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redeemed<sup>2</sup>repeat<sup>INC.</sup>

THE GAME CHANGER  
NEWSLETTER

# *Fighting for* HOPE

Being a teenager in today's world brings heartache and challenges that most of us never had to face. The realities of the ugliness of the world, the busyness of our schedules and the decline in our knowledge of God has created a mess for our children.

## **Why do teens use drugs?**

Teens turn to drugs and alcohol for a variety of reasons, but the main reasons are coping with pressure, numbing their pain, boredom or rebellion. The availability of substances makes the problem even greater. For decades the government has tried to address teen drug and alcohol use with campaigns like "Just say No," "This is Your Brain on Drugs" and other fear-driven approaches. The new trend in anti-drug messaging is trying to relate with teens and an attempt to offer "something better."

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**83% USE RX DRUGS BEFORE  
THEY LEGALLY DRIVE.**

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## **Why aren't these approaches successful?**

There are many well-intentioned people truly trying to make a difference in the world, yet positive affirmations and nice words are not enough. Words alone cannot fix the problem. The only words powerful enough to change someone are God's Words (Hebrews 4:12). This is what makes Redeemed2Repeat different.

In July 2016, we began a teen support group called "Fighting for Hope" in response to a number of hurting teen girls needing help. These girls have experienced much pain and suffering in their life. The pain caused

by addicted parents cuts deep and without the correct help, kids medicate their pain with destructive behavior.



**The Redeemed2Repeat teen meeting helps girls who have deep wounds to understand God's love for them, His ability to heal them, take away their shame and give them a new life.** The meeting is

real, raw and we don't shy away from the realities of their pain. But we don't stop there. We identify their pain, acknowledge it and connect them with scripture and practical application for their life. We teach them how to fight for hope in the darkness that is their life. We provide a safe place for them to share honestly about what they are going through and help them to understand how the Bible, God's very Words to us, can help them, can heal them and can give them hope in the darkness of their suffering. We don't talk about details of what has happened; rather we talk about how the things that have happened in our life affect us, how we feel and think about these things, and how we can have hope and healing through Christ.

### What does this look like and is it enough?

I'd like to tell you about 14 year old Brooke. When I met Brooke she was afraid. She had been so hurt that she had trouble having a conversation and couldn't look me in the eye. When we began the teen meetings, most of the girls could not openly share and mostly answered shallow questions. They were afraid to trust because they have been so deeply wounded by people who should have protected them. In our very first meeting we talked about pain, about suffering, but we also talked about hope and how to find hope in the midst of our pain and darkness. The girls didn't talk much but they began to see a life-changing connection to God.



One of things we do to help both adults and teens understand and apply God's Word is through growth assignments, or homework. Change doesn't happen in the meeting, it happens when they take what they have learned and engage with God through the everyday situations in their lives. One of the growth assignments was to read Psalm 139 and write down how God's Words spoke to them personally. Here is what Brooke wrote:

Psalm 139:5, You hem me in, behind and before, and lay your hand upon me.

*"This stood out to me and I thought that I am all put together and He knows what is going to happen to me in my life and He knows from today to the day I die and go live with Him in eternity. Also, that He will always help me through the journey that He has set up for me. It says to me that He's looking at us from all sides and watches and leads us to follow Him. Another thing is **He will sew up our life that was in the darkness and help us get through life even if it is a hard life and road.**"*

This young woman, with all the horrible things she has endured in her short 14 years is learning how to hear God, how to believe God and how to trust God. Isn't this the very struggle we all have? Redeemed2Repeat helps people who have been conditioned to think that they are different than "normal people" to see that we are all the same and our greatest need is met in Christ.

Brooke has great support in her life now and Redeemed2Repeat is just a small piece of that. She doesn't have to hide or pretend. She has grown so much in the past year. She smiles. A lot. She is more comfortable with herself and others. She continues to learn about God and how He loves her and helps her.

The leader of the teen group, Chris Harris, has done an amazing job in bringing deep truths to a very practical level. She purchased journals for the girls just for use in the group. They write notes during the meeting, and when we ask questions that might be too scary to answer out loud, they write the answers in their journals. Over the past year, I have seen these girls grow, become more comfortable with who they are and open up and share. The girls are learning how to go to God with their pain instead of to other things like cutting or drugs or alcohol.

### How do we reach teens?

The best anti-drug message we have is God's Word. But I'm not talking about clichés or "Bible band-aids." I'm talking about helping people truly understand Who God is and what He has done. Their greatest need, as is true for all of us, is a Savior to rescue us, a big God, the creator of heaven and earth, who loves us, and has given us everything we need to live this life (2 Peter 1:3).

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**SOMETIMES WE HAVE TO GET IN THE DARKNESS WITH PEOPLE AND WALK WITH THEM FOR A WHILE SO THEY SEE THE LIGHT OF CHRIST.**

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This journey takes time. A long time. This is what Redeemed2Repeat does. We walk with people. Sometimes we have to get in the darkness with people and walk with them there for a while so they see the light of Christ. John 1:5 says, *The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it.* This is what Redeemed2Repeat is all about. This is why **your prayers are so needed and appreciated. Thank you for standing with us.** Lives are being changed.

# the government's answer to the opioid crisis... *is it enough?*

This month the Arizona Department of Health Services released its 2016 Arizona Opioid Report. The alarming number of overdose deaths in Arizona last year has resulted in Governor Ducey declaring a statewide health emergency and initiating stricter reporting on opioid deaths.

The United States does have an emergency. Drug overdose is now the leading cause of accidental death in the US and the leading cause of death for Americans under the age of 50. **The staggering number of people losing their lives has gotten our attention.**

When someone is prescribed opiates, they are now being prescribed naloxone or narcan which, when administered will stop someone from overdosing. Naloxone is paid for either by insurance or tax-payer dollars. The only solution being offered is to keep people from dying. When someone is so miserable in their pain, so overwhelmed with their life, death seems preferable. As Christians, we know that hope is not found in a program or initiative. Hope is found in a Person, Jesus Christ. **The only way we are going to tackle the issue of overdose deaths is to give people a reason to live.** Simply not dying is not enough. Redeemed2Repeat is bringing hope, sharing a reason to live and lives are being transformed.

Recently, the government has recognized that **the local church is vital to the long-term success of someone in addiction.** The solution being presented by Redeemed2Repeat and the necessity of the local church, is being noticed. Redeemed2Repeat currently serves on the Chandler Gilbert Coalition on Substance Use and is bringing awareness to community leaders on the importance of including the local church. At the beginning of this year, I was asked to chair a sub-committee with the task of engaging the faith community. **God is opening doors in this area**

**and the task force is looking to Redeemed2Repeat to lead the way in developing a campaign to reach and train churches.** This campaign is in the developmental stage, but we plan to begin engaging the local church over the summer and are developing a presentation that will be delivered to churches and faith groups. We are excited about the opportunity to train and equip churches to care



for people and bring a biblical perspective to the issue of addiction. Another opportunity that we are involved in is a **peer support program for people admitted into the hospital for drug overdose.** We will be a part of the planning/development team as well as providing R2R peers to visit and extend hope and resources for hurting people. The program has the potential to be used as a model for other cities. God continues to give favor and open doors for Redeemed2Repeat to proclaim the good news of the gospel and Jesus as the answer to the drug crisis.

We are grateful for your prayers and your financial partnership. **Your faithfulness allows us to be here, to be walking with people, bringing hope and engaging our community, helping people to see addiction from a biblical view.**

## *Did you know?*

When someone uses drugs they stop maturing. We grow and mature as we experience life. We learn from mistakes, we learn from people around us and learn as we live everyday life. When someone uses drugs or alcohol, they lose the ability to live normally. When they stop using they do not know how to do things that we take for granted. Simple things. Life has been avoided for so long and when someone gets sober, everything they have been running from is looming large. Without the proper tools and support, people cannot function. This is why as many as 90% relapse.



Almost 300 people attended our Annual Silent Auction and Dinner fundraiser in April. It was an amazing evening with **more than 60 people hearing about Redeemed2Repeat for the first time. Among those in attendance were the Gilbert Mayor's Chief of Staff and a representative from the Governor's Office of Youth Faith and Family.** A number of pastors attended and expressed their excitement at the possibilities for their churches to become involved.

We are grateful for the many who joined us, who were encouraged and who gave to keep Redeemed2Repeat moving forward. **The generosity of those in attendance blew us away with \$30,000 being raised.** We received new monthly pledges as well as other monthly givers increasing their giving. This is amazing!

We are thankful for the team of dedicated volunteers that served tirelessly to make this a God-honoring night. Thank you to everyone who attended and to those who are standing with us in prayer and in your giving!

If you weren't able to join us, you can see the video that we shared on our youtube channel. You will be inspired and blessed!

*Will you join us?*

**Pray:** This work is tough. Your prayers are most important to us. Pray for those who are receiving help and those who are walking with those who need help.

**Give:** Help with a monthly gift or even a one-time gift. Our budget for 2017 is \$85,000. **Currently we need an additional \$2,000 per month to meet our budget.**

**Connect:** Like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter and instagram (and like and share our posts), subscribe to our blog and our YouTube channel. Get updates on the on-going activities of Redeemed2Repeat.

**Volunteer/Serve:** Connect with us and we will connect you where you are gifted. You can make a difference. All you need is heart for people.

**Tell:** Share what God is doing in Redeemed2Repeat. Tell someone who needs help that there is hope. Will you tell one person who might want to financially support Redeemed2Repeat?

*Thank you! Lives are being forever changed!*



Music by Willow Grove

