Stories MADE NEW

Vision

To bring young women who are struggling into fulfillment and purpose in **Jesus Christ.**

Mission

To help young women work through life-dominating challenges.

To provide loving nurture, discipleship, and care.

To assist in learning the value of self- discipline and intentional living in a structured family-like setting.

To inspire a vision for and an understanding of the joy of serving others.

Summer 2026 Volume 9

Strength for the Journey

Mark King, Board Treasurer

Some years ago, four other young men and I planned a trip to the West to see and experience the handiwork of God. While in Montana at Glacier National Park we decided to take a hike up the mountain to a beautiful lake and camp. We acquired the permit needed from the park office, packed our backpacks with the things we needed, and headed out about mid afternoon.

The trail wound up the mountain alongside a bubbling creek, and sometimes we would walk through grassy meadows with wildflowers, all while admiring the beautiful snow-capped mountains off in the distance. The trail was constantly gaining elevation; sometimes fairly gradual, but sometimes quite steep. Eventually I found myself at the back of the line and not able to keep up with the pace of my fellow hikers.

As the afternoon wore on, I felt my energy beginning to dwindle. I realized I had my pack full of gear but didn't bring any food with me. Before long I was so drained I took my pack off and lay beside the trail, ready to give up. I had no strength left to climb. After some time one of my fellow hikers realized I wasn't coming and came back to find me. He brought with him some food and water.

After having some food, and a good drink of water, I felt my energy start to come back. Soon I had a renewed vision to finish the hike and enjoy the beauty of the lake and the mountains we had set out to find. This experience impacted me deeply and God used it to teach me some valuable life lessons. The journey of life brings many challenges too. And we need people to help us when our strength is seemingly gone. We need proper physical, emotional and spiritual nourishment along the way. All are very important as God has created us body, soul, and spirit.

The purpose of Stories Made New is to provide encouragement and renewed strength to young women who have encountered a difficult journey. Ultimately this comes from God and His word. But He also uses people and we are blessed with a very caring staff group (and other counselors), who are willing to walk alongside the young ladies who come to SMN. The first part of the SMN mission statement reads as follows: ***To help young women work through life- dominating challenges. To provide loving, nurture, discipleship, and care.***

Please continue to pray for us all as we continue our journey into the future. The requests for young women to join the ministry are more than we can accommodate. We need God's wisdom to know when and how to expand as it will require additional staff and finances to finish and prepare more rooms. Thank YOU for your interest and support for this ministry. May the good things that happen through this ministry bring glory to God and build his kingdom.

Stories Made New exists especially for young women who support the 1963 Mennonite Confession of Faith.

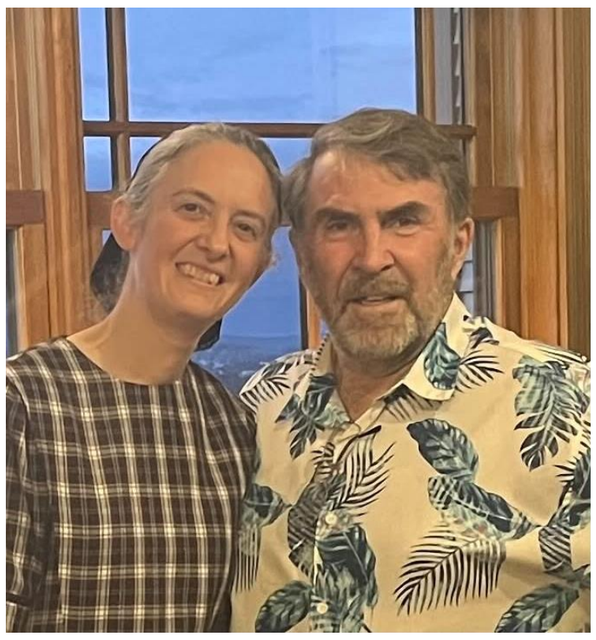
We desire to see these young women brought into spiritual freedom and life in Christ Jesus.

Please pray for this ministry within our Anabaptist community!

Stories Made New operates under a Board of Directors and an advisory committee. Names and affiliations are listed on the back page.

Some Observations About Family Systems

Ernest & Yvonne Witmer, Administrators



It is through systemic family heritages that we all become who we are, both for better or for worse.

The Psalmist says, *"God setteth the solitary in families, he bringeth out those which are bound with chains, but the rebellious dwell in a dry land."* The Message makes it even more pungent when it paraphrases it in this way, *"God makes homes for the homeless, leads prisoners to freedom, but leaves rebels to rot in hell."*

To those of you who may have joined us some years ago on skid row in downtown Los Angeles with the LA ROAD to help us with our foot spa ministry to the homeless, you may recall the grossness of peeling off socks from feet that hadn't seen the light of day for months. But the bright smiles that would always break out across their faces after their feet had been washed, lotioned, and massaged gave testimony to the healing power and influence of healthy families.

No family system is perfect!

It humors me sometimes how desperately we try to convince ourselves that our family doesn't have issues. We're right, you know… we're normal, and everyone else is abnormal; we're of a regular order, but ya'll—well, you're irregular!

It's understandable. The only life we've ever lived is our own. And wherever we go, there we are! We can't get away from ourselves. No wonder it seems we're each at the center of our own universes, while everyone else is a bit off.

But sooner or later—and it's amazing how much later it is for otherwise well-informed people—we wake up to the fact that we all have issues. Even us. And those with the worst issues are those who don't think they have issues! So, I don't know about the Shirks, or the Bombergers, or the Yoders, or the Lengachers… but I'm quite convinced the Witmers have issues. At least this one does!

They're fascinating to observe—better yet, to experience; sometimes with the potential for tragic disappointment.

Indeed, it's been great to be part of the Witmer-Hershey (my mother) family systems! I wouldn't trade my family for anyone else's. And it's been even more fun becoming a part of the Schrader-Graybill family system in my first marriage to Rachel Schrader, and the Yoder-Stoltzfus family system in my second marriage to Yvonne Yoder-King!

Rachel was killed in an automobile accident just four days before our second son's wedding. And Yvonne's first husband Lovell King passed away from leukemia before they had even celebrated their first anniversary. Would it frighten you to realize that all of this was written by God right into the stories of our lives from the very beginning of time?

We're all involved in at least three family systems: 1) Our father's family system, 2) our mother's family system, and 3) the one that they together created for us. **Plus, if we get married, we embrace another three.** 4) Our spouse's father's family system, 5) our spouse's mother's family system, and 6) the one that together they created for him/her. **This is why in-laws matter!**

The seventh family system then is: 7) the one that my spouse and I created for our children. Plus, Yvonne and I (and others) each have still another three family systems that we are involved with because of the blended nature of our remarriages. Each of these twenty different family systems impacts who we are, how we think, and how we function. No wonder understanding ourselves within the universe of our family systems seems complicated at times.

But such insight is transformational if we're curious enough to embark upon the journey of bringing our humanity to the intersection of the cross of Christ. And it is at this place where we exchange our identity for His, and become a part of His family—the family of God. Herein is the vision of Stories Made New.



New Board Member

Please welcome Albert Yoder to our board. He and Karisa have been married for 15 years and are blessed with five beautiful daughters: Kyliah, Kaminee, Keziah, Kenisha, and Kinsley.

They live in Mohnton, Lancaster County. For occupation Albert is involved in the residential fence market. As a family they enjoy travel and exploring new places. Their years in Nicaragua as missionaries developed within them a deep love for Latin American culture and cuisine.

Through all the ups and downs of life, Albert says, "God has been faithful and we are very blessed! Our heart's passion as a family is to follow God's will and to serve Him wherever He calls us."

A Beautiful Seminar – Yvonne Witmer

My cousin Teresa Beachy and I have lots of history together. Growing up in the same church and school in Maryland, we did lots of things together! And so, it was such a gift to have her spend three days with us here at Stories Made New and introduce her to the staff and residents.

Teresa has worked extensively with young women for the past 20 years of her life, starting as a chief at Wilderness Way Girl's Camp in South Carolina, and more recently being instrumental in starting residential facilities for young women who need a restart in life, several of which are Pearl of Grace in Oklahoma, and Mountain Ridge Girls Retreat near Pittsburg. She has done lots of study on both the pathology off how young women are wounded, and the psychology of how to help them—all, of course, centered around the love and beauty of the Lord Jesus Christ. It goes without saying she's also had lots of hand-on experience. We were delighted then to have her come speak to us about Beauty.



In one of the first sessions, she had the ladies imagine the delight of the triune God in heaven, planning their life. She had them think of words that expressed the anticipation and joy in heaven over this new life—themselves!! Then each lady wrote words on a helium balloon, describing how it made them feel to think of God creating them, words such as delight, anticipation, potential, understanding, and precious. In a following session, she talked about how events happen in our lives that cause us not to live in that feeling of wonder and delight but rather feeds us lies about who we are, such as "I am stupid" or "I always mess things up" or "I am too much for people." She had us use thorny stems of rose buds to pop the balloons as we thought about these hard events.



Shyanna Reinford
(early summer graduate)

Later, we took these lies that we believed about ourselves—lies that have shaped how we live—and prayed about them, asking Jesus to replace the lies with truth. As we did so, each lady was given a beautiful rose bud representing the truth of who they are in JESUS.

The teaching, of course, was so good, but even better were the relationships that were formed as everyone got to know Teresa. Our conversations around the table, swimming together Friday afternoon, and working together in the kitchen added real-life connections. Thank you, Teresa, for the joy and truth you brought to us here at Stories Made New!



Semi-annual cabin cleaning for Joel & Marty

Stories MADE NEW

Touched by a loving heart,
wakened by kindness,
Chords that are broken will
vibrate once more.

154 E. Farmersville Rd, Ephrata, PA 17522



We thank God for

- Vibrant, humble staff, loving each other and leaning hard on Jesus.
- Young resident women with an insatiable hunger for Jesus.
- Albert Yoder joining the board.
- Teresa Beachy assisting our staff.
- Consistent donations of capon, and freshly butchered pork and beef.
- A bountiful harvest from our own little garden, plus donations of sweet corn and green beans.

Please ask God for

- Holy Spirit guidance for mentors, counselors, administrators, and board members alike.
- Additional staff: another mentor, and several sets of back-up house parents to provide more time off for our current staff.
- Remodeling permits and sufficient funding for the Phase II 3rd floor remodeling project.

Learn more at: www.storiesmadenew.org

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Lavina Brubaker, Domestics/Mentor
Kim Kleinsasser, Mentor

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

Make checks payable to

STORIES MADE NEW

154 E. Farmersville Rd, Ephrata, PA 17522

Also to give, go to: www.storiesmadenew.org/give

Tax-deductible receipts will be sent upon request.

Monthly operational budget.

$30,000

Grocery items and volunteer help are also appreciated.

Funds still needed to cover updates and remodeling costs.

$79,500

In-kind donations of labor and materials also accepted.