

# Light of Hope ministry offers hope in the face of difficulties

- Tom Fink
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With Light of Hope ministry, a local woman has taken her own pain and turned it into purpose.

After overcoming her own personal struggles with abuse, addiction, grief, depression, Layla Freeman of Claremore had to face the biggest loss of her life — the loss of her daughter Ashley.

“Ashley was my ray of sunshine,” Freeman said. “She loved nature, animals, art and writing, but when she turned 16, depression set in and she became withdrawn, so one day, I started digging through her closet and found drugs.”

Having faced and overcome her own addictions, Freeman knew from personal experience the dangerous slope that drug use can put its users on — and she felt helpless as her daughter’s life spiraled out of control.

“It begins as insanity for a parent as you’re trying to get control of something that you have no control over,” she said. “You can’t figure it out. Pills are hidden easily.”

Freeman said tried everything, but Ashley’s drug use progressed to cocaine and heroin and always more pills.

“We even discovered she was doing Meals on Wheels on purpose to get into elderly people’s homes and steal from medicine cabinets,” said Freeman. “It was heartbreaking.”

Freeman’s daughter’s drug use escalated to the point that she died from an overdose which led to kidney failure on Christmas eve 2013, leaving behind a devastated family.

“There’s nothing like a child loss, nothing like a child loss — there are no words for it,” said Freeman.

Out of her loss, Freeman created Light of Hope.

“Light of Hope is a non-profit charitable ministry outreach for addiction and other life difficulties,” she said. “Our programs help assist families and individuals through support groups, education, helpful resources, and by encouraging people with hope for the future.”

Freeman said Light of Hope is a safe, non-judgmental place for person and families to come for support and encouragement, offering them hope for the future.

“Light of Hope offers prayer, weekly encouragement support groups, monthly speaker panels, quarterly seminars and community education as well,” Freeman said. “We assist individuals and family who are ready to seek help. Oftentimes, the most difficult step towards recovery is simply admitting the need for help. We help them be locating appropriate resource facilities, specific to their situation and support them as they make these important life decision and take steps towards recovery.”

Freeman said Light of Hope also provides resource assistant to individuals to help them reintegrate into their new life after treatment, as well as partner with schools to provide educational classes, assemblies and seminars.

“We’ve partnered with Operation Aware to bring awareness to elementary and middle schools about drug awareness, Internet safety, suicide awareness, and several other subjects and dangers kids may face,” she said.

Additionally, Freeman has authored “Hope in the Struggle,” a book dedicated in part to the memory of her daughter, Ashley, which she wrote as another resource for those dealing with tough times.

“When we face situations that seem impossible, we may want to give up, often struggling with isolation and depression during very hard times, but this is when we need to understand the hope awaiting us when we place our trust in God,” she said. “I wrote ‘Hope in the Struggle’ to help walk its readers through those difficult times in life, to bring encouragement with the 90-day devotionals within to help people find hope in their struggles.”

A portion of the sales of Freeman’s book benefit “Light of Hope,” a non-profit 501(c)(3).

To learn more about Freeman and the resources available through Light of Hope, visit [www.lightofhopeinc.org](http://www.lightofhopeinc.org).