

HOPE.



RACHEL'S VINEYARD

A journey to hope and healing

We all have things in our pasts that have wounded us. We may carry shame and close off those parts of ourselves from others – even from God.

Rachel's Vineyard Retreat offers healing for those who carry wounds from an abortion experience. Bridgehaven now hosts these retreats twice a year, with the most recent taking place over the weekend of March 9. To help the facilitating team prepare a couple weeks before the retreat, the Bridgehaven staff went through an exercise based on the story of Lazarus that Rachel's Vineyard participants go through during the retreat.

If you're not familiar with the story, by the time Jesus arrives on the scene, Lazarus had been dead and wrapped in a tomb for four days. Lazarus' sisters say to Jesus, "If only you had been here, our brother would not have died." Jesus' heart breaks for their grief, and He weeps with them. But He has something greater planned – something beyond

anything they could imagine. He orders the stone guarding the tomb to be rolled away and commands Lazarus to come out. Lazarus steps out of his tomb, his burial linens are taken off, and he breathes in his new life.

In this exercise, one of the facilitators read the story, and we meditated on Jesus' love, power, and healing. We were given a chance to identify parts of us that had died because of sin and have those parts wrapped in bandages. For example, some chose to have their hands wrapped to represent feeling powerless to change, while others chose to wrap their heads to show a spirit damaged by negative thoughts. We then could choose to be wrapped in a sheet – buried. We felt the death and coldness of our tombs as we identified with Lazarus' sisters. "Lord, if only you had been here, our brother would not have died."

Bridgehaven's mission is to **empower choices for life** through Christ-centered education and support.

"This retreat allowed me to gain peace and understanding about my grief and the joy of motherhood."

-Rachel's Vineyard participant

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"A weekend that began with trepidation and doubt moved me through many emotions and experiences that resulted in inner peace and has been a turning point in my life."

-Rachel's Vineyard participant

But it doesn't end there! One of the facilitators came to us one at a time and asked if we believed Jesus is the Resurrection and the Life – that if we believed in him, we would have no death. Upon proclaiming a simple yes, we were commanded to come forth in the name of Jesus, and our tomb and bandages were taken away. We were told to breathe in our new life and then went into a time of discussing what we had just gone through.

It was a powerful experience.

Rachel's Vineyard Retreat is filled with exercises like this, designed to help participants work through their experiences and wounds, to allow God to help them breathe in new life. Some exercises walk through Scripture that relates to their experience, while others are designed to help them deal with their emotions – namely anger and grief. They are given permission to mourn for their children and

to build relationships with them, which is something most of the participants have never even thought of. On the final day, a memorial service is held to honor their children before the participants depart.

If you or someone you know could benefit from an experience like this, Bridgehaven will be hosting our next Rachel's Vineyard Retreat this coming November 2-4. We also provide counseling for abortion recovery throughout the year. Give us a call or visit our website to learn more.

"There truly was healing to be had, walls to come down, and all of the guilt and shame to be released. A tender heart was uncovered that had been buried for so long."

-Rachel's Vineyard participant

OPTIMAL HEALTH CLINIC: STI TESTING

This past quarter, Bridgehaven began offering an Optimal Health Clinic with limited STI testing to clients and their partners through a partnership with the Iowa Department of Health.

Who? We are offering the testing to current Earn While You Learn and pregnancy test clients, as well as their partners.

What? There are four possible tests. The Department of Health advises each client on which to take based on their individual risk factors. Details of the four tests are listed in the graph below.

A member of the Bridgehaven team will also offer client counseling and prayer.

When? The STI clinics began on February 1, 2018 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m., and they will continue every other Thursday until further notice.

Why? Statistics:

- Gonorrhea and Chlamydia are the most common STIs in Linn County
- Linn County has the second highest STI rate in the state of Iowa
- 90 percent of the population that is STI-positive experiences no signs or

symptoms

- Bridgehaven served 507 women with pregnancy tests in 2017. We know these women and their partners are sexually active, and they have already approached us for our services. We can do more to give them the information they need to be a healthy family.

Clients who participate in STI testing are 60 to 70 percent more likely to choose abstinence*. If they simply take the one-time pregnancy test, only 15 to 20 percent choose abstinence*. By offering STI testing, we now have more opportunities to water the seeds that have been planted, reach abortion-vulnerable clients, and share the Gospel.

We know STI testing is somewhere on Bridgehaven's roadmap for the future. We are going to learn a lot from this opportunity. When the time comes, Bridgehaven will be more equipped to provide these services through our own resources.

*Statistics from CareNet; Bridgehaven's National Affiliate

Test	Type of Test	Results
HIV	Finger Poke	If finger poke (results in 20 mins) is positive, will draw blood (results in 1 week).
Hepatitis C	Finger Poke	If finger poke (results in 20 mins) is positive, will draw blood (results in 1 week).
Gonorrhea	Urine	Results in 3-5 days.
Chlamydia	Urine	Results in 3-5 days.

With your support, we are able to offer our services at no cost to clients. They do not have to worry about insurance paperwork or facing a bill after a visit here.



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Please direct address changes to mail@bridgehavencr.org or the address above.

Your support is changing lives