

Feel-Good STORY

Saluting the people that make us proud of our community



through the program's three phases. She credits both the program and her strengthened faith for her recovery.

"When I surrendered to God, I had to build on that trust. Sometimes it was easy, but most of the time it was hard to just

really trust in God and trust that he will manage it all," Hammoak said. "And once I could do that, then things just eased up slowly over time and we began working through these false beliefs that we have."

In Simonka program, Hammack said

she would work weekly with a counselor to identify the "false beliefs" she had about herself. False beliefs, according to Hammack, are the things we tell ourselves to justify our actions.

"You identify, what are your top five false beliefs about yourself? The 'whys' that you tell yourself. You go through and break each of those down and then you meet with our counselor," Hammack said. "It's kind of like when you go to boot camp. They tear you down and then build you back up."

Recovery is open ended, as Hammack knows better than most, and she says that she works daily to strengthen her connection with God and improve on her recovery. She is currently in phase three of the New Life Fellowship program and has begun looking at jobs for when she leaves.

Hammack said she's hoping to go work for a non-profit — or to come back

and work at Simonka Place, which many program alumni have done. Either way, Hammack said she wants to give back and help others who may be struggling like she was.

"I would like to eventually mentor a woman or two from Simonka because that mentorship relationship is very key to success for a woman," Hammack said. "My hope for any woman leaving here is that they have the external support and you can always rely on Simonka."

On March 10, Hammack will officially graduate from the program. The ceremony will include two women from Simonka Place, one being Hammack, and three men from the Union Gospel Mission's men's shelter. The graduation ceremony will take place at the men's mission in Salem. While her recovery at Simonka is coming to a close, Hammack's journey will continue.

"My past is behind me. That's all been forgiven and that's behind me," Hammack said. "I think that everybody deserves to feel like they have a second chance, a third chance, a fourth chance. I believe that our God doesn't give up on anybody and there is no such thing as a number of chances."

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— LAURA HAMMACK
resident at Simonka Place

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If it's happening in Keizer, or to someone from Keizer — WE WANT TO KNOW.
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Tree of encouragment set up by local woman



At the start of December, Jeannie White, a resident in Keizer, set up a small station for members in the community to share their gratitude.

The station included a bucket full of pens and foam snowflakes for people to write down what they are grateful for. They then get to hang their snowflake on a monkey tree that is located at the corner of her street.

Along with the pens and snowflakes, White also included a sign that explained the importance of gratitude.

"There are a lot of people who've suffered from depression issues and to recognize gratitude in your life helps with that," she said.

White also noticed that the people who choose to just read some of the snowflakes instead of writing one still walk away with a smile.

"It helps other people recognize their own gratitude when they see someone else sharing the same thing," she said.

Over 60 people put a snowflake up on the tree. White will be removing the snowflakes soon, but is planning to do something for the tree again in the future. The tree can be found at the corner of McNary Estates Drive N. and Hogan Drive N.

Keizer Elks delivers to community food bank

The Keizer Elks Lodge was able to obtain a \$5500 Elks National Foundation Grant.

With these funds members of the Elks Lodge worked with the Food Bank to donate, purchase and deliver food and funds for the Keizer Community Food Bank on River Rd.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic started there has been a tremendous increase for this need at local food banks. This donation supplemented between 150 to 200 families with this critical need.

Assistance is always welcomed by the Food Bank for their worthy works



The Keizer Food Bank receives a delivery from the Keizer Elks.