

SPRING
2020

Memory Books  For Children



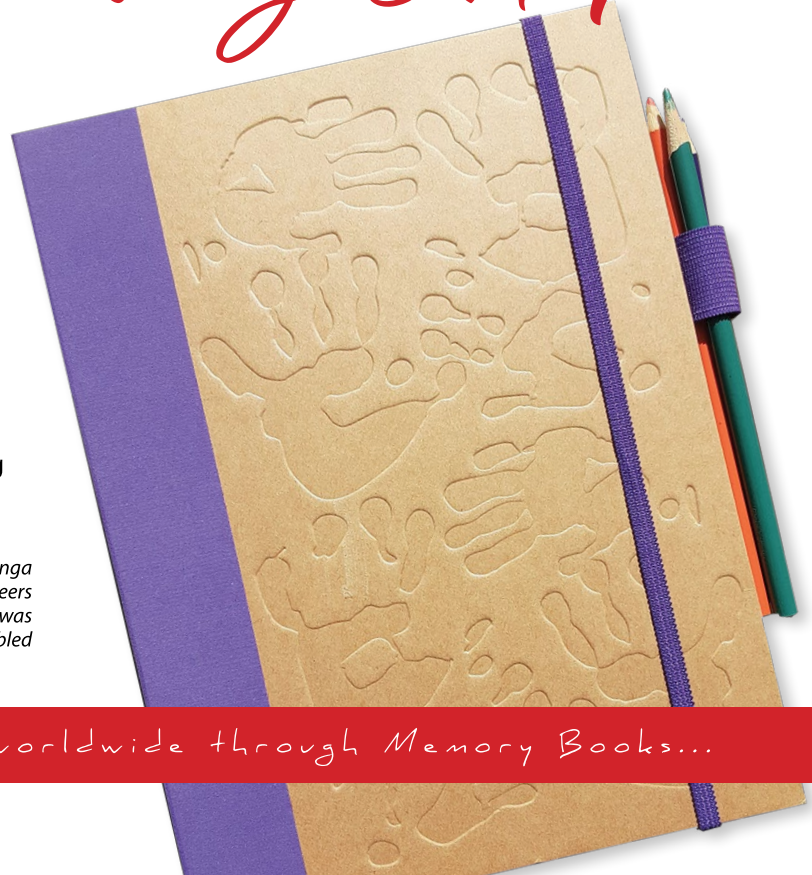
15 Years of Healing & Hope

A letter from *Tamara*

While having lunch with a friend, we began reminiscing about Memory Book Monday Nights. On most Monday evenings for ten years the contents of hundreds of Memory Books were strung from one end of my house to the other. Sometimes it got crazy as we assembled hundreds of Memory Books to fill a request from somewhere in the world. Jokingly, I'd beat a small drum so all those dedicated friends and family assembly line workers would "pick up the pace!"

Monday Nights began in 2006 when we began assembling Memory Books in the basement of *(continued on page 2)*

Cover image: Memory Book Club (MBC) in Northern Kenya led by Judith Sellanga since 2014. Judith provides a chicken and rice meal for children and volunteers attending the monthly MBC. Pictured right: Unlike the original version that was hand-assembled, the current Memory Books (as seen here) are pre-assembled with a distinctive hand-print embossed cover.



...gifting vulnerable children worldwide through Memory Books...

Healing Hearts

At Home and Around the World

Gresham, Oregon

(continued from cover) my house. The assembly line quickly spread to the study, then the kitchen, the dining room, and eventually nearly every room in the house. At exactly 8:30pm, the assembling of Memory Books stopped—finished or not—to gather in the living room for dessert and prayer. All Memory Books assembled that night were prayed over: “We pray for the next hands to hold each Memory Book. Just as those who brought handkerchiefs to Paul (Acts 19), we pray, God, that You will touch the lives of the children whose hands will hold this gift.” The Memory Books are simply paper and plastic, but God promises a miracle.

Some Mondays there were a few of us, and other evenings dozens of friends and family members came to help assemble Memory Books destined for grieving children. Yet, many Monday evening volunteers came with their own burdens. Over the years, we shared deaths of loved ones, often unexpected, even tragic. We celebrated new births, old birthdays, a new job, and cried over someone moving away or enduring one of life’s challenges. We laughed. We sang. We cried. We grieved together. The life experiences we shared connected us to each other and to the children who would be receiving the Memory Books.

Requests continued to increase from all over the world, simply by word of mouth. As dedicated as Monday Night attendees were, we couldn’t meet the requests on our own. Memory Book

materials had taken over our home, and assembly of Memory Books stretched beyond Mondays to the entire week. Knowing this was always God’s idea, Ron and I prayed God would show us the way.

While journaling one day, our daughter-in-law Holly wondered what it would cost to manufacture a journal like the one she was holding. We discovered a journal like it, manufactured in China, would cost less than those we were assembling. Thanking God, I heard a quiet voice inside say to me, “You’ve envisioned hundreds, but you need to be ready for thousands.”

I continue to hear from many of those who attended Monday Nights about how much they miss the time together—miss doing something they knew made a difference. I miss those times, too!

This year, we are celebrating 15 years of gifting thousands of children with a Memory Book—a place to preserve and tell their stories, with the belief God heals hearts. It truly is more than paper and plastic. A Memory Book can be part of the miracle of healing God has promised.

I am forever grateful to all my dear friends and family for believing in something so simple. We all realized that God still uses dead wood to perform miracles as He did with Moses’ wooden staff. God whispered to me



Pictured above: Monday evening volunteers during Memory Book early years. Who are these lovely ladies? First person to identify them in an email to info@memorybooks4children.com receives an autographed copy of the soon-to-be-released children’s book, I Am Chosen!

once, “What is your Memory Book, but dead wood?” Just as God has and is healing our hearts, my friends, He is healing the hearts and giving hope to children all over the world.



Dr. Virginia Phillips (left) with Tamara Faris (right)

Special thanks to Virginia Phillips, founder of Women of Purpose, for her heart for children and for partnering with us to bring Memory Books to communities all over the world served by Women of Purpose. We wish God’s blessings over Virginia as she relocates to Florida to discover her next assignment from God. Tamara, who considers Virginia her mentor, travelled with her to Kenya for the launch of Memory Books in Nakuru and Bondo.

As I Had Always Hoped

Seeing Memory Book Clubs in Action

Uganda - Fall 2019

We have shipped 65,000 Memory Books to children living all over the world. Until Fall 2019, I never had the chance to return to sites where children are using Memory Books, except for a brief research trip to research and document Memory Books as a tool for healing from grief and loss.

With a mere 400 Memory Books left in storage, I wondered if this year was to be the last of distributing the books. After traveling across globe for the past 15 years, I could envision staying home with Ron, relaxing, maybe doing some gardening, or spending more time playing with my kids and grandkids.

In Fall 2019, Patty Pullen of Good Samaritan Ministries (GSM), her team, and I returned to Masaka School of 1,400 students where I had distributed Memory Books in 2016. I noticed hundreds of children lying in several circles across the grassy soccer field.

Hannah (GSM) asked if I'd like to visit the Memory Book Club of grade school children. As I walked closer, I noticed they each had a Memory Book laying open in front of them and they were writing. The adult leader requested they close their Memory Books, as they had a visitor. The leader handed a talking stick to a child. As they passed around the talking stick, they either stood and told a story or passed it.

I moved from circle to circle where children took turns telling a story. An adult facilitator led the group, encouraging children to overcome their shyness and speak, reminding others to listen to the speaker, and thanking them for sharing. I was so pleased to see how many children shared a story—some lighthearted, some devastating. As the last group sang in closing, I couldn't help but think what a beautiful gift God was giving me: seeing a Memory Book Club functioning as I had always hoped. To truly see what God was doing for

children by giving them a witness to their stories, and making His presence known in the midst of it all. While walking back across the grass, I sensed that God wanted to show me what He had been doing while I'd been away.

For several days, I visited classrooms filled with singing children. I sat with several teens in the shade, listening as they told me their stories. Every evening all the students who lived at the school held a student-led bedtime devotion of worship and story. It took my breath away and brought tears as children, whose lives were surely burdened, danced and sang to the Lord they adored. On the last day, the entire school of students and staff assembled on the soccer field and expressed through song and dance their joy in the midst of life challenges. *Break every chain*, I heard my heart sing. Here, in this place, God was showing me what it means to discover God's love in the midst of our stories. *(continued on page 4)*



Children at Masaka school gather to greet Tamara & the Good Samaritan Ministries team.



An adult facilitator (in blue vest) encourages and affirms children during Memory Book Club.



Attentive listening while the child with the talking stick gets a turn to share during Memory Book Club.

(continued from page 3)

Hannah and Pastor Richard, (GSM) Uganda said, "Memory Books are really making a difference in the lives of these children. Really. The impact is far-reaching. It is greater than you can imagine. Do you know this isn't just for here, but for all over Africa?" I was humbled by their words, and somehow knew earlier thoughts of God being done with Memory Books were short-sighted and self-focused.

I returned home from Uganda with requests for 7,500 Memory Books, and shortly thereafter received a request for 6,000 Memory Books from Comfort in Nigeria. Rwanda requests would exhaust the final 400 memory books we had. Time to order more!

Oswald Chambers writes, "Why cling to the tiny pinnacle of success when you could let go and let God do even greater. Having a hope that your reach would exceed your grasp." The truth is, in 2006 I was amazed at receiving 1,600 Memory Book requests while in South Africa. Yet even then I heard a quiet voice whisper, "You

focus on the thousand while I see millions."

God bless the children! God bless you!

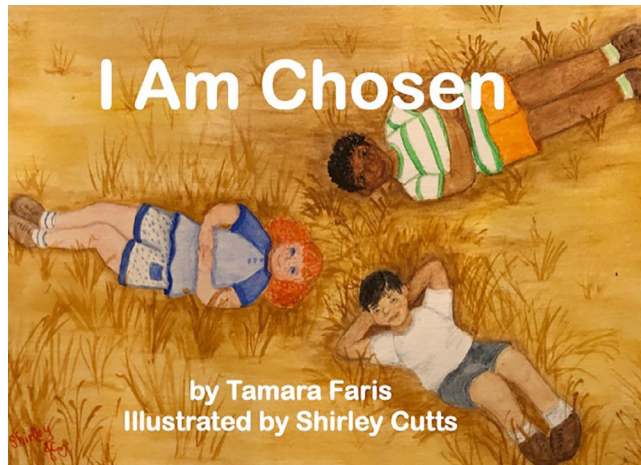
Donations to Memory Books are deeply appreciated and can be made at memorybooks4children.com/joinus,

through your bank's online bill pay or by mail.

Make checks payable to Love, Joy, Peace/Memory Books and mail to: LoveJoyPeace/Memory Books
P.O. Box 1372
Gresham, Oregon 97080

more to come...

MEMORY BOOKS EXPANDS TO INCLUDE CHILDREN'S BOOK



Watch our Facebook Page and website for the release of *I Am Chosen*, a children's picture book written by Tamara Faris and illustrated by Shirley Cutts. The book will be used during Memory Book Clubs as an additional resource to emphasize each child's uniqueness, value and that their life matters.



100% of all donations to Love Joy Peace/Memory Books are used to ship and gift a child with a Memory Book. No monies contributed to Memory Books for Children (Love Joy Peace 501c3) are used for purposes other than to place a Memory Book in the hands of a child. No donation monies contribute to the stories mentioned in this newsletter or for any other gift beyond a Memory Book. All administrative costs, newsletters, website, fundraising, travel, and training are fully funded separately through donations of Ron & Tamara Faris and volunteers.

CONTACT INFO

Address: P.O. Box 1372, Gresham, OR 97030
Website: www.memorybooks4children.com
E-mail: info@memorybooks4children.com
Blog: www.memorybooks4children.com/blog

MEMORY BOOK TEAM

Executive Director: Holly Faris
Founders: Tamara & Ron Faris
Editor: Linda Dodge
Designer: Stacie Butler

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...teaching children the truth that "I am somebody!"...