

Love and Compassion Ministries

In the Name of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit

January 1, 2012 In The Year of Our Lord

NEWSLETTER

Happy New Year

A new year, 2012, what will it bring? Looking back at 2011 we see a year of many natural disasters, earthquakes, tornadoes, drought, floods, and hurricanes in places we usually don't see them. We see a rough economy, severe unemployment, and home foreclosures. These were all things we could do little to change. But many changes we did make, with God's help.

We changed lives. Can you imagine the extreme joy we felt when we helped put a person into a drug program rather than having them go to prison? Thanks to you, we were blessed to help many families stay together, find jobs, get cars repaired, pay rent and utility bills. We were able to help the sick, veterans, troubled youth, and the homeless with many of their needs. But, most of all, we have been able to tell each of these people about Jesus Christ, and His saving grace, and many have invited Him into their hearts.

What challenges will we face in 2012? Many we don't yet know about, but we continue to face two main challenges. We'll discuss these in more detail in the next couple of pages.

Homelessness— We begin the year with about 3400 homeless in Lee County. This has been a growing number, and now much of this growth is occurring in families with young children. This makes fighting homelessness more important than ever!

Drug Addiction- According to the Lee County Sheriff's 2010 Annual Report, 32,000 inmates were booked into the Lee

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County jail in 2010. Most of this was caused by drug addiction .

Homelessness and Drug Addiction

2012

Jung Min Park, a professor in the School of Social Work at the University of Illinois, completed a study of the effects of homelessness on young people. He said, "Children with a homeless episode were reported to have higher rates of physical disabilities than other low-income children who were stably housed or living doubled up. Children who experienced homelessness also had nearly double the rate of probable emotional or behavioral problems at 15 percent, versus 8 percent of children in the stably housed group." He also indicated the homeless children had higher rates of asthma.

So, homelessness creates more problems for children than it does for adults. This means that unless we do something about homelessness **TODAY**, all of us will soon pay the costs of increased emotional and behavioral problems in our community. We will also pay the increasing costs of medical care for those with physical disabilities.

In a paper entitled, "Nowhere Else to Go", Robby Kennedy, a senior at Florida State University, and a grandson of former Love and Compassion Ministry directors, Jim and Joann Cossairt, makes some very important observations about homelessness.

The reasons for homelessness Robby says, "Many individuals would argue many people become homeless because they just don't care enough about becoming successful. If someone wants to become successful, they should be able to do so. This is a great example of the "fallacy of one", meaning that just because one person can achieve something, that any other person should be able to do that. This is just a ridiculous fallacy, because every single person is different in their own ways, and therefore not everyone has the same chance of doing things someone else has." He says, "Homelessness is a possibility for everyone, and the homeless come from all different walks of life."

I hate to admit it, but I once shared some of the thoughts Robby mentioned. I thought homelessness was a choice that people made because they were lazy, addicts, or alcoholics - not worthy of my help. But, I have come to know most are good people, who with our help, can change their lives. How about you? How do you feel about them?

Robby mentions some of the reasons for homelessness - drug addictions, mental illnesses, a growing shortage of affordable housing. Yes, he did mention drug addictions, but we regularly work with addicts, getting them into drug programs, and we do see their lives change. We have many examples of addicts who were homeless or near homeless, who are now successful people. And, Robby mentions in his paper that these people just need a little help. He says that the homeless often resort to drugs and alcohol to "temporarily relieve their problems". But, as we know, drug or alcohol then becomes the problem.

He does find many other reasons for people becoming homeless. One is that young people who grow up without adults in their lives who can show them the importance of work, often turn to illegitimate sources of income and become homeless. Positive role models could make such a difference in their lives. He also

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mentions people who have served time in prison often end up homeless because they are not eligible for jobs or homes. They just cycle between homelessness and incarceration.



Robby volunteered at a homeless shelter in Tallahassee where he found college graduates who were forced to live on the streets because no jobs were available in the field they majored in. He said, "If an individual does not have family or friends to help them out in a time of need, the individual will wind up on the streets curled up with the clothes on their back and their college diploma as their pillow."

He mentions that you find veterans, who have fought for us, now have post-traumatic stress syndrome, and are unable to maintain a stable life, and end up homeless. He says the National Coalition for the Homeless says that 40% of homeless men are veterans.

Of course, he mentions our current economy and home foreclosures as a real cause for homelessness. Robby quotes one person he interviewed at the homeless shelter. That person said, "Man, you got doctors, lawyers, and successful people in here, they just don't get a chance to become successful right now. They messed up and lost a job somewhere along the way, and then you got nowhere to go."

So, there are many causes of homelessness. Robby says the National Alliance to End Homelessness indicated that over the next two years 1.5 million more people will become homeless if the current recession continues. It's growing!

So what do we do? We have to stop this growth in homelessness. Robby concludes his paper with, "All in all, homelessness is a major crisis that society needs to pay more attention to. Many people overlook homelessness and just blame individuals for their own mistakes and claim that they just are not willing to get up and do something about it, having no motivation to do what is necessary to become successful. However, as I explained it is much different than that. Homelessness is caused by a numerous amount of factors, including a lack of structural and economic opportunity, and I think society needs to put a bigger emphasis on trying to end it. If everyone in society could just pitch in a little time and effort and help these individuals in their time of need, I believe homelessness could be stopped."



Love and Compassion Ministries work with the homeless. As you know, Love and Compassion Ministries has been trying to start God's Place, a self supporting facility where we can house the homeless, train them, free them from addictions, and return them to society as confident, successful, and productive citizens.

We currently work with other ministries and organizations to feed and clothe the homeless. We will continue to try to meet this major challenge in 2012. (See the notice of the Homeless Service Day Stand Down on page 5). **WITH YOUR HELP, WE CAN DO IT!**

During 2012, we will continue work to help people overcome addictions by getting them into drug programs, driving them to the programs, and keeping contact with them while they are in the recovery program. We will appear in courts to share with the judges that the defendant would benefit more from a drug recovery program than a prison sentence. We always offer support to an addict in any stage of recovery from getting started in the program, support while in the program, finding jobs when completing the program, and support for years after. Thanks to the Lord, we have seen many recoveries!

DELIVERANCE

I met George (not his real name) in 2000 when I was teaching a Bible study at the Lee County Stockade and again teaching another Bible study at a drug recovery house. He has spent most of his life since 1995 in jail or prison. All his violations have been drug related crimes. When I first met him, he and his girl friend had three children. Love and Compassion Ministries took presents to his mother's home many times just before Christmas. His mother provided loving, Christian nurture to the three girls. When he got out of prison in 2003, he and his girl friend were married, and I went to the wedding. A little over a year later, they were divorced. His mother died unexpectedly about the time of their divorce. All of their children are now grown and are successfully employed. One works for the Florida Department of Corrections.

After his divorce, George began a relationship with a new lady, and they have two children. He and his girl friend both became involved with drugs, and were convicted of the sale of controlled substances. His girl friend was just released in December 2011, but he still has about two years to serve. Their children have stayed with the girl's mother and step father while she was in prison. About three months ago, he contacted me to get the address of a Christian drug program another inmate had told him about. I had not heard about the program, but I found the address, and a short time later, I ran into a man whose daughter was in the same program. This man had a lot of good things to say about their work. So, George has written them. I pray that he does get into the program, completes it, and turns his life around.

The reason I tell you his background is that last week he wrote me and sent me a poem I want to share with you. In his letter he thanked me for talking with him. He said it made him feel like someone in the real world cared. He said he knew God had him there to learn how to cope with real life when he is released. I pray, that as the poem says, when he is released, George has no desire to let go of God. Here's the poem. I don't know the source or the writer, but it obviously had great meaning to George. He said it was a cool poem.

DELIVERANCE

I lay in my bunk and stare at the walls every night,
Wondering to myself when I will see the light.
Living in my past and not wanting to let go.
The burden of my sins burn deep within my soul.

I look at pictures of loved ones who are free
Asking myself, "Do they remember me?"
I let my heart speak when putting these words together,
I watch people's moods change like the weather.

Anything can make you snap in a place like this,
From a game of cards, to thinking about the ones you miss.
I've seen men abandoned by their wives and left alone.
I've seen men stressed out worrying about what's going on at home.

Sometimes I feel like there's nothing I can do,
Till I opened a Bible and I heard from you,
From God, the one who created the universe,
The one who can deliver me from anything that hurts.

He who brings peace to a troubled soul,
I have Jesus in my heart with no desire of letting go.
So late at night, when the devil attacks,
I open up the Bible and hit him with the facts.

The loving words of God can bring you a long way,
So keep that in mind the next time you have a stressful day.



Homeless Service Day and Stand Down

Love and Compassion Ministries will be joining the Lee County Homeless Coalition and many other organizations at the Homeless Service Day and Stand Down Event at the:

Broadway Community Church Life Center

3309 S. Broadway

Fort Myers, Florida

Saturday, January 28, 2012

9:00 a.m. – 1:00 p.m.

This event provides a variety of services including food, hygiene kits, hair cuts, medical care, VA benefits, referrals for substance abuse addictions, mental health counseling and many other benefits to the homeless.

We are in need of Bibles, blankets, haircutters to cut their hair, ice and hygiene products. We also need tables, chairs, large coolers to keep food and drinks cold and of course we need volunteers to help.

If you can help or provide any of the items listed, please call Love and Compassion Ministries at 239-574-LOVE (5683) or

Email us at: RonWillis@LoveCompassion.com



GRACE CAFE A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters

For no matter how many promises God has made, they are "Yes" in Christ. And so through him the "Amen" is spoken by us to the glory of God.

- 2 CORINTHIANS 1:20 NIV

DON'T OPEN THAT DOOR A Joyful 'toon by Mike Waters

If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must master it.

- GENESIS 4:7 NIV

A PRAYER FOR THE NEW YEAR

What shall I ask for the coming year
What shall my watchword be
What should thou do for me, dear Lord
What can I do for thee?

Lord, I would ask for a holy year
Spent in thy perfect will
Help me to walk in thy very steps
Help me to please thee still.

Lord, I would ask for a trustful year
Give me thy faith divine
Taking my full inheritance
Making thy fulness mine!

Lord, I would ask for a year of love
O let me love thee best
Give me the love that faileth not
Beneath the hardest test.

Lord, I would ask for a year of prayer
Teach me to walk with thee
Breathe in my heart the Spirit's prayer
Pray thou thy prayer in me!

Lord, I would ask for the dying world
Stretch forth thy mighty hand
Thy truth proclaim, thy power display
This year in every land.

Lord, I would ask for a year of joy
Thy peace, thy joy divine
Springing undimmed through all the days
Be thy days of shade or shine.

Lord, I ask for a year of hope
Looking for thee to come
And hastening on that year of years
That brings us home to you.

Author unknown



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Mail Your Donations to:

Love And Compassion Ministries, Inc.

P.O. Box 152636

Cape Coral, Florida 33915

Thank You



Friends and Partners,

With a humble heart I thank God for all of you! I thank God for this ministry and for the many miracles He has granted to so many this past year. I thank God for calling me into this ministry and for giving us strength, power, and many opportunities to reach so many lost people and introduce them to our Lord and Savior.

Even in these difficult times, Love and Compassion Ministries has grown in so many ways, and we have a lot of you to thank for it! I thank you for believing in this ministry. I also want to thank you for your prayers, compassion, generosity, love, and support you have shown Love And Compassion Ministries and me. I appreciate you and pray that God will pour out His blessing on you and your family in 2012.

I pray that you will continue to support us and pray for us in the coming year, as we go about ministering to the people who are in need, and are desperately seeking, and trusting for a better life. If it were not for your love, support, and prayers we would not have been able to do all we have done this last year.

We have helped a lot of people get back on their feet. We have worked with many prisoners and their family members and have been able to lead a lot of them to the Lord. We have counseled many ex-prisoners and their wives. We have been able to send and give out hundreds of Bibles, tapes, sermons, and pamphlets. We have sent hundreds of cards and letters to prisoners all over the State of Florida. We have provided good wholesome books for them to read. We have taken many homeless, ex-prisoners, and the elderly to hospitals, and doctors' offices. We also have made many hospital visits.

We are doing all we can to help stop the same person from reentering the prison system again and again. We teach the gospel in the county jail, as we work with state prosecutors, attorneys, probation officers, and judges to get people into drug programs rather than having them sentenced to prison. We are teaching the ex-prisoner and the homeless the basics of life. Not to just give them a fish but to teach them how to fish. We are helping people find jobs, housing, and transportation.

We have put in thousands of hours working with troubled youth, feeding people within our street ministry great tasting food and God's Word, and we have fed many wonderful donated pastries and breads to individuals and Churches. None of this would have come about if not for people like you giving.

May God bless you all with peace, love, and a brighter future during 2012. I pray we all will reach out to someone and touch them in a way that they will feel the love and compassion from our Savior. May we all be able to say, as Mary said, "I am your servant, May it be as You have said." I pray that The Holy Spirit will minister, direct, and guide all of us to become better servants of God!

Please keep us in your prayers and join us in reaching the lost of this world with love and compassion starting now. Please give!

In the Presence of our LORD,

Ron Willis

Ron Willis, President
Love and Compassion Ministries, Inc.

May you and yours have a wonderful and prosperous New Year

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Stamp

**We're on the Web!
www.LoveCompassion.com**

**SEND YOUR PRAYER REQUEST TO ...
PrayerRequest@LoveCompassion.com**



If you would like to be a part of our exciting prayer team, please send us your e-mail address and we will send you updates of people who need our prayers.

It is a great privilege that we have, as sons and daughters of the KING, to be able to come into HIS presence with our needs, our hurts, and our cares.

We know that we can leave them at HIS feet because HE cares for us and will always answer us in our time of need.

Prayer requests are very important to us! We always need people who are caring and willing to personally pray for others' needs.

As we pray for their physical, moral, and spiritual needs, we must understand that because of JESUS CHRIST'S love for all of us, we are able to do this. CHRIST is the answer to every human's needs.

As members of the BODY of CHRIST, we have the privilege and responsibility to pray for our Churches, our missionaries, public officials, other ministries, and each other.

It is so exciting to see prayers being answered. May we always give CHRIST the Glory!