Power," says Carrie. "He loved baseball, but working out at Power was also another chance to be with his friends."

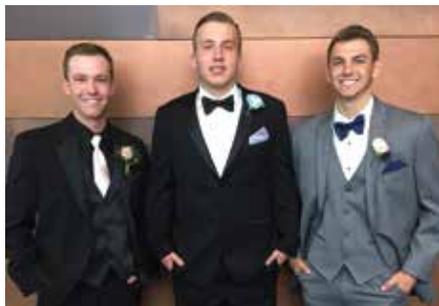
Friends whose lives Ben is still touching.

"Ben is without a doubt still making an impact. The scholarships and everything the BSC Mystics baseball team has done to honor him it is truly amazing," says Bostin. "It is clear that Ben's impact on our community is something worth sharing. He is watching over everybody and still affecting every one of us. I miss him and he is a big piece missing in a lot of people's lives, including mine."

"I've started telling people to 'live like Ben,'" says Carrie. "I wrote that in some thank you notes and I just keep saying it. Live like Ben. Love everyone. Ben was so accepting. He never asked for anything and he always had a smile." *M*



Ben with his parents (Jim and Carrie Berg) the day of his high school graduation



(LEFT TO RIGHT) Ben Berg, Reed Feland, Bostin Svihovec



# A GUY'S GIRL

by Amber Rae Bernhardt | Submitted Photo

I have one female cousin. Growing up, we floated on a raft in a sea of boys, donned in matching pink skirts, bestowed with duplicate dollies. She's nothing short of amazing. Smart, talented, and well-rounded. A doting mom, loving wife, daughter, and granddaughter. Beautiful, successful, and one of the kindest people I've ever met. I love her like a sister.

But this wasn't always the case. Twenty years ago, I would not have given her such praise. As kids we fought constantly. In our teens our separate evolutions widened the divide. When we eventually each went off to college, it was without as much as a second thought.

Years passed. We saw each other over major holidays but didn't have much to talk about. Our rivalry had faded with time and distance, but we

weren't exactly friends. Fast forward to adulthood. She has a Rockwellian family, home, and tenured teaching position. I'm a traveler and adventurer, settling into an executive job in our hometown to be closer to family.

My oldest male cousin and I have always been close. Our lifelong bond has been the reason I have regularly referred to myself as a "guy's girl." So upon my return, I naturally gravitated toward him, which put me in proximity to his sister, the subject of this piece.

I didn't anticipate a friendship to form after all these years. But I soon discovered she was delightful. For the first time in our lives we truly got to know each other and just hung out as cousins, women, and friends.

Through this we discovered we're more alike than different, our ideologies almost entirely in line, our sensibilities and senses of humor in sync. I wondered why we wasted so much time at war and as I looked back I realized, I was a tomboy, she was a brat. I was a brat, she was a princess. But more important we were females immersed in a culture that ensured we understood our generic roles.

We were matched from day one, but we were never the same. I am extroverted, impulsive, and spontaneous. She is thoughtful, creative, and careful. But we both had the same part to play. Our differences and desires for individuality set us up for competition, reinforced by family, peers, and mentors. Rather than being celebrated, we were considered disruptive. It was easier to treat us by the rules than to let us break them, and we took out our frustrations on each other.

I can see that conflict in my friendships with other females. I grew up a "guy's girl" because I was conditioned to "compete" with other women for resources. With a culture that reminds us there are a finite number of jobs, partners, and futures so we'd better always be the best, we find ourselves insecure. As such, it becomes easier to

tear each other down than to support one another.

I had very few female friends in the past because of this perception. I always found myself jealous and judgmental if I thought another girl was prettier or smarter. But as I got older and my self-confidence and list of accomplishments grew, I found myself surrounded by more and more women, and having them in my life made me better, and made me like myself more.

While male friends are great, only women can truly empathize. They've experienced the wage gap, had a coworker brush too close, clutched their keys between their fingers in a parking lot. They've been ignored at a car dealership, heard comments about their clothing choices, felt the pressure to be coifed while balancing work and life.

They also know the excitement of hard fought professional accomplishment and the pride in a safe, happy, and thriving family. They know the deep, rich love, passion, and joy that only a female can feel, and what it's like to be the one to stay standing when everyone else falls.

It's exhausting and isolating to tear each other down. With some practice, I reconditioned myself to see my sisters as supporters rather than enemies, and the more I rejoice in their successes, the better I feel about my own. On the bad days, I have friends who support me. On the good days, they celebrate me.

When we reconnected as adults, I quickly realized how wonderful my cousin really was, and I recognized being told I was jealous of her clouded my ability to see how much better we would have been championing rather than challenging each other. When we stopped knocking each other over and started lifting each other up, our friendship bloomed and our foundation solidified. I wasn't jealous before. I was lonely. And now, I have someone to be proud of who is also proud of me.

*This story has been edited for length and content. Read the full version at [inspiredwomanonline.com](http://inspiredwomanonline.com). *



*Amber Rae Bernhardt is an adult theatre kid, a career promoter, a marketing director, and a proud mama. She loves Elton John, stand-up comedy, well-written television, spontaneous travel, and hanging out with her rock n roll partner, their two beautiful boys, and their bulldog. Many friends bless her life. Amber is grateful to be surrounded by inspirational women.*

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# COMMUNITY CONTRIBUTOR



**WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS**  
by Karen Wolff | Submitted Photos

Women who own a business in the Bismarck-Mandan and surrounding community are finding another way to connect with each other and get professional advice from experienced professionals. Karen Wolff shares details about Women Entrepreneurs.

## **GIVE US A LITTLE HISTORY OF WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS:**

The group was started in 2013 by Mary Jo Van Horn and me. Mary Jo was one of my coaching clients, and we decided there was a real need to start a group for like-minded women entrepreneurs who needed encouragement, support, referrals, and resources. From that group of Mary Jo and me, we are now 260-plus. It has grown by word of mouth only. We never saw the need to advertise because it just grew so well on its own. In 2015, Mary Jo

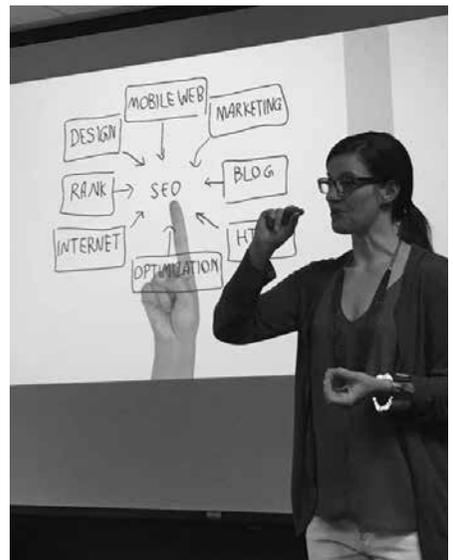
decided she didn't want to be involved in the administration anymore, so now I am solely responsible for the group.

## **WHAT SERVICES OR BENEFITS DO YOU OFFER?**

One of the biggest benefits is access to our Facebook page. The group is free to join as long as you are a women-owned business in the Bismarck area. Search Women Entrepreneurs Bismarck on Facebook.

We also offer meetings, both in person and virtual. They can be on topics like finding and using business apps to make your life easier, how to use blogging to build your business, how to build a social media strategy, and upcoming is how to create an online course or eBook.

Every Friday our members are able to promote their business on the Facebook



page in any way they like. We are happy to celebrate successes and there are always numerous connections between our members as they use each other's services.

Every Wednesday our members are able to ask questions, get input or advice, or share resources. This gives our ladies the chance to hear outside opinions from other ladies who have "been there."

We also have socials for our members. They are usually hosted by one of our members, and give our ladies the chance to network and create relationships.

### **HOW ARE YOU DIFFERENT FROM OTHER ORGANIZATIONS LIKE YOURS?**

Our group is very casual. Although we have a few rules to make the group work effectively, I try to keep it as open as I can. It gives our ladies the chance to really connect with other women-owned businesses without barriers.

### **HOW CAN PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN YOUR ORGANIZATION?**

We are always looking for great business topics, presenters, and any other programs that benefit our ladies. You can contact me at coachkaren@midco.net. You can submit a request to join our group on our Facebook page.

Later this year we will be having a virtual event on how to create your own online course or eBook, a Christmas social, and numerous opportunities for ladies to create relationships that help build their businesses. *M*



To the people who enter our door,  
our name evokes help and  
healing. Life brings losses.  
Small and big, physical and  
emotional. An accident, stroke or  
loss of a dream. Therapy  
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confidence and a plan to heal.



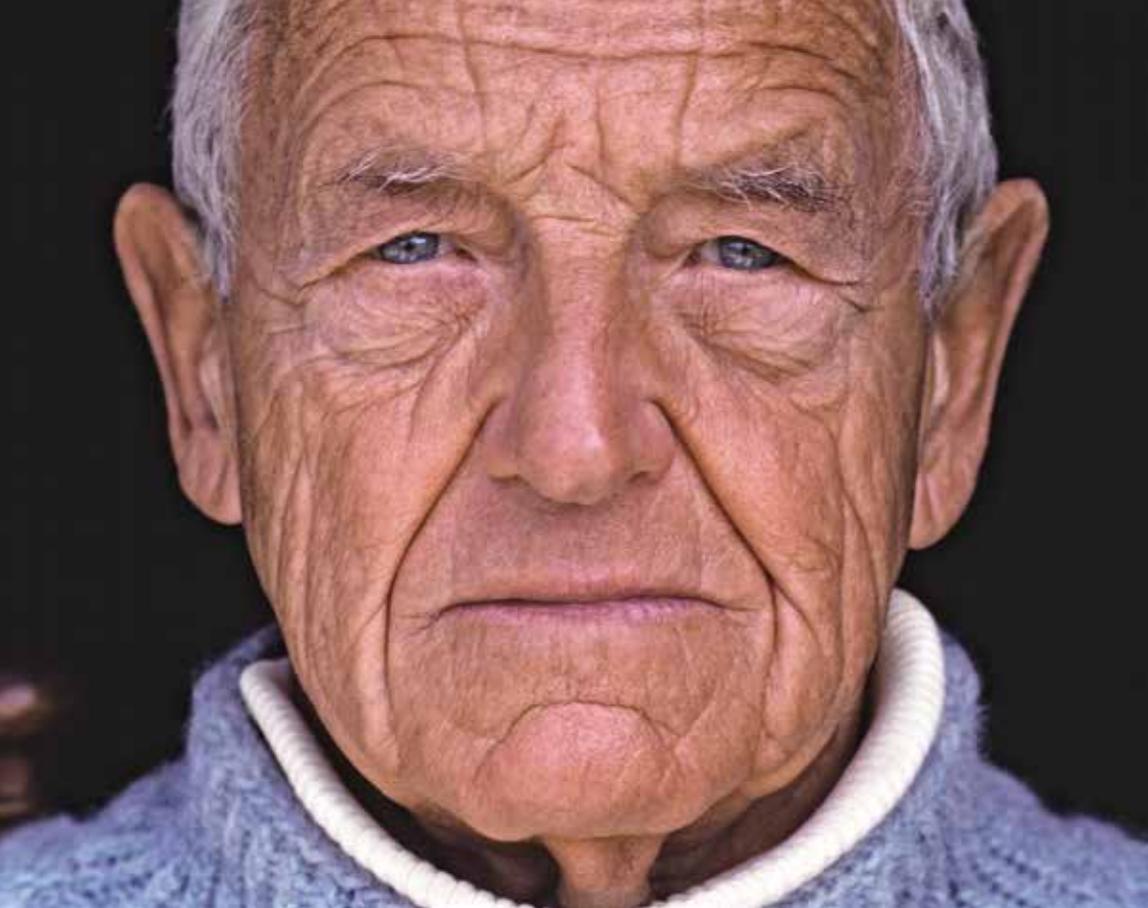
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## MY AFTERNOON WITH ANDREW WYETH

by Carole Hemingway

(ABOVE)  
Andrew Wyeth,  
prominent 20th  
century visual  
artist

Photo courtesy:  
Peter Ralston  
Ralston Gallery,  
Rockport, ME  
See more Wyeth  
photos at  
ralstongallery.com

It was a fall day, and I had left my New Jersey home after arguing with my then husband, driving off into the distance, directionless; thinking about my future as a potential single woman again.

Two hours later, having blown off my steam, I finally realized I was lost. Knowing only I was somewhere in southeastern Pennsylvania, I stopped, and got out of my car. Gazing up a steep hill, I eyed a lone telephone pole and a tall, lanky man whose face looked like an 18-wheeler had run over it years before, dressed in an ecru fisherman's knit sweater and a pair of jeans.

To this lonely figure, I yelled out, "I'm lost!"

Like the report on a musket, his voice answered back, "I'm Andy Wyeth. Don't come up, I'll come down."

To my surprise, that enchanted autumn day entailed a chance meeting with Andrew Wyeth in Chadds Ford, Pennsylvania. He wanted to know how long I was staying in Chadds Ford, and would I like to come up to his studio, to rest after my ordeal? As we walked along a dirt road and crossed ill-fated railroad tracks along a creek, I saw him as a regular guy who paid his taxes, obviously had property and money, but none of that appealed to me. What did, however, was his very sense of being—to me, he was a 'rugged man' who liked living in the country.

I told him I was born in Bear Creek,

Pennsylvania so I was at home in his surroundings. It was pretty clear from where I sat, in the doorway of his studio, that he was a craftsman. He picked up his sketch pad and wildly began drawing me. His expression was like a gale that continued to blow.

The time frame in which we met was before Andy revealed to the art world in 1986 "The Helga" paintings. He had started sketching and painting her in 1970 in the sanctuary of the Kuerner family farmhouse. He managed to rack a large arsenal of those nude paintings which wrought scandal over the peaceful land. This one is for the critics of Andy: Did you know that men with Mars in Gemini can love someone with whom they have never shared sex? Sex to them is mechanical, and not essential. Their most perfect sexual contacts take place in their minds.

After his bout of 'mad sketching,' he asked if I was a Rubens beauty, and quickly answered his own question, "Of course, you are."

I love a man who speaks his truth. Andy said at one point, "tell me about yourself, I want to know more, what are your dreams, what do you do with your anger, what you had for breakfast, what forces brought you to my door, why the color of your eyes and the light that changes the color so that I might know you better."

I confessed that I had always wanted to be a nude model but didn't know how to go about it. He suggested that I ask around to various colleges and universities that held 'life classes,' then added, "Carole, I think you have to find the magic yourself. You'll know where it feels right, no one else can."

As the afternoon wore on, he kept encouraging me to pose nude. He was undeterred, even when I admitted that I weighed a zoftic 250 pounds, to which he commented, "If you don't love yourself at 250 you won't love yourself any better when you get down to 106."

It wasn't long afterward that I posed in life classes at various colleges and

universities. I found that anyone who poses nude has the makings of a truly honest writer, which is all I wanted to do since I was a little girl. During one of our deeper conversations that day, I told Andy all I ever wanted to do was write; he remarked "and to write honestly, like painting, is to reveal."

Seeing that Andy painted nudes, rather than landscapes or still life I would think that was what made Andy feel a part of art history. His canvasses, his models, especially Helga, became fuller, richer, and more complex individuals, and he captured beautifully the fullness, the blossoming of Helga's character. Because it was honest.

One day I was approached by a French sculptor from Princeton University, and out of 30-some other models was chosen to pose for a

“

During one of our deeper conversations that day, I told Andy all I ever wanted to do was write; he remarked "and to write honestly, like painting, is to reveal."

60-foot statue that stands between two science buildings at Rutgers University. Thanks to Andy, and his encouragement I did find the 'magic' he told me I would find. *M*



*Carole Hemingway is an internationally regarded author, speaker, and historical researcher. She currently lives along the coast of Maine where she is writing a book about Gettysburg and waiting to publish another book about her father, Ernest.*



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