

# REWRITING LIVES



December 2012

Changed Choices in Action

**CHANGED CHOICES INC.**

## Mountaintop Experience!

By Jennifer Calloway.

October 19-21 was the third annual Changed Choices Retreat, held in Montreat, N.C. This retreat was special as teenaged daughters were invited to strengthen their relationships with their mothers and begin to heal from the time spent apart during their mother's incarceration.

On Friday, Ann Noonan, Agape Christian counselor, kicked off the weekend with a Biblical story about a sinner who committed adultery and planned a murder to cover up his sin. This man was the writer of the Psalms, an ancestor of our Lord and Savior, and a man after God's own heart. This man was David. Though he had sinned, he knew that this grieved the Lord's heart and he accepted responsibility for those sins. Ann ended the night by reading David's Psalm 23 using a pictorial description.

The next day, two of our clients gave their testimony of who God was in their life. Their powerful stories reinforced the fact that God is continuing to work in powerful ways and His plans for these wonderful ladies are being carried toward completion. In the afternoon, we were asked to find a quiet spot to reflect on who God is in our life. After our time of reflection, the group used their free time to go hiking, paddle boating, shopping in town, visiting the chapel, sitting in the rocking chairs, and fellowshiping with the other ladies.

We wrapped up the weekend with a session on how God works in our own lives. Through the Holy Spirit, He guides our decisions, leads us to do things that we don't want to do like



**They hiked to the mountain top!**

making amends with our past, and protects us from raw pain. The teenaged daughters ended by telling their mothers and the group how it felt to be without them when they were incarcerated and the impact on their lives. Their testimonies were powerful and a reminder to stay the course.

## Balloons, streamers, speeches and tears.



By Karen Kovach

Balloons, streamers, speeches, tears, and delicious sweets, provided by a new friend, Antonia Childs, of "Neet's Sweets" was the setting for the November 30<sup>th</sup> first year anniversary celebration of the launching of Second Helping and its coffee cart!

Just in time for our anniversary, the cart was moved to a new location in the Children and Family Services building, with increased foot traffic and a great deal more space. We celebrated with a party to thank Second Helping's supporters and volunteers. It is only by their generosity and support that Second Helping has provided a year of employment to formerly incarcerated women. Melissa Mummert (whose idea started it all) took the opportunity to honor the hard work of our client employees, Monique Maddox and Candice Ikard, as well as Second Helping's Manager, Tim Mollenkopf.

With a year of experience behind them, Second Helping looks forward to the future. December 3<sup>rd</sup>

is the launch date for its new venture, a coffee and concession stand located at the Goodwill job training center on Freedom Drive. Thanks to a partnership with Goodwill Industries, the stand was completely designed, built, and outfitted at no cost to Second Helping. We're thrilled to announce the hire of our third Second Helping employee. Vilma Mirjah, another Changed Choices client and graduate of the Community Culinary School.



**Melissa, Monique, Tim, Candi**

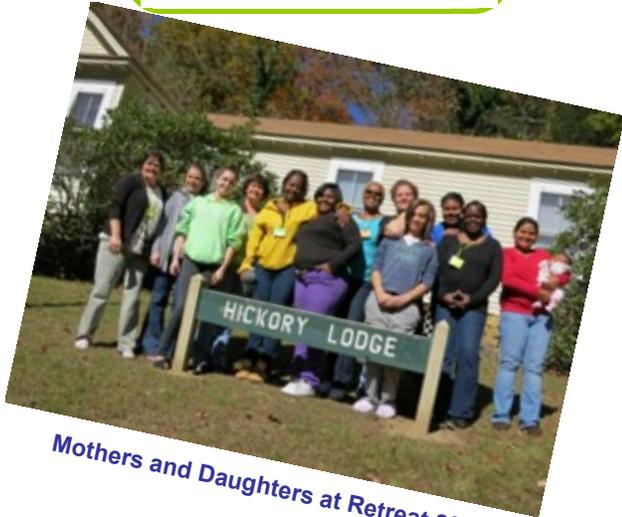
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*Mothers and Daughters at Retreat 2012*

**Reflections on Retreat 2012:**

- **Board of Director member, Karen Pickett:**  
"This was my first Changed Choices retreat and I'm really glad I went. It was a great opportunity to get to know our staff and some of the clients as we hiked, sang and shared in large/small groups. The testimonies of our clients were inspiring - giving me a greater appreciation and understanding of the impact Changed Choices is making in the lives of these women and their families "
- **Clients:**  
To be aware of who I am listening to and why God is right to listen to  
To want to choose to love as God does  
To choose to trust God even more than I do now
- **The teenaged daughter of a client:**  
"We're all beautiful in our own way. And being different is good. We shouldn't care what people say about us, because they know our name, not our story."

**"Changing Lives Through Prayer"**

November 12th was the first Prayer Event hosted by Changed Choices. Participants were able to visit several interactive stations, see videos and receive specific information on how to pray for Changed Choices. At the end a case statement and refreshments completed the self guided visit through the many aspects of Changed Choices. If you would like a case statement, please contact the office at 704-332-6388 or [info @ChangedChoices.org](mailto:info@ChangedChoices.org)

**Meet Our Staff**

Karen Kovach was raised as a missionary kid in West Africa, Karen moved at age seventeen to South Carolina where she graduated from the College of Charleston. Since graduation, Karen has worked for several non-profits, usually in positions focused on serving women with children and substance abuse histories. She began in her current role as Operations Manager in September 2012, and has experienced a warm welcome from Changed Choices staff, clients and partners! Karen looks forward to deepening these relationships as she works with Changed Choices.



**Karen Kovach**  
**Operations Manager**



**Alleyn Cole**  
**Volunteer Services Manager**

Alleyn Cole grew up in California after moving as a child to the States from the Philippines. She graduated with a Bachelors in Sociology from BIOLA University in Southern California. She has been married for 21 years and has five amazing teenagers ranging in age from 13-19. She is blessed and thankful that God graciously allowed her to join the staff of Changed Choices in this new season of life.