

## Well of GRACE Goes Global

This past year our board president, Leslie Kroeze, had the opportunity to teach English as a Second Language (ESL) at her church, The Chapel, in St. Joseph. One of the other teachers was a missionary from South American Missions, Hilary Merwin, who was home on furlough for a few months. Hilary and Leslie spent a lot of time together planning ESL lessons and teaching classes. Over the course of their time together, Hilary shared her ministry in Bogota, Colombia.

Hilary lives in a home for orphan girls who have aged out of the orphanage and are transitioning to living independently. The girls attend university and work. This home keeps them off the streets where life is dangerous and ugly, especially for young women.

Hilary shared that orphans in Colombia are outcasts in the community. Family is highly valued in Colombian culture so an orphan with no family relationships is very much looked down upon.

Hilary shared her desire to build up these girls emotionally and spiritually, but didn't know how or where to start. Leslie shared the mission of Well of GRACE Ministries and the content of our programs which soon resulted in Leslie training Hilary and equipping her to facilitate our Club H2O program with her girls in Bogota, Colombia. We are very excited about this partnership and look forward to hearing from Hilary in the near future. We pray that these young women who are outcasts in their community will come to know how much they are treasured by God!



Please welcome our newest therapist on staff, Amber Smith. Amber is a Licensed Masters Social Work (LMSW) clinician who received her Master's Degree from Grand Valley State University in Social Work and is a Berrien County native. She has been practicing outpatient clinical social work for 14 years in the Grand Rapids and Berrien County areas. She works with a variety of clients including children, adolescents, and adults but particularly enjoys her work with the adolescent population as they struggle with issues of identity, self-esteem and coping. Amber was led to Well of GRACE and drawn by our God centered approach to leading teenage girls toward healing in a holistic (biological, psychological, social, and spiritual) way.



## From The Director's Desk

### “Planning, Preparing and Waiting”

It seems as if everyone I know is busy. My friends, family members, co-workers...even the community I live in with graduation, weddings, birthdays, plans for a remodel, landscaping, tending gardens and so much more. I ran into a friend today, we both gave our apologies (and grace) for not keeping in touch. It's been over a year since we spent time together. It occurred to me that...we are too busy planning, preparing and waiting for what is coming next. It left me feeling like I am missing out on so much when constantly looking to the future.

As we recently wrapped up Growing in Grace 2016, we begin planning for next year's conference. As we wrap up our Grateful Gals gathering, we start planning for another. As our spring groups are coming to an end, we move on to summer and fall programming. Planning, preparing, and waiting for the pieces to come together.

In June, I will be celebrating my third year as Executive Director of Well of GRACE Ministries. I have learned a tremendous amount about planning, preparing, and waiting. At times, I think I have found a rhythm to my responsibilities and it seems to flow nicely. Other times, I feel like the rhythm needs to change or I'm out of rhythm completely. If you are rhythmically challenged and anything like me, you might question, “What is next, Lord?” or “What should I be preparing for?”

*The Bible says, “But they who wait for the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles; they shall run and not be weary; they shall walk and not faint.” (Isaiah 40:31)*

It is when I think of *Isiah 40:31*, I am comforted and reminded of what I need to wait for. This is often why my rhythm is thrown off. When I hurry through life, checking off my to-do list, getting things accomplished and plans come together and I feel that something's missing. I know it's His holy wisdom, guidance and direction! But, when I truly WAIT on God's guidance and direction, *truly listen*, I feel rested and peaceful about what's next.