

## Sharing Behind The Bars

The Support for Prison Ministries chaplaincy programs are assisted by teams from local churches that regularly minister to those incarcerated. Currently, about 25 churches go to the Lancaster County Prison and 20 churches and youth groups go to the Youth Intervention Center on a regular basis. We asked two of these churches to tell their stories.

### Carpenter Community Church Hinkletown Mennonite Church



by Daryl and  
Jen Hoover

Over the past 10 years, I (Daryl) have had the privilege of serving inmates at Lancaster County Prison (LCP) through leading out in worship services. Our team consisted of a bass guitar player, a drummer and myself playing guitar. In spite of all the prep time for the services, after the 2 one hour sets of singing, we all come away blessed immeasurably!

As I reflect on these times and the teams that served with me at LCP, there are many good experiences. I can remember that first Sunday night service, rolling the cart of sound equipment and instruments in, not knowing what to expect. We rolled off the elevator and into the gymnasium thinking that was the room, only to keep walking into the tiny chapel. I thought for sure we had too much stuff, but soon realized this to be untrue. As the inmates started to pour out their hearts in worship they overwhelmed the teams singing even with a sound system!

This year a new team member begin to help me. I had never taken a woman along before, but this one is special, she's my wife, Jen. She also plays guitar and helps me sing. She was a little intimidated the first time she came along in January, but the warm hearts of the inmates welcomed her and her heart began to see the passion for Jesus within their hearts.

Divine appointments or chance circumstances....which do you believe in? As I (Jen) entered  
*(Continued on Page 3)*

by Bonnie Stauffer

For over 10 years Hinkletown has been sending a monthly missions team into Barnes Hall (now the Youth Intervention Center -YIC). The teams consist of 4 - 6 people that spend approximately 2 hours at the facility. Different people volunteer each month, and more than 100 different individuals have been part of this ministry over the years.

During the 2 hours, we have a short worship time that may include skits, Bible verses, testimonies and various visual aids. Later we spend time playing games, talking and getting to know the young people. We also share a snack. Many are surprised to learn that we play games with our own families. We often meet with the new arrivals of that week. For the first time offender the YIC experience can be quite traumatic. Many are eager to talk with someone who will listen.

Many of the young people we meet come from single parent homes. Some have parents who are in jail, addicted to drugs and/or alcohol. Some have been abandoned and are living with an extended family member or a friend. Few have a strong family bond and very limited if any church or Christian example.

These young people need to know that there is a God and that He loves them and is eager to forgive them. The way to begin this process is by having people in the community reach out, taking the time to share the Gospel and a positive testimony with them.

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# Meet our new Staff Chaplain

Hello. My name is Michael Booth. I am privileged to be a chaplain at the Lancaster County Prison, working with the Support for Prison Ministries program. I am grateful to God for all He has done in my life. My work in the prison is a testimony to that. I was first introduced to prison ministry while a resident at the Teen Challenge Training Center at Rehrersburg, PA. I entered Teen Challenge in 1991 after suffering many years of substance abuse. It was there that the Lord began to transform my life, and call me into ministry.

I remember one day while I was in my dorm room studying, my roommate told me that he had joined the prison ministry team, and encouraged me to join. I was hesitant at first because I was injured and on crutches and I did not think I had anything to offer the team. After thinking about it more, I sensed the Lord leading me to join the prison team, so I did.

We traveled to various prisons and juvenile detention centers sharing the gospel. The first place I went to with the ministry team was Barnes Hall in Lancaster City. It was difficult for me to see teenagers behind bars. It broke my heart. I remember praying with a young man to receive Jesus after we had completed our skits. It was then that I realized I didn't need to be a former inmate to be able to minister to someone in prison. When I looked back at my life as a substance abuser, I realized I too was a prisoner. I felt trapped and hopeless as many prisoners do, in not knowing which way to turn. The only differ-

*Michael Booth  
standing in front  
of Swiss Alps -  
Photo taken on a  
recent Africa/  
Europe missions  
trip.*



ence was that I was not in a physical prison, but I was locked in spiritual bondage. I am grateful that Christ came and set me free.

One of my favorite verses is *Jeremiah 29:11* "For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the Lord, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end."

The Lord has exceeded all my expectations so far in my life. After leaving Teen Challenge I attended Youth Challenge Bible Institute and graduated from Lancaster Bible College. I then joined the staff at Crossroads Mennonite Church as Community Outreach and Evangelism Director. At Crossroads, I became apart of our prison ministry team. Through the church, I became a volunteer chaplain at the prison, and eventually this led to me being hired as staff. One of my biggest joys as a chaplain at LCP is when the prison team from Teen Challenge comes in to minister. I am reminded of where I started and how awesome God is to those who commit their life to Him.

## Prison ministry happenings you should know about . . .

**Overheard in a Lancaster County Prison (LCP) Bible study group from a middle-aged inmate:** "Now it all makes sense to me. My life was so empty. I followed carefully several different religions, but I always felt so empty - nothing inside - always seeking answers. And I had no power to make changes in my life when I was released. I was in and out of prison, many arrests, many convictions. This time I decided to go to a church service. After a few times, I felt something different. The Spirit of God changed me. I now have power for right living. I want to follow God and His Word."

**Michael Wolfe**, a Bible teacher from Christiana, PA, has been teaching a weekly class in LCP called "Inside/Outside". Offered each Wednesday morning, 15 - 30 men regularly attend this two hour teaching and discussion time. Recently, Michael added a second weekly class for women. He reports "there have been about 40 women. The Lord has blessed this teaching. I am convinced there are hungry hearts and eager minds in the class."

**THANKS to Lee Stauffer** who recently completed a part-time chaplain assignment with Support for Prison Ministries at the Youth Intervention Center. Lee volunteered at Barnes Hall for several years, then was a staff chaplain at the new Youth Center for the past 3 years.

**CONGRATULATIONS to Lee and Sarah Huber Stauffer** who were married on May 14, 2005. The Stauffer's will live in New Holland.

**HEART TO HEART Ministries** continues to expand their outreach and connections to children and their families in Lancaster city. Operating out of a house on East Strawberry St. that is owned by Support for Prison Ministries, Board member Anthony Martin recently reported "Heart to Heart has as high as 50 children come to some after school events. Several women are building relationships with women in the neighborhood, and numerous outreach opportunities are happening".





LCP for the first time I was flooded with feelings of fear, uncertainty, and intimidation. The Lord began to change these feelings into a sweet peace as I stood quietly by Daryl's side being warmly welcomed by the ladies group filling the small prison chapel. I was overwhelmed with joy to be worshiping with sisters desiring the same freedom in Christ that I desire. The bars of prison which separate our lives crumbled down as our hearts were unified in worship.

A few weeks later I was admitting a patient at work (I'm a labor and delivery nurse) and she thought I looked familiar. As conversation progressed we realized she worshipped with us in January at LCP. Divine appointment or chance circumstance? Hmmmm..... she was looking for more of the Lord and through this "appointment" He spoke to each of our hearts a new freedom and sweet reminder to me not to look at the outward appearance (the prison jumpsuit) but to look inward at her tender heart desiring to know more about Jesus. To her I seemed like an angel reminding her that God is in control of the timing in our lives.

In March as we worshiped at LCP again, the Lord used this divine appointment for me to share a testimony which led into several receiving Jesus. "My Jesus, My Savior, Lord there is none like You....nothing compares to the promise I have in You!" I began to weep as I heard myself asking these women to stand up and give up their lives to Jesus, their Savior to receive the promise of eternal life to which nothing on this earth compares.

I left prison that evening with a strained voice, sore fingers, tear stained cheeks and a heart so in love with my Jesus for the work He continues to do in me...Lead me on, Lord, to our next appointment!

*Hinkletown (continued from page 1)*

We are touched by the faces behind the walls. These are not hardened criminals; they are someone's grandchildren, niece or nephew. Many have survived unspeakable dysfunctional lives that we can only imagine. Simply spending an evening with them is a way to introduce the Lord to them and to plant seeds of faith. As we share the message of the Gospel with them, however, we find that we are also blessed for serving the least among us.



# Prison ministry information

can come to you

One of the mission and purpose statements of Support for Prison Ministries is:

*"to provide training to the local church, community and interested persons."*

SFPM does this in a variety of ways; such as chaplains or staff sharing at church services, meeting with mission committees and small groups, and displays or talks at community and outreach events. For more information about how SFPM can bring information to your group or meeting, contact Nelson Martin at (717) 625-0232.



*Katie Mininger and Michael Booth, chaplain assistants and Director Nelson Martin at a recent program at Landis Homes West Chapel.*

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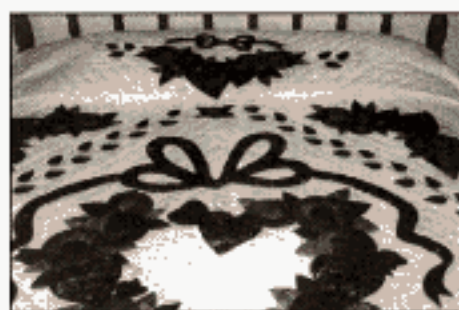
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## Support for Prison Ministries ANNUAL BENEFIT AUCTION



October 21 & 22, 2005 at Farmersville Auction Grounds

### Friday Evening

4:00-7:00 PM Chicken BBQ (eat in or take out)  
Dinner—\$7.00

5:00 PM Auction of quality merchandise,  
hardware, flowers, gift certificates, toys,  
collectibles, meats and groceries

### Saturday

6:00 AM Delicious Pancake and Sausage Breakfast

8:30 AM Huge auction begins with quality  
merchandise for home, farm and business.

Our auction goal is to clear \$68,000 after expenses, to be shared with LANCASTER COUNTY PRISON and YOUTH CENTER CHAPLAINCY PROGRAMS, EXIT (Ex-Offenders in Transition), FREEDOM GATE, TRANSITION TO COMMUNITY and WE CARE PROGRAMS.

*Donations of merchandise and gift certificates are needed. For more information, call: Nelson Martin (717) 625-0232, Glenn Hoover (717) 733-7301 or Cliff Martin (717) 336-6411.*



## Focus on Finances

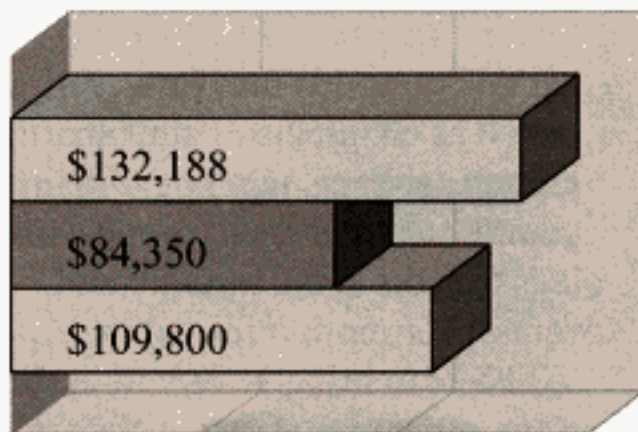
**JANUARY 1—MAY 31, 2005**

Our annual budget is \$317,250. Of this amount, about \$160,000 is anticipated from contributions.

We are thankful for generous giving that we receive from churches, businesses and individuals.

As you can see from the chart, we receive more of our income toward the end of the year because of our October benefit auction and strong year-end giving. Since our monthly expenses stay fairly constant for chaplain salaries and programs, we need regular giving that helps fund each month of the year.

Budget	\$132,188
Income	\$84,350
Expenses	\$109,800



An envelope is enclosed for you to share a gift with us. A receipt will be sent for contributions.