

The following remarks were written by Sandy Paetz, Jillian's uncle, for his planned presentation at our 2022 Sowing Seeds of Hope golf outing. Unfortunately, he was unable to deliver his powerful remarks due to the rain and issues with the pavilion microphone!

What's Mustard Seed Shelter all about?

Do you believe in angels among us? I certainly do! If you would like to see some for yourself, I would encourage you to visit the Mustard Seed Shelter.

As you walk in the door in the kitchen you will find the personified essence of humble, soft spoken, grace and love in action. Her redemptive countenance is truly inspiring. Her name is Sister Leona. A selfless ambassador of Mustard Seed Love. She is not the only one working with divine inspiration. Everyone there seems to have a servant mentality. Reminiscent of what heaven might be like.

Many people consider themselves as self-made successes. How do you think you would fare if your mother was a heroin user and during your entire childhood you watched as she injected? Would this role model have served you well? Or how about a recovering alcoholic desperate for a real second chance at life?

What happens at the Mustard Seed Shelter?

A gossamer thread of hope is extended to engage new members of their family. This fragile connection is nurtured by divine providence.

Imagine if you faced uncertainty with few or no alternative paths. Through no fault of your own, abandoned, sometimes judged, often criticized and frequently powerless to act in your own best interest.

There are no accidents, the serendipity of your life path intersecting at the cross road of literally hope or hell needs no explanation. What transpires next is without question one of the most monumental destiny definers for a soul.

A loving, compassionate, sympathetic, merciful hand is extended. Is it unconditional? Not quite. Once accepted, the long journey to redemption and self-sufficiency begins. Sanctified by the direct love of Christ, each member of the extended family humbly works to transform their psyche and character ever diligently seeking to manifest the best version of themselves. This voyage from hope to healing to thriving is never certain but arduously worked for.

The new paradigms and life perspectives are all orchestrating a deeper faith in God.

Each member of the Mustard Seed Family cares genuinely about the happiness and success of each other.

God's Love, God's Joy and God's Peace are the primary ingredients of transformation. The Mustard Seed Phenomenon is a cornucopia of these ingredients.

What resources are needed to sustain this ethereal mission?

A better question might be: What is the worth of a redeemed soul? Priceless isn't it?

So why was I so touched by the Miracle of Mustard Seed?

On Thursday November 18, 2021 I attended a visitation which preceded the memorial service for my niece Jillian Heather Paetz-Brooks. She was born on June 6, 1978 and passed through onto eternal life on October 19, 2021 at the tender age of forty-three.

Five years ago, my brother's and his wife Carla's hearts were crushed. They had made generous provisions for their daughter Jill's future.

A mom and dad's love, understanding, prayers and patience included a new life for Jill. If only they could wean her off the addictive drugs that had a tenacious grip on her soul. A condo, a modest stipend for necessities. A safe haven with spiritual, physical, mental and emotional insulation from the world. If only they could separate Jill from Satan.

One day when Bob insisted upon limiting Jill's addiction by monitoring her use of the drugs it came to a head.

She was an adult, and had the right to control her own life. She called the Saginaw Township Police who arrived at Bob and Carla's Home.

Imagine the police chief telling your daughter that if she presses charges her dad is going to Jail. At that moment years of work, prayer, sacrifice, compassion and love were all for naught. Jill made her decision that drugs were more important than her mom or dad. This ripped my brother's heart out. As he surrendered her drugs, he gave up trying to control her and thankfully placed her destiny in God's hands.

From here a labyrinthine convoluted struggle to the precipice of hell was divinely interceded by God laying Jill's fragile hurting heart into the hands of the Angels we call the Mustard Seed Mission.

After two years of Mustard Seed Love, God declared Jill's soul fully redeemed.

At Jill's funeral, Bob spoke very softly, so unlike him. You could viscerally feel his love for Jill as his body shook and his voice cracked as he spoke of the absolute thrill of moments with the

new Jill. Simple visits, while going to pick up things at the drug store or lunch at Tony's or even spontaneous phone calls where he always heard those words; "I love you Dad!"

He knows we were all blessed. The just-in-time intervention of God assured us all that we will see her again in Heaven.

Having visited the Mustard Seed Shelter and interviewed some of the guests, I can assure you of the tremendous value of this worthy mission.

Of all of your individual resources, the greatest sacrifice one can make is to give of themselves.

On behalf of Mustard Seed, thank you for your time. Thank you for being here today to help memorialize Jill. Your kind and generous support is what this tournament is all about. Among the many things you could be doing, your choice to be with us today is much more than noble and benevolent. Know as you think about today that you have made a significant contribution to the lives of many other people. It is our hope that your life has been enriched by being with us today.

May God bless you and yours with some deep memories of an exciting time with friends and family and a tournament that brought out the best version of you.