

MISSION GATE UPDATE

Turning Lives From Crime to Christ Since 1985

JANUARY 2025



Rick and Trish Mathes, Founders



Rick and Trish Mathes

"The righteous give without sparing" Proverbs 21: 26

And that's what you have done. Your generous donations in 2024 helped us reach out to thousands in prisons, jails and those released. Your contributions for rebuilding after the flood are bringing our residents back into their cabins. Pictures of completion will be coming next month! Fort Good Shepherd got most of our attention due to the flood, but tons have been done in prisons/jails and at all our sites. It is encouraging to know that you believe in what we are doing...reaching out in the darkest of places and most difficult tasks trusting that only the Lord can change lives. Residents of Mission Gate have faith that we will help them, that's why they came. Your donations bring the message of Christ's love, helping them stay on their journey with God. Dare to be great, step out of the boat and say, "Send me!" Press On!

"Rejoice in the Lord
always. I will say it again:
Rejoice!"
Philippians 4:4

Mashala Smith- The Way, the Truth and the Light

I am a recovering addict who has been saved by our Savior, Jesus Christ. I struggled with addiction for many years and lost my children. I have tried over and over to fix things on my own, the way I wanted to. I have been in and out of rehabs, jails and prisons but was never ready to say goodbye to the darkness that was consuming me. I always knew who Jesus was but was not living a life to serve and please Him.

After my fourth prison stay, I came back to Hannah's Ranch. This time around I was like "Wow, Jesus, I am sorry." God's hand has been with me, and every day I am reminded that I am forgiven and loved beyond measure. With Him I quit smoking 8 months ago, and at that same time I got my twins, Melody and Lyric, back living with me. I have spoken with my other children and have recently been in contact with my brother who has been estranged for 10 years. I have to remember that when doubt and lies creep in with negativity and darkness He is the truth and the light.



Mashala, Melody and Lyric

Trish Mathes- Act of Kindness



Rhonda, James and Landers

James asks us to honor his mom and dad today as they are 25 years free from the addiction of Crack Cocaine. James says, "Mission Gate was the start of my family's healing. It's been a long road but with the help of God, I've watched them pull themselves and this family out of the mud. I'm proud to be their son and thank them for being an inspiration of hope." Rhonda and Landers graduated from our program in 2000. James, their son, told me he has his own personal story with Mission Gate. While his parents were in classes at Mission Gate, James played in the gym and did arts and crafts all while learning about Jesus. When he was in junior high school, he so badly wanted to go to Chicago with his school choir but was \$179 short. We first told him we did not have the money, but after we prayed, God told us to get it for him. James told me how that kind gesture continued to ring out God's love to him throughout the years.

He had a bout of drugs himself as a young adult; his mom and dad prayed fervently for him. He moved to Waukegan, IL to go to a treatment program and stayed in that area to start a clean and sober life. He is successful today and works in a hospital. He quoted Psalm 91 knowing that even though he will have hard times, God will keep him and protect him. James said, "Satan may come near to me, but won't be able to touch me."

"He has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us to the kingdom of his beloved Son." -Colossians 1:13

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January 2025

Todd and Ryan– Tough Love

Ryan and Todd lived in our St. Louis homes trying to straighten out past addiction issues in their lives. Ryan was there first and told his twin brother Todd about it, who joined him three months later coming from a treatment center. They both wanted a structured Christian home where they could learn more about the Bible. Four days before Ryan's graduation date, old charges surfaced for both. Their mom, Debbie, called while they were at Celebrate Recovery to tell them the bad news. When they returned to our house, they packed their bags and went to a motel and drank. The next day they went to their moms and soon got arrested as the police were patrolling the area. They wanted to bond out of jail, but their mom said "no" as we did also. They ended up in Dept. of Corrections for three months and then applied again for Mission Gate. Ryan came to the city outreach and Todd came to Fort Good Shepherd. They both said, "I wouldn't know what a relationship with Christ was if it wasn't for this place."

They have both graduated this time but have stayed on longer because they want to make sure they are ready. In the city, Ryan fell in love with two stray kittens and cared for them as his own. Their plans are to get a home that will take cats. Todd is equally happy about that as he loves animals and will miss the ones at Fort Good Shepherd. Pray for the future of these two men of God and their mom. Debbie says, "They are happy with themselves and that the rap they took may have been the very best thing."



Ryan, Debbie & Todd

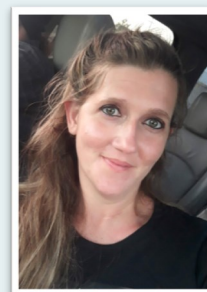
James and Joyce Fields– Recalling our Program Days



James Fields

I was nervous upon my arrival at Fort Good Shepherd. I was from Kansas and had no family or friends in Missouri. In fact, home was four hours away. I did not know what to expect as I began this new chapter in my life. However, I soon found out that I did have a family and people that cared for me and wanted to see me succeed. I found a family here at Mission Gate that showed me what love truly was, and what a home truly is. The LORD had taken me from a very wicked and lonely place in my life and placed me in a place that brought peace to my soul. I thank Jesus every day for Mission Gate, the place where I learned what it meant to take refuge in Jesus.

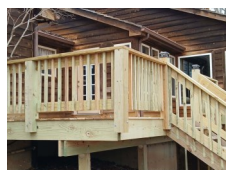
When I arrived at Hannah's Ranch, I remember thinking how beautiful it was. The pond, where I would spend so many hours at talking to the Lord, pleading with Him to do things my way and Him telling me "No." Our Lord knew this is exactly where I needed to be. I was so nervous, but ready. I had just started understanding that our Lord wanted to have a relationship with me, and not a one sided one like I had been used to. I was able to spend time with Him and His people, to see His Goodness in everything. This place taught me how to turn all things over to Him, from the hurt, pain, anger and sadness that came from the death of my sister, to forgiving and getting forgiven. Our Lord is good and once we accept the calling He has placed on our life, nothing will ever be the same.



Joyce Fields

"The salvation of the righteous is from the LORD; He is their stronghold in the time of trouble. The LORD helps them and delivers them; He delivers them from the wicked and saves them, because they take refuge in Him." Psalm 37:39-40

What a winter so far... Happy New Year!!

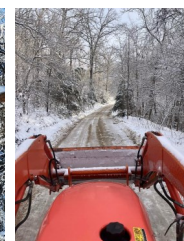


Promises of Hope back porch built by the City Outreach

Promises of Hope snow day



Hannah's Ranch sledding



FGS clearing the roadway

"Rescue the weak and the needy; deliver them from the hand of the wicked." Psalm 82:4