

CAM UPDATE

Christian Aftercare Ministries for Ex-Offenders

Non-profit Organization

www.christianaftercare.com

MARCH 2017

Established 1994

FROM THE DIRECTOR

By Paul Roussel

Praise! Again this Christmas Pastor Carlson had a service at Valley Street Jail, wonderfully arranged by Captain Scurry. Fifty-one men and women attended. While none responded to an invitation to accept Jesus, God's word never comes back void.

HELPING HANDS HELPS MEET CRITICAL NEED

Housing is critical as men and women are released from prison, especially in the winter, when they may find themselves suddenly homeless. Our own Helping Hands is taking quite a few men directly from jail or prison. In addition, approximately four weeks ago, the former St. Peter's Church in Concord opened up as a six-month (over the winter) shelter with NO restrictions—that means sex offenders are welcome. This meets a great need for Nashua, Manchester, and Concord areas. Manchester Parole recently put many boarding houses off limits because of drug infestation, so we continue to meet new landlords to try to fill that gap.

CAM AND PAROLE GROUP SHARE COMMON GOAL

As our ministry deals with the statewide drug crisis, we realize that only Jesus as their personal Savior can help the people we minister to overcome their addiction. Secular authorities treat addiction as a disease; the Bible calls it sin. CAM works closely with the statewide prison parole group. Parole is these days a wonderful resource to help men and women successfully reenter society. So we work well together with a common goal in mind. Our ministry includes the spiritual component (a personal relationship with Jesus) to help ex-prisoners successfully reenter society. ~Paul

MY PATH TO HELPING HANDS Part 2

By CAM Board Member
Guy Torgersen

After thirty-plus years working full time in a career while volunteering in the NH Men's Prison in Concord, Guy faced a layoff and a decision. After obtaining his Associate's Degree in Addiction Counseling, he was offered a part-time position at Helping Hands. His story from the December newsletter picks up here.

I became a part-time case manager for Helping Hands, a Christian organization that provides Transitional Sober Housing to men from the streets, prison, and treatment centers.

I felt the Lord opened up this wonderful opportunity for me to use my gifts and minister to those from the prisons, the streets, and treatment centers.

The Executive Director, Richard Doyle, bumped up my hours and within three months I was working days again, Monday through Friday, thirty hours per week. I have now been at Helping Hands for over six months and was recently given full-time status. I go to school and take two classes per semester. I have the opportunity to counsel the men on their struggles with life, addiction, prison, and the streets. I set up an All Recovery Meeting in our Helping Hands building, as well as a Bible study for the men, which I facilitate with my wife, Deb.

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(My Path to Helping Hands, *continued from page 1*)

I drug test men in the house for their safety and the safety of the other men in the house. I have the opportunity to share my faith and help these men with life skills, coping skills, long-term sobriety, and prayer. The men that have been there a while tell me they feel the difference in the house since I started. I spend time with them, pray for them, and they feel safe. The Lord is placing a hedge of protection on our building and the men in it.

I believe the Lord placed all Christian men in leadership positions in this place, and he is helping us all prosper.

My job has me coordinating open beds with the parole board, with case managers at the prison and treatment centers, and with men walking into our shelter to hopefully get a bed for the winter. I set them up with Medicaid, Supplemental Social Security or Disability, and job opportunities.

I also encourage the men as many struggle with low self-esteem coming out of the prison or treatment centers. They don't feel they are worth anything. I try to show them that God loves each of us where we are at and no matter what the men have done, our God is a God of second chances who loves us even when we stumble. I want the men to know that and see that. I want outsiders to know that people don't choose addiction. In many cases, mismanaged prescription pain meds represents 75 percent of the current heroin users. Homelessness for many of us is just a few paychecks away. The Lord is teaching me compassion lessons every day.

Jeremiah 29:11 (NIV): *“For I know the plans I have for you,” declares the LORD, “plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*

This job has changed me and hopefully changed those I encounter. I have a stronger, more compassionate faith. Prosperity is not the same as your “income or monetary blessings.” The Lord prospers us in so many ways that don't necessarily involve money but can be spiritual blessings also. I am so thankful for my career change. I was not expecting it; however, God is using it for His glory to touch others with the love of Jesus Christ. ~Guy

MY PERSONAL TESTIMONY

By Christos Svoleantopoulos

I spent all of my teenage years and into my thirties as an abuser of drugs, living a very ungodly life. My days were spent high on drugs, seeking my next high or in pursuit of some exciting adventure or girl, all of which never gave any lasting satisfaction. In my early twenties I was looking for an easy way to make money so I could avoid the hard road of actually working for a living. I had a drug habit that needed to be satisfied, so selling drugs seemed like a good option. I was insane at the time because I saw absolutely nothing wrong with choosing a career as a drug dealer.

A crash happened in 1983 when I was arrested for possession with intent to distribute a controlled substance. At age twenty-three, I was sentenced to state prison for four to fifteen years.

I was on bail pending an appeal, which I was denied, and I was supposed to report to the prison to serve my sentence. I did not go. Instead, I fled the state. After roaming the country for a couple of years, I ended up in San Diego, CA, in 1990. I was very much a drug addict, sleeping and eating where I could. In 1992 I went to a group in a church to seek help getting off drugs.

During that meeting I saw a little book on a chair. I went over to see what it was. It was a small Gideon Bible.

I slipped it into my pocket hoping that no one saw me. I was not a Christian or a Bible-reading man, but somehow I knew that in this little book there was some hope for me. I started reading Matthew while detoxing on someone's couch and was invited to a Bible study and accepted Jesus Christ as my Lord and Savior. I do not know why, but I wanted Jesus. I became born again that day. I started attending church regularly from that day forward.

When I became a Christian, I knew that I had to surrender to the police. I could not claim to be a Christian and at the same time live as a fugitive.

Where was my faith, if indeed I had any?

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PLEASE PRAY . . . *that more women being released would take advantage of the things our ministry can help them with.*

(My Personal Testimony, *continued from page 2*)

I went to a pastor who counseled me to do just that. I hired a lawyer and after dragging my feet due to fear, I surrendered to the authorities on April 14, 1998, to serve out my sentence. I knew that the Lord was with me.

Psalm 139:7–8: *Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.*

When I went to jail and I heard that steel door slam; I asked God, “What was I thinking?” I could still be in sunny Southern California living a quiet life. Why was I here? Why didn’t God let me out? At that moment, my cell door opened and in walked my new cellmate, Lenny. He was big, tough-looking, with big muscles, long wild hair, and tattoos all over his body. “Hate” was tattooed across the knuckles of one fist and a cuss word across the knuckles of the other. He was agitated, angry, and swearing while he paced the cell. I was very frightened. Then he loudly yelled, “Why is God always doing this to me?” That was an opportunity if ever I heard one. I began telling him of my God and His Son Jesus Christ, and within twenty minutes Lenny was on his knees in the cell weeping and praying to receive Jesus. I had my answer too. The very next day I started a Bible study, and Lenny went every day and was full of peace and joy. I was blessed to see many such miracles throughout my stay. I got out on parole in January 2001 after serving three years.



I now attend Merrimack Valley Baptist Church and have become a Gideon—the same group that published the little Bible that was so instrumental in my salvation. I speak at churches and am the assistant chaplain at Middleton (MA) jail. I have the wonderful pleasure and privilege to be able to go into the jails and prisons of Massachusetts and New Hampshire, the same prison that I was an inmate in, and tell these men about the love of God through His son Jesus. I am also attending seminary and hope to graduate next May. I am hoping that with seminary credentials more prison doors will open for me so that I can tell more inmates about the love of Jesus Christ. ~*Christos*

NEW HAMPSHIRE REENTRY TASK FORCE

By Denis Frediani, Director

The New Hampshire Reentry Task Force is a group of local, state, and federal agencies partnering with a number of Christian organizations like Christian Aftercare Ministries and Vision New England. The task force has come together to assist a network of Bridge Churches in their endeavor to help ex-prisoners successfully transition from being behind bars to life in society. Specifically, it does this by:

1. Inviting additional healthy, well-balanced churches to join the network as needed.
2. Providing Bridge Church and Mentor training for churches that join the network.
3. Providing a mechanism by which network churches can share resources needed by the returning citizen.

Our Mission: Changing lives, minds, and communities through Jesus Christ.

Our Vision: Partnering with the church in order to unite, equip, and support the Christian community to provide reentry support to former inmates transitioning back into society while assisting them to reconnect with God through Jesus Christ.

EDITOR’S NOTE: Paul Roussel and Mike Grady of CAM are part of this task force.

CAM UPDATE
Christian Aftercare Ministries
50 Lowell Street
Manchester, NH 03101

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. Postage PAID
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TO ADDRESSEE OR CURRENT RESIDENT:



URGENTLY NEEDED DONATIONS:
microwaves, small apartment refrigerators, coffee makers, winter clothes, shoes, socks, jeans, slacks, boots, pots and pans



**FOR INFORMATION ABOUT DONATIONS,
PLEASE CALL OUR OFFICE: 603-669-5090.**

CHRISTIAN AFTERCARE MINISTRIES

Co-laborers with the Church in ministry to ex-offenders since 1994
www.christianaftercare.com

Office hours: Mon. & Wed. 8:00 a.m.–4:00 p.m.
Thursday: 2:30–6:00 p.m.
Phone: 603-669-5090

Tax-deductible donations may be made payable to
Christian Aftercare Ministries at
50 Lowell St., Manchester, NH 03101
Thank You for helping to meet our needs.

INVITE A SPEAKER: If you would like a CAM board member to visit your church or group to speak about this ministry, please call Paul Roussel, Director, at 603-669-5090 to schedule a date.

Board Members: Paul Roussel, Mike Grady, Kent Threlfall, Jean Metzger, Jack Shuler, Samson Duclair, Dave Grant, Ernie Kilman, Guy and Deb Torgersen, Don Grosso, Ron Menard

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