

# CBF Impact

## *Power in Belonging*

### DEEP ROOTS

THE CONTINUING  
LEGACY OF FINDING  
HOME AT CBF

### MOVING OUT

TRUSTING GOD'S  
WORK OVER OUR  
PLANS

### GOING HOME

FINDING ACCEPTANCE  
IN CHRIST'S FAMILY OF  
FAITH



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CBF building a community of belonging in the past and the future.





# CEO PERSPECTIVE

FROM SEAN STEWART

I've learned that belonging is an important part of our journey in life. On my own, I searched for belonging in church, educational institutions, and secular circles. What I found in many of these relationships was "earned belonging". Earned belonging meant that as long as I produced at the right level for the community or relationship, I belonged. This always left the pressure to work and strive to still belong. I recently heard Tim Keller define transactional relationship as someone being in the relationship to get something of value for themselves. Transactional relationships may seem good on the surface, but whenever one party doesn't feel like they are getting enough value the relationship sours. I have come to realize when I joined CBF I came for transactional reasons. I came to serve those who were less fortunate and in return I wanted God's blessing on my life. When times became difficult, I wanted out. The benefits didn't appear to outweigh the cost. Over the last few years, Jesus has taught me that while I came to serve "the poor", I would only truly belong in the community if I too became poor. On this new journey, I learned that real belonging only comes from Christ. Jesus offers me true belonging as part of His body when I come in my own poverty bringing nothing but filthy rags and He meets me there with His incredible love and acceptance. This newsletter focuses on belonging and shares stories of others and how they found belonging. My hope is that you will connect with their stories and see God's love in your own life.



# Deep Roots

Recently I had a chance to sit and chat with a long-time participant in our special needs program, Diego. We talked about his roots with CBF and lessons he's learned about being a part of community.

This is his story:

## **How did you come to CBF?**

I came to CBF when I was seven years old. I was in Saint Mary's Hospital and Aunt Gail and Uncle Jim came down and asked me if I wanted to live at Hopetown. I said yes because I wanted to learn about God and wanted to go to church. I stayed at Hopetown until I was a teenager then I went to the Family Care program.

## **Where have you felt left out?**

When I left family care I stayed with a woman and her grandchildren in Rhinebeck. While I was there, I felt at home with her family. One day without warning everything changed. I went to program as usual but when it was time to come home, they said I couldn't go back. They moved me to a residence in another county and I had to switch out of my daily program and leave the staff I had been working with. At the new residence there was no one my age and I felt out of place among all the older residents. I stayed there a few months and while I was there, I didn't do many outside activities. I was shocked when I found out the reason I had to leave. Someone showed me an article in the local paper that the woman I lived with had stolen money from me and other residents and had been arrested. I was devastated and felt unsafe. It was a rough time.

## **Where do you feel connected?**

At my current residence I have staff who really care about me. They give me space and privacy to do things on my own but when I need help, I can ask and get assistance. I also started back at my old program. I reconnected with people I hadn't seen for so long. The people in my program care about how I'm doing and ask me about my home life. I also feel connected with CBF because I've kept in touch with the staff more. During the year you guys (CBF) do a lot with us and I feel like I can connect with everyone. I know I have family, but I also look up to CBF Staff as family because I used to live at Hopetown. At Hopetown I met my



friend Oscar who is almost like a father figure to me because he took care of me at Hopetown when I was little and now, I try to keep in touch with him. I have health proxies that I keep in touch with, but I feel connected to CBF because I see you more often than my family.

### **How do you connect with other people?**

I connect with others by caring for them. I mostly learned that through Camp Hope. Aunt Gail, Uncle George, Uncle Jim and Uncle Win taught me what I know and I've carried it with me wherever I go. Now when people tell me what's wrong, I try my best to fix it and if I can't I tell them to go to a staff member who can help.

### **What is your biggest struggle when you try to connect?**

The biggest thing for me is that I'm still in the process of trying to look for a church to go to, that's a connection I still want to build. I know that I'm still a Christian and nothing is going to change that but I really want to find a church nearby that is handicap accessible. I also struggle because when I try to keep in touch with people, they are sometimes busy or too far away. My dad is in Long Island and I have family in Virginia and it's hard for me to see them because I'm in Upstate New York. When I go out with my program I head out in the neighborhood and introduce myself. I try to reach out here but it's hard because I'm from the city and not from around here. I want to build more friendships with people who are nice, but I also feel like there aren't too many nice people around here. Even at my residence sometimes I run into people who are gossip and are rude that I must stay away from.

### **What would you tell people who want to find ways to connect?**

I would tell people try to get along with each other. Be friends with them talk with them. See what they're like and what their hobbies are. They might be strangers but talking to them is how you can get to know them and how they get to know you. If you don't get to know people how are they going to learn about what you like and your hobbies? They're not going to know unless you talk to them or they talk to you.

---Interview of Diego by Jenine Outley



# Moving Out

When I first came to CBF I didn't know what to expect. I knew it was a Christian ministry working with youth and the disabled. But having never experienced summer ministry outside of my church's annual week-long VBS program, I was unsure what a whole summer serving would look like. I thought I knew what ministry was and pictured myself diligently serving in the kitchen, praying for others, enjoying corporate worship and Bible study, not knowing how much more was in store.

My first summer was difficult. Working in a new environment, meeting new people and being trained in new skills often overwhelmed me but the hardest part of the summer was my internal battles. After spending years volunteering in church ministry, I struggled with the compulsion to constantly play the role of mentor and teacher to those I felt were not as spiritual or knowledgeable as me. I constantly found myself judging and fixing—thinking that sharing my views would help people “get it together”. I couldn't have been more wrong in my approach and was hit hard with the truth that in order to truly connect with people I had to speak less and start listening.

I was reminded of that lesson during our last retreat. We were hosting some young ladies diagnosed with cognitive and developmental delays and used the theme of community. Throughout the retreat I was anxious and nervous, laboring over lessons and worship songs hoping the girls would “get” my message and that their lives would be changed by learning profound truths about God's biblical model for community. During the Saturday evening small group time, I began talking to the girls about community. I had originally planned to run an exercise where they told me what they thought community was and then I would give them a teaching about true community. The exercise started as planned but was quickly derailed as I realized these young women already had a firm grasp of what was needed in healthy community.



I spent the next forty minutes listening to these women of faith expressing their needs for acceptance, freedom, growth and connection, and their desire for a true sisterhood where they could learn about God and share their stories with others. I also watched the lights go on as they realized that they could build that kind of community with each other. As I sat there hearing their stories and watching their revelations, I was struck by the thought that I had almost bulldozed through that precious time. I almost missed true connection with others because of my focus on showing them something I assumed they didn't know. In that moment I was reminded of my first summer and how my vision of ministry had been limited. I was also reminded how God gave us two ears for a reason and how powerful it can be to "Just Listen".

----Jenine Outley





# Going Home

## **Belonging**

Belonging is a primary human need, just like the need for food, shelter and safety. To belong means to be accepted as you are. We know when we have it, and we long for it when its absent.

God has wired us for belonging with Him (only achieved through Christ) AND belonging with others. Belonging has been a consistent core value within the mission of CBF since its beginning in 1942 and those roots still live on today.

## **Harry's Story**

I met Harry S. when he came to visit CBF in Aug 2019. To be honest, it was 'one of those days' - overcast and chilly, and all of us were longing for a break. All we knew of Harry was that he grew up at Hopetown and wanted to see it one more time as he was struggling with kidney disease. The story was much more than any of us expected - Harry's roots at CBF went deep.

Harry was the FIRST child brought off the streets by Uncle Win to live at Hopetown. Considered a troubled, delinquent, and throw away child, Harry was surprised to find a home at CBF. Through the love and care he experienced, he learned to see that he was precious to God and that his life had a purpose. He found his belonging in Christ and his belonging in community - CBF was family. It was that belonging that drew him home to CBF after he 'lost himself' due to the grief and trauma he experienced in Vietnam. He came back to the one place where he knew he belonged, where he could heal and be reminded of God's love and purpose for his life.

## **Jill's story**

More than 50 years later my friend Jill's (Jillie) experience with CBF is very reminiscent of Harry's...



Here are some of her words:

“Driving up the long and winding road to CBF for the first time...I was filled with both nervous anticipation of reconnecting with my long lost college roommate as well as a hesitancy to admit my fear in pursuing a restoration of my Christian faith as a volunteer this summer. It was my intention to expose my son to an environment of faith expressed through service and devotion while enjoying the company of a friend I missed dearly. Initially, I felt that our time at CBF would allow Aidan, my 15-year-old child to embrace the Christian faith, which I had lost sight of over the years. Little did I know that it would be me who really was the one in need and it would be the both of us who experienced such profound lessons in faith and acceptance during our time at CBF. At first, both Aidan and I were hesitant strangers. I felt as if everyone could see our flaws and would think of us as outsiders. I asked myself, if we had made a mistake in coming. I could NOT have been more wrong. In all honesty our first experiences at CBF were awkward at best. Yet over time all my fears faded away. Everyone we met during our time at CBF had something to teach us, but it was the campers who made the biggest impression.

One evening, despite Aidan's reluctance to go to Chapel, we had the honor to meet Diego, one of the campers (who grew up at Hopetown), on the path to the Chapel building. He didn't have a motorized chair to climb the unpaved hill. Both Aidan and I didn't know if we should offer to help. We didn't want to thwart his independence. Then, Aidan decided on his own to reach out to Diego who gratefully accepted his assistance to push him up the incline and a friendship was forged. Together we all arrived at Chapel where we broke into individual groups to listen to one another. We Just Listened. We heard Diego's story. He heard ours. Together we felt God's embrace. Both Aidan and I felt like we made a forever friend in Diego.

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For more information about how to  
get involved with #JustListen, go to  
our website:

[www.cbfny.org/justlisten](http://www.cbfny.org/justlisten)



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Even today, we speak of our gratitude for being able to befriend such a gentle soul and we look forward to the day we meet again. We hope it is soon. Aidan and I came to CBF expecting to serve, but instead we were the ones who were served with hope, with joy and most importantly we were afforded a newfound faith in our Christian beliefs through the CBF family. We found a 'home' and 20 years from now, we can only hope to call ourselves, "old timers" rather than newcomers. It would be our privilege. Thank you all from the bottom of our hearts. God certainly delivered His message to us through y'all as we say down south."

No matter where we started in life, whether as a 'lost kid' or an old college friend, our deepest needs and longings remain the same. To Belong with God and with others.

Belonging isn't CBF - it isn't a place - it's the people. Over the years the faces of CBF have changed but the heart of God's call stays the same for the ones who remain: To be a community of belonging.

---Ann Chavarro

**Sadly, Harry S. lost his battle with kidney disease on Nov 16, 2019. He is finally HOME - where he is fully known, fully loved, and fully belongs.**

**To see more about Harry's story go to [www.cbfny.org/announcements](http://www.cbfny.org/announcements) and read his obituary and the eulogy given at his funeral.**

## How To Help



Please keep the mission and its partners in prayer as we grow where God has planted us.



Gifts of resource and finance are always welcomed by the mission.

Visit: [www.cbfny.org/donate](http://www.cbfny.org/donate) for more information.

Make checks payable to:  
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Carmel, NY 10512



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[www.cbfny.org/get-involved](http://www.cbfny.org/get-involved)



