



FRIENDS OF THE WAY HOME

Our Mission: To free individuals from the cycle of crime and despair by providing them with holistic support after prison that generates hope, self-sufficiency and connection to the community.

Volume 5, Issue 2

June 2009

From the Director's Corner

June 2009

Spring time in Delaware is such a delight! The fields and trees are lush and bright from the abundance of rain, birds are busily clearing out old nests and building new ones, and folks are working in their gardens, happy to be outside without putting on the hats, coats, and gloves of winter. It is the time when dogwood trees are trimming the woods with white lace, tulip trees bloom with their often unnoticed flowers of orange, green, and cream, and peach, apple, and pear blossoms dress up the landscape. The rivers and ponds begin to wake up; we hear the first spring peepers and tree frogs serenading the night with their wild music, and the scents of honeysuckle and swamp magnolia fill the spring air. It is a time of renewal, when the whole earth seems to heave a sigh of relief and take a deep breath before the heat of summer comes in.

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Previews of Coming Attractions!

June 10th, Noon

Men's Transitional House Blessing

324 Old Landing Road

Millsboro, Delaware

June 15th to 20th

Epworth United Methodist Church, Rehoboth, hosting students from St. Paul's Episcopal School in Baltimore for community service and other educational projects, commencing with a closing ceremony and dinner hosted by All Saints' Episcopal Church.

June 18th, 6:30 p.m.

Quarterly Celebration Participant of the Quarter.
Dinner

Tunnell Hall, Georgetown Presbyterian Church,
North Bedford Street, Georgetown.

Bring a covered dish!

The birds aren't the only ones clearing out debris. The Way Home is also doing some spring cleaning! Community volunteers are helping with this newsletter and going through files and putting things to right. Inmates still housed at Work Release and Crest programs in Georgetown are volunteering to clean our offices on East Laurel Street. Participants are organizing clothing donations in our storage space, and keeping things in good order. Our new Office Manager is combing through files and putting things in to right. It is a good season!

Spring also brings a wonderful group of students from St. Paul's Episcopal School in Baltimore! A group of 25 or more, with their Chaplain and chaperones, will be arriving on June 15th for a week of community service with TWH, as well as with several other Delaware non-profits. The group has been joining forces with TWH for years, and it is always a very enlightening and inspiring experience for students, staff, and Way Home participants alike. The students come away with a whole new perspective on what it means to be putting life together after time spent in prison, what it means to be on the edge of homelessness, what it means to create a viable life out of limited resources. This year we are privileged to be able to schedule a tour of the Sussex Correctional Institution, the Violation of Probation Center, and the Crest and Work Release Centers in Georgetown. Our thanks go to Warden Deloy and Warden Oettel and Director Gail Simms for making these important experiences possible for the students. The group will also help with painting the Men's Transitional House, give our van and cars a good scrubbing and waxing, help with organizing donations, and put up a tent for the Quarterly Dinner on June 18th at the Georgetown Presbyterian Church. They will be on set-up, cooking, and clean – up crews as we honor the Way Home Participant of the Quarter! The public is invited! Please bring your favorite covered dish and be prepared to hear some inspiring stories of courage, persistence, and faith as men and women make the journey from prison to community, with our staff walking right beside them. All Saints' Rehoboth is graciously hosting

the closing dinner and service as we cap off a week that we look forward to all year with the staff and students of St. Paul's, Baltimore.

Wherever you are on your journey, whatever the season in the landscape of your heart, please know that fresh starts, second chances are always here, mysteriously woven into the fabric of our lives, our surroundings, our connections with the earth and with all of her miraculous creatures. Change springs forth after the cold of winter, with new strength, new life – filled to the brim with possibilities.

Barbara Del Mastro
The Way Home Director

Profiles in Courage: Don's Story

“The Way Home provides a rung on a ladder. This place is hope and opportunities if you want to grasp both.” Those words were spoken by Don, a mild-mannered and friendly man recently incarcerated at Sussex Correctional Institute in Georgetown.

As is typical of most men and women when transitioning from prison to the community, Don had no money, housing, plans for employment, or a support network - only the clothes and shoes he wore when he entered to serve a six- month sentence. His public defender lawyer called The Way Home as Don was on his way back to the Sussex Correctional Institution after his case was heard in court. Upon arrival at the prison, Don was to be released to the street – with nowhere to go. His release would come long after closing time for the local Social Services building. The Way Home Director, Barbara Del Mastro, assigned one of the program Case Managers, Bill Corning, to meet Don at the prison. Bill picked him up and escorted him to The Way Home Men's Transitional House in Millsboro.

Don's story is atypical of most ex-offenders. He grew up with a loving, kind, and religious father and mother. He was awarded an Associate's degree in Psychology from Salisbury University and graduated from the University of Maryland, College Park, with a political science major. His

Since 1998, The Way Home has helped hundreds of ex-offenders stay out of prison, providing comprehensive case management for participants for less than one-sixth of the cost of incarceration. The Way Home aims for no more than five (5) percent recidivism among participants and seeks to eliminate recidivism among participants altogether.

Aside from the cost of crime to the community, Delaware taxpayers are paying approximately \$30,000 per year to house one inmate in prison.

The Way Home Program provides case management services for a participant for approximately \$5,000 per year, one-sixth of the cost of incarceration.

In 2006, the University of Delaware (UDE) released the results of a 5 year study that compared the recidivism rates of ex-offenders who participated in The Way Home with those who did not. The study found that The Way Home participants were less likely to return to prison, especially during the first year of release. In 2004, the recidivism rate for Way Home participants (10 percent) was approximately half that of Department of Correction's clients (21 percent).

The Way Home grew out of a church-sponsored prison Bible study where volunteers realized the desperate needs of men who were being released from Sussex Correctional Institution and took action to make a difference. The program began formal operation in 1998 under Children and Families First. After the first year of operation, The Way Home then became affiliated with the Episcopal Diocese of Delaware and in 2006 became an independent, non-denominational, non-profit organization with 501(c)(3) status.

Masters degree in Educational Counseling was awarded from the University of Maryland, Eastern Shore. He dabbled in real estate and volunteered for the Carter Democratic Campaign in Maryland, the Southern Poverty Law Center, and recently with Habitat for Humanity after Hurricane Katrina.

What is typical of Don and many ex-offenders is that Don's drug of choice is alcohol. Self-described as a "functional alcoholic," he has worked 18 years on sobriety, after three relapses all during the Christmas season, the most recent in December 2008. While living in Delmar, he had an argument with a mentor and friend's son-in-law. Unable to solve the altercation because of his impaired thinking due to drinking, he picked up a knife from a tool box. The son-in-law called the police and Don was placed in maximum security, pre-release, with two other men in a cell at SCI. The charge was Aggravated Terroristic Threatening and Disorderly Conduct. The felony was bargained down to Menacing Without Aggravation.

"In 'pre-trial,' there is no rehab. We were housed and not given any opportunities for moving ahead. In jail you are a non-entity and it is a hard place to have a sense of humor," explains Don, whose goal since release is to become a substance abuse counselor.

Is this a happy ending? Don has much more work to do. There is one thing for sure – The Way Home team will be with him every step of the way.

By: Jessica Clark, Way Home Volunteer for June 2009 "Friends of The Way Home" Quarterly

Thoughts for Today

Submitted By **Bill Corning**, TWH Case Manager

Once upon a time, a baby eagle was sitting in his nest, way up in a tree. Suddenly, a strong wind came, causing him to fall to the ground. It was a cold wintery day and the baby eagle quickly began to freeze. Just at that moment, a mother chicken and her chicks were walking through the forest and saw the baby eagle lying under the tree. "We shall take this bird home," the mother chicken said to her chicks, "and raise it as if it were one of our own." The little chicks picked up the baby eagle and carried it back to their hen house at a nearby farm.

The mother chicken placed the baby eagle in a nest, covering it with straw to keep it warm. The chicks quickly ran out into the yard and gathered loose chicken feed to bring to their ailing new found brother. After a while the baby eagle woke up and began feeding on the gathered food and started recovering. The mother chicken cradled the baby eagle and sang lullabies to it every night. After a few weeks the baby eagle was back on his feet and accompanying his brothers and sister chickens outside in the barn yard.

The baby eagle had an instinctive urge to look at the smaller animals in the yard as prey and began to attack and eat them. "What are you doing," the sibling chickens cried. "You are a chicken, wait for the farmer to come out with feed to feed you!" The baby eagle looked confused, but relented, and waited for the farmer to spread the chicken feed in the yard every day.

One morning, the baby eagle was out in the yard. He looked around the yard, jumped up on the fence rail and began to instinctively yell a "Caw." The eagle's brothers and sisters turned and looked at him, "What are you doing?" they cried, "You are a chicken, we do not "Caw. We cluck, like this!" All the chickens began to cluck, and encouraged the eagle to do the same. Soon the eagle stopped cawing and began to cluck, like the rest of them.

One morning in the yard the eagle had an urge to fly. He began to flap his wings to take off. Upon seeing this, the brother and sister chickens ran towards him and yelled, "What are you doing? Chickens can't fly. They have to scratch the ground with their feet. They can't fly!" The eagle listened to his brothers and sisters, so instead of flying, he went outside in the yard, scratching and clucking like all the others.

One morning, the mother chicken came in to gather her chicks and line them up for a morning walk. "Oh what fun," the little eagle said, and lined up with his brothers and sisters behind their mother for a walk outside the farm. The mother chicken walked outside, through the barn yard gate, into the nearby woods for a morning of exercise. As the mother and her chicks walked, they came to a clearing. The growing baby eagle looked up and observed a large bird, that appeared to be floating on air with its wings spread, far up in the sky. "Oh, how majestic," the baby eagle thought to himself. He valued the beauty of the bird, from its white head, to its contrasting dark brown feathers. "Hey Mom," the baby cried out to his mother. "What kind of bird is that, mother?" The eagle's mother looked up and said, "That is an American bald eagle, the most beautiful and powerful bird in the world!" The baby eagle stared up in the sky "Gee, isn't that bird beautiful," he thought. "I guess I'll never be one of those," the eagle thought, "I'm just a Chicken!"

The moral of the story is: You believe you are what people tell you you are!

Thank You to

Michelle Kidd

For filling in for a few weeks and keeping The Way Home office running efficiently and smoothly.
Great Job! We will miss you!

And Welcome To

The Newest Way Home Staff Member

Joy Spicer, Office Manager

Joy, born in Florida and an Air Force "military brat," has lived in Laurel, Delaware for 25 years. She has an extensive career in accounting, payroll, and office management. She is a longtime volunteer and 10-year member of the Laurel Lions Club, presently serving as President of the club. Joy's husband, Brad, with Masters Degrees in Educational Counseling and Educational Administration, presently teaches art at Laurel High School. He has served the school district as an Administrator and Guidance Counselor.

Joy has also instilled volunteerism in her daughters, Sierra, a junior at Laurel High, and Summer, a 2007 Swarthmore College graduate with degrees in

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Are Wii Having Fun Yet?

Page 4 Welcome to Joy Spicer – continued from



**TWH Lead Case Manager, Tony Neal,
Bowling with WII.**

Among the games enjoyed by participants at the Game Night fundraiser sponsored by American Legion Post #28 in Millsboro was the Wii Fit Workout Game. Some participants chose to bowl with this latest fitness virtual game. Standing on a wireless platform while holding the Wii remote, the program corrects form while tracking balance and long-term progress. A delicious dinner was also enjoyed by all.



Enjoying a Card Game. Left to right: Linda Rogers RSVP; Pat Fleetwood, TWH Board Member; Barbara Del Mastro, TWH Executive Director; Don, TWH participant; and Bill Corning, TWH Case Manager.

Thank You,
American Legion Post #28
For a Fun Evening!

Due to her high GPA and volunteerism during high school, Summer received the prestigious Swarthmore McCabe Scholarship in the amount of \$114,000 for total scholarships of \$145,000 to help finance her education.

Sierra, also at the top of her class at Laurel High School, has scholarships from the Janosik Foundation, is a Ben Carson Scholar, and has received the Jefferson Award for Volunteerism. She had the lead in “Grease” in ninth grade, “Music Man” in 10th grade, and as Sharpay in “High School Musical” in the 11th grade. She is also active in local community theatres and is presently appearing as Alice, one of the miserly Mr. Harper’s children, in the Possum Point Players production of “Stinkin’ Rich.” Sierra plans to attend college majoring in musical theater.

So, feel free to stop by the office and welcome Joy to The Way Home family.

In the Poet’s Corner on Route 113 The Rev. Jim Lewis

British poet T.S. Eliot writes, “Home is where one starts from.”

He is right, of course, but home is also the place where one *returns* to.

The tragic reality for so many men and women coming out of prison is that they really *don’t* have a home to come home to. The prison doors open, they face a road, and so often it is a road with no destination in sight.

Poets have an imagination. They paint pictures with words. I invite readers to picture three scenes.

Picture, if you will, Highway 113, just outside the Sussex Correctional Institution in Georgetown. That road will take you past The

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Dover International NASCAR Speedway which seats 140,000 people. Fill the stands 16 times and that total will be the number of people in the United States now behind bars—some 2.3 million incarcerated men and women.

Wrap your mind around a global picture. Try comparing the United States with some familiar nations in the news these days. Our nation has 760 prisoners per 100,000 population. Compare that number with Afghanistan (44), Pakistan (55) and China (119).

Think of the popular game Monopoly. Visualize yourself drawing a card which reads, "Go to Jail." Then picture roughly two thirds of those released from US prisons ending right back in prison. It's called *recidivism*, but it's nothing more than a Go Back to Jail card.

The great American poet, Robert Frost, says this about the subject of home: "Home is the place where, when you have to go there, they have to take you in."

When The Way Home program was in its infancy, it was baptized with a wonderfully appropriate name. Truly, the entire mission of the program has been directed toward providing a way home for people facing an unknown road upon leaving prison. The Way Home folks are compelled to take folks in because hospitality and loving concern are the passionate components that drive the program.

The key to The Way Home program is the fact that people who have been *inside* prison are now able to walk alongside of those who live *outside* the prison—people who are dedicated to making the journey home work successfully. It is in every sense of the word a walk-with-me-work-with-me heartfelt effort.

There's one more picture I want you to ponder, one that may even be familiar. It's a picture of a man walking free from the Sussex Correctional Institution. He's greeted by Barbara or Tony, or one of the many dedicated people working with The Way Home.

Instead of walking down Highway 113 to who-knows-where, he's driven to a new home and a fresh start on life.

The African-American poet, Maya Angelou writes these words: "I long, as does every human being, to be at home wherever I find myself." And that newly released prisoner will find himself in the hands of someone who loves him and will be traveling down the road with him. That's a scene worth imagining and then making it a reality.

(Ed. Note: The Reverend Jim Lewis was the inspiring and energizing force behind the early beginnings of The Way Home. One of three priests serving on a clergy team at St. Martha's Episcopal Church in Bethany, Delaware, Reverend Lewis began the first Bible studies with three to four inmates in the chapel of Sussex Correctional Institution. As a result, the group became aware of the needs of ex-offenders facing release with no support. He was also an ardent social activist in the Delmarva region and some of the activities he was involved with was forming the Delmarva Poultry Justice Alliance, La Esperanza, LaRed Clinic, providing legal help for the Hispanic community, and counseling for teen pregnancy. He served on the National Board of the Episcopal Peace Fellowship for two terms. Reverend Lewis retired after 40+ years ministry and lives with his wife, Judy in Charleston, West Virginia. You can read some of his recent writings (2001 to the present) on his web site at www.figtreenotes.com)



...to everyone who plays such a vital role
in helping The Way Home
keep reaching out to those leaving prison!
...and the many individuals who give
of their time, talent, and treasure!
This list cannot name everyone.
Please know that you are truly appreciated.

Michelle Kidd for Stepping in as Temporary Office Manager of The Way Home

Our Dedicated Staff, Board, Volunteers, Mentors, and Participants
Churches, Synagogues, and Centers of Worship Across the State of Delaware

All Saints Church & St. Georges Chapel
Booker Street Church of God
Dagsboro Church of God
Georgetown Presbyterian Church
Lewes Presbyterian Church
Ocean View Presbyterian Church
St. Mark's and St. Martin's Churches
St. Martha's Episcopal Church
St. Paul's Episcopal Church
Westminster Presbyterian Church
Episcopal Diocese of Delaware
God's Way
Episcopal Church Women of Delaware
Lewes/Rehoboth Association of Churches
The Southeast Sussex Ministerium
American Legion Post #28
Abriendo Puertas
Department of Corrections
The Office of Probation
RSVP
Criminal Justice Council
Speer Trust Foundation
Laffey-McHugh Foundation
Milton & Hattie Kutz Foundation
Good Samaritan, Inc.
The Christian Storehouse
St. Vincent de Paul Society
Female Benevolent Society
Children & Families First
Village Improvement Association
Georgetown/Millsboro Rotary Club
Quota International Club of Wilmington
Sussex County Council
Cooperative Mortgage
Discover Bank
G & E Hardware Store, Ocean View
Megee Motors
Individual Donors
Our Anonymous Patron

**We
cannot
thank
you
enough!**





The Way Home is always looking for individuals willing to:

- Mentor a participant.
- Visit someone in prison who receives few visitors.
- Be a participant's pen pal.
- Help with transportation.
- Help organize a clothing/coat/necessities drive.
- Work with your church or civic organization to hold an annual fundraiser or give an annual pledge to the Way Home.
- Serve on one of the Way Home committees.
- Help with job search/job contacts for The Way Home participants.
- Pray for ex-offenders, all work in correctional institutions, and the community.

Ongoing Support Groups

Everlasting Hope
Wednesday nights
6:00 to 7:00 p.m.
Booker Street
Church of God
Georgetown

Bridges to the Future
4th Monday of each month
7:00 to 9:00 pm.
Georgetown Presbyterian
Church
North Bedford Street
Georgetown

Way Home Women's Group
4th Tuesday of each month
4:14 to 6:15 p.m.
Georgetown Presbyterian
Church
North Bedford Street
Georgetown

HOW TO REACH THE WAY HOME

1 East Laurel Street, P.O. Box 1103

Georgetown, DE 19947

www.thewayhomeprogram.org

Phone: (302) 856-9870 or (302) 856-6850

Fax: (302) 856-9871

Barbara Del Mastro, Director

Tony Neal, Lead Case Manager

Bill Corning, Case Manager

Joy Spicer
Office Manager

The Way Home
1 East Laurel Street
Georgetown, DE 19947

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