

SERVING IN PRISON CHANGES HEARTS.....

Longtime Volunteer Neil Hook who passed away in the fall of 2025 will be dearly missed.

His daughter Leslie writes this letter to Kairos Prison Ministry.

Kairos Community,

I would first like to thank each of you for your love and support in visiting and attending my dad's service, Neal Hook. Our family truly appreciated your presence, your prayers, and the kindness you have shown us during this time. Kairos was one of the greatest blessings in both my mom and dad's lives, and I wanted to share just how deeply this ministry meant to them.

Before Kairos, Dad had already dedicated much of his retirement to serving others. He was one of the original seven volunteers from local churches and temples who helped establish North County Interfaith Council. He worked tirelessly to bring together the right people, make the organization legal, and build something that would go on to serve millions through food assistance, medical support, and rehabilitation intervention. Though the organization later changed its name, its impact continues to this day. After serving for years in leadership positions there, Dad felt he was ready to step back and slow down. Then Kairos came into his life.

This ministry was especially significant because our family's experience with incarceration had been deeply personal. My sister, Debra, struggled with heroin addiction beginning in high school and, despite many interventions, was never fully free from that battle. Dad once believed very strongly that if someone was in jail, they deserved to be there, and prison ministry was not something he ever imagined himself doing. Visiting my sister every other weekend for a year while she was serving time was a painful experience, and he often said he never wanted to go through that again. Then some friends invited him to simply come and give Kairos a try, and something changed in his heart. Dad and Mom became wholly committed. They poured their time, faith, and love into the men they served, yet they would come home saying that no matter how much they tried to give, they were always the ones who felt blessed in return. The men on the inside, along with the Kairos teams serving beside them, gave my parents immeasurable joy, fellowship, and purpose.

Dad used to say in retirement that he did not want commitments and wanted the freedom to simply enjoy life. That quickly became laughable, because before long

every vacation, family gathering, and plan was carefully scheduled around Kairos weekends. They protected their Kairos time faithfully, and that commitment continued for more than twenty-five years. Dad was, I believe, ninety-eight (98) years old when he served his final Kairos weekend at the prison. His love for the men on the inside and for his fellow volunteers never wavered.

Mom's love never wavered either. Although in later years women were not able to be as directly involved inside the prison, she faithfully served with the outside crew and remained deeply connected to the men and the mission. She baked thousands upon thousands of homemade cookies for Kairos over the years, no small accomplishment in a household full of cookie thieves. Those cookies, along with every banner, decoration, and countless behind-the-scenes tasks, were all prepared with love. In everything Dad took on, Mom was right there beside him. It was always a team effort.

At first Dad thought Kairos would be too much, the commute, the prison regulations, the concerns from others, and all the logistics involved. But before long Kairos became a part of who he was. He especially loved leaning on trusted friends for biblical guidance and would often laugh, saying that when one of the men asked him a question he could not answer, he would send him straight to Charlie (Baker).

The stories my parents brought home from Kairos both broke and healed their hearts. They were filled with compassion, hope, miracles, laughter, and moments that stayed with them forever. Kairos gave them years of love, happiness, fellowship, and deep purpose in a season of life when they thought they were simply slowing down.

I simply wanted to share how profoundly Kairos blessed my parents' lives. All they ever wanted to do was bless others, and through this ministry they received far more than they ever expected.

Thank you for being such an extraordinary Kairos community and for loving my parents so well.

God bless each of you, and may Kairos continue to reach those who think this ministry may not be "their thing," just as it did for my mom and dad, only to become one of the most meaningful parts of their lives.

With gratitude, Leslie Hook Froud