

SPRING 2009

A SPECIAL EDITION NEWSLETTER OF ACRES OF DIAMONDS

"There was a man who searched the whole world for a fortune in diamonds. After decades of fruitless hunting, he returned home to find them in his own backyard."



Acres' Diamond

To Know Her is to Love Her

For many months last year our director, Laura Wandoishima, was experiencing serious medical challenges. Inadequate and inaccurate diagnoses were among the toughest. Her primary symptom was pain in her upper back. Following an extended period on antibiotics, Laura was told in September that she had a stress-related pinched nerve. In the meantime, she was not her energetic self. Every task was labored.

Just before Christmas she determined to press on for answers. It was December 26, 2008, that Laura received her diagnosis — cancer in the lymph nodes and the lungs. Her humor and adorable wit were present that day as she told the doctor, "I can't go through cancer treatments, I'm growing my hair out right now."

We are asking God for a miracle healing! In the terribly short time since her diagnosis, Laura has been told that the doctors have done all they can. She will continue her part, praying, believing, and implementing alternative methods. Let's continue our part, praying and trusting God. There is always hope in our loving Lord.

Laura is deserving of vast appreciation as she has touched the hearts and lives of so many. It is our honor to share some of the sentiments of residents, volunteers, board members, and staff who have had the privilege of knowing Laura while in the vocation to which God called her, directing Acres of Diamonds.



Laura and Jackie



"My boss, my mentor, my friend. What incredible joy to share the heart for Acres with Laura. I have learned so much in so many areas. Watching her faith modeled has been challenging, convicting, and inspiring. Seeing her calm in the midst of chaos will always be something to aspire to. Then there's her humor, always at the ready. Together for six and a half years we have laughed and cried and witnessed God's hand in big and small ways. She's become such a huge part of me. Her absence from Acres leaves a great hole, I so hope she will be able to return! Until such time I will continue to smile with my whole being every time I think of my very special sister, Laura."

Jackie Gould, Program Manager, Laura's assistant

"I have known Laura since she first came to AOD years ago. There have been many faces pass through the house, some successes, some not, but all touched by God. To Laura, they were not just faces, but women and children whom God loved. She showed the love of God at every turn. The essence of His nature always ruled in her heart and in her ways. She has taught me how God's love can change the hearts of hurting people."

Vivian Zoller, Board President

"After much careful contemplation and consideration, I have decided that Laura is like a plate of Swimming Rama, though not in the slimy sense! Ha! Since I know that Laura will be reading this, I am quite certain that she will know exactly what I'm talking about... that most beautiful, most yearned-after, most delicious, most quirky meal at the Thai restaurant in Duvall. In a way the dish is disarming, this funny mountain of spinach and onions mixed with a peanut sauce is not at all pretentious despite its distinguished history. In fact, Laura is such an accomplished person, how could there ever be a more well-suited director than her? She is open, deep, understanding, knows domestic violence, knows the law, knows the LAW, knows Jesus — knows life! Not that a Rama dish can do all that for you, but really, this dish is a phenomenon. Its flavor is rich and thick and, except for the fat, is so healthy for the soul and the spirit. The memories of my times spent with Laura and this dish are long lasting and bring broad smiles to my heart. I have been moved to tears by her stories — her joy has touched me too. I have felt so humbled and comforted by her wisdom and presence. I am so grateful, not just

because Laura gave me the opportunity to minister at Acres, but because Laura gave me a chance to get to know Laura. I love you, Laura. I miss you!"

Michelle Nilsen, Board Member

"I first met her about seven years ago. You could not shock her. I could say the house was in flames and all the women are butt naked and she would say, 'Well, you better get out in the driveway then.' She is unshakable, with a strong foundation. I could never trick her. She never believes everything she hears. She is steady, steady, steady. I have a terrible problem with being judgmental. She told me the story of her mother lending a car and it showing up months later in another state. Her simple comment was 'I guess I may never lend my car again.' She was unruffled. She was giving and accepting. She will always welcome anyone here. She personifies the whole philosophy of Acres of Diamonds."

Julie Manion, Resident

"To look in Laura's eyes is to see kindness. Her presence is soothing and calm — loving. And she's funny. She asked what color was the car I drove. I said I didn't have a car, but if I did it would be green. She said, 'Okay, I just need to know if you park in my parking spot.' My daughter looks up to her because she is tall. Even my ex had to look up to her! She is very loved and missed. She had a very strong faith and it showed. She shared it."

Elaine Stangler, Resident

"Laura has such a heart for the women and children at Acres. She is an inspiration. She models her belief in God and the power of His transforming grace to everyone. She gives them hope and a belief in their future. God has used her mightily!"

Renee Stegemoller, Ex Board Member, Staff

"You could always see the Lord working in her. I admire her wisdom and grace. She gave me hope with her smile and kind words. I could write a book, but suffice to say ... I adore her."

Lynn Rongren, Resident

"I remember going out on front porch to listen to whatever story Laura had to offer. Memoirs from her time in Africa, or her time at Acres, no matter what she talked about I would sit cross legged, with doe eyes, hanging on her every word. Whether she spoke of serious things like being a single mom, or the crazy antics that have occurred at Acres, she was genuine and always brought about what God taught her from it. Laura loves God and I know He loves her. I am blessed and will never be the same from having known her. I was blessed to get to work with her and watch her do the intake interviews. One of my favorite moments was when she would ask, 'Do you have a car?' If the answer was no, then she would ask, 'Do you want a car, and what color would you like it to be?' Yes, it would make me laugh every time because she told me that you have to believe God cares about you and that He even cares what color we want our cars to be — and we can ask him for anything! I will never forget the many lessons I have learned from her."

Karry Kirkland, Ex Staff, Resident



Laura with her daughter and granddaughter

"From the moment I met Laura, I knew the fabric of who I am as a woman included her. I have admired her in many ways, such as her no-nonsense style of speaking, her bold directness about her faith in our Lord, her love of the mission of Acres of Diamonds and the women and children who have been and are residents, her tall-drink-of-water beauty, her sense of humor with a wit that illuminates truth, and so much more. It has been an honor to have Laura be a part of my life."

Janice Summers, Volunteer Counselor

"I feel that Laura is a very blessed woman in many different ways. She motivated me to want to go back to school, because she told me when I first came that it was hard to be a single mom without going back to school and getting a career. I told her that I was a strong black woman and I was going to be fine. She didn't say anything. She just looked back at her computer and said "okay". So now a year later I have decided to go back to school to be an LPN. I love her!"

Amisha Armstead, Resident



"It is with mixed emotions that Acres of Diamonds must communicate this message about Laura Wandoishima. Laura's prognosis is not good. She will no longer be able to carry on her duties as executive director for Acres. She has chosen to visit her daughter in Arizona and spend time with her family there.

Laura represents the heart and soul of Acres of Diamonds. She has a glow that only comes from the Holy Spirit and confidence in God's good as a result of her personal relationship with Him. Her laughter and calm spirit will be missed. She has taken such joy in introducing Jesus to the Acres residents and patiently waited as God did His work in their lives. There was never a doubt He could provide miracles.

Laura is facing this challenge as she does all others, with a sense of humor and absolute confidence in her Lord. Great rewards will await her in heaven! For this we are joyful.

Faithful supporters of Acres, I reach out to you with a sense of urgency. The organization is going through challenging times as positions get shifted. We need your prayers and support. Acres is in need of board members, volunteers, and consistent financial support. **Please prayerfully consider how you might be involved.**"

Pam Hogan, Board Member



Touching the hearts of many

Cards can be sent to Laura in care
of Acres of Diamonds. Watch for
updates on our Web site at:

www.acresofdiamonds.org



Acres of 
DIAMONDS

A Non-Profit 501 (c)(3) organization

Email: info@acresofdiamonds.org

Phone: 425-788-9999

Fax: 425-844-1553

P.O. Box 1672
Duvall, WA 98019

NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SEATTLE, WA
PERMIT NO. 6901