



PazNaz  
June 2017

# WELCOME



Welcome to *Transformed Under the Pepper Tree*. In this monthly magazine, you will read stories of how God is changing people's lives at PazNaz, transforming them into the image of Jesus Christ by the power of his Spirit!

Some information about specific events on campus is found within these pages, but each month *Transformed* is focused on relating stories about what PazNaz is really all about. Rather than programs or events, there are stories about changed lives, stories about people coming in contact with the Savior, and people exploring what it means to become a follower of him. It is exciting to hear what God is doing in the lives of people!

Years ago, Pastor Earl Lee and a group of staff members gathered around a pepper tree located on the northern-most point of what was to become the site for First Church of the Nazarene of Pasadena. They dreamed and prayed that God would provide a place where more people could find power for living through Jesus. What began then has been going on for over thirty years as men and women, boys and girls have come into relationship with Christ in significant ways under the shade of that old pepper tree. The mission of the church hasn't changed. May it continue to flourish as people experience the transforming power of Christ.

Blessings,

B. Scott Anderson  
Executive Pastor

# CONTENTS

## A Growing Fruitfulness

3

By Heidi Headcock

## Hockey Pucks & Answered Prayers

6

By Rebecca Conrad

## 3 Peas in a Pod

10

From Kim Hansen

*Transformed* is a magazine publication of First Church of the Nazarene of Pasadena (PazNaz). It is designed to highlight the Church's stories of personal transformation. For a complete overview of PazNaz, their beliefs, and ministries, please visit the website [www.paznaz.org](http://www.paznaz.org).

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*In* John 5:5 Jesus says, “If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing.” The fruit of our labor is to be used for the Father’s glory and for his mission, but only if we remain connected to the vine. Jesus also speaks of love and joy when he urges us to “remain” in him. As a parent of two little ones, I strongly desire for my daughters to experience this love and joy as they grow precious budding branches in the vine rooted in the firm foundation of discipleship. It seems fitting, then, that every day when my daughters and I set foot on the campus of Valley Center Preschool, we are greeted by a colorful tree painted on the office door and the playground wall. The logo of the school itself serves as an important reminder that we are nothing if not connected to the vine — growing in Jesus and learning who God wants us to be for his glory. When I arrive to pick up my daughters at Valley Center Preschool, I also see the children smiling and laughing with their teachers gathered around the large trees on the playground. The presence of the Holy Spirit is evident and I am assured that this preschool is a place where my children are learning to “remain” in Jesus and where they are experiencing enduring love and joy.

Although the campus at Valley Center is small, it is extremely well-kept. The classrooms are bright and brimming with the evidence of little hands, little minds, and little hearts growing in the light of learning. The children are content and confident because they trust and know they are loved. The staff members are affirming and assuring with each child and every parent. This ministry and the service of the staff have profoundly touched our lives. It is a blessing that our family has been a part of Valley Center Preschool since its earliest days.

It was during the summer of 2014 that we prayed and sought a preschool for my older daughter, Olivia. I felt uncertain and uneasy. Where would she go? Who would take care of her with as much love and kindness as I do? How could I spend my days in peace not knowing exactly what she was

going through at any given moment? I think every mother asks herself these questions. We had decided to wait until Olivia was three years old to send her out into the big, big world and that moment was approaching rapidly. It was exactly at that time that Pastor Jayme Lenker mentioned to me that PazNaz was opening another preschool at the Valley Center site. I had recently driven past there and I knew the location was situated conveniently close to my work. Then she told me that opening day was scheduled for January 2015, which I thought was odd because preschools usually start a new school year in the fall. I still remember that very moment in Pastor Jayme's backyard. The warm sun was shining down on us. Many moms and little ones had gathered that day to connect and support one another. The children were laughing as we pushed them on the swings. Was it really an odd date to open a preschool? Not at all! Opening day would coincide with Olivia's third birthday! God works in mysterious ways, and I knew in my spirit that he was opening this door for us. All we had to do was follow the call to walk through it.

Our next step was to visit the school. From the moment we set foot on the campus, Olivia was enamored with this new place. She pranced around the halls eagerly. She beamed as she approached each room. Finally, she ran to one of the classrooms. After entering, she claimed it for herself and for our family by saying, "This one is *my* classroom, mommy!" In doing so she not only secured her spot on the registration list, but she also confirmed in us that this was the place God wanted us to be at that moment.

Olivia started with the inaugural class at Valley Center Preschool and she is now in her third and final year in the program. My daughter enjoys every day she spends there learning and laughing. My second daughter, Alyssa, started attending the preschool in the fall of 2016 as

well and currently attends three days a week. Since Alyssa's very first day, she runs off to her classroom without hesitation. In the morning, when Alyssa wakes up, she asks me, "Is it a school day, mommy?" On the occasions that I say yes, she responds with a delightful, "Yay, yay, yay!" It makes my heart dance and floods my spirit with peace knowing my girls have a place where they feel they belong.

It is truly a blessing to find those moments when I can rest in God's peace and trust his plan for my children. Life can seem so hectic with little ones and big responsibilities. As we boarded this roller coaster called parenting, our infants have turned into toddlers, our toddlers have turned into preschoolers, and one of our preschoolers is about to turn into a Kindergarten student. Through this transition, I have had to learn to let my children go knowing God will keep them. I am learning to love them so fully, as God does, so their lives align with his purpose and not merely that of my own desire. As I do so, Jesus says that my joy will be complete (John 15:11). Jesus promises that if we remain in him, that he will remain in us. What an assurance!

As a parent it can be overwhelming to think of what our children are facing in this world full of distraction and danger. However; I must choose not to dwell on those things. Instead I choose the hope and joy that Jesus offers. Although I have the great responsibility of nurturing the physical, mental, social, and emotional well-being of my children, I must also remember that I am responsible for nurturing their spiritual growth. Our family is blessed knowing that the teachers and staff at Valley Center Preschool and the body of Christ

at PazNaz truly share this task with us. On both campuses, our family has experienced the love and joy of Christ through thoughtful and thriving children's ministries.

As I wait for my daughters at school in the afternoon, I often admire the playground and I am filled with peace. As we walk to the car, my older daughter frequently asks me to read the words painted on the colorful wooden pencils that are posted along the playground fence. They read: *love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control*. Each time we read these words it is yet another reminder that each one of us, no matter our age or size, is here to bear fruit for God's kingdom. As we remain in him, he will remain in us. He will never let us go.

- Heidi Headcock

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***In His Image presents***



**SOBS**  
**SAVE OUR SANITY**

**A Day of Fun for Special Needs Kids  
Of All Ages & their Siblings**

**Saturday, June 10, from 10:00 am-2:00 pm  
Room 123, Lower Arms Hall - FREE!**

**You don't want to miss out on this great opportunity! This free event provides a day of fun for the kids and a break for the parents. Childcare will be provided by cleared and trained volunteers for ages preschool to young adults. Space is limited. Registration is available online at [www.paznaz.org/special-needs](http://www.paznaz.org/special-needs) by June 4.**

**Contact Kryz Strong with questions at [strongkrys@yahoo.com](mailto:strongkrys@yahoo.com) or 626.482.6725.**



# HOCKEY PUCKS & *Answered Prayers* by Rebecca Conrad



**E**very Sunday afternoon and Wednesday evening I could count on having a house full of teens playing video games and emptying out my refrigerator before and after Temple City Nazarene youth group. I wouldn't have had it any other way (even though my carpet and furniture paid the price). Unfortunately, the community changed and my daughter Sydney's group started diminishing. She was devastated to find out she was the only teen interested in attending the Nazarene Youth Conference, so she joined the PazNaz youth group. She became fast friends with Pastor Jayme Lenker and her love for little ones had her volunteering in childcare. This is how I became involved at PazNaz, and my life has been blessed ever since. This is my story of an answered prayer.

Once Sydney laced up her first pair of skates and started playing hockey, she immediately fell in love and said that she wanted to go to college to play hockey and one day play in the NHL. My beautiful dreamer! She was offered a full-ride to a college in the Midwest ... which meant no ice hockey. Sydney has played hockey since she was five, from roller hockey to ice hockey, from all girls' teams to Pasadena's SCAHA championship winning co-ed team. When she's not playing, she referees and coaches. Giving up hockey was not an option. So she turned them down, confident she would find a way.

During Sydney's final semester at Citrus College we prayed for guidance. She decided to continue with roller hockey and attend a local college for her undergraduate studies in kinesiology. I prayed, even pleaded, with God. If anyone deserved an opportunity, it was Sydney. She devoted herself to her teammates and the kids she worked with season after season at summer

camp, all while working three jobs to help me pay rent and bills.

Our prayers were definitely answered in May when she heard from a coach in Connecticut. Post University was starting a women's hockey team and they wanted her. She asked when she needed to fly out for tryouts. She was told she already had a spot on the team and all they needed was her application! I asked the tough question, "What kind of scholarship money are we talking about? After all, they called you." She was disheartened to learn there were no scholarships. The coach told her to apply and that they would work on other options. Being a private out-of-state university, we were going to need a lot of options!

As an excited mother, I shared her good fortune with everyone in the office at PazNaz. That's when

we saw truly miraculous things happening! Sydney's grades were good enough that the school offered her academic scholarships and, with her federal aid, she only needed \$25,000. I prayed, continually hearing, "Just let her go ... Just put her on the plane ... Just get her there." I thought, what kind of mom puts her child on a plane to travel clear across the country to be homeless?

Sydney continued to fill out grant and scholarship applications and was able to get that figure down to \$17,000. She had received more than 50% of her tuition and a one way ticket to Connecticut with her teammate, Anna. Sydney had told her coach about Anna and he added her to the team. I found myself praying all the time. She had worked so hard all her life for this, devoting herself to others, volunteering her time and her talents year after year. She always lifts up others and helps them. How could she be so close and yet so far?

One day, as I was listening to Air 1, I heard Hillary Scott sing "Thy Will."

*Like a child on my knees all that comes to me is ... Thy will be done, Thy will be done ... I know you see me, I know you hear me ... Lord, Your plans are for me ... Goodness you have in store.*

Every time I heard that song I stopped and prayed, "Thy will be done, Lord." All I heard was, "Just get her there ... Just put her on the plane."

On August 24, Sydney called her coach to let him know that she didn't have the money. He told her, "Just get here." Discouraged, she posted on Facebook that her dreams were over and that she couldn't come up with the rest of the tuition.

The next morning I walked into work numb, feeling that this amazing opportunity was fading away. As I walked to my desk, Pastor Julie Keith, stopped me and said, "Rebecca, I know you don't know where the money is going to come from, but have you thought that sometimes you just have to act on faith? *You need to put her on the plane and just get her there!*" I had no words. I wanted to fall to my

knees and cry. I looked at Julie and told her that those were the exact words I had heard over and over in prayer. Julie smiled and said, "Well, what more do you need to hear?" Nothing.

I called my daughter and told her, "Pack your bags. I am getting you on that plane! Don't get excited because I don't have the money and I don't know where it is coming from. I only know I need to let you go! If you can think of any way to raise money between now and when I come get you, let me know." I hung up and prayed in gratitude for sending Julie as an affirmation of what I had been hearing all along and thanksgiving for the hope that all was going as God had planned.

When I got home, Sydney was all packed and waiting for me, holding her acoustic and electric guitar. She said the mom of the triplets she had coached called, and they wanted her to see their championship game that night. She also told Sydney about a pawn shop by the rink. I went to my room and grabbed every piece of jewelry I could think of, as well as my sterling silverware. Since she didn't think she was going, Sydney hadn't picked up her sports physical, so we raced to the doctor's office to find the paperwork wasn't complete. They told us to come back another day. I told them, "This was supposed to be ready yesterday. Her flight is at 5:00 am tomorrow. Are you going to be here at 2:00 am?" I was told to come back in an hour. Three hours later the paperwork and blood work was completed, but the pawn shop was closed. I told Sydney, "No worries. I will go tomorrow." So we headed to the hockey game.

Everyone at the game gave Sydney lots of love, wished her well, and congratulated her even though they did not know the full situation. Around the middle of the first period I noticed her texting feverishly. She wouldn't stop to tell me what was going on. Thirty

minutes later Sydney showed me her phone. Her former coach, EB Jenson, saw her Facebook posts. Sydney had remained friends with his sons, Ryan and Sean, who also played hockey. They told their father about what she had been doing to raise money and how she planned to pay back a student loan. God bless the man, the night before she was to fly to Connecticut he co-signed her online student loan! If she had not packed for the flight earlier we would not have had her required medical records ready.

I walked out to the parking lot and broke down in tears, thanking God for his love and blessings. I am grateful to know that there are incredible people in our lives, praying for us, and answering our prayers as well. We just have to be bold enough to follow through. I only had the strength to let go and send my daughter nearly 3,000 miles away because of God's grace. I am very grateful for everyone's prayers.

Sydney's inaugural season was amazing and the team moved up to Division 1, which means there will be scholarships. As long as she continues playing, her tuition will be covered.

As a side note, one of her professors notified her that during her senior year they have an internship for her with the American Hockey League, and 2016-2017 was the first season for the Women's NHL.

I just needed to let her go ... to put her on that plane and get her there. God is so good!

- Rebecca Conrad

**I had no words. I wanted to fall to my knees and cry. I looked at Julie and told her that those were the exact words I heard over and over in prayer. Julie smiled and said, "Well, what more do you need to hear?"**



*Women's Ministries*

# *Testimony & Praise*

*Friday, June 9, at 7:00 pm in Lee Chapel*

*Come hear the testimonies of several PazNaz ladies, and share in a time of worship, food, and fellowship in Gilmore Hall following the service.*

*For more information, contact Megan Marsh at [mmarsh@paznaz.org](mailto:mmarsh@paznaz.org) or 626.351.2429.*

*Free childcare when you RSVP to Erin Miller at [emiller@paznaz.org](mailto:emiller@paznaz.org).*



# New to PazNaz?

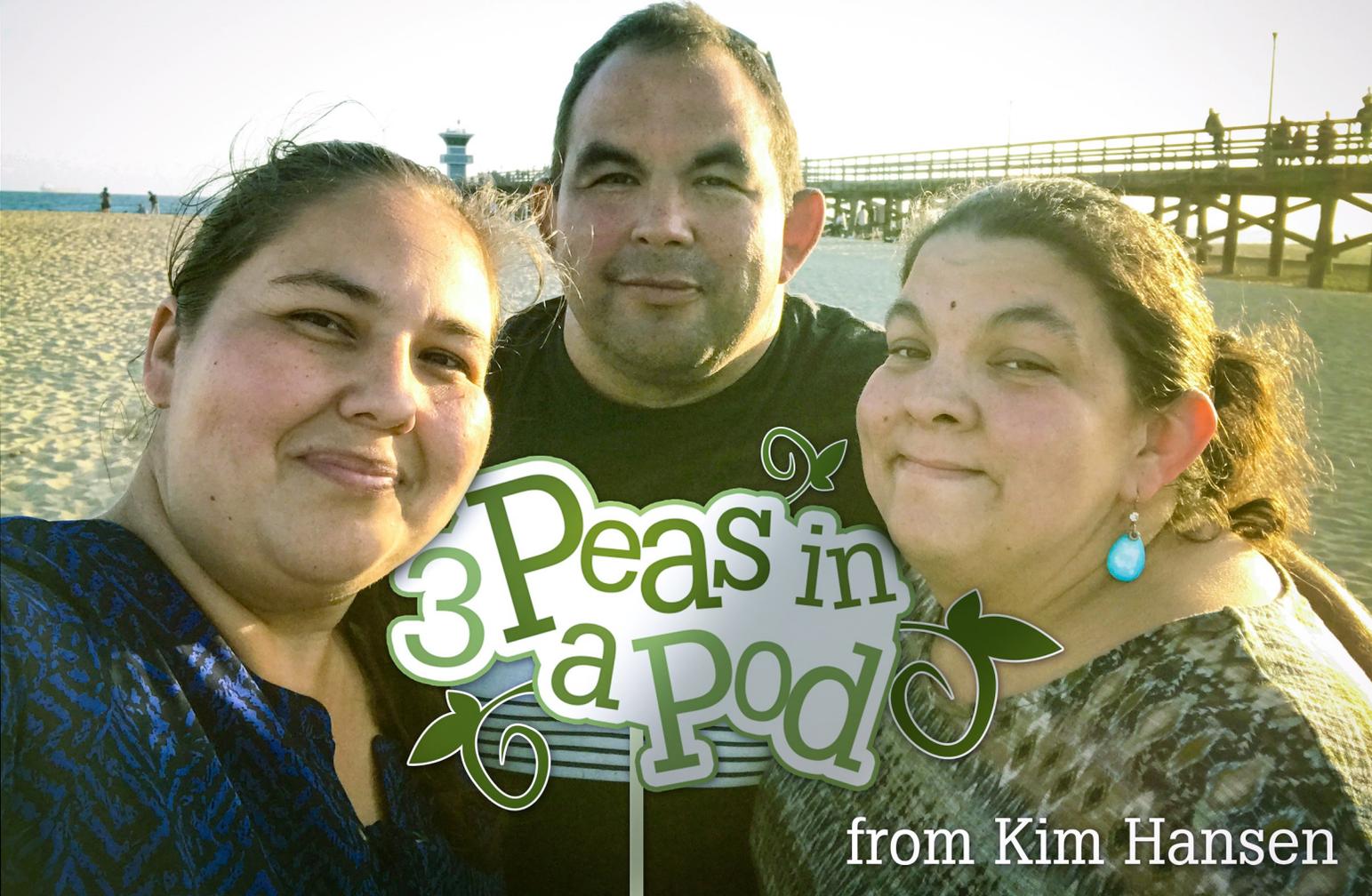


**Sunday, June 11, at 9:30 am**

**Pastor Tara Beth Leach's Office, Administration Building**

Are you new to PazNaz and want to find out more about this church community? Are you looking to connect and become involved in the life at PazNaz? Then *Coffee Talk with a Pastor* is for you! You are invited to come the second Sunday of the month to meet with one of the pastoral staff and have your questions answered in a small intimate setting.

Contact Pastor Julie Keith for more information at [jkeith@paznaz.org](mailto:jkeith@paznaz.org) or 626.351.2485.



# 3 Peas in a Pod

from Kim Hansen

We are John, Elizabeth, and Kim Hansen; three peas in a pod that love volunteering and have felt a call to teach and learn from the youth of the church. We are three siblings that have attended PazNaz for almost three years and have been looking for ways to help and become more involved.

In October 2016, we heard about the upcoming "Jump In Sunday." This was a special day when all the ministries of PazNaz would be highlighted and we'd be able to find a way to "jump in" and get involved. During the luncheon, we listened to the wonderful pastors from each ministry explain all the ways we could participate. We eventually felt God's guidance to go in the direction that he has led us in our career. John is a teacher and also coordinates the Sports Medicine Program at Los Alamitos High School, while Elizabeth and I are currently transitional kindergarten (TK) teachers at a private school in Whittier.

Soon after getting involved, we each felt a call to assist in different ministries. John quickly felt a connection with PazNaz's High School Ministries with Pastors Mackenzie Smith and Heather Handley, Elizabeth connected with Pastor Faith Romasco in Early Childhood, and I was drawn to Elementary Ministries after seeing the connection Pastor Doug Ravasdy had with the students. I get so much joy from my time with the children down in *The Cave* while helping in the 3<sup>rd</sup> grade Sunday School class.

In addition to volunteering, we are blessed to be members of the Disciples Sunday School class. We enjoy sharing treats and fellowshiping with these dedicated people, as well as listening to great testimonies and praying together. We have made some excellent friends there.

It has been a real blessing to see all the wonderful things PazNaz is doing and offering to

the community. We've been grateful to be a part of some of it. In October 2016, we helped with the Bubble Station at the annual *Love Walk & Roll* from PazNaz's Special Needs Ministries. At this year's Eggstravaganza, Elizabeth and I helped out at the Paw Patrol bounce house and John assisted at the rock climbing wall. We really enjoyed welcoming people with a friendly smile and seeing their faces light up with excitement as they participated in each of these events.

Our family has always been one to volunteer. John felt humbled to go with Men's Ministries to feed the homeless with Central City Community Church of the Nazarene. John first began volunteering with The American Red Cross many years ago. Elizabeth and I have assisted with many fundraisers for charities over the years. We feel that volunteering is a gift to share and not just something we get to do. "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in." Matthew 25:35

When John was diagnosed with cancer, all three of us were looking for a new church. We hoped to find a welcoming place that would connect us to Christ, and we eventually found that at PazNaz. The choir and orchestra were among the first things that stood out to me. I feel blessed to belong to a church that has such great music ministry! I think that the connection of scripture to song speaks straight to the heart. We also love that PazNaz is a multicultural congregation. Some of our favorite Sunday mornings are when we get to hear from Pastor Marcos of La Fuente Ministries, Pastor Min from Mandarin Ministries, or any of the other inspirational pastors. It just shows us how beautifully different we all are, but that we all celebrate one glorious God! "For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink." 1 Corinthians 12:13

Also, I have to mention our beautiful balcony seating. We love that our church has such a beautiful building to worship in with a space where I can take it all in. We love seeing our #balconypeeps every Sunday morning and treasure the wonderful people and friendships we have formed in those seats.

### **Our Favorite Part of Volunteering**

**Elizabeth:** *It is such a joy to help a sweet little one get settled so mom and dad can attend their class. I love that they can laugh, smile, play, and share peace, love and kindness.*

**Kim:** *In Creating On Wednesdays (COW) with Elementary Ministries, I love being able to see these creative young minds discover and explore in games, activities, and fellowship, all while welcoming and showing love for our one true King. This sight is such a gift and by far my favorite part. On Sunday it is always fun to hear the children read from the Bible and then explore the text through activities and crafts. I feel blessed and happy that God has brought me to meet these amazing people that lead and help in these classes.*

**John:** *I love being involved in Men's Ministries where I get to learn and discuss how to best serve God in my life while discussing topics that are specific to being a man. I also love the time I spend with the Disciples Sunday School class and how we all volunteer together. Most recently I've started working with the high school students and am excited to hear and see how God is working in these young people's lives.*

In our spare time, with cameras in hand, we love to drive by the beach or take trips through the mountains. God has given us so much beauty in the world. We love to capture everything he has created and enjoy sharing photos with friends. When we aren't out traveling on a day trip, you will find us at our home away from home, Disneyland. We go to the park often and visit Disney World about twice a year. That is us ... simple, happy, and blessed. The three peas in a pod.

- Kim Hansen

When John was diagnosed with cancer, all three of us were looking for a new church. We hoped to find a welcoming place that would connect us to Christ, and we eventually found that at PazNaz.



# SUMMER BBQ

 **Pasadena  
PrimeTime**  
PazNaz Senior Adult Ministries

**Thursday, June 15**

**6:00 pm in Gilmore Hall**

Tickets are \$17 / Purchase yours by June 11

Contact Sylva Hekimian for more information  
at [shekimian@paznaz.org](mailto:shekimian@paznaz.org) or 626.351.2426.