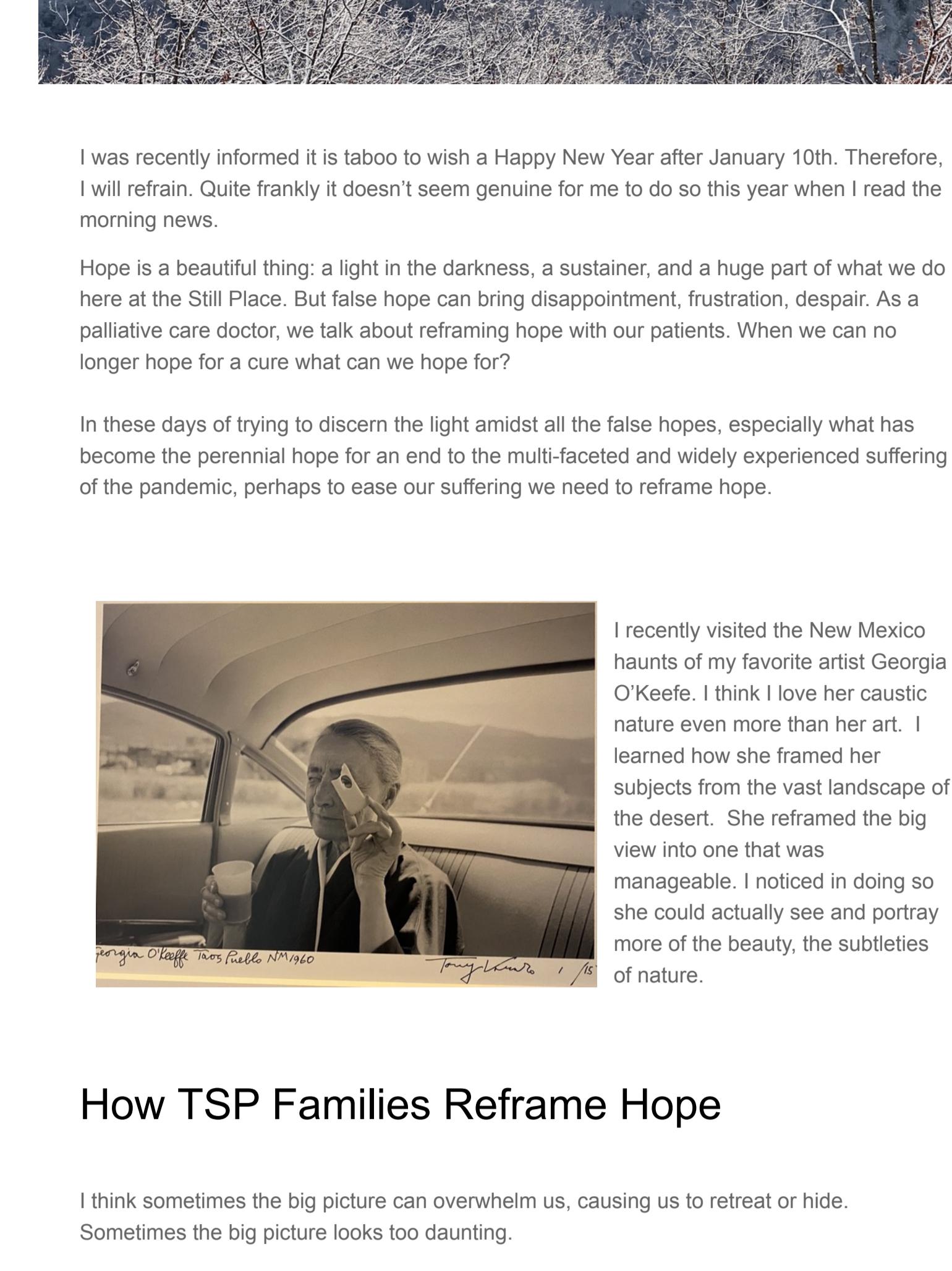




## Reframing Hope

December/January Newsletter



I was recently informed it is taboo to wish a Happy New Year after January 10th. Therefore, I will refrain. Quite frankly it doesn't seem genuine for me to do so this year when I read the morning news.

Hope is a beautiful thing: a light in the darkness, a sustainer, and a huge part of what we do here at the Still Place. But false hope can bring disappointment, frustration, despair. As a palliative care doctor, we talk about reframing hope with our patients. When we can no longer hope for a cure what can we hope for?

In these days of trying to discern the light amidst all the false hopes, especially what has become the perennial hope for an end to the multi-faceted and widely experienced suffering of the pandemic, perhaps to ease our suffering we need to reframe hope.



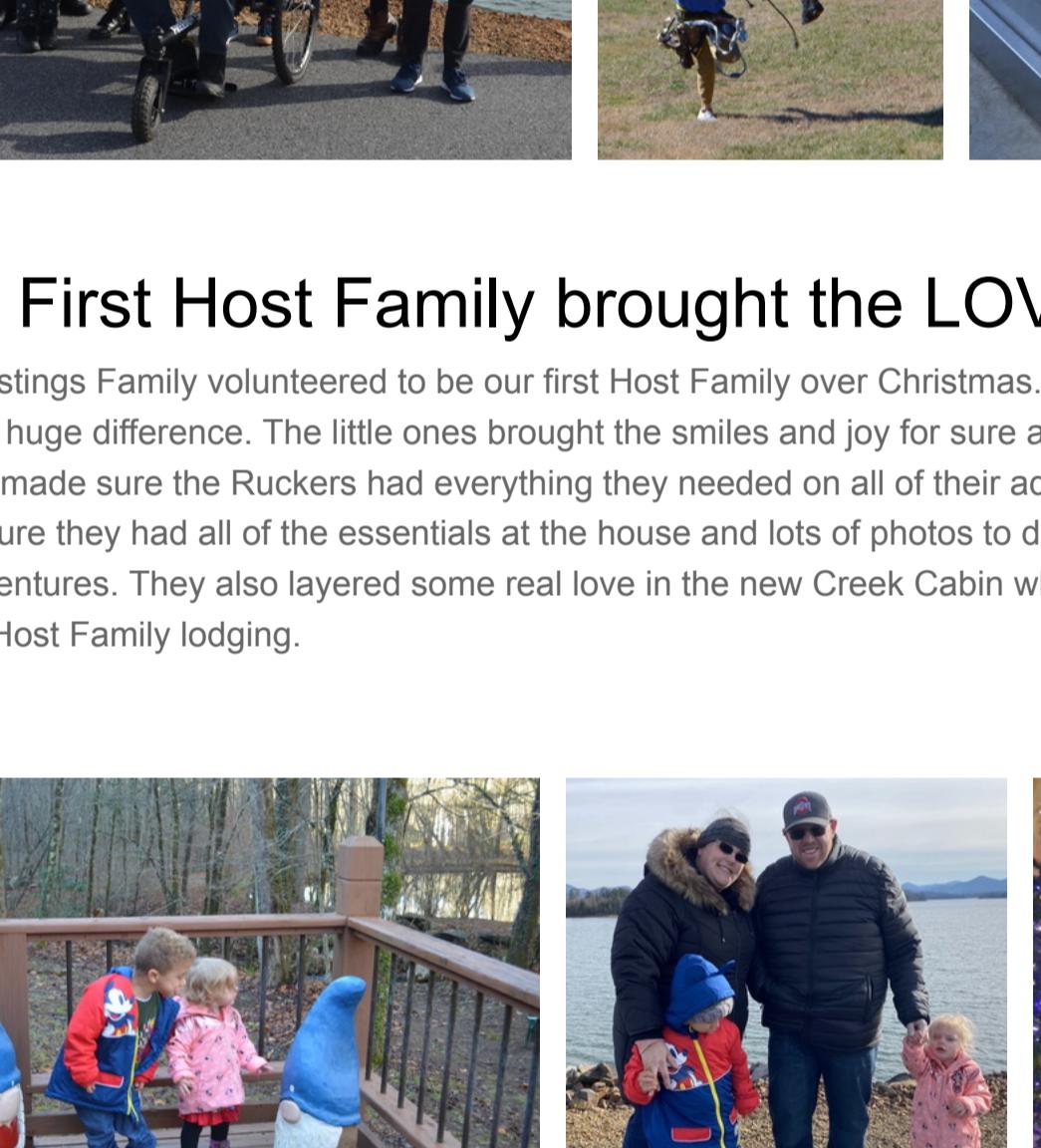
I recently visited the New Mexico haunts of my favorite artist Georgia O'Keeffe. I think I love her caustic nature even more than her art. I learned how she framed her subjects from the vast landscape of the desert. She reframed the big view into one that was manageable. I noticed in doing so she could actually see and portray more of the beauty, the subtleties of nature.

## How TSP Families Reframe Hope

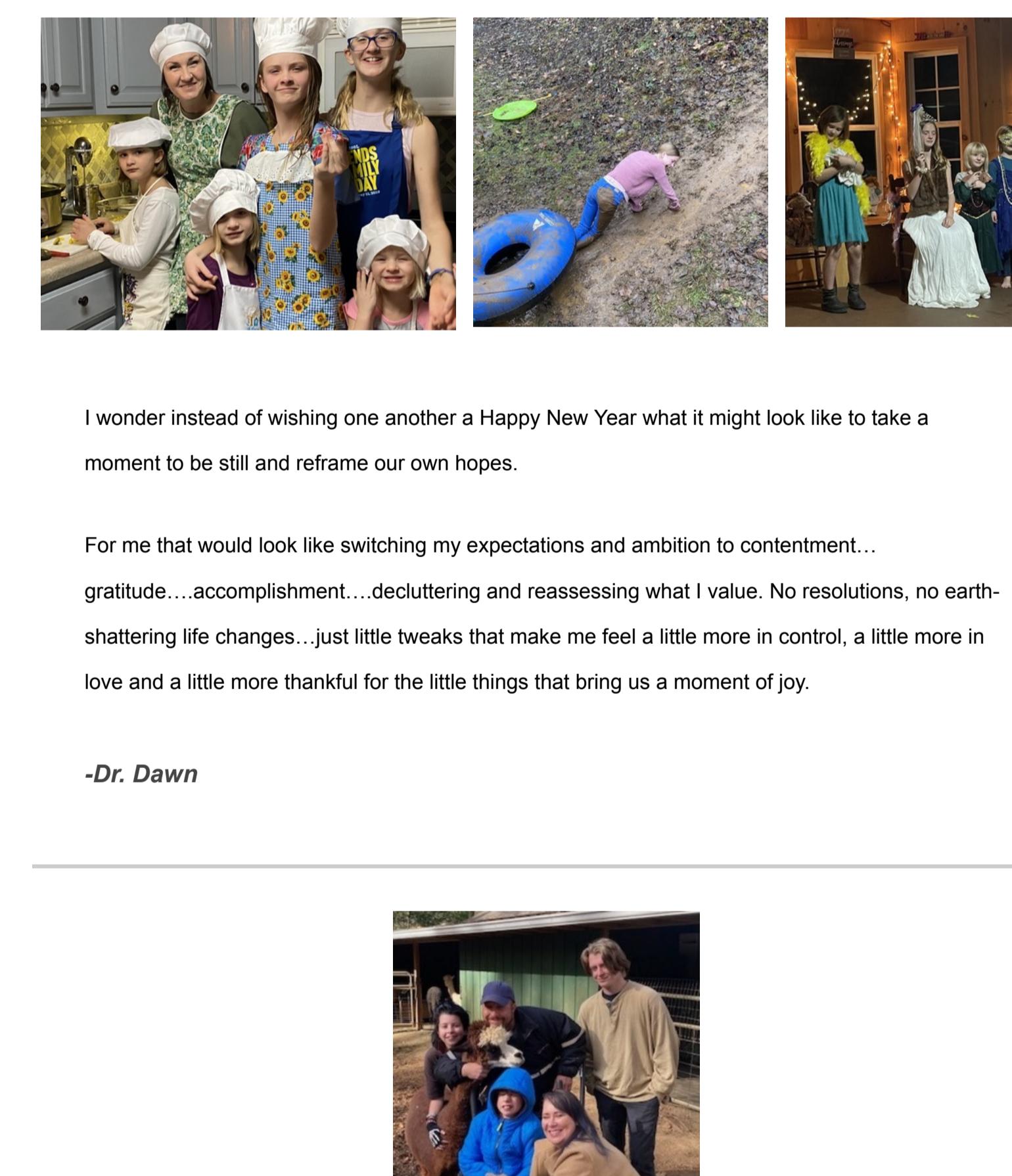
I think sometimes the big picture can overwhelm us, causing us to retreat or hide. Sometimes the big picture looks too daunting.

I have interviewed many families recently who have experienced overwhelming life catastrophes from unexpected birth traumas, rare cancers which have recurred and rare genetic disorders. I have also witnessed the deep pain of losing a son or daughter in recent weeks. Each of these families have shown me how from the deepest pain and suffering, they rise again and again reframing hope, taking the one next baby step whether it be finishing the Lego creation or room redo their son or daughter were working on when they got too sick, too fast to finish or reaching out to serve other families in the way only another family knows how to do.

I want to share some of the moments of hope and love we have experienced at The Still Place in the last two months...an act of hope framed by love each time.

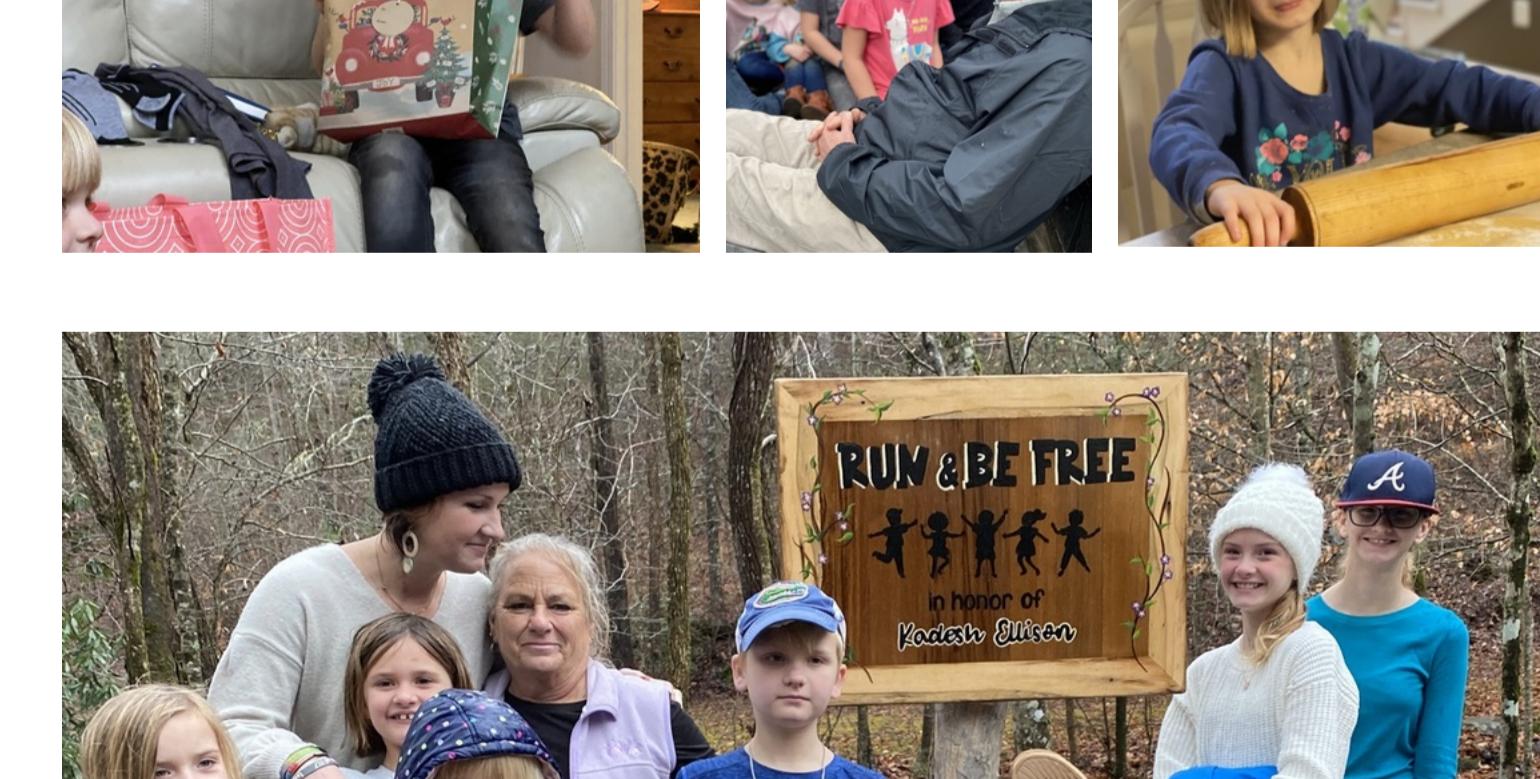


This holiday season, we were amazed with the loving gifts each family provided the next. It all started with three little Donchonie elves delivering gift cards that allowed a family to visit after almost having to cancel due to the rising gas prices.



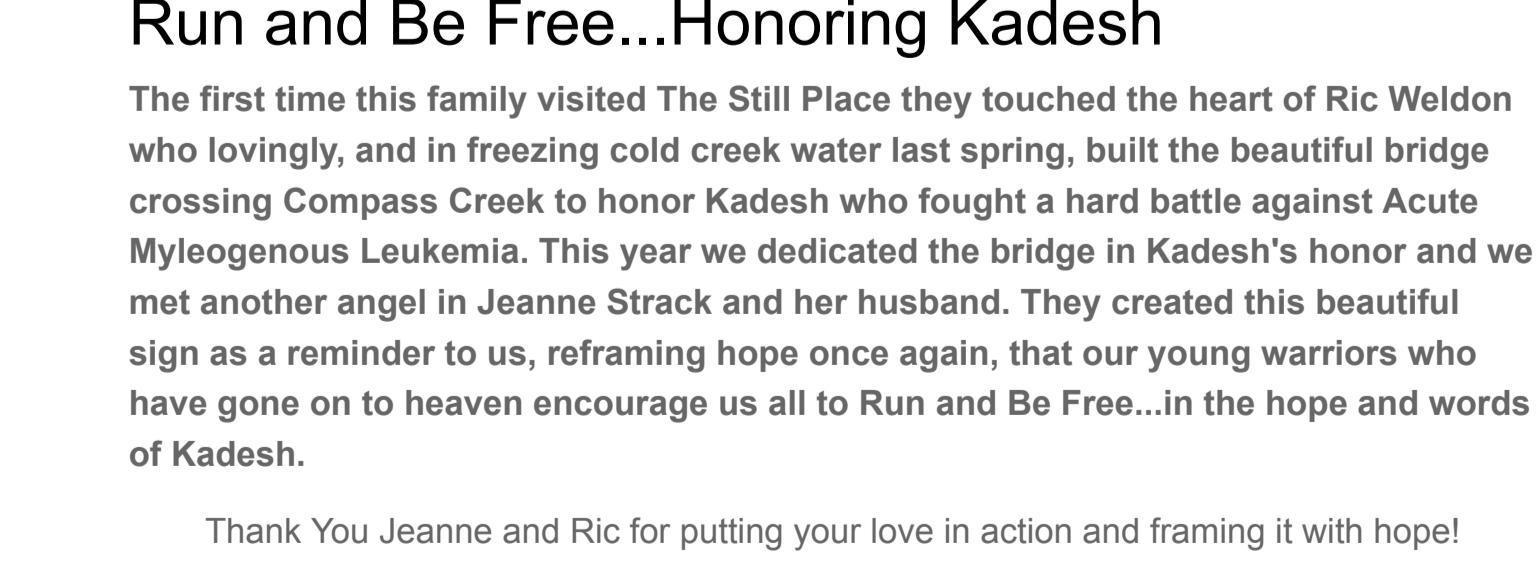
Then the Phelps family (above) filled their rained out adventure day with a Wild Walmart Christmas shopping spree of epic proportion for the next family and our Christmas Host Family. Suddenly, we realized the Phelps had their first retreat with the host family last spring and hosted the next family, the Rucker crew (below), at their Inn in Valdosta allowing them to have a little Wild Adventure summer fun when we were too full to serve them. The Ruckers had suffered a devastating trauma a several months before which changed their lives forever. We laughed and held a bit of awe at the way love connects us even when we are unaware.

It didn't stop there though because then the Rucker/Rhodes Family outfit the house with all kinds of new goodies including a new coffee maker, more laughter and layers of love!



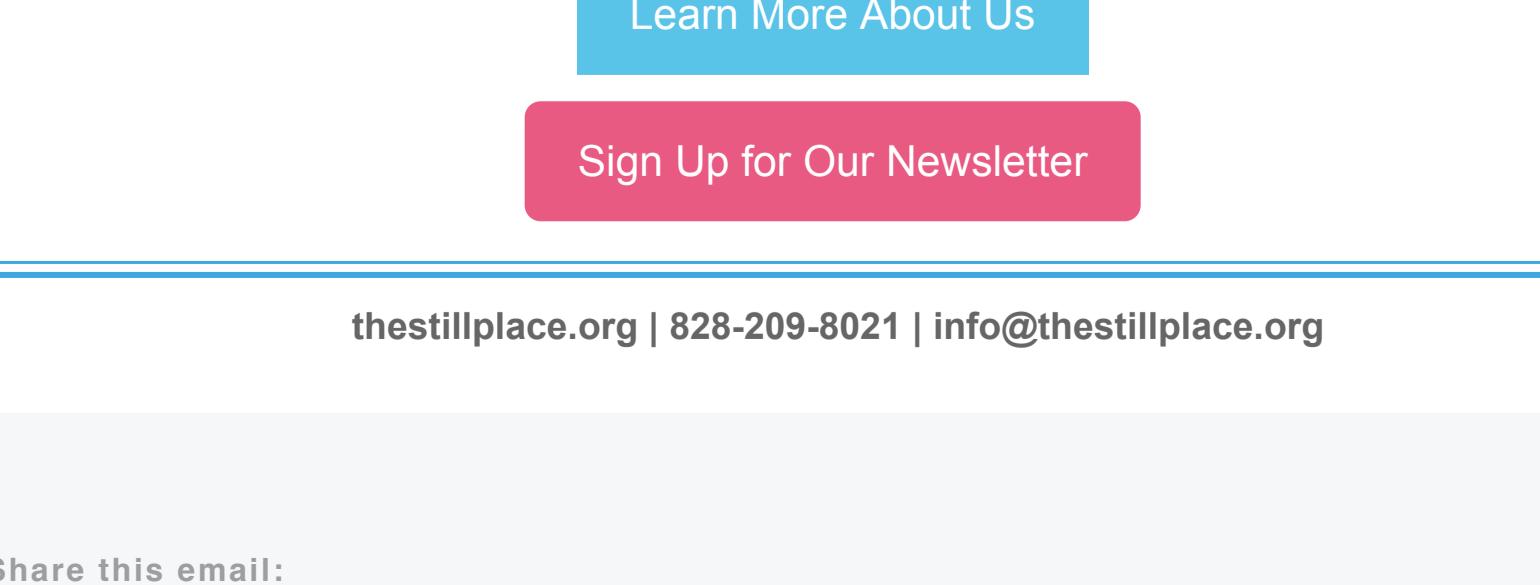
## Our First Host Family brought the LOVE...

The Hastings Family volunteered to be our first Host Family over Christmas. Boy, did they make a huge difference. The little ones brought the smiles and joy for sure and Sara and Steven made sure the Ruckers had everything they needed on all of their adventures and made sure they had all of the essentials at the house and lots of photos to document all the big adventures. They also layered some real love in the new Creek Cabin which will serve as our Host Family lodging.



## The New Year Clean Up Crew...

The Ellison clan worked like crazy developing the ski slope, AKA mud slide, greasing up the bikes, making a new hobbit house trail and most importantly helping Dr. Dawn clean up and organize the Art Barn finishing up with their rambunctious Princess Pirate Play encore performance.

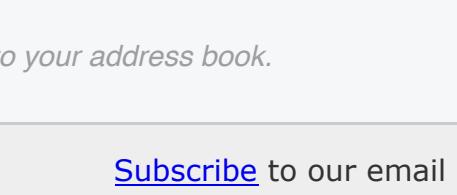


I wonder instead of wishing one another a Happy New Year what it might look like to take a moment to be still and reframe our own hopes.

For me that would look like switching my expectations and ambition to contentment...

gratitude... accomplishment... decluttering and reassessing what I value. No resolutions, no earth-shattering life changes... just little tweaks that make me feel a little more in control, a little more in love and a little more thankful for the little things that bring us a moment of joy.

-Dr. Dawn



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