

Human Kindness Foundation

A Little Good News

Spring 2013

IN LOVING MEMORY: BO LOZOFF

On November 29, 2012, Bo Lozoff died in a motorcycle accident. The other driver didn't see Bo, and turned right in front of him. Bo died immediately. The other driver, though not physically injured, is devastated and needs your prayers.

This newsletter is dedicated to our dear founder and friend, teacher and author, builder and musician. We know that many of you love him and miss him deeply, and we hold you in our hearts and prayers as you share this grief with us. In this newsletter, you'll see just a few of the hundreds of drawings and letters that were sent to us in response to the news. You'll also see photos of some of the people who are continuing the work of Human Kindness Foundation. We're committed to keeping Bo's books available free to inmates. We're so grateful to be here, carrying on the work that Bo started, and that he loved for 40 years.
—HKF

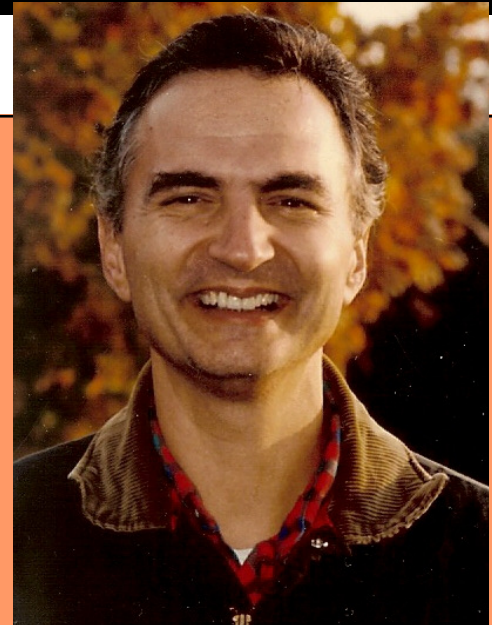
In Memory of Bo Lozoff

A poem by Douglas Goetsch

He was a Jew, a Hindu, a Christian,
a Buddhist, a Muslim, a Sufi,
pilgrim, husband, father, carpenter.
Most of all he was a writer of letters,
and the reason why countless souls
could get up in the morning,
and sleep at night a little less angry and afraid,
a little more likely to say a prayer
for the troubled world outside,
a world they might never see again.

Picture the worst thing you've ever done,
then picture having to think of that heinous thing
every waking moment of your life,
and picture, most of all, the place
you would be in, while you contemplate it,
cement and razorwire outside, but on
the inside, a locale even more arid—
that's the place where Bo addressed
his letters, thousands of them,
telling people to listen to your better angel,
see the cell as a world, see the prison block
as a garden, see the divine in the faces
of the guards, the bullies, prosecuting
attorneys, parole boards; write your daughter,
apologize to your ex-, renounce
your pals—they're not your friends—
forgive your father, forgive yourself.

How many, today, are wandering around
with a letter from Bo in their pocket,
tucked in a sock, up a shirtsleeve,
down a brassiere, under a bunk mattress—
a folded and refolded note they've read
again and again until they know it by heart,
inhaled it and exhaled it in their sleep,
woke up finally determined to do one
good thing, however small, for somebody
other than themselves, and that letter



always closing with the two words:
Love, Bo.

Love, Bo.

Thousands of messages sent off
into the vortex of the night—
Leavenworth, Angola, San Quentin,
Pelican Bay, Huntsville, Stateville,
Sing Sing, Attica, Folsom Prison,
and the Horizon Juvenile Detention Facility,
where an undersized kid from the South Bronx
jumped up and down in his puke green jumper
like it was his birthday, a letter from Bo
in his hands, in answer to his impossible
problem, and the question:
What would you do?

How many times have we all asked that?
What would Bo do?

The answer's already in the question,
the fact that we're even asking,
along with that word at the bottom
of the page: Love. Find a way
to love, get out of the way of love.

We're all doing time, as we know by now,
and that might not sound so great,
but how lucky we were
that Bo did his time with us.

The Three Principles

of Human Kindness Foundation:

- 1) Live simply
- 2) Dedicate your life to service
- 3) Spend some time every day in spiritual practice

From a talk by Bo Lozoff in 2005

The Human Kindness Foundation was founded upon three principles. After reading the scriptures of most of the great traditions of the world, I saw three principles just singing off the pages of the Bible, the Koran, The Bhagavad Gita, The Mahabharata, Greek mythology and the writing of the Greek philosophers. I saw three principles that were just indisputably identical. If you distill any of those great philosophical or religious traditions down to some practical advice, one thing they all agree on is: don't want too much stuff—it'll get you in trouble. It puts you into a dynamic of wanting and acquiring and protecting and defending and repairing and replacing. And all this precious divine energy, this mysterious energy that can move mountains and raise the dead, winds up paying off a BMW. So all the great traditions have said live simply, live modestly. You have an inefficient use of your energy when you spend too much of it around your comfort and your toys. Live simply.

The second principle they agree on is, for your own sake, don't devote your life to your personal success. Devote your life to the common good—make the world a better place. If you only devote your life to personal success, you will never ever have enough to satisfy you. There's always more. If you devote your life to making the world a better place, you'll have plenty of personal

success, and you'll be in tune because you'll be drawn toward the part of the common good that draws you and you were created for. Each of us was born with an individual nature as well as being born with a universal nature. And our individual natures, like magnetic shavings, get drawn by certain stimuli: working with the environment or working with prisoners or working with the elderly or working with children or selling shoes with a great deal of compassion. I don't have as much skill talking with children as I do with convicts so I gravitated toward a life with convicts. By the end of this tour I may have been in a thousand prisons. I haven't been in a thousand day care centers. It's not my pull. I'm glad there are people who go there. So we naturally gravitate toward our individual Dharma and here we are, that little thread in this enormous tapestry that we can never see the whole of with these eyes. So dedicate yourself to the common good and you'll find your niche.

The third principle they all agree on is: spend at least a

little time every day being humble, alone and silent before the Great Unknown. I'm always telling people it takes time to be deep. If you're not willing to spend time to be deep, you know what's going to happen? You're not going to be deep. You may philosophically think you're deep. You may intellectually believe in being deep. But it's not free. It takes time — especially in as noisy and agitated a world as we live in today, where multi-tasking is a positive thing. If we don't commit ourselves to some time, even if it's ten minutes, of truly humble spiritual introspection every day,

we're not going to become deep. Don't think that you're above this, because that would be really arrogant. Don't think, "Oh, not me." Every good person who has ever been caught by the world is just as deep as you and me by nature. And we have to give some of our time to reminding ourselves that we really are like children before the Great Mystery. And we submit ourselves to the intelligence, the beauty, and the profundity of Life.



Kenny Dorsey, Carson City, NV

A Note from Sita:

Dearest Family, As I write this, it's just a little more than two months ago that our dear Bo died. I've read hundreds of letters from people inside and out who are grieving his loss with me, and though I'm not able to respond, I did want to thank you for your warm-hearted expressions of love—they've deeply touched me.

On January 10—Bo's birthday—we had a memorial celebration for him. Most of Bo's family came here, as well as friends as far as Seattle, Washington and California. Here's a picture of our son Josh singing one of Bo's songs with Bo's brother Ron. It was a sweet evening of laughter and tears, but mostly one of deep love, appreciation and respect for this dear man

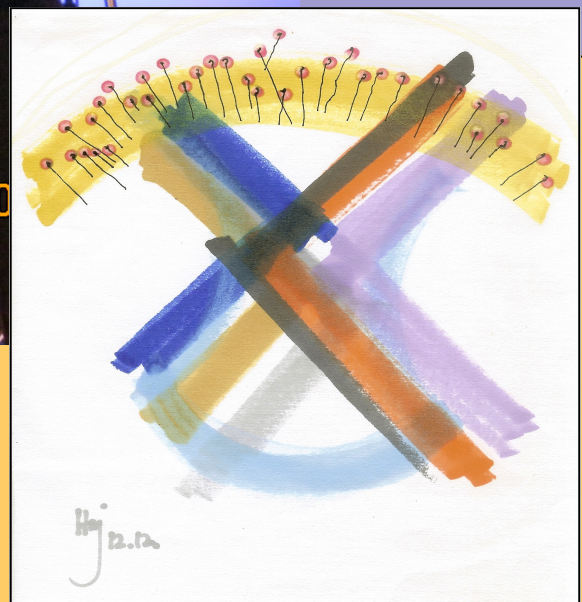
who we were privileged to know for a while.

So, dear-hearts, many of you have asked how I'm doing. I'm focusing on the work of Human Kindness Foundation, which gives me a lot of peace and keeps my heart full of love.

I love you all,
Sita

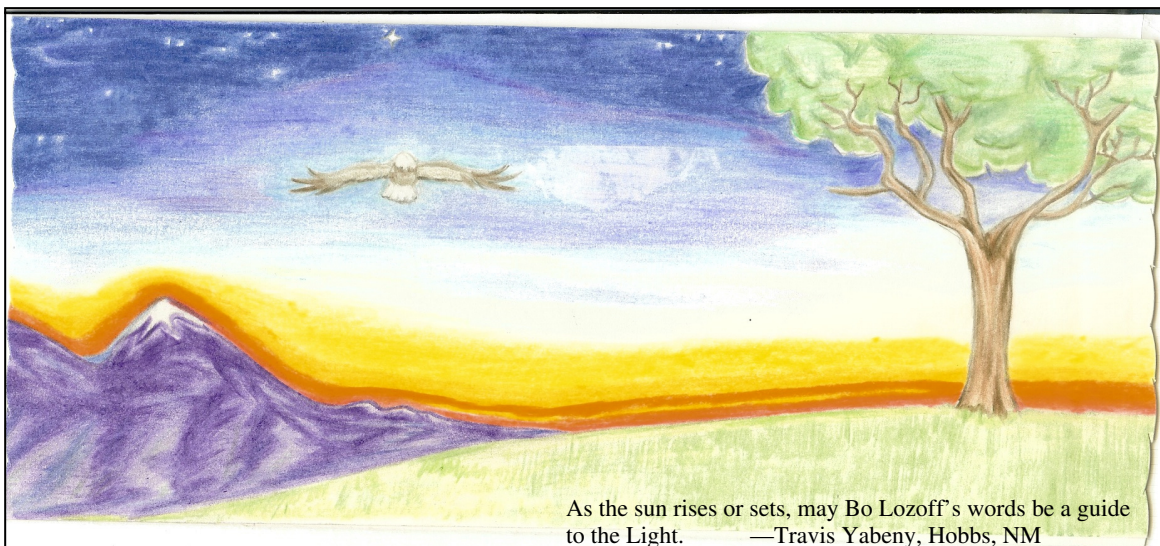


HKF co-directors Catherine & Sita, singing with Eli at the memorial service. Eli is Catherine's son and Bo & Sita's godson.



Dear Sita, dear Josh,
How terribly quickly came the news about dear Bo. No matter how often we tell our brain that nothing lasts, still we expect the sun to rise tomorrow. We finally get to feel what a giant soul Bo is, by feeling the size of the hole in our lives that he leaves behind. I have loved Bo for probably around 40 years — I'm not sure exactly who told me about him in the 70s. And then 5 or so years ago he gave a talk in a church in Fort Worth — I finally had a face and voice and body to go with the Great Heart who has been with me for so long. I am one of the lucky ones. I shook his hand, thanked him for his great talk, great work — that was all, it was a lot. He is a warm sun to be with, I feel his huge Love still now. I enclose a painting I have made in which I try to catch a glimpse of Bo's kind, strong, wise spirit. And funny he was too. And tough on bullshit.
Your friend, Haj Ross

[Above: Haj's painting]



Bo was like a beautiful flame sent by God to bring light to this sea of darkness and ignorance. So many other flames were lit by his one, that the ensuing wildfire can never be extinguished. Sita and Human Kindness Foundation will be in my prayers.

Robert Lane,
Angleton, TX

I received the 25 to life sentence as a California third striker. Three years into a life sentence, I was at the end of my rope—drug infested, depressed, angry and bitter. Well, the book cart came by my cell and I picked out *We're All Doing Time* by Bo Lozoff. That was almost 3 full years ago. I've been clean and sober ever since. Now, wouldn't you know, the CA 3 strikes law has changed and I have a chance to go home to my wife and family. I owe a lot to Brother Bo. The pages of that book helped me to get a grip and turn my life around. Now, I'm actually ready to go home! Thanks Bo.
Mike Ybarra, Delano, CA

Many years ago, when I first read *Deep & Simple* and *We're All Doing Time*, I had a very troubled mind and spirit. The things I learned from Bo are still with me, still valuable tools for kindness, compassion, and peace, still foundational for the building of new, better, more beautiful ways of being a solid but caring human being. Yes, God has used Bo, but God will continue to use him in that the spiritual concepts that God communicated through Bo shall continue to proliferate.

Joseph Washawitz, South Bay, FL

There's a light. A way. My way was lost, but I'm finding it again. I read both *Deep & Simple* and *We're All Doing Time* every day. I sent *Lineage* to my troubled, angry, abandoned 16 year old daughter. I may not be able to reverse damage, but I can do my best to not inflict more. Thank you for everything. I'm a better person for knowing you, Bo.

Stephanie Brown, Gatesville, TX

Without Bo the Prison Phoenix Trust's work in the UK could not have flourished as it does today. Dear Bo. May he now rest lightly and in deep peace.
Sandy Chubb, retired director of PPT, Oxford, England

Suddenly for him
that Light for which we all do yearn
has come
but not to us just yet
is it in his power to give.

A spark of it he shared
already in our Time,
and we saw within the dark
that we could live.



Poem written for Bo by Sister Elizabeth Racko, Gallup, NM
Envelope art by Eli King Thistlewood, Albion, PA

I only met Bo once. This was when he came to Mitchellville prison. It was such a moment of light in that dark place. He had us women singing "Knock Knock Knockin' on Heaven's Door" in round fashion. It was hauntingly beautiful! I could tell he sincerely enjoyed singing with us and for us. I will never forget it!

Heidi Anfinson, Des Moines, IA

Dear HKF Family, I was saddened to hear that our beloved Bo has passed. If he'd ever started a religion I would have been a proud Lozoffian, but he let us be ourselves, which was the most beautiful thing he could have done. No other story has ever touched me as deeply as "The Saddest Buddha." Bo brought light into the darkest places on the planet, and light is the only thing any of us need to find our indwelling Christ Spirit. Keep the love flowing, we all need it!

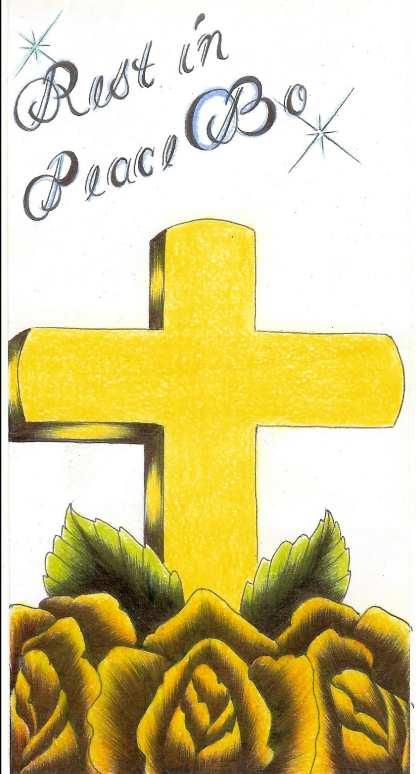
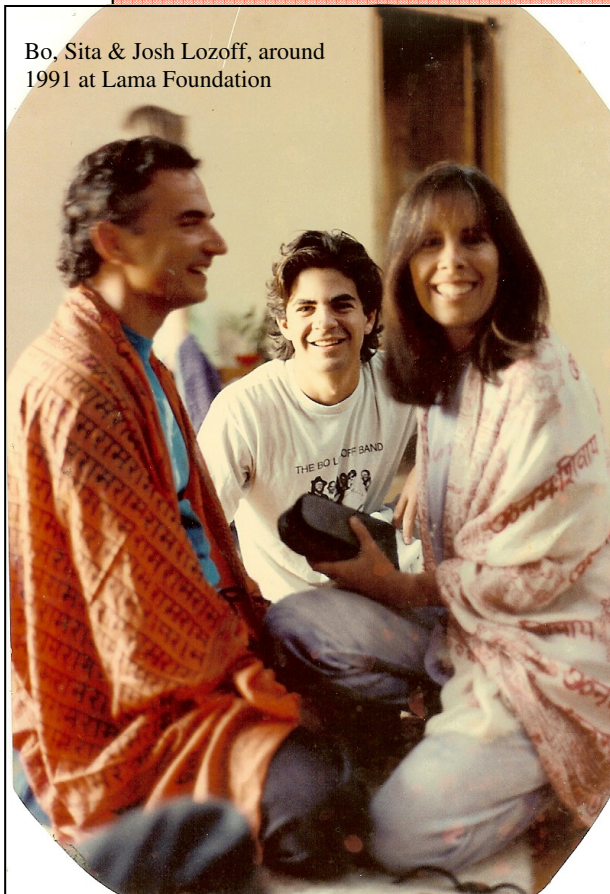
Blessings in the Christ Spirit,
Charles Nickell, Vacaville, CA

Royal Hayes has been on San Quentin's death row for decades. At one point in our long history with him, Bo offered to be with him if he ever got an execution date. This is his response when Sita offered the same:

Dear Sita, It is with a heavy heart that I received your letter and the notice of Bo's passing. I rode bikes for decades and know the risks. I have been with you guys from the start in Santa Cruz and Federal prisons. It

has been my honor to be his friend. You folks have changed the very core of my belief system. I have seen many changes, and you have been a constant and loyal companion through it all. I was glad to hear you intend to keep up the work. What you do is more important than you may be able to realize. You have brought forth lasting, drastic, meaningful changes in so many. The change in any one convict produces a lasting ripple effect. Live a life of joy and connection, Sita. Leave my execution to those who support that world of violence. At my age it is a blessing, not a curse. I welcome what younger men flee from. I'm 100% fine, accepting, relaxed and happy.
Love and respect,
Pops, San Quentin, CA

Bo, Sita & Josh Lozoff, around 1991 at Lama Foundation



Tony Martin, Jr., Corcoran, CA

Bo has helped me and my last cellmate to be better, kinder, happier people. Powerful is the only way to describe the book. Good things happen to me daily ever since I started praying and meditating. I never met Bo, but I know he would be happy with the way I have changed my life.

Jeremy Laird, Tracy, CA

Bo wrote in *We're All Doing Time*: "...the way our lives in the boat were ripped out from under us, we also saw that whatever we found, if it depended on people or things outside of ourselves, it could still change in a moment. The boat, the beautiful ocean, all just props—here today, gone tomorrow. Out of our control. The task remained to find something in ourselves as boundless as the deep blue sea, and which can't be taken away..." See ya later, Bo!

Mark Sublette, Arcadia, FL

I had the great opportunity to meet Bo in person when he visited our hospital and gave a wonderful performance in front of over 200 staff and patients. I will never forget that we all sang Hallelujah—something impossible to imagine ever before in this institution. He said "I love you" when we met, and I could feel he really meant it.

Blessings, Rika Kruse, San Francisco, CA

Bo's words have inspired me soooo much. I've embraced my spirituality and meditate daily. Bo is directly responsible for this metamorphosis. I live and breathe lovingkindness because of Bo. **My kids are finally going to have a clean & sober father!** I have a lot of trust to rebuild, but that's okay—everything is okay, thanks to Bo.

Andre Melfin,
Westville, IN



As Bo "Stumbles Toward the Light," let's all honor his memory by being the people he taught us to be, **showing kindness and compassion to one another**. Bo may have passed on, but the love he showed each of us, regardless of who we are or what we have done, doesn't have to die! **A part of Bo lives in each of us** whose life he touched. It is our place to keep that alive and to pass it on! May God bless us all!

Love, Michael Causey,
Glennville, GA

To Bo's Spirit;

Goodbye is such a useless word. We, your energy and mine, will meet again some day. It may be long minutes or short millennia from now, but we will meet. For now is all there is; there is no then. So embrace now with joy. And we'll say hello anew someday.

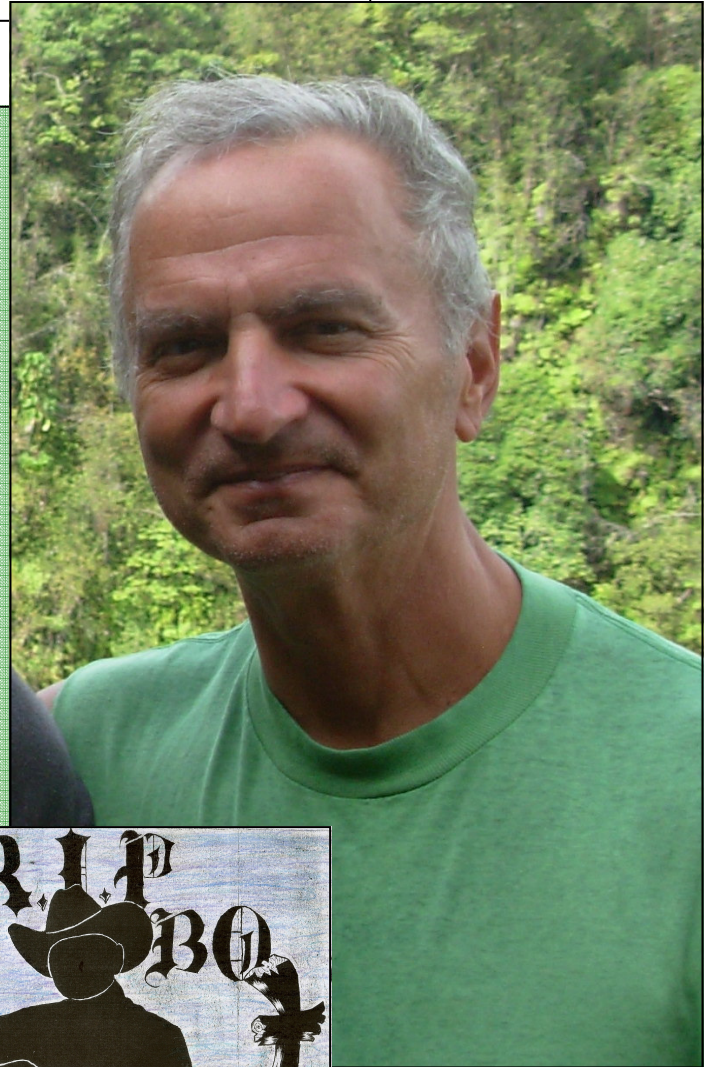
- John Sanger



So often in these situations we find ourselves saying the world is a little bit darker because Bo is gone, but I like to think the world is a bit brighter because he lived. We all carry a little bit of Bo Lozoff in our hearts. There

is no greater tribute we can offer this man than to continue to love one another.

Brandon Harlan, Navasota, TX



Art on this page: 2 poems by John Sanger, Hominy, OK. Drawing of Bo by Jeremy Tyler, Wilson, NC.

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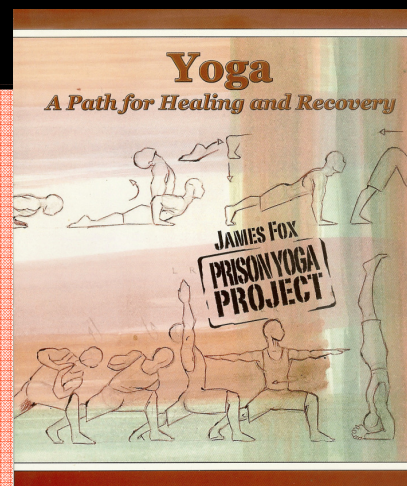
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BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Human Kindness Foundation is a nonprofit organization, led by a volunteer Board of Directors. We'd like to introduce you to the members of the Board.

LEFT TO RIGHT: JOHN,
SITA, CHRIS, PAM, MIKE

Chris Canfield volunteered in a prison for more than a dozen years, taking inmates out on passes and leading yoga and meditation. Chris works as an environmental nonprofit executive helping Gulf recovery, and lives in Louisiana. In Bo Lozoff's books, he found a kindred and guiding spirit.

Pam Clarke works as an accountant, and has been HKF's volunteer bookkeeper since 2004, spending two mornings each week in our office. In 1999, her son received a copy of *We're All Doing Time* while in prison, and Pam watched as his life was transformed by it.

John Collins received HKF literature and tapes while incarcerated, and credits these works, as well as later personal interactions with Bo, Sita and HKF, as being a major part of his transformation. John currently works as a designer in an engineering firm and volunteers at the prison he was released from in 2006.

Sita Lozoff is Co-Director of HKF, and has been part of HKF's Prison-Ashram Project since its beginning in 1973.

Mike Thumm is the retired Superintendent of Orange Correctional Center, a minimum custody facility in Hillsborough, NC. As Superintendent, he was a strong supporter of programs in his facility, including having Bo visit frequently. Mike still serves on the Prison Ministry Board that serves the prison where he used to work.

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These are the people who
do the day-to-day work of
Human Kindness
Foundation.
HKF has two staff members,
Sita and Catherine, and
many volunteers.

We all send our love.

