

This week CedarWood celebrates its 5th Birthday! What a precious milestone we celebrate together!

Five years of supporting children with our Backpack Kids program, five years of providing coats, shoes & clothing to both young and old, five years of serving meats, cheese, dairy products, fresh fruits and vegetables, grains, and so on to thousands of individuals who've stepped across the threshold of our doorway. Five of the most exhilarating, exhausting, and rewarding years of our amazing CedarWood team member's lives!

Five years ago we began with five people: four volunteers one staff member. We had a few tables set up and we opened the doors! We were so excited about our grand opening and while only a few clients came, we knew something was birthed in the Seattle area that would stand the test of time. Today, we feed 275-300 every week. We have 151 children enrolled in our BPK Program and plenty of staff and volunteers to feed & clothe them. No one is turned away, everyone receives what their family needs, and we've seen countless clients become family in the Kingdom of God! This is CedarWood!

The first year was rough, long days, and sleepless nights filled with more questions than answers. We knew it was a commission of the Lord and obedience was key.

The second year was so busy! Our baby was just walking, teetering here and there, even hitting some bumps along the way. We even took a couple hard hits, losing the BPK school district affected us hard, but knowing the children would be taken care of was all that mattered to us. Despite a few bruises, we'd rallied a little more support and developed a good system. Clients were becoming family and many even signed on to volunteer

The third year we were running strong! With this year came new leadership and by the end of the year, a new opportunity to serve in BPK; a larger community wherein we could also serve the families of the children in that community. How exciting to adopt and partner with another ministry to meet the needs of so many outside our area.

The fourth year was exciting! We took another jump in our services and provided Christmas gifts for over 80 families! Our team was solid, and while bursting at every seam in Bethel Chapel, we'd developed a rhythm in the community enabling us to serve more and more on a spiritual level with women's classes geared to discipling the women of our pantry. They learn practical things like balancing a checkbook, parenting skills and growing closer to God in their daily lives.

Here we are at our 5th Birthday! In keeping with the purpose of CedarWood, we launched a ministry of service to the most misunderstood and judged people in society, the homeless. This weekend, Lynn and Patricia prepared and took hot meals to the 61 homeless men and women in the community. In addition to warm meals, they offer to pray with them, provide some basic necessities and even a little food for during the week. This year Adam will head up another outreach. Much like the women's outreach we offer but geared toward men. This discipleship program is designed to strengthen the man, the father and the husband of our clientele.

We are so thankful to the Lord for asking us to start this work; what an honor to serve others in this manner.

We can never thank those who work in CW, the Volunteers or those of you who support this work enough for standing with us. Just know that the long hours, strategic planning, hefty physical demands,

the spiritual preparedness, and the financial support that comes in from afar all enable us to serve those in need. Rest assured, this is labor of love is not without honor or reward in the Kingdom of Heaven. 1 Corinthians 15:58.

What wonderful opportunities we've had to serve the community through our own backyard mission;
Happy 5th Birthday CedarWood!

Blessings & love,

Ricci Wilson