



THE MESSENGER

Restorative Justice Ministries

May 2016

A newsletter for RJM Volunteers, Sustaining Member Churches and Staff of the Brazos County Detention Center.

www.rjmbv.org

RJM Office 361-4852

Chaplain Office 361-4831

Planting Seeds of Christian Hope and Change

Fellow Volunteers, I hope this newsletter finds you well and enjoying the sun after so much rain and wind. Let us continue to hold up in prayer those in our community whose homes and property were damaged. We pray that God would bless their efforts as they seek to recover from their loss.

RJM Focus Question. How do you explain our ministry? As the RJM Board Chair, it is my honor to represent RJM at meetings with different groups and churches. One of the challenges that I face, and perhaps you do too, is explaining to people what RJM does, as a ministry, "behind the walls". Because our work is out of the public view, we are not able to show tangible real time results of our ministry like building homes, holiday food drives or free medical clinics. Yet God is working through you and me in what we do at BCDC, to bring glory to His name and to set the captive free.

The metaphor I have come to use in explaining jail ministry is that of planting of seeds of Christian hope and change. In our worship services, Life Skills classes, bible study classes, Discipleship classes and Baptisms is the very important Holy work of planting seeds. Seeds grow from the inside out. Watered and tended, they will germinate and grow. Indeed, these seeds will, in God's time, become ready for harvest. Some of us will see it but most of us won't. In our faith we know that God will act and bring those to Him at a time and place of His choosing. His Word does not come back void.

Our God is a God of grace and second chances. Isaiah 43:18-19 says *"Forget the former things; do not dwell on the past. See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the desert and streams in the wasteland."* NIV.

Isaiah was encouraging the Israelites to let go of the past and focus on Him, who is in the business of new beginnings.

With God, change is possible only from the inside out. Like the seeds we plant that no one sees, God is growing a relationship with the inmates from the inside out. He seeks to relieve the burden of the prisoner, to offer a new life, a future and a hope through Jesus Christ, to those who would believe in Him.....and it all begins with planting the seed of Truth. May God continue to bless the planting work you do in His name "inside the walls."
Doug Ralston

Vacation Plans?? Tell Us !!

If you are planning a vacation or will be out of town during the summer, let Shannon at RJM know, so we will not schedule you for ministry. **Remember we count on you to let us know your absences.** The RJM and BCDC Detention Staff appreciate your consideration in this matter. RJM



RJM Calendar

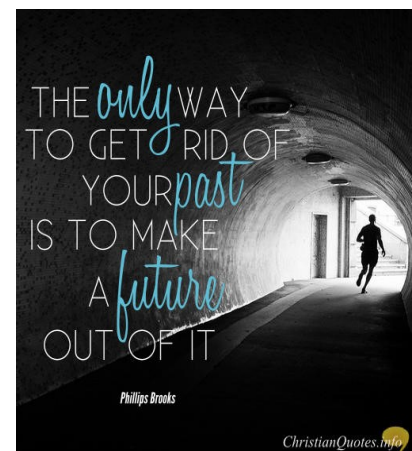
Board Meeting June 16, 2016

Life Skills Session II ends

June 24, 2016

Life Skills Session III begins

July 11, 2016



Inmate Evaluations of Life Skills Classes Session II

Job and Career, Robert Madkins, Instructor —

Since I am in charge of my own destiny, this class has helped me to improve on making myself more professional. Also this class has helped me to realize that failure will help pave the way to success. Those who find success are those who have learned from their mistakes and moved on.

Women's Personal Finance, Monique Reed, Instructor—

I learned how to budget and save money. I learned so many things in this class. Instructor was awesome. Thank you.

Healed Hearts Class, Patricia Arnold, Instructor. —

I am grateful for taking all the Life Skills classes. The instructors are awesome. What I like the most is when they share from their life and other's experiences, they back it up with Bible verses. The classes have changed my outlook on life completely.

— I have learned a lot from this class. It has given strength and wisdom in God and myself to go forward in my life and be productive in society with my hurts, habits and hang ups.

Relationship Awareness, Cathy Fields and Jennifer Nedbalek, Instructors —

This class helped me to come face to face with the ugly truth. I want to (in the future) practice healthy relationships with my family and spouse. Thank you.

— I loved this class, it will help build a better relationship with my fiancé when I get married.

Men's Communication and Anger Management, Gary Youngblood, Instructor.

— This class taught me to think about what I say before I act. Great class.

— *Mr. Youngblood you are one cool cat!!*

Women's Celebrate Recovery, Susan Williams, Instructor. —

This class helped me to get God in my life. This class was about recovery. Any class about recovery is beneficial. Thank you.

Men's Celebrate Recovery, Doug Ralston, Instructor. I

loved this class. I would like to take the class again and grow in my understanding of God. Great class.

Men's Personal Finance, Glenn Dowling and Mike Cochran, Instructors. I

enjoyed learning how having God in my life will help me make better (financial) decisions and that He will help me become more successful in my life. Thank you instructors.

Women's Health, Vickie Keys, Instructor

— This is the best class and teacher I have ever had. I am going to work on building a better health program for myself. Thank you.

Women's Parenting, Billie Sue Lightfoot, Instructor-

I loved the class. Miss Billie Sue was so helpful. I learned so many things, including how to be a better grand parent. Thank you.

Women's Communication and Anger Management, Linda Bow, Instructor. This

class taught me to think before I react. To choose my words wisely when angry. To not judge a situation. To ask myself how would I feel if I were the other party? To defuse situations. It has helped me to respond in a different manner for all parties concerned. Thank you.

Men's Parenting, Doug Ralston, Instructor—

I loved this class for showing me how to be a great parent and how to teach your children how to do things the right way, the Godly way.

— I learned I should not coddle my daughter but encourage her to take on my challenges and/or show her how to do them. As an adult I should be showing them God's Love.

RJM Volunteer Hours and Chaplaincy Ministry April and May 2016

Our volunteers and Chaplain are the hands and feet of God in BCDC, bringing light to darkness. While we understand that it is not our works that produce eternal life, the numbers below show the amount of effort that God is directing to this mission field. We give thanks to God for each of you and praise to God for your service to the "least of these". Thank you, Volunteers.

Volunteer Services, Classes and Hours

April/May 2016

Volunteer Hours

| | Number of Sessions | |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|-----------|
| Worship Services Led | 62 | 187 |
| Bible Study Sessions led | 112 | 180 |
| Life Skills Class Session Taught | 55 | <u>92</u> |
| | | 459 |

Chaplaincy Ministry

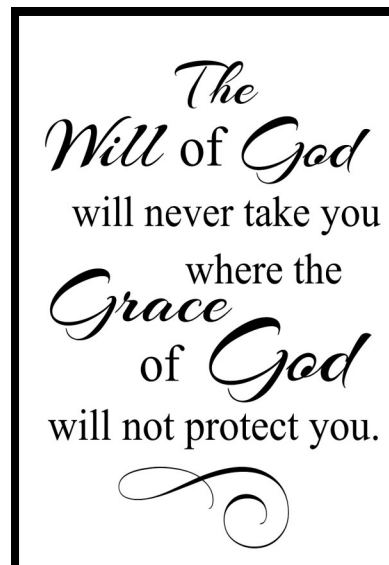
April/ May 2016

| | |
|--|-----|
| Baptisms | 11 |
| Inmates in/completing discipleship program | 67 |
| Bibles delivered | 311 |
| Inmate Contacts | 588 |

Sustaining Member Churches — Thank you.

RJM wishes to thank the following area churches who faithfully support RJM each month. Without you, this ministry would not exist. May God bless you.

- First Baptist Church Bryan
- Westminster Presbyterian Church Bryan
- 1st United Methodist Church College Station
- A and M Church of Christ College Station
- Central Baptist Church Bryan



RJM Board Members and Staff

| | | |
|---|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| Doug Ralston, Chair | Carolyn Carroll, Secretary | Jim Jackson, Treasurer |
| Linda Bow, Board Member | Kelly Nall, Board Member | Hal Sweet, Board Member |
| Jennifer Nedbalek, Board Member | Chaplain Obed Matus. Ex-Officio | |
| Shannon Coyle, Administrative Coordinator, Ex-Officio | | |