



PATHWAY of HOPE®

Western Division

August 2015

In this issue & event:

- *Success Story* Newton, IA Corps
- *Regional Coordinator Meeting* Sept. 10th & 11th

Mary proudly stands behind three of her four children, smiling at her accomplishments from the evening's Pathway of Hope (POH) graduation celebration. But life wasn't always so easy for her, her husband Don, or her family.

The security of Don's job at Maytag, Inc. in Newton, Iowa, came to an abrupt end when Whirlpool purchased Maytag, resulting in the plant closure in 2007 and the laying off of all employees. Newton's unemployment rate skyrocketed from 5% to 10%. Newton's Jasper County had the highest unemployment rate of Iowa's 99 counties, at 8.2% by 2010.

Don received a retraining-government grant and quickly obtained a CDL license to drive semi-tractor trailers. He soon acquired employment with Van Wyk Trucking driving over-the-road.

Mary quickly swung into action by working on an Associates of Applied Science degree in medical transcription and by providing a day-care business, while home-schooling her children. With arthritis and tendonitis, Mary could only stand on her feet for three hours a day. Due to these and her hearing impairment, Mary obtained a job with I-Max, working out of her home transcribing medical records earning 3-cents per 65 characters, along with a minimal base salary. In 2010, Mary and Don purchased their house through a third-party loan agency utilizing the first-time home buyers program for their down payment. But life quickly changed.

Mary states that Don was rarely home, trucking somewhere between the west and east coast. In 2011, they made the decision that Don



Newton, Iowa POH Family

find work closer to home... and he did. After three years, however, his company lost several large accounts and Don was unemployed. Mary describes this period as in "limbo." Don was in-and-out of work for the next three years. Mary shared that she was "burnt out," as she took on an additional job as a part-time school janitor.

Feeling overwhelmed, in 2014 Mary and Don contacted Newton's case manager, Kelly Zach, and they quickly became POH participants. Being behind on house payments, Kelly found money to provide a partial month's payment. But this was not enough. During this time, Kelly assisted as mediator with both the bank's and the homeowner's contact issues. Through a cordial arrangement, however, Mary and Don let the house go. Ultimately, Mary decided it was best for the family to move in with her mother in a large rental house-- mother paying for the deposit and Mary paying the first month's rent with POH financial assistance.

Mary shared that Kelly and Major Mikey were "awesome" and "uplifting" during her struggles while a POH participant. Mary currently oversees the Newton corps' breadline 2-days a week, with her husband helping when he can (scheduled around his full-time job). Kelly shared that both Mary and Don are two of the best volunteers their corps could hope to have, describing them as "tremendous."

By Mark Dougherty

[Participants' Names Changed]