

CIC Ministries

CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTIONS CHAPLAINCY

INSIDE VIEW

FEB. 2015

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Comunidad Cristiana
Serving God in Jail

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CIC Ministries
PO BOX
360068
Milpitas, CA
95036



Dear Louann,

We would like to share the words of one of our volunteers. "As chaplains, we each bring our gifts. Some chaplains share music and give the gift of worship. Others bring an incredible knowledge of Scripture, which is so valuable to women and men struggling to read the Bible on their own for the first time. Others bring language gifts, with bilingual skills that help them meet inmates where they are. Still others have backgrounds and training as therapists, pastors, or other specialized training that can benefit others.

Bring your gifts and see how God will use them."

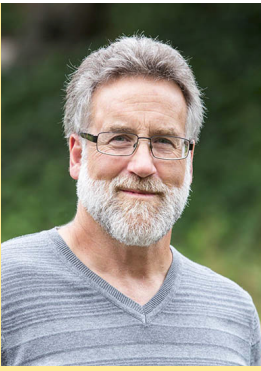
Amen!

Laptop Needed

Perhaps you have a used laptop that you're not using. We need one that has HDMI and DVD to connect to our projector for volunteers to use in the chapel for teaching and worship. Call David Robinson: 408-957-5853.



Volunteer Chaplain Jeannie Cole receives an award from Rev. Louann Roberts



Rev. David Robinson
Executive Director

We are all seeking fulfillment and salvation. My way is following the Call of our Lord to serve our brothers and sisters in the Juvenile Hall and in the jails. I have found my heart's desire here among people seeking the Lord with a profound sense of need. I see how our Lord reaches out in love to the least of our brothers and sisters. Grace is offered to the most unlikely and is received with a depth of faith and hope and gratitude that humbles me to the core. **My faith has been transformed by the infinite Gracefulness of Jesus here in jail.** I invite you to join me in CIC's ministry of love. Through your prayers, financial support or volunteering you will participate in the gifting of the Spirit and experience more than just a glimpse of the Kingdom's power. You will come to an even fuller sense of fulfillment and know very directly the significance of the blessing of salvation. Come let us meet Jesus together in jail.

Blessings of Peace,

Dave Robinson

Listening to the Story of God at Elmwood

BY JEANNIE COLE

When I began going in to do one-on-one visits with Elmwood women, I was eager to be "helpful." As I listened to each woman's story, my mind was busy running through the litany of practical needs-She needs housing, what will she do for a job?, she needs trauma therapy, she needs a treatment program, she needs a church family, and on and on. **Ironically, I felt useless and helpless and very ill-equipped.**

Then, about a month into my time as a one-on-one volunteer, I had a woman come in, fling herself into the chair, look me in the eye, and say, "You are the first person I've talked to in here who is not evaluating me." I was busted. I knew then that I needed to be honest with myself and God about what I had to offer. God was not asking me to be a social worker or a therapist or even a pastor. God was asking me to be still, be present, and listen for God's own presence and action in another person's story-the very thing I was training to do as a spiritual director.

God used a second event soon after to help cement my role at Elmwood. One afternoon I was in a minor car accident, and though I was not injured, I experienced that rush of adrenaline that takes some time to leave the body. It helped me understand *in my body* how victims of trauma must feel most of the time-the lack of focus, the anxiety, even the struggle to pray. I had a visceral lesson that being still and being a *steady presence*-even for a short conversation-can be a link in a chain of healing.

It is an incredible gift to be able to listen to these women's stories. They are a strong, resilient bunch and they amaze and inspire me. A woman and I will sit together and listen for how her story is a part of God's larger story. I will point out and we will savor together the moments when she can see God's action in her life and feel God's presence and care. We will notice. **We ask the question, "What is God inviting me to right now? How will I respond?"** Many women describe their incarceration as a sort of intervention on the part of God. I even had one who told me that after 20 years on the street she had literally laid down in the gutter and told God, "Tonight either I need to die or get arrested." Her chaplain request was her own first step with God to figure out why she was still alive.

It's not always easy to bring hope to the people we serve. In many cases my imagination fails me when I try to envision the path forward for an inmate. But as I learned early on, it is an act of faithfulness to listen

Quick Links...

[Our Website](#)

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Join Our Mailing List!

JAIL MINISTRY TRAINING

Sun, April 26
1:30 - 5:30 pm

Grace Baptist Church
484 E. San Fernando St
(corner of 10th and San
Fernando Sts)
San Jose

SAVE THE DATE:

The San Jose Textile
Museum to exhibit
CIC Ministry's...

TRANSFORMATION: Art from Within

September - November
2015!!



Here's what the museum said
about the art; *"We all found
the project, the stories and
the work very compelling."*

We at CIC are excited and
reminded again about the
ripples of grace.

More details coming...

Art and Spirit Classes

attentively to God as I listen to an inmate, and to know
that in that moment, that is enough.

Thank you to **Comunidad Cristiana and
Golden Altar Ministries**
for hosting the **CIC Ministries jail ministry
training in January!**



Comunidad Cristiana provides many of the bilingual volunteers
needed to carry the Gospel message to the Spanish-speaking
population behind bars. Pastors Mario Zuniga and Raul Avila
of Comunidad personally lead services and many of their
congregations have been inspired to bring their gifts to the jail
population. .



Not pictured is Pastor Cal Cook of Golden Altar Ministries, long
time CIC friend and supporter, who co-hosted CIC's jail ministry
training. Many thanks to him and to church member and CIC
volunteer, Belinda Wortham. We appreciate the help from both
Comunidad and Golden Altar's volunteers!

Serving God in Jail



Volunteers from Presbyterian Church of Los Gatos help in an Art and Spirit class.



Volunteers create a colorful weaving of prayers.

"A QUIEN CORRESPONDA"
 PRIMERO QUE NADA, "GRACIAS" POR SU TIEMPO, CARINO
 PACIENCIA, Y COMPRENSION!
 (LUCAS 12:43) EN ESTO SE LE APARECIO UN ANGEL DEL
 CIELO, PARA DARLE FUERZAS."
 ANTES DE QUE VOLVIERA A NACER ERA MUY DEVIL, Y ERA TENTA-
 DO, Y ENGANADO POR LOS MALOS DESEOS. GUERIA Y TENIA LA
 SED Y EL AMBRE POR SAVER MAS DE DIOS, Y POR ENTREGARME A
 EL. GRACIAS A USTEDS Y GRACIAS A MI HERMANO SAMI "QUE
 FUE, Y ES PARA MI UN ANGEL QUE BINO DEL CIELO, PARA
 DARMER FUERZAS, AMOR, SU CARINO, SU ENPENCION, SU TIEMPO,
 Y QUE ME ENSEÑO EL CAMINO A NUESTRO SEÑOR DIOS"
 ME EH ENTREGADO A DIOS!
 (AFESIUS 4:14-15) YA NO SEREMOS COMO NIÑOS, QUE CAMBIAN FACIL-
 MENTE DE PARECER, Y QUE SON ARRASTRADOS POR EL VIENTO
 DE CUAQUIER NUEVA ENSEMANZA HASTA DEJARSE ENGANAR POR
 GENTE ASTUTA QUE ANDA POR CAMINOS EQUIVOCADOS. "MAS BIEN,
 HABLANDO LA VERDAD EN UN ESPIRITU DE AMOR, DEBEMOS CREER
 EN TODO HACIA "CRISTO" QUE ES LA CABEZA DEL CUERPO."

Inmates express their gratitude in many ways. Here, an inmate who has been visited by one of the many bilingual volunteers of CIC Ministries tells of his happiness in finding that he is part of the Body of Christ. Before receiving the Holy Spirit, he had been a troublemaker and in trouble, but now his life has changed and wants the world to know.

Many volunteers come to jail ministry after having served in prisons or other facilities, and they find that the issues confronting the men and women in jail are vastly different than the issues confronting those who have been sentenced to prison.

Here is one volunteer's look at the difference and what it means to serve those who suffer from the stress of not knowing what will happen to them in court or when they are released.

**BY RANDALL NEWCOMB
 CIC VOLUNTEER**

This past week I've been doing a lot of thinking about the group that I meet with on an almost weekly basis. In some respects this group in jail has been more challenging to deal with than guys in prison. It's not that these guys have done more serious things than the guys I met in prison. (I recall one time meeting with a dozen guys at San Quentin. It turned out that I was the only guy at the table who hadn't murdered someone.)

But there is a key difference in the "culture" of prison vs. the jail situation.

In prison there is far less change. The guys you see around you today will probably still be there tomorrow, and next week, and next month, and next



New volunteers with CIC help the inmates' prayers find their voice on the fabric.



An inmate expresses her thanks for being able to see God's grace at work in jail.



This beautiful prayer weaving was made by male inmates.

year, and possibly even the next decade. There is an established rhythm and social pecking order, for better or worse. There is also the presence of the long-time Christian inmates who pray for each other and encourage each other.

In the maximum-security section of the jail the guys are in their cells most of the time so there is little social interaction, except for the volunteer chaplains who bring them the Gospel. In the dorms where Bible study is permitted, men gather to learn how to live their lives different, even though they are segregated by gang affiliation. They learn to rely on God and God's guidance because different people move in and out of the unit, affecting the structure.

While some of the guys will be in that section for several years as they serve their sentence, there are people coming and going each week. So there really isn't time to establish a stable social order. It isn't always firmly established who is a threat or not.

I believe that some of the stress I see in the guys each week is that sense of uncertainty --how should they act, and who should they follow. This is particularly difficult for guys who want to break out the gang culture and the cycle of addiction that they have been living under up to this point.

This is why they need to hear the healing message of the Gospel and how the words of Jesus can help them heal the sorrows they have suffered and the pain they have endured - not just physical pain but the pain of separation and loss of those they love.

This is the place where Jesus told us we would see him. And it is true.

Sincerely,

The staff of CIC Ministries
Correctional Institutions Chaplaincy

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