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#### Our Mission:

Our Mission: "Ministering through the heart of Jesus to the broken hearts of those impacted by the criminal justice system, both those incarcerated and re-entering and their families."



## In This Issue.....Sharing



### Louise's Corner

There has never been a Christmas since Kingsway started the Apple Tree Project in 1985 that we haven't seen God work in a miraculous way. This year I encountered an Angel. I received a letter from an inmate requesting gifts for her 2 sons for Christmas. She was in jail, the boy's father was in prison. She gave me the guardian, named Angel and a phone number to reach Angel. She failed to give me the boy's names or ages. OK God, how do I handle this? After calling Angel, I found out he was the Godfather of these boys age 12 and 14 and had agreed to take care of them. When I spoke with Angel, he told me he had saved money to get them something, but his car repairs took all his extra money. I gave the information to Pat and Carla to fix Christmas boxes for the boys. When Angel came to pick up the gifts, he shared that the oldest boy was being bullied because he didn't have a backpack or book bag. This was a last minute thing, and the gifts were not wrapped, but wrapping paper, etc. was sent with him for Angel to wrap. I had him check to be sure the gifts were suitable even though they had been prayed over when they were packed. In the box was a backpack for each, a game and a Bible along with a few small stocking stuffers. Angel left happy that the boys got a Bible. He really wanted them to have one as they did attend church. Angel was truly a living Angel.

The Banner is published as a bridge between you, Kingsway's supporters and the hands-on prison and family outreach ministry of Kingsway. The Banner welcomes your comments, suggestions, and questions. Is there something of interest you would like to know about? Let us know.

Also remember, the Banner is a

**KINGSWAY PRISON & FAMILY  
OUTREACH**

**P.O. BOX 2335**

**HARRISONBURG, VA 22801**

**OR**

(Note Physical Address )

**2217 South Main St (Dukes Plaza)**

**HARRISONBURG, VA 22801**

**PHONE: (540)433-5658**

## KINGSWAY BANNER SPRING 2019



### A Volunteer's Story of Finding Purpose and Fulfillment



I was first introduced to Kingsway a year ago at Christmas time by my sister Melody Whitmer (also a volunteer) and began with the hectic pace of the Apple Tree Program. This experience deeply affected me and at that moment I felt I had found the Lord's calling in my very soul. It was here I found a sense of purpose and fulfillment, helping others that were in the same situation I was year's ago. I feel a strong connection with those incarcerated and, as a result, my compassion and empathy drives me to continue God's Work every chance I get. In my opinion, Kingsway and its mission are an awesome example of the Lord's commitment

### A Re-entry Story

Recently, an ex-offender came to Kingsway after being released from jail. He had no winter clothes, no money, no transportation, no shelter and no way to get back to his home in Ohio. Immediately, the people of Kingsway jumped into action to help him in any way we could. One of our volunteers took him to the Goodwill and bought him a coat and other clothes to keep him warm in the freezing temperatures of mid-January. But the goodhearted people of Kingsway were not done yet. We bought him a ticket back to his home in Ohio and even drove him to Charlottesville where

## Kingsway's Programs in 2018

**\*320** Children received Christmas Gifts through the Apple Tree Project (Christmas for Inmate Children)

**\*300+** Children's Birthday Cards sent

**\*6,000** Inmate Christmas Bags

**\*50** Weekly fellowship meeting

**\* 30 Ex-offenders** were supplied with hygiene products, canned food and paper products such as toilet paper and paper towels, as well as household items, sleeping bags, towels and a washcloth to those who are making a new start.

**\*200** Inside Prison Church Services and Bible Studies  
**\*Women** in the Harrisonburg Rockingham Regional Jail and Middle River Regional Jail were visited weekly

**\*1,560+** Birthday Cards sent to inmates

**\*6,000** Holiday Cards sent to inmates

**\*Encourager** program (letter writing)

**\*Over 265** request letters from ex-offenders and inmates

### Encouragers Needed



Calling Christian men to write to inmates thru the Kingsway Encourager program. If you are willing to write please contact Carleen Loveless, coordinator , [kingswayoutreach@hotmail.com](mailto:kingswayoutreach@hotmail.com) or call **540-433-5658** and leave a message. This is a safe program.



## Kingsway's 2018 Christmas Apple Tree Project

Kingsway's 2018 Apple Tree Project was a huge success thanks to the many goodhearted volunteers and supporters who gave their time and donations to make this Christmas a truly special time for hundreds of children who's parents couldn't be there due to incarceration. Kingsway Prison and Family Outreach is a Christian ministry that was started in 1985 by Shel and Louise Jennings to bring Christ into the hearts of inmates and help them both inside prison and when they reenter society.

This year we mailed more than 300 boxes of gifts to 320 children throughout the state of Virginia. Each box contained two wrapped gifts plus a Bible or other Christian book for each child, appropriate for their age and gender, as well as small stocking stuffers. In addition, we put together over 6,000 inmate gift bags that contained a notepad, pencil, toothpaste and chap-stick. These items were distributed at facilities such as the Harrisonburg Rockingham County Jail, Harrisonburg Diversion Center, Augusta Correctional Center, Fluvanna and Coffeewood prisons among others.

This monumental task was only accomplished because of the generous gift and monetary donations of the many people who wrapped the presents and filled the inmate's gift bags. Bob Wade Auto Group helped to pay for a majority of the shipping charges. And many thanks to Pat Crouse, Kingsway's Associate Director, who organizes and coordinates the entire operation. The love, generosity, volunteer involvement and the spirit of Christian fellowship was truly a Blessing. The Spirit of the Lord moved everyone to do their part to assure that the children of the incarcerated had a memorable Holiday Season.



New Beginnings Church Youth Group Wrapping Gifts



Volunteers Appreciation Lunch at Panos

## Prison Ministry

**Working in Prison Ministry** can be the most rewarding and discouraging at the same time. Rewarding in seeing someone come to Christ and turn their life around in a new direction. It is discouraging to watch others keep repeating the behavior pattern that caused them to become incarcerated. The letters and cards we receive from inmates and their families, lets us know we are touching their lives in a positive way. Kingsway knows the value of hard places, it shows insufficiencies and failures in areas of our lives that need to change. We understand that it is Christ who really changes a person's heart and attitudes. Kingsway through our volunteers, contributors, and prayer warriors reach out to a group of people who made wrong choices in their lives. They are paying the price to society for their wrong choices. Kingsway is not a fruit inspector but a fruit harvester for Jesus.

***Come join us in the harvest for Christ.***

## Addiction

We live in a time where people live for the next high. They don't intentionally want to become an addict, but over the course of time, they are one. The addiction becomes their driving force in life only living for the next high. Since their focus is on the next high, they don't care what they have to do to get their fix. They lie to their loved ones and sometimes verbally, and physically abuse them. They crave the drug over everything around them, often resulting in robbing and stealing to get it. The addict can be a doctor, lawyer, student, minister, etc. Below is a testimony of a formal addict:

### William's Story

At the age of 12, I was already drinking hard alcohol, and one year later I started to smoke cannabis. This totally messed up my schoolwork, as I was smoking it almost every day. I ended up with a criminal record at 16, and without any education, I was homeless and always in trouble.

One day I was looking out of the window and saw an old girlfriend, someone whom I had not seen for quite a few months. I waved to her, and we started talking about what we had been doing since we last met. She told me that she had become a Christian. She invited me to a meeting and mentioned there was free food. (*I went because of the food.*)

However, something happened that changed my life forever. I was challenged to find out if God existed. I was shown in the Bible that I had to turn my life around and find God, and ensure my eternity-and I decided to try it out. At the next meeting, I prayed and accepted Jesus as my savior and was baptized.

I met up with some of the Christian Group a few days later, and after chatting for a while, one of them asked me "how it was going with my drug usage, smoking, etc." to which I had to answer "I haven't even thought about it!" —no desire for drugs, no lack of peace! The second miracle.

Since then, I have seen this happen on countless occasions and experienced many other answers to prayer. It has not always been a bed of roses, and a few times, due to my selfishness and pride, I have found myself to be very far from any semblance of Christianity-but He never casts us aside and through it all, I have never been able to deny that ***Jesus Christ is alive and is indeed,***

***"The same yesterday, today and forever" Hebrews 13:8***

## Mental Illness and the Criminal Justice System: A Need for Reform and Removal of the Stigma of Mental Illness

By Wayne M. Berman



What do you think of when you hear the words mental illness? Often society views these people with great suspicion and prejudice, as dangerous and belonging only in a state of perpetual confinement. Of course, you or someone you know might be suffering with this debilitating disease. To be sure, views on mental health issues have certainly evolved

over the decades, but this evolution has actually led to an increase in the percentage of the prison population with mental health disorders. The reason for this is that in the 1970's and 80's, many institutions and state hospitals that used to house and treat the mentally ill began to close. The simple fact is that jails and prisons essentially cannot and do not treat mental health issues, which is understood to also account for substance abusers as well, as these two conditions often go hand in hand. Often, these situations have an all too familiar theme: abuse or neglect as a child, drug use (often seen as a form of self-medication), incarceration, probation, little to no job prospects which may lead to re-offense or more drug use, both of which result in re-incarceration. We as a community need to find ways to maximally divert vulnerable individuals out of the criminal justice system and into treatment. Mental health screenings and access to affordable, quality psychiatric care are but a few ways in which we can begin to reform how we view mental illness and the nega-

## A New Kingsway Volunteer

I was released from prison on Halloween Day. Was it "Trick or Treat" to find a path to Kingsway? My first day here I helped to address Christmas Cards to those who are incarcerated. It is a treat to work with others who are concerned to touch the lives of those who are away from home, family and friends. I sense some divine intervention as my future gains guidance and meaning. Thank you Kingsway for being all you – we – can be.

Jim D., Volunteer

