

Love and Compassion Ministries

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

September 1, 2016 In The Year of Our Lord

NEWSLETTER

**ONWARD, CHRISTIAN
SOLDIERS, MARCHING AS TO WAR,
WITH THE CROSS OF
JESUS GOING ON BEFORE!**



**IT IS TIME FOR CHRISTIANS TO PUT ON
THEIR MARCHING BOOTS.**

Come Join Us As A Team Member!

In His Service (Suncoast)

Prison Ministry

Homeless Ministry

Prayer Ministry

Correspondence Ministry

Drug Program Ministry

Bread Ministry

Newsletter Ministry

Youth Ministry

Volume 13, Issue 9

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Nick Trosterud (our vice president) and his wife Jackie just came back from a mission trip that was such a blessing to the children of Hungary and to all that participated from Lee County. They helped the children with English, taught them about Jesus, played games with them and did skits about sin in our lives.

They ministered to 133 children and 44 accepted Jesus Christ as their Savior!!!!

Everyone enjoyed the experience!
Don't you wish you had gone?



Several youth at the Crossroads Boys Camp in Punta Gorda joined in singing and listening to wonderful Christian music at the camp last month. Standing among the youth are L-R Craig Bacheller who sings and plays guitar and Illesia (his wife) also sings and plays the organ. To the right of Illesia is John Domino, the Youth Director and cook. On the far right is Mike Romero who plays the acoustical drums.



The band is affectionately called "The Trinity" by their friends in this ministry. A GREAT time was had by all who attended. This camp is a foster home for teenage youth ages 13-18.

Crossroads Boys Camp

You are welcome to join us next month. For more details contact our ministry or call John at 239-218-3976.

Street Watch Ministries

On Saturday, August 6th we gathered in Clemente Park as we do each first Saturday of the month. We varied the menu a bit with ham sandwiches and hotdogs, along with beans, coleslaw and chips. Many of the same people were there, but we had several new people and some who had not been in a while. I was most impacted by one of our regulars named Jorge. Jorge has been coming almost since day one. In May he was there, smiling more than usual. His son, whom he had not seen in about 15 years, was there with him! He introduced us and was thrilled to have him "home." His son said he was happy to see his dad and had a job lined up and things were looking good.

The next month I asked Jorge how his son was doing and he said, "I don't know, he's on the street." He was worried and I assured him we would pray for him. When I asked him Saturday, "how his son was doing?" He looked at me almost horrified. "He's dead, that's how he's doing." I was flabbergasted. I had no idea. He told me thru tears he was found in an abandoned building. He either OD'd, committed suicide or was murdered. No one knew. He went on to say this was the second son he has lost. The first was born with severe asthma and he and his wife were told he could die any time. He and his wife were prepared. But not this time! His wife has since died also. He said he felt so alone and was struggling with the overwhelming sorrow. He sat alone and cried much of the time. I assured him, as we gathered to pray for him, he was not alone. God is with him and his friends at the park would be praying for him. Thru tear filled eyes he said, "I will not give up on my faith."

He inspired me to remember, no matter where we are, we are not alone. God's grace will hold us. He will in time restore us. Please keep Jorge in your prayers.

Frani and Dave
Street Watch Ministries



Hi,

My name is Mark Johnson, a native of South West Florida, born right here in Fort Myers. When I was born, I already had one sister and two older brothers. After I was born, two more brothers came. A big family in a small house was what I remember, although most of my early years seem to have erased from my memory. I wish I could say more about my childhood before the age of eight, but that is where my memory starts. What I do remember is that my mother was the comforter and my father the unappeasable punisher. I knew he loved me, I just didn't know how to please him. As strange as it may sound, I still feared him, even after running away from home at age fifteen.

I said my memory starts at age eight. I believe that is mainly because that is when the sexual abuse started. I've heard many cases of this kind of abuse first hand working with others who went through the same thing and many of them lost years of memory during the time they were abused. The mind has a way of erasing things that are so detestable, a way of self-protection from the things that are too painful to remember. I used to wish for that, but I remember. I also remember the fear I lived in every day of my life. Fear of my father finding out and what he would do to me when he did. You see, as with most all victims of abuse, we blame ourselves, not the abuser. This went on until the day I ran away. I can say without question that I missed my family while living on the streets. I was just too afraid to go home.

I made myself a little home in the woods off Metro Parkway with another runaway, with a dugout in the middle of some thick wooded area, a tent, a campfire, and a log from an old tree that had fallen over which was used for a bench. This is when I first became a full blown addict. There are no words to comfort a 15 year old living that way, there is only fear. The campfire was my security, and the darkness beyond it was my prison, as if there were steel bars at the border between the light of the fire and the darkness of the woods. This is when I discovered something that would change my life for the next twenty years. I discovered the antidote for fear. Drugs and alcohol became my best friend, my true companion and the only thing I could think about. I literally hated being sober and having to deal with reality.

For the next twenty years of my life I bounced from one place to another, one job to another, one problem to another and one relationship to another. I managed to somehow stay married for 15 years of that time, but looking back I realized my ex-wife was just someone else I could use, so I did whatever I could to keep her around. I do believe I loved her as best I knew how; the problem was I just didn't know how, and that wasn't good enough. She finally left me after 15 years together with all the scars one could inflict on one another.

That was my rock bottom as we say in recovery. I will never forget the pain I felt in those following months. You see, by this time I had done so much damage to myself and others that I was sitting in jail with arrest warrants in 4 different counties. My ex-wife came to see me for visitation and I could see the numbness in her eyes. She was done. I had drained the life out of her and she just couldn't do it anymore. She left that night after visitation and I never saw her again. The pain of those days felt as if it was going to kill me. I was locked up, my then wife had left me, I was facing several years in prison, and I had no access to the drug dealer or liquor store to make it all go away. For the first time in my life I had to face the reality of what my life had become.

After about six months in jail it was time for sentencing. I had no hope left in me for any kind of life worth living. I failed to mention two suicide attempts during my addiction earlier because I didn't want this to sound like a plea for pity, but I guess it's important to mention it here to give depth to the meaning of hopelessness I felt. The hopelessness I felt those two times paled in comparison to what I felt here, but what I didn't realize at the time was that in the midst of my shame, guilt, pain, loneliness, and self-hatred, something wonderful was about to happen. God was closing in.

The day of my sentencing, the judge I had was out sick. That doesn't sound very significant unless you know this judge never sent anyone to rehabilitation. He didn't believe in sending criminals to rehab when they should, in his mind, be in prison. So I was appointed another judge with a different outlook on drug addiction. My three year plea bargain in prison ended up being a 1 year program in drug and alcohol rehabilitation. The significance of what the Lord did that day I would only discover later.

I went straight from jail to Dunklin Memorial Camp. It was a Christian regeneration program, but more importantly, it was where I met my new best friend, "Jesus Christ." Those first few months at Dunklin I will always hold dear to my heart. It was for me a time of closeness with Jesus I have no words for. I had never felt loved unconditionally that

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way before. His acceptance of me just the way I was, changed me forever. Those days for me, were a realization that there was a world all around me that I had never seen before, and in the center of it all was the presence of Jesus. I can say without any reservation that was when I fell in love with my Savior.

I graduated the program after a year of taking a hard, painful look at what I had done with my life and all the people I hurt along the way. All the while, God was restoring broken relationships I had with my parents, siblings and friends. I never saw my ex-wife again, but I was given the blessing of writing her to let her know what happened in those years together weren't her fault like I always tried to make her feel and not to carry any guilt for leaving when she did. I let her know I was praying for her and not resenting what happened. That was the first time I can remember the freedom of true forgiveness, but it wouldn't be the last.

When asked by the staff what I wanted to do after graduation, my answer was "STAY", and I did. I spent just under five years there as the Lord continued to work on me while giving me the blessing of helping new comers in the program. I stayed for phase 2 of the program, then servant leadership training, then staff, and studied at Freedom Seminary on campus. I was transferred to another Dunklin Training Center called Liberty Lodge where I worked with men in addiction for another three years. I was ordained into the Ministry of Jesus Christ on July 15th, 2007 as one of the most memorable days of my life.

I returned to Fort Myers with a new lease on life and a burning desire to serve God in whatever way he would call me to. I met my present wife Claudia and was blessed again with two boys who were abandoned by their own father. They now look to me as their dad, something I've always taken as a great privilege, but also a great responsibility. Who would have ever guessed, me, raising two boys to love, honor and glorify God above all else in this life and my wife by my side supporting me as the spiritual leader of the home, and as she likes to say, her other half. Today I am a blessed man, not by anything I have done or deserve, but by the grace of our Lord and Savior, "JESUS CHRIST" and to him I give all the honor and glory forever and ever, Amen!

IN CHRIST'S NAME,

Mark Johnson



In His Service

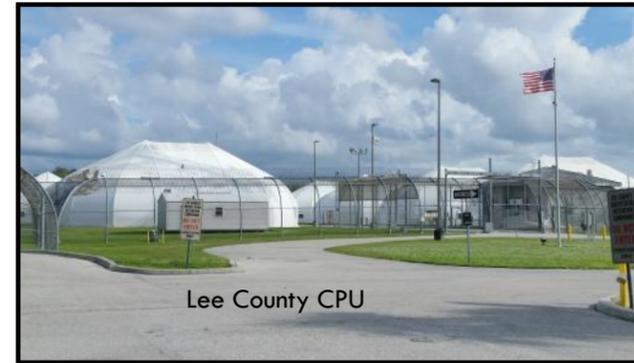
Come and enjoy an afternoon meal volunteering with Nick Trosterud (our vice president) and his wife Jackie at the Suncoast Community Center at 2441 Case Lane in North Fort Myers every Thursday at 12:00 noon. They deliver a Biblical message, give out Bibles and help meet people's needs. Our goal is to lead many homeless and veterans to our Lord's Saving grace. If you would like to be part of this ministry or would like to donate to this worthy cause, call us at 239-574-LOVE (5683).

Thanks!





Lee County Stockade



Lee County CPU

Love And Compassion Ministries was started as a **Prison / Jail Ministry**. Seeing the same person coming back into the jail or prison system, again and again will break anyone's heart. Teaching men and women within a jail cell about Jesus Christ is wonderful and many have come to know Christ as their Savior because we care, but these people need follow up when they get out.

If you feel led to join us in reaching these people, please call us at 239-574-5683. We need people within the prison system and outside the walls of prison, to reach the lost of this world for the Lord.

To break the cycle we need to help them get jobs, clothing, housing, transportation, counseling and so much more.

Housing an inmate in jail GODLCM@777 costs thousands of dollars! To teach them about a wonderful Savior is priceless. When someone turns from their wicked ways and accepts Jesus Christ, they become a taxpayer and not a burden on society.

Our heart felt thanks goes out to our team of ministers that serve this community behind the walls of our prisons and county jail.

Pastor Jim Holbrook / Mark Decker / Nick Trosterud

Many need our help!

Without your help we can't help anyone! You have the power to change lives!
When you support LCM it gives us the power to reach the lost, imprisoned, homeless, troubled youth, the orphans, widows, alcoholics, drug addicts, dying and hurting people of Southwest Florida! We are called to love our neighbors.

If you can help, please call us at

239-574-LOVE (5683)

We need your support to keep this ministry going!

You Can Donate with Debit or Credit card at:

www.LoveCompassion.com

You Can Use Your Bank's Bill Pay,

Or

Mail Your Donations to:

Love And Compassion Ministries, Inc.

P.O. Box 152636

Cape Coral, Florida 33915

THANK YOU!



Love and
Compassion
Ministries

Friends and Partners,

We, as Christians, know that we are not to hold grudges. Yet, it's not uncommon for Christians to have unforgiveness in their hearts. The act of forgiving does not come easy for most of us. Our natural instinct is to recoil in self-protection when we've been wronged. We don't naturally overflow with mercy, grace and understanding when we've been hurt.

Forgiveness is a choice we make through a decision of our will, motivated by obedience to God and his command to forgive. The Bible instructs us to forgive as the Lord forgave us: Colossians 3:13 *Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another.* We are the ones who suffer most when we choose not to forgive. When we do forgive, the Lord sets our hearts free from the anger, bitterness, resentment and hurt that previously imprisoned us.

A true story: Many years ago my wife and son planned a trip up the east coast of America around a meeting I had to go to in Atlanta, Georgia. Our plan was to leave on a Saturday and drive to Atlanta. We would spend the day together that Sunday, I would make my meeting Monday morning and then drive up the coast to see Asheville, North Carolina, Norfolk, Virginia, Washington DC, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, New York City, Boston, Massachusetts, Augusta, Maine and then drive over to Niagara Falls. A two week trip became a nightmare overnight and until recently caused such a bitterness in my heart and soul.

The Friday before our trip, I had the van serviced. The owner of the shop I went to said we needed the transmission serviced, so I said, "do it." Upon watching the mechanic hook up hoses to the van, I asked, "what are you doing?" He said, "I am servicing your transmission." I asked, "How can you do that without putting it on a lift?" As he explained the process I got irritated. Upon talking to the owner, he explained that they would take the old fluid out, clean it and put it back into the transmission. I said, "no! I want you to put the van on the rack, drop the pan, replace the filter and put new transmission fluid back in it." The owner said, "We do not do that anymore, this is the only way we do it now and we have never had any problems doing it this way."

So reluctantly I said, "OK." Upon paying my bill I drove back home to load the van up for our trip. That was when my son spotted red liquid flowing from the van. I immediately called the owner that serviced the van. He said, "Bring it in now for they were getting ready to close." I drove like a maniac back to the shop. The owner put the van on the lift as the bottom of the van looked like Niagara Falls. The owner concluded that the seals in the transmission had been blown by too much pressure from the machine that they used to clean the fluid. I was at my wits end when I was told he would help me find a rebuilt transmission on Monday morning, as he closed the shop. I was supposed to be leaving on our vacation in mere hours!

I immediately called my wife. There was no answer at the house or her cell phone so I left a message for her to call me. I sat in front of the shop for some time thinking what to do. After making my calls again and leaving messages again, I decided to start walking home. By the time I got from Fowler to downtown it was dark. I walked over the old Fort Myers Bridge into North Fort Myers up Hancock Bridge Parkway to my home crying and asking God, "Why is this happening?" I did not know how I was going to tell my son that we would not be able to go on the trip.

Upon getting home I did not say a thing. The next Monday I canceled my meeting in Atlanta, found out what it would cost to have a rebuilt transmission installed in the van and went to the bank to borrow the money. It took all the money we had saved up for the trip plus hundreds of dollars more to get the transmission installed. I was sick for months! It was the owner's fault this happened, yet I was the one that said "ok," against my better judgment.

Recently, I wrote a letter to that owner asking him to forgive me! How about you? Do you need to ask for forgiveness?

In the Presence of our Lord,

Ron Willis

Ron Willis, President
Love and Compassion Ministries, Inc.

To God Be The Glory!

**Love And Compassion
Ministries**

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newsletter@LoveCompassion.com**

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Stamp



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

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PrayerRequest@LoveCompassion.com

**WITH CHRIST, WE HAVE THE
POWER TO CHANGE LIVES!**

By supporting Love And Compassion Ministries,
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homeless, drug addicts, troubled youth and hurting
people!

**Please consider giving a
tax-deductible gift!**

Thank You for all that you do!