

# MISSION GATE UPDATE

Turning Lives From Crime to Christ Since 1985

MARCH-APRIL 2024



## Press On! —Rick Mathes, Co-Founder



**Happy 39<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Mission Gate!** Our ministry was founded on April's Fool Day—April 1, 1985.

I went from being a punk for Satan to being a fool for Jesus! And what a joy it has been. The joy of souls won to Christ strikes Satan at his very soul. Surrender, the battle belongs to the Lord! Let's press on with Jesus and finish the job of saving souls while we can still serve His people. In these times of testing, press on as a FOOL for Jesus with us.

*Thank you for lifting our arms for Christ while we press on to the victory.*

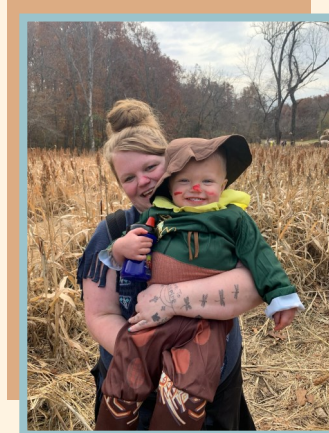
"The fool says in his heart,  
'There is no God.'  
They are corrupt,  
and their ways are vile;  
there is no one  
who does good."  
—Psalm 53:1

## I facilitate beautiful family reunions —Tamara Caron, Family Support

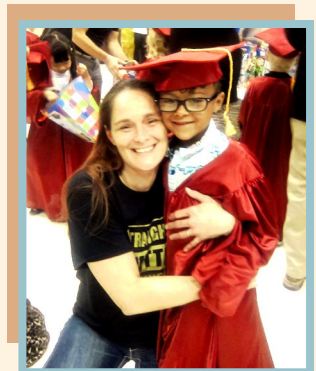
**As family support specialist,** I make sure the Mission Gate moms are grounded, engaged, and fully ready before their children move in with them at Hannah's Ranch. We must be sure moms are ready, so the children have the best chance of success.

### My job includes:

- Making sure the women are completing goals on their service plans
- Developing relationships with case workers and juvenile officers to build rapport with Children's Division in various counties
- Attending Family Support Team meetings and informing the courts of the accomplishments of the mothers at Hannah's Ranch
- Supervising mother/child visits and watching the parent/child bonds blossom and strengthen



It's a beautiful thing  
to walk with mother  
and child through the  
reunification process.  
—Tamara



## Hats off to Mission Gate! —Bobby Pedrotti



I graduated from Mission Gate on August 20, 2019, then stayed on another year to make sure I was really ready to leave. During that time, I met my 12-year-old son Joshua for the first time at a Fort Good Shepherd Family Day.

Joshua had been kept from me because of my lifestyle before I became a Christian. That's good, I believe, because Joshua never saw me drink, swear, or use drugs. I'm six years free of addiction, so he only knows me as a Christian. When he visits, Joshua clings to me and always wants to visit the prayer garden at the Fort. Joshua loves the Lord and goes to church with me whenever we're together.

Coming to Mission Gate was the best thing that ever happened to me. Hats off to Mission Gate and thank God for my life today.

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## Faithful to the ministry —Greg Smith, Director of Planning and Development



Throughout the Bible, you'll find many people who were faithful to the mission God had given them even when others thought they were crazy. Noah building the ark in the middle of the desert ... Nehemiah rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem section by section ... Joshua's army overtaking Jericho by marching around it and blowing trumpets.

Forty years ago, Rick and Trish began building the Mission Gate reentry aftercare program when nobody was doing anything like that in prison ministry. There were no best practices books, how-to websites, or role models for guidelines. Rick and Trish simply followed the vision God had given them. Today, many studies reveal how the ministry Rick and Trish built really works. The Mission Gate model is being replicated around the world.

Studies show that the first month a person is released from prison is the most critical for establishing stability. This is hard to do with no guidance or support. Facts indicate that people are up to 13 times more likely to die in the first month after their release from prison than at any other time in their lives. Not only that, but these people also need assistance and resources in months 3-9 after their release as they readjust to life. Mission Gate sees people through all these many months and aspects of building recovery.

## God is creating a new life from broken shards —Jared Leimbach



On May 19, 2022, my life shattered like a vase thrown against a wall. Jesus Christ was the only One who could deliver me from addiction to meth, abusive relationships with women, and all the rest of the destructiveness I had allowed into my life.

God moved in many ways to grab my attention, wake me up, and convince me that full submission was the only way. One day, I got down on my knees and cried out, "I am powerless without you, God. I am nothing, I want you to take control of all my life." At Mission Gate, I am learning ongoing submission, and God is taking control. It's working.

## What we've been up to recently

### Participated in reentry fairs in these locations

- Moberly Correctional Center
- Crossroads Correctional Center
- Algoa Correctional Center
- Booneville Correctional Center
- Maryville Treatment Center
- Chillicothe Correctional Center

### Led Bible studies/reentry sessions in these locations

- Fulton Diagnostic and Correctional Center
- Missouri Eastern Correctional Center
- Ozark Correctional Center
- Women's Eastern Reception & Diagnostic Center (WebX)
- St. Louis County Justice Center
- Franklin County Jail
- Community Supervision Center

Visiting the locations above is like walking down memory lane for **Larry Walker, James Fields, Jay Major, Shawnya Blankenship, Joyce Fields, and Jordan Vaughn.**

They were at one time behind prison walls, and now they wait for prison doors to open so they can go back in and make a difference.

They are living proof Jesus saves lives, and they inspire many to make decisions for Christ.

*Come to me all you who are weary and burdened and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28*