

## FAITH

By Marsha Fisher

# THE 'ULTIMATE journey' for Hobsons

Convergent experiences provide abilities to build the Christ-Life Center.

Area residents will soon have access to a new community center with a Christian-based focus. Located at 1900 N.W. 86th St. in Clive, this center is the fulfillment of a dream of a local couple whose Christ-Life Ministries and their Ultimate Journey curriculum have been impacting local people for the last 19 years. The grand opening of the Christ-Life Center will be Aug. 11, 1-4 p.m.

The 12,000-square-foot building, formerly Ryan's Steakhouse, has been completely renovated. Today, it provides a welcoming atmosphere and gathering space, a large conference area, multiple classrooms, small counseling rooms and a future coffee house to be called the Ultimate Grounds.

However, there is a back story to this new non-denominational resource center for churches and the community. Through a series of "God events," Jim and Kathie Hobson's vision of helping people find themselves through a relationship with God has come true.

About 40 years ago, two kids in Urbandale met and fell in love. They graduated from Urbandale High School and traveled to separate colleges: Jim to UNI in Cedar Falls and Kathie to Evangel University, a private Christian college in Springfield, Missouri. They kept up a long-distance relationship and married after college graduation. Kathie went on to graduate from Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, and Jim decided that being a CPA in a Chicago-based firm would be a growing experience. With a master's degree in counseling, Kathie found a job in a counseling center and Jim continued for 10 years with the accounting firm while they made their home in the Wheaton area and had their two daughters, Rachel and Meredith. Then, Jim became the CFO and general manager for a large construction firm in Chicago. Fast-forward five years, and their journey took a sharp "right turn."

"Begin with the end in mind," an effective habit from Stephen Covey's book, jarred Jim as he contemplated whether he was doing things that have meaning and make a difference. This was highlighted by his young daughter's comment about what he did at work: "Daddy goes to meetings and cleans off his desk."

After six months of prayer and considering his gifts from God and strengths of character, Jim resigned his high-powered corporate job and came back to Des Moines to work as an administrator in a large church. Kathie began



Christ-Life Center, 1900 86th St., Clive will serve as a gathering space with coffee house, as well as provide Christian-based community education classes. Photo submitted

working as a counselor at Teen Challenge of the Midlands, and there they met John Marquez, who became their mentor and creator of the curriculum for the Ultimate Journey materials. With her counseling background, Kathie knew firsthand the struggles many people experience in life.

"We had a vision of providing a safe, comfortable place where people could come and be accepted for who they are at this stage in life and learn of the love of God and grace," says Kathie. "However, the coping skills we teach are for all, regardless of whether someone is a Christ follower."

In 2000, the Hobsons began Christ-Life Ministries, a nonprofit that provides resource classes and materials for churches and individuals. These three-phase materials have been used by churches throughout the local area, the state and the country. The classes were offered locally, but previously the office of the ministry was only 2,000 square feet, so classes were limited.

Three years ago, the miracles that have contributed to the establishment of the new center began.

"In the fall of 2016, a woman called and wanted to talk about donating some money to help our ministry," says Jim. "She had been through the Ultimate Journey experience, had been a facilitator and wanted to increase the opportunity for people to also experience the strengthening she had in her relationship with God and the healing."



Little by little, with board approval, task force studies and many small leaps of faith, the offer to purchase the building was made. It fell through. Navigating the financial details and business requirements for this property purchase was where Jim's CPA and corporate training provided the needed expertise.

"About a year later, on April 3, 2018, we were able to purchase the property for \$650,000 — almost \$1.5 million less than it was first assessed in 2017," says Jim.

The demolition began for the renovation. For almost six months, Jim and his brother, Sam Hobson, retired, came every day to take down the cement walls and reconfigure the building to an open, accessible space. Jim's experience as general manager for a construction firm gave him guidance.

"Then, volunteers were provided by God, and we were on our way. Architectural advice from Simonson and Associates and general contractor consultant Mark Riley provided the leadership to organize volunteers from all types of construction trades," says Jim.

"Literally, every day, God provided what we needed," adds Kathie. "It's all about relationships with others and with God on our life's journey."

For full schedule of classes available at the Christ-Life Center, check out [www.clcenter.org](http://www.clcenter.org) or call 515-251-6838. ■