

Stories MADE NEW

Open House
June 28th
(See details inside)

Summer 2025

Volume 5

The Privilege of Accountability

Leroy Smucker, Board Chairman

Accountability is a familiar concept to us in Christian circles. Yet sometimes we fear and hide from it as if it is an assault upon our lifestyle and happiness. But it is essential for us to grow and produce godly character.

Accountability makes us open to both encouragement and to correction if needed. It helps us realize that we are liable, responsible, and answerable to God, and to other Christians too, for our actions.

“For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ that everyone may receive the things done in his body according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad” (2 Cor 5:10).

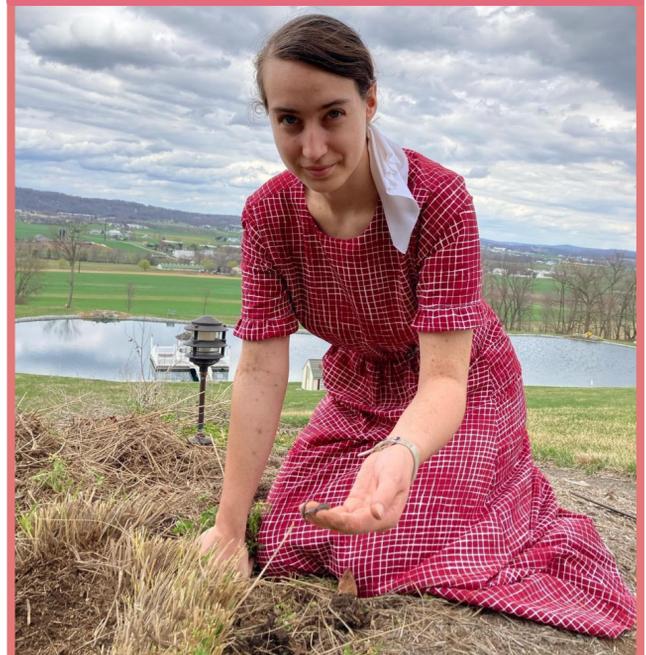
Accountability is a choice. It’s like the right-of-way on a highway—some thing we give, not take. If someone must call me into account, that’s not real accountability. True accountability gives of its own initiative.

Accountability requires us to be vulnerable, requiring our self-esteem to be solid enough to allow this. Brave people are accountable people. Cowards play the blame game. Blaming stops all forward movement in our lives and in the teams we lead. Solomon said those who trust in themselves are fools, but anyone who walks in wisdom is safe.

Taking responsibility for ourselves by giving account to others is one of the character qualities we try to build into the lives of the young women we serve here at Stories Made New. And one of the most powerful ways we can do this as a board is by modeling it for them.

Everyone in this ministry is accountable: board members, administrators, staff, and residents alike. We are all accountable, first to God and to everyone over us in the Lord, but especially to those we are serving. Those under us are the first not only to benefit from our service, but also to be negatively affected by our shortcomings.

Accountability is a privilege! It means trust has been placed upon us. It means others have chosen to believe in us. It means there is an expectation for us to be successful. When accountability is avoided, trust is lost, faith in our efforts is weakened, and the possibility of failure is greatly increased. What an honor it is to be accountable for the lives we live and for the service we give!



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 in serving others..

Stories Made New has been developed 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 Jesus Christ.
Please pray for this ministry to our Anabaptist communities!

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

The Tree of Life

Ernest Witmer, Administrator

A crucial concept when doing life-giving ministry is what I like to call SEQUENCE: Putting first things first. (Two other crucial concepts are FOCUS and BALANCE. I will write about them in future newsletters.) Sequence has to do with caring for the heart before informing the head. If the heart is not secure, the head has a hard time understanding what is true.

As you might expect, it is in the book of Genesis we first find this motif, and then we also find it later throughout Scripture. The Tree of Life was given precedence over the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. The context is God and the first couple on a cool walk through a garden—the Garden of Eden. This is the inaugural record of where God first taught His people how to do ministry, walking with them in the cool of the day. Interestingly, my wife Yvonne too finds this to be a wonderful way

for having good heart-to-heart talks with the young ladies here at SMN, going on walks with them rather than sitting either on hard uncomfortable chairs or on soft sinking sofas with the limited stimuli of a closed environment.

There in Genesis, the Tree of Life—along with all the other trees in the garden—was wide open for Adam & Eve to feast from. But one tree in the middle of the garden God specifically commanded them not to eat from: the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil.

Why do you think that was? God's answer was directly to the point, though to our limited mindsets it may seem quite lacking in detail. He bluntly said, "You will surely die."

Now, one would think that should be enough to have kept them away from feasting at this tree! If someone pointed to a delicious-smelling bottle of liquid and said, "If you drink this, you'll die," anyone with a healthy mind would promptly turn away.

Or, if you were standing at the top of a cliff and someone pointed to a beautiful valley below but warned, "Enjoy the view, but don't move toward it because if you do, you'll plummet to your death." Would you promptly step off the cliff? Again, not if you're in your right mind. Instead, you'd back away, the mere thought of it making your head spin.

But please don't misunderstand, because Adam & Eve were forbidden to eat from such a source of knowledge does not suggest there's something wrong with knowledge. All true knowledge originates with God. The book of Proverbs highlights knowledge and implores us to get wisdom and to get understanding. There's a proper place for knowledge! But it's only after we have first feasted from the Tree of Life, ingesting God's goodness into our hearts, that our heads can handle knowledge.

Jesus said, "They that worship me must worship me in spirit and in truth" (John 4:23). Here is the sequence again: spirit first, then truth. The Apostle Paul also, in clarifying priorities, wrote, "Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God" (1 Cor. 1:24). See the sequence? Power first, then wisdom. In ministry, if we get the cart before the horse and put head-knowledge before the life of the heart, we will surely die—God has promised it so! But if our first hunger is for the very heart and life of God, we will thrive. We cannot do otherwise, for it's His eternal life at work

in us.

Such is a reproducing life. We become channels for God, propagating His life in others. And it multiplies like the living impulse it is. It is born again and again and again in the lives of everyone involved. It's spiritually contagious!

So, the Tree of Life is where we must feast, and it is where we must bring others as well. We worship there! In fact, that's why Adam and Eve were eventually cast out of the beautiful Garden of Eden—they got their worship wrong. You see, worship is "worthship." They thought Satan was worth listening to when he slithered up to them suggesting God didn't know what He was talking about. In his subtle way, the devil convinced them that knowledge was what they needed to survive in the place God put them. The snake stoked their egos with this lust for knowledge: "In the day you eat thereof you will be as gods, knowing good and evil" (Gen. 3:5).

While the Tree of Life is the place for feasting, the Tree of Knowledge becomes a place for following. It is a place of obedience. By not eating, we obey God; if we eat, we disobey.

Remember, wrong worship was the first sin. Disobedience always follows wrong worship.

And so they died, just as God said they would.

But worship is the path to obedience! If we get our worship right, beautiful obedience will follow. In this sequence, life-giving ministry can occur.



Horseback Riding



Exploring w/Keturah



In Memory of Mary King

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

Safe

Time

Oppportunity

Reflection

Intentional

Empathy

Solitude

Motivation

Accountability

Disciplineship

Encourage



Nourishing

Exercise

Winning



Keturah's Mother

Thank you, Mom, for your example of faith in Jesus and a love that overflowed to others. Thank you for helping us move SMN to Farmersville and giving your blessing upon me working here. Thank you for being a friend to the ladies! Your heart was always huge for others, but an apparent heart attack took you way too soon!

2025 Annual Open House

EVERYONE WELCOME!

Saturday, June 28th 10:00 — 2:00

154 E Farmersville Road,
Ephrata, PA 17522

- Tours of the mansion & ministry
- Yard sale, including crafts made by the ladies
- Hot dogs served for lunch



154 E. Farmersville Road
Ephrata, PA 17522

PRAISE REPORTS

- Kim Kleinsasser has been approved by customs to serve as our newest mentor, coming in August
- Increasing funds for remodel project
- Marvelous grace for Keturah in grieving the death of her mother
- Great oversight by the Board of Directors
- Collaboration with Sharon Sensenig and her stable of horses

PRAYER ITEMS

- Comfort for Keturah as she processes the loss of her mother
- Guidance for the counselors in working with our young ladies
- Prayers for the young women on our waiting list
- Continued funding for remodeling
- Finalization of permits for upgrades



Learn more at: www.storiesmadenew.org

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Keturah King, Mentor
Lavina Brubaker, Mentor & Domestic
Kim Kleinsasser, Mentor

WE ARE SO HAPPY FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

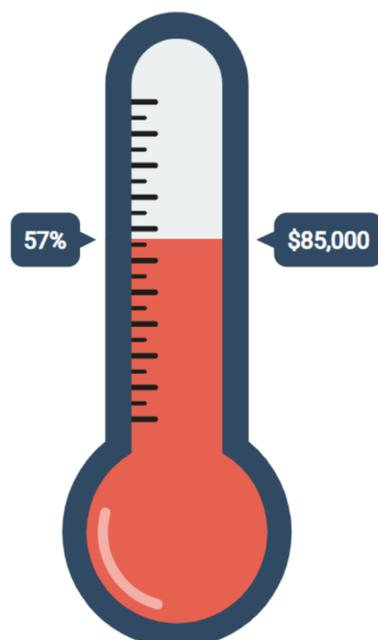
Make checks payable to
STORIES MADE NEW

154 E. Farmersville Rd, Ephrata, PA 17522

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

Tax-deductible receipts will be sent upon request.

GOAL: \$150,000



Funds still needed to cover
transitional costs and remodeling!

\$65,000

(alternative, in-kind donations of labor and
materials are also appreciated)

Other items still needed:

- pop-corn popper (stir crazy style)
- Bosch mixer
- fresh fruit & produce for canning/freezing
- two yards of garden muleh
- yard volley-ball set w/ poles and net
- a wheelbarrow