Changing Lives Through God and Football
“The Bakers’ Dozen – and Then Some” highlights four decades of adventures in Navajoland, and is now available for purchase.

Jim and Kay arrived at what was then Navajo Missions in 1975, moving from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania to become houseparents. They followed God’s call then, and continue to do so today.

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Navajo Ministries helps the people we serve through programs that instill hope, restoration and Christian values.

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ABOUT NAVAGO MINISTRIES
Navajo Ministries was established in 1953 for the purpose of caring for dependent children, regardless of race, religion or national origin, and for printing and distributing Navajo tracts and hymnals.

The ministry has expanded over the years to include: a non-commercial Christian radio station, KNMI Vertical Radio 88.9 FM; an On-Site School; and Navajo Nation Outreach, providing spiritual, emotional and material encouragement to those living in Navajoland.

When a donor expresses a preference as to the use of donated funds, Navajo Ministries will make every effort to honor their request and in most cases this is done in exact compliance with the donor’s wishes. However, the Board of Directors, in ensuring that Navajo Ministries carries out its exempt purposes required by law and effectively uses available funds, accepts the responsibility of applying funds in accordance with objectives of the ministry.

Views and opinions expressed in Navajo Neighbors by those interviewed are not necessarily those of Navajo Ministries.

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LETTER FROM THE MANAGING EDITOR

Welcome to the Spring 2016 issue of Navajo Neighbors, a magazine that is published twice a year by Navajo Ministries to highlight stories of hope and restoration in the lives of people who are following God’s call to serve.

This issue’s cover story features Travis Clary of Farmington, New Mexico; a full-time minister, college student and assistant coach for the Farmington High School football team. His story has touched so many of us here at Navajo Ministries, and I know that it will make an impact on you as well.

Inside these pages you will also read about:

• Some changes in the Four Corners Home for Children with one boys' home and one for girls. We would also like you to meet our House of Hope house mother, Becca McCabe.

• The Navajo Ministries School continues to help students meet their goals, and their teachers are a big reason for this success.

• We had special visits last fall from Alyson Shirley, Miss Navajo, and Ronald McDonald. You will also read about the Live Nativity and the annual Farmington Christmas parade float for the Four Corners Home for Children.

• Vertical Radio welcomes Leah Stovall as the new full-time Music/Program Director, and won another Readers Choice Award for Best Radio station.

Be sure to like our Navajo Ministries and Four Corners Home for Children Facebook pages!

God Bless and please enjoy,

Diana Lang
Director of Development and Managing Editor
It Takes a Great Team to Do God’s Work

By Eric Fisher

Navajo Ministries has a mission to help the people we serve through programs that instill hope, restoration and Christian values. Fulfilling that mission would not be possible, first and foremost, without God leading the way. All we do at Navajo Ministries is built on that vital foundation.

That was the same story when Jack Drake founded Navajo Missions in 1953 on the west side of Farmington. We have seen the ministry grow from a single children’s home to a thriving campus that now includes four programs on 16 acres of land. Jim Baker, President from 1987 to just this past April, was here for much of that time, moving from Lancaster, Pennsylvania with his wife Kay in 1975 to become houseparents. We’re so thankful that Jim and Kay remain serving with us today as Co-Directors of Partnership Ministry.

God has called more than 35 full and part-time employees to serve together here at Navajo Ministries. I am amazed daily by the team we have working here in our four programs: The Four Corners Home for Children, Navajo Ministries School, KNMI Vertical Radio and Navajo Nation Outreach.

I wish you could see what we see each day at Navajo Ministries. Picture this: Houseparents and childcare assistants caring for more than 20 children who come from very troubling situations. No matter the time of day or night, this team is providing the love, safety and stability the children desperately need. At our Navajo Ministries Elementary School, the teachers are working one-on-one with the on-site children, giving them the tools they need to succeed in the classroom.

The ranch program is also an important part of the Four Corners Home for Children, allowing the children a chance to learn to care for animals like horses, donkeys, sheep, llamas and more. This is a great help in their healing process.

In the Connection Center, which houses the administration offices, Vertical Radio and the Eubank Counseling Center, there is always plenty of activity. KNMI, the first Christian radio station in this region, is staffed by a talented team of radio professionals who are helping to spread God’s love throughout the Four Corners. And, other team members do wonderful jobs in the business office, development, maintenance, kitchen and elsewhere. We also partner with many friends through the Navajo Nation Outreach program.

Yes, God is in charge at Navajo Ministries, and we’re along for the ride, wherever He leads us! We always thank our loyal friends both locally and throughout the country who partner with us in prayer and through their financial gifts. We could not do this incredible work without you all.

God Bless,

Eric Fisher

ERIC FISHER, PRESIDENT
Navajo Ministries Hosts 31st Annual Live Nativity

Navajo Ministries hosted our 31st annual Live Navajo Nativity on December 23. This favorite community tradition celebrates the true reason for the season - the birth of Christ. The weather this year was challenging with snow and wind in the late afternoon that made lighting the luminarias very difficult. Eric, Jim, and the rest of the Navajo Ministries staff did their best, but the conditions didn’t cooperate. Thankfully, the weather cleared, and everyone had a wonderful time.

The Four Corners Home for Children kids portrayed the characters of the Nativity, dressed in traditional Navajo clothing, along with animals, Navajo choirs, and lots of smiles. Other than the big celebration afterwards, what the children enjoy most about the evening is spending time together. Isn’t that a big part of what Christmas is all about?

The Merrion Match to Provide Needed Funds

You can join us in helping to raise $100,000 over the next five years for the Four Corners Home for Children at Navajo Ministries! The Merrion Family Foundation has agreed to match every donation over the next five years, up to $50,000 total. With your match, that’s $100,000 over the next five years.

“The Merrion Family Foundation is excited to partner with Navajo Ministries as they continue to provide the much-needed care and support to the kids at the Four Corners Home for Children. The loving attention and stable surroundings at the Four Corners Home provide these children with the confidence and footing they need to succeed in life. Please partner with us in the Merrion Match,” said T. Greg Merrion.

Thank you to our friends at the Merrion Family Foundation!

Thank You to McDonald’s

We would like to thank the Farmington McDonald’s for doing so much for the Four Corners Home for Children. Ronald McDonald was in town for the annual Farmington Christmas Parade, and made a special visit to the Navajo Ministries School. We don’t know who had more fun - the children or the adults.

For a special monthly treat, McDonald’s hosts the Four Corners Home for Children families for a meal. We are rotating locations, and everyone enjoys the food and fellowship.
By Diana Lang

Travis Clary is the poster child for life transformation, and he is not afraid to use his experiences to bring people to the Lord. Being a two-sport college athlete and honor student wasn’t enough to keep depression from taking hold of his life. God had a plan for him, and Travis is definitely keeping up his end of the deal.

Born and raised in Farmington, Travis graduated from Farmington High School in 2001, where he played football. He was an all-district player who was also named to the New Mexico All-Academic Team, compiling a 3.6 GPA. Relatively small at 6’2” and 240 pounds, he never dreamed that he might play football on a scholarship. After receiving several recruiting letters, he narrowed his search to three schools. A visit to McPherson College in Kansas sealed the deal and he became a Bulldog.

In college, Travis immersed himself into his new life. He played football, worked out, and was an honor student. His sophomore year he was approached by the track coach to continue his strengthening year round. He began competing in the hammer and weight throws during the track season. Outward appearances showed someone who was truly living their dreams, but inwardly Travis was dealing with something much bigger.

His second year in Kansas, Travis began to notice feelings of sadness and depression that he had never noticed before.

“I felt like the world didn’t need a guy like me,” he said. “I didn’t fit in anywhere; I didn’t serve a purpose and I was never good enough. I was a two-sport college athlete with a 3.8 GPA, yet I struggled with insecurities every day.”

It was at this time that Travis started drinking and using marijuana. “It wasn’t just a little alcohol … it was a lot of alcohol. As soon as it started wearing off, I drank more. It was the only thing that was comforting. I was just sweeping my problems aside and making things worse. At the time I didn’t know that … I was just looking for something to make me feel better.”

His feelings of despair finally got so bad that he left Kansas to transfer to the University of New Mexico. “I did the typical run from your problems technique.” He transferred and was accepted into the architecture program at UNM.
Depression is an illness, not a weakness. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) estimates that 1 in 20 Americans over the age of 12 suffer from depression. Further CDC data lists suicide as the number two cause of death, behind accidents, in people age 15-34, and is in the top 10 causes of death for all Americans. What drives a strong, successful, college athlete to try to take his own life, twice?

“After I moved to Albuquerque the depression and substance abuse continued. I finally had enough of the inner fight. I felt like there was no end in sight. I reached the point that I didn’t know what the solution was, and in my thinking, that was the solution; just end it. I don’t know why I was looking for a permanent solution to a temporary problem.”

In the spring of 2005, Travis attempted suicide for the first time. While at an all-time low, he played Russian roulette … but the gun didn’t go off. The very next morning his former coach, friend and mentor, Don Loret, called him to “just check in.” Loret’s intuition told him that Travis was in trouble and he reached out. Travis told him what had happened the night before and Loret called authorities.

A Change Begins

During the summer of 2005 Travis sought solace in Farmington. He went to therapy and developed a support system. He had attended church as a youth, but chose not to continue in his high school years. But his mother Louella refused to give up on her son. One night she told him that she wanted to take him somewhere. She drove him to the church that she was currently attending in Kirtland, New Mexico.

“I fought it, and fought it. I remember sitting out there in the parking lot … I wasn’t going in, I wasn’t going to do it. The pastor and his wife sat in the doorway waving at me. I finally just decided that I had better go in. I didn’t know what to expect. I thought they were just going to pray for me. I remember walking in to the sanctuary. I sat down and that was it. They didn’t have to say anything. I just reached out and completely broke down. The only thing I remember is them asking me ‘are you ready to experience God’s love?’”

But the battle with depression continued when Travis returned to Albuquerque. He stayed at UNM during the week and came home on the weekends. There was no support system in Albuquerque, which led to his second suicide attempt about a month later. He consumed a couple of gallons of hard liquor and took several bottles of pain medication. He was found unconscious on the streets of
Farmington, and once again his life was spared. Somehow, two days later he competed in his first Strongman competition.

Travis credits his former pastor and friend, Bob Moon, for helping him move into the next phase of his life. Moon took him under his wing and counseled him, saying “You have to make a decision.” With God fully working in his life, Travis made the decision. He never touched drugs or alcohol again. He has now been sober for more than 11 years.

In January 2006, Travis moved back to Farmington and started attending church. In August, Randy Jackson, his former Farmington High School football coach, recruited Travis to do some filming for the Scorps. He started hanging out with the team, and by the end of the season was down on the field as an assistant coach.

“When I came back from college I had a desire for God. I bought a Bible, and visited churches. I wanted to be back in Farmington where I had a support system. Pastor Bob invited me right in to My Father’s House Church.”

Travis began Bible College with Moon, and became pastor of the church in 2013, the same year that the FHS Scorpions won the state football championship.

“My life really changed in 2013. I was asked to become the pastor of My Father’s House Church; we won the state title … things really started moving for me. At that time also I had known that I wanted to be a teacher. I wanted to be teaching at the high school level.”

“Through the process of the depression and learning more about God, I basically figured out how to conquer myself, my insecurities and the things that the world was telling me. I narrowed it down to that high school age, and the early part of college; that 15-22 age where I didn’t know who I was. My heart really goes out to that age group. I want to let them know that they are valuable; they are important. That was when I found out that God had put it in my heart to teach.”

A Pastor, and Coach

So, in the summer of 2015 Travis re-enrolled in college to become a teacher. He doesn’t know exactly what the future holds for him, but he does know that he wants to minister to youth through Christ and football.

“Here is what I have gathered from my studying and my relationship with God. People don’t stay in one place until they die. That breeds complacency. All I can do is prepare for the next man up so that they can be in the best place possible for the future.”

That is exactly what Travis tries to instill in his football players. He strives to develop discipline and fortitude, both on and off the field. “When life gets hard, discipline is
what keeps you going. And that’s where Christ comes in. He reassures us over and over that you’ve got this.”

His coaching philosophy is simple. “You are not going to be treated equal, but you will be treated fairly.”

He teaches accountability and treats players as individuals. “That’s the hardest part; accountability. You see someone struggle … you see a kid struggle and you want to back off. In some situations you have to back off and give encouragement and other situations you have to be willing to put your foot down and adhere to the rules.”

Today Travis is just trying to be Travis. He wears baseball caps, designer jeans and Chuck Taylor tennis shoes in the pulpit. His coaching friends joke that he looks like he is going to the club.

“It was a culture shock to the congregation for a while. I didn’t tell anyone beforehand. But they started to realize that I wasn’t playing any longer.”

“I want to be who I am. I don’t want to fit society’s standards. How many of us really want to look in the mirror and face who we are? That is what I had to conquer for several years. I really didn’t want to do it. When I finally faced everything that I am, it wasn’t that bad. It wasn’t nearly as bad as I thought. I was looking at myself through the world’s eyes, rather than how God sees me.”

If you look closely, you will notice something written on the bottom of the bill of Travis’ baseball hat. He is asked about this often. He writes a meditation on all of his many hats that he wears daily. This particular hat said, “God has sanctified me for greatness. Make me zero God. I no longer want to be a 100 or even a 10. I want to be zero. I want the full credit to go to God.”

So, what did he write on his state champion FHS football hat? He prayed about what to write prior to the season beginning and settled on the story of Gideon. With these 300 men I will rescue you and give you victory (Judges 7:7). And that is exactly what the 2013 Scorpion state champion football team did when they beat Goddard with 25 total players against Roswell Goddard’s 90. The final score: 7-0.

“This is who God designed me to be … this is my personality. I know God created my personality like this. I’m a beautiful peacock … let me fly.”

Miss Navajo Visits Navajo Ministries

Contestants compete in areas that focus on skill and knowledge that a Navajo woman should possess. This includes being able to speak fluent Navajo, understanding the traditional matrilineal construct of the Navajo Nation, how the tribal government operates, the ability to butcher and cook a sheep, and more. This is all done in full regalia.

Alyson Shirley, 20, from Tolani Lake, Arizona, was crowned in September, and has been busy promoting her platform of keeping the Navajo language alive ever since. She stopped by Vertical Radio and the Four Corners Home for Children in December to share her story and passion. Her number one job is promoting the Navajo language and culture on the road almost every day.

When not traveling she can be found in her office at the Navajo Nation Museum in Window Rock, Arizona.

“I ran in the competition to showcase my community and where I came from. I grew up around the older generation … my mindset is kind of like an old lady,” she said. This could be attributed to the fact that she was raised primarily by her maternal grandmother, Lorraine Chee, who pushed her to work hard in school. Her primary language is Navajo, which she says was taught to her at about age 3.

Before accepting the crown, scholarships and other assorted gifts, Alyson said, “Miss Navajo stands for hope. Even if you teach one person something, it’s enough because that person will go teach another person.”
Providing Hope in Times of Change

By Randall Jeffrey

The Four Corners Home for Children has seen many changes recently. We had a new set of houseparents enter the House of Love, and we’ve seen a number of children come and go in just the past couple of months. In December we made a big change in making the House of Faith a boys-only home, and the House of Love only girls. As our children are getting older and needs are changing it was crucial to make this move. It has been a very beneficial decision for both our houseparents and our children.

Rick and Janice LeBeane became the new houseparents in the House of Love in October. They hit the ground running and have already experienced so many things in their home. Cliff and Kristine Young, who remain in the House of Faith, have been with us for more than two years now. Becca McCabe is the housemom in the House of Hope emergency-placement home. Our houseparents are faithful servants and are a blessing to the children in our care.

Becca started as an assistant in January 2014 and soon after became the full-time housemom in the House of Hope. At that time, this was a long-term home.

Since then, Becca has weathered many trials and changes as her roles have changed. She was in the House of Hope when we were forced to close that home due to a decline in funding late last year. Becca moved to the House of Love and filled in until the LeBeanes arrived. She then moved back to the House of Hope even though we were still unable to open it. At the first of the year we were able to re-open the House of Hope for crisis placements only. Becca was ready to take care of the children who would enter her home.

Becca, along with her husband Courtney and two children, have been committed and flexible through each change. It never occurred to them to move on. Of these past few months Becca said, “I am very grateful for this ministry, and very blessed to be here serving. It has been a challenge, but I know we are better because of it.”

Becca knows that Navajo Ministries is right where she belongs and that has made all the difference. “There is a peace about being here at Navajo Ministries. I enjoy being here for the kids, to help them and love them. This is my purpose.”

We are pleased to have Becca as part of the Navajo Ministries “family.”
Teachers Make a Big Difference

By Diana Lang

Cheryl Sanders and Kimberly Thompson, the mother and daughter teaching team at the Navajo Ministries School, are making a huge difference for our students in grades one through five. These two are beyond dedicated to helping the children be the best that they can be. They came in on a “snow day” to have school. Some of the middle school students even participated. “Fun day” at school included games, crafts, and other activities.

“We deal with the ‘whole’ student in our school,” said Cheryl. “We help the children build relationships, learn, and have faith in themselves.” Most students come to the school behind academically and have never been successful in school. At the Navajo Ministries School, everyone achieves their goals.

At the start of the 2015-2016 the On-Site School had nine students. The “one-on-one” attention that each child receives is a key to success. Two of the younger students read over 300 pages per week, and an 8-year-old second grader is doing fourth grade work. The Navajo Ministries School provides students with many opportunities that they would not have in a regular classroom. This year Cheryl and Kimberly initiated participation in archery and the rabbit program through 4H.

Box Tops for Education and Labels for Education provide our school with additional funds to take field trips and purchase necessary items. This year the school earned almost $4,000 through these worthwhile programs. Unfortunately, we are about $1,000 down in Box Top funding. In the past an amazing donor scoured trash and other recycling bins in order to clip box tops for us. He is no longer able to do this.

Students took a trip to Albuquerque, New Mexico to attend the State Fair this past fall thanks to the dollars collected from Box Tops for Education. If you would like to help us with this program, please contact Kay Baker at 888.325.0255.

Three fifth graders graduated from the school last spring and are doing great in middle school. Two are honor students and one is completing his sixth grade year through an on-line academy. “I am so proud of the boys that graduated last year,” said Cheryl. “Not only are they doing great in school, but they are making good decisions. You can’t ask for any more than that.”

Taylor and Connor show off their honor roll certificates.
All Aboard the Polar Express

December is a very busy month at Navajo Ministries. This year the Christmas season started off with the annual Farmington Christmas Parade themed “All Aboard the Polar Express.” Our own Hannah Rodden and Michael Terpsma built a beautiful float for us that included sound effects, steam, and lighted train wheels that really moved.

The children enjoyed passing out candy to hundreds of bystanders on the street, we waved, and spread Christmas cheer. Our float didn’t win first place, but we were featured in the Farmington Daily Times article, and more importantly, we made memories to last a lifetime.

What Ails Our Kids Today?

By Linda Eubank

I deal with children from age 2-18 in my counseling practice. Unfortunately, a lot of my young clients are seeing me because their parents are splitting up. I always tell children that they really have very little control over the choices their parents make. I help them to deal with the short and long-term effects of those adult choices! Most children want to have a relationship with both of their parents, and as long as there is no abuse or serious addictions this is usually doable.

I often teach children how to talk with their parents. Sometimes this involves telling a parent “Ms. Linda says I should not carry messages to Mom (or Dad). You should call or text them.” Of course I stress that all messages need to be delivered with respect and not anger, whether or not the parent is angry. I also encourage them to get comfortable saying things like “I don’t like to hear you say bad things about Mom (or Dad). I love you both!”

Parents and children need to develop healthy communication patterns so that the child is free to work on new relationships as well as family relationships. Children should be encouraged to talk about their feelings concerning outings or lack of activities, new adult partners or step siblings. Parents need to set aside their anger toward previous partners or family members. The adults need to control feelings of jealousy and insecurity as new relationships enter their child’s world.

Another issue some children deal with is a parent who is not capable of caring for them for a variety of reasons. It seems that no matter what a parent does, children still want to connect. They have a big need to know their family loves them. Of course, unfortunately that is not always the case. Children then feel a range of emotions: anger, sadness, disbelief, fear, etc.

It is ironic that I often walk away from a counseling session thinking, “Wow, who is the parent and who is the child?” Pray for our children. They will be parents some day!

Linda Eubank is a licensed professional clinical counselor with the Eubank Counseling Center; located on the campus of Navajo Ministries. Two-thirds of her clients are children ranging in age from 3 to 17.
Connections providing eternal results

Through the connections of 12 Navajo Nation pastors, Navajo Ministries once again reached out to over 300 needy families. On December 18th these pastors arrived with their trucks and trailers. We loaded them up with food, Bibles, blankets, coats, caps, and much more! Then after we prayed with them, they headed out to their home areas to make their deliveries. These pastors reached into New Mexico, Utah, and Arizona – with these many items, and God’s love. Below are just a few snippets of their stories.

Some of those we visited live far from electricity and running water.

One mother cried, trying not to look at me, but I felt her happiness in seeing her kids get gifts.

Needy families included the elderly who were so appreciative of the quilts and blankets.

At one home we sang “Jesus Loves Me.” This lady decided to receive Jesus as her Savior.

It takes a lot of support and donations to make our Christmas Connections possible, and we appreciate each one. We owe a special thanks to our local Salvation Army, Life Line of Hope from Montana, and Jenette Richardson in Alabama. These connections are providing eternal results for our Navajo Neighbors.
Since 1980, Vertical Radio has provided Christian radio, information, sports and inspiration to people in the Four Corners region, and nationwide (online at www.VerticalRadio.org). We are a non-profit, listener-supported station that provides programming for the entire family.

Vertical Radio is the number one Christian radio station in the Farmington market. This year, Arbitron ratings ranked Vertical as the number three most listened to station overall in the market, and the Farmington Daily Times readers voted us as the Best Radio Station for the second year in a row.

Last November, Vertical Radio partnered with the Blue Star Mothers of San Juan County for the annual care package drive. Donations of gifts, food and hygiene items were collected to be sent to members of the military who are serving at home and abroad during the holidays. This year’s event was the most successful to date. Green chile is a favorite gift of the troops from New Mexico.

This past year we were happy to be in a financial position to hire our second full-time staff person in the capacity of Music/Program Director. Leah Stovall brings a wealth of knowledge and creativity to the station, and programming has never been better.

Leah is a native of Clovis, New Mexico. She and her husband, Cody, moved to Farmington in 2009. Cody is an Associate Pastor at the Oasis Church in Aztec, where Leah is also a worship leader. Her spiritual gift of music blesses people every week.

Cody is a veteran of the United States Army, where he was a member of the bomb squad, and was on track to become a member of the Secret Service. “But God had a different idea,” said Leah. The two became youth pastors and later transitioned into their positions with the Oasis Church. They have been married for 16 years and have three sons.

As a listener-supported Christian radio station, we rely on Pledge Drives to help fund our mission. This year’s spring drive will be held April 6-8. We appreciate everyone who participated last fall, and look forward to providing the Four Corners with the best Christian radio broadcast for many years to come!
Remembering, Honoring Loved Ones

It’s always a privilege to provide this space in each of our Navajo Neighbor magazines to remember the lives of those who have gone on to their eternal reward. Many have been supportive of the various ministries and outreaches that have made a difference in the lives of Navajo families since 1953. This is also a great place to honor friends or relatives who have made a difference in your life or who have impacted others through their service to mankind.

During this Easter season it is also the perfect time to remember the sacrifice of our Savior, Jesus Christ. It was through His shed blood that we have the hope of eternal life in Heaven when our time on this earth has ended. And, it’s because of His love that this ministry has reached out to Navajo boys and girls who have experienced great hardship in their young lives.

Living Memorial and Honorable gifts benefit the boys and girls in our care at the Four Corners Home for Children. It is a joy to provide them with loving care during their time with us. Upon receipt of your tax-deductible gift, an attractive card will be sent to the family of the one you’re memorializing or honoring. No amounts are ever mentioned. Please use the envelope that is attached in this magazine to respond with your gift.

I hope you will find this way of support for the children to both reflect your remembrance for loved ones while also benefiting our children.

Jim Baker,
Co-Director of Partnership Ministry
Past President (1987-2015)

FROM IN MEMORY OF
Jan Patterson Naomi L. Sharp
Wallace Barrett-Johnson Henry L. Appl
Wallace Barrett-Johnson Henry L. Appl
Mt. Vernon Church of the Brethren Henry L. Appl
Dan and Lisa Heuchert Henry L. Appl
Louise Thomason Lois Rogers
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Sunday School Class
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Marie Fehrenbach William Fehrenbach
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