

CELEBRATING LIFE

Nancy Dukes

February 11, 1937 – December 24, 2023

By Brian Beckman

The Ladder staff became acquainted with Nancy through her grandson, Tim Dukes. When The Ladder opened on February 16, 2016, Tim was here. Over the next couple of years, Nancy became a true champion of The Ladder. Nancy would say frequently, "I am so glad The Ladder exists for these kids in town. I know it is a great place for Timmy."

Nancy invested in The Ladder by becoming a monthly donor. When she went to the store, she thought of The Ladder, buying wish list items for the center. As she was cleaning out her house, she thought of The Ladder. Nancy had a grateful heart for what The Ladder had done for Tim. She showed her appreciation in so many ways.

A great memory of Nancy was when we had a graduation party for Tim in June 2023, more than seven years after his first visit. She was the center of the attention during the party and in the group photo. It was a great day of celebrating Tim and Nancy. We are so blessed to have known someone so committed to helping her community. It is with great sadness we say goodbye to a true Ladder champion with eight years of service to The Ladder.



Marjorie Cope

August 10, 1940 – February 16, 2024

By Brian Beckman

We had the great pleasure to spend July 2022 through June 2023 with Marge as she frequented The Ladder. Her daughter Beth Ross would bring her to get some exercise and to listen to the Friday Jammers. Marge was a friendly lady who enjoyed talking with people and listening to music. In conversing with her, you could tell she had an adventurous spirit. Marge was real, authentic, down-to-earth, spunky, and upbeat. We loved to see her come through the doors. She made The Ladder a better place.



Beth said, "Mom loved The Ladder." The Ladder staff and volunteers loved Marge Cope. After her hip replacement, Marge came home. A nurse came to the house to help with rehab exercises. "Marge told the nurse, 'I've got to get stronger, so I can get back to The Ladder,'" reported Beth. Unfortunately, she had some heart issues and never returned to The Ladder. Marge passed away peacefully on February 16.

Memorial contributions for Marge may be made to: The Ladder Community Center, 67 N. State Street, Shelby, MI 49455. You may also donate online: theladdercommunitycenter.com/give.

The Ladder extends sympathy and love to the families of Nancy, Odey, Marge, Ray and Steve.

Obituaries for our friends can be found online:

Nancy Dukes: harrisfhome.com/obituary/nancy-dukes

Odelia Ramirez: harrisfhome.com/obituary/odelia-ramirez

Marjorie Cope: harrisfhome.com/obituary/marjorie-cope

Raymond Ludwig: harrisfhome.com/obituary/raymond-ludwig

Stephen Hall: harrisfhome.com/obituary/stephen-hall

Odelia Ramirez

October 17, 1957 - December 30, 2023

By Cathy Zoulek

Odey was completely dedicated to giving of herself to help others. During her time of serving at The Ladder, she was willing to do any task that she saw needed to be done. Not only was she a dedicated volunteer at The Ladder, but during her 30+ years as a migrant recruiter for Shelby Public Schools, she was willing to do anything it took to get the migrant families to send their kids to school. One of her co-workers said that she was an absolute tiger when she went into the migrant camps and recruited the kids to come to school. She was not afraid to tell their parents that their kids needed to be in school. She would do anything to get them there, not only during the regular school months, but also during the summer. We at The Ladder are thanking God for the life of Odey and for the time she gave serving the community at Shelby Public Schools and here at The Ladder.



Raymond Ludwig

February 22, 1934 – January 14, 2024

By Michelle Deuling

A gifted musician, Ray loved to join the Jammers on Friday mornings at The Ladder. "He was a great musician and was one of those guys that played in several bands," stated fellow musician, Kim Stone. Ray normally played the harmonica but would sometimes sing a song that took the listeners back to "the good old days," his favorite being *I'm My Own Grandpa*. He also enjoyed playing military songs, particularly the theme songs for every branch of the U.S. military.

Ray served as a Specialist Third Class in the U.S. Army 13th Ord. Co. Fort Bliss, TX from June 1956 to June 1958. He was also a committed member of the Honor Guard. For about 17 years, Ray transported Honor Guard members and other veterans in his motor home to various local ceremonies.

Ray will be missed by many who came to hear him play his beautiful music. We are thankful for his service to our nation, his fellow veterans, and our community.

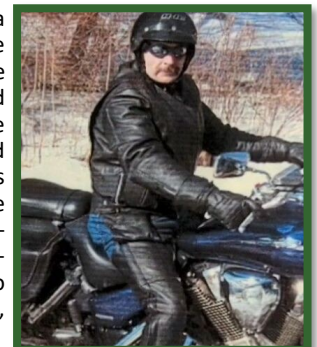


Stephen Hall

February 12, 1954 - February 7, 2024

By Brian Beckman

Steve and his long-time friend Carla stopped by The Ladder weeks before Steve passed to show his appreciation for The Ladder and the community. He had saved money to donate to The Ladder because he believed in what was happening in and through The Ladder. He wanted to give his donation in person. Steve told us, "The Ladder is doing a great thing in this community. Please keep The Ladder going. I appreciate all that you do." We are grateful to Steve and Carla for investing in The Ladder, the community, and the kingdom of God.



LIVE WELL

Pursuing God's best in mind, body & spirit

Constant Prayer

By Sue Beckman

Rejoice in hope, be patient in tribulation, be constant in prayer. Romans 12:12 (ESV)

Constant. Other translations may use the word devoted or persistent. These are translations from the Greek word *proskartereo*. This Greek word includes an understanding that we are to be constant or devoted so we are ready. It's the same Greek word in Mark 9:3 where Jesus instructs his disciples to have a boat in constant readiness for Him because of the crowd, lest they crush him.


At The Ladder, we desire to be constant *in* prayer, devoted *to* prayer, persistent *in* prayer so we are ready - ready for Christ to come and unleash his power, ready for the Holy Spirit to guide us in all truth, ready for neighbors, families, and our community to be transformed in the name of Christ.

We pause to give thanks for the....

- 45 men and women who have committed to pray faithfully for The Ladder.
- 19 Kids Hope prayer partners who have committed to influencing the life and heart of a child and their family through prayer.
- Huddle youth who pray, writing prayers for our young-at-heart members.
- Young-at-heart who, in turn, write a prayer back to the Huddle youth.
- Group of women who gather two mornings a week to pray for those with cancer.
- Huddle volunteers who pray daily so that every youth is prayed for week after week.
- Thursday gathering each month to pray for our community and nation.
- Wednesday gathering each month to pray for the mission and vision of The Ladder.
- Men who gather on Tuesday mornings to pray.
- Staff who gather each morning to pray for those who walk through our doors.

We pray ready. We pray expectant that the Lord will move in the hearts of our community and across our land. You are invited to attend anytime we gather for prayer. Come Ready!

To learn more about joining The Ladder's prayer team or see our current prayer schedule, scan the QR code or visit theladdercommunitycenter.com/pray.



NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER

LIFT UP THE WORD
LIGHT UP THE WORLD

2 SAMUEL 22:29-31

THE 73rd ANNUAL NATIONAL DAY OF PRAYER
THURSDAY, MAY 2, 2024

THU, MAY 2
12-1PM
at
The LADDER
COMMUNITY CENTER

Prayer guides will be available

EVENTS

A Lot of HERO Manpower

By Troy Love

February 17 was a record-breaking day! It was the single greatest gathering of men in Ladder history: More than 160 men gathered on a Saturday morning to hear the story of "The Naked Farmer."

Not only is 160 men packed into a gym a lot of testosterone, but it's also a lot of influence. As I looked with admiration at the men of our community, I saw pastors, farmers, police officers, business owners, and homeless men. Young and old. Men who came alone, fathers who brought their sons, and men who came with their team (Shelby Tiger Varsity Basketball). The day provided a memorable and meaningful common experience that will forever bind them together.

The theme of this season of HERO: Manhood God's Way is "The Power of a Man's Story." Our invited guest was Tim VanderZwaag, otherwise known as "The Naked Farmer." For 55 minutes, 320 eyeballs locked in on Tim, as he told his gripping and sometimes gruesome story of survival after being mangled in a PTO (power take-off) accident on his farm. Throughout the talk, Tim shared lessons that encouraged and challenged us as men and glorified God. His story emphasized and drove home the importance and benefits of men being in community with each other and men investing in the community, as opposed to simply living for themselves.

At the conclusion of the event, men were invited to be a part of our Tuesday night HERO gatherings called Pit Stops. The invitation was well-received, as last week we had 42 men attend our meeting. Each night a man gives a short testimony. There truly is power in a man's story. It leads to tremendous conversation and connections between men. These men trust each other and invest in each other even outside Pit Stop meetings. It's powerful and it's changing lives. In the last month, two men have surrendered their lives to Jesus and trusted Him to be their Savior and Lord. Men doing manhood God's way leads to stronger marriages, families, workplaces, churches, and a community of HEROES! A lot of HERO manpower makes a huge difference.

My prayer is that the youth in our community will think back on their childhood and be able to say, "I grew up in a community full of HEROES." Join the movement, men!



Left:
Men ages 12 and up meet at The Ladder for Pit Stops every Tuesday through May.



Right:
Tim delivered a message of turning tragedy into triumph to 160+ men.