

MISSION GATE UPDATE

Turning Lives From Crime to Christ Since 1985

NOVEMBER 2025



Happy Thanksgiving!

Rick Mathes, Founder, Prison Minister - The loneliest night



The loneliest night of the year is Christmas Eve for a prisoner that won't be with his family. A father feels shame and disappointment for not providing gifts for his children to wake up to celebrate the Lord's birthday on Christmas. Can you imagine waking up in a dingy cell on Christmas morning with no Christmas tree, no candy canes, no children...just the cold unforgiving concrete of a jail cell? The heartache of remembering times past and the realization of how many more

Christmases may be missed because of one stupid mistake can be haunting. That's why Mission Gate has a Christmas Angel Mission to fill the gap for dad (or mom), so he has the comfort of knowing his family is cared for on the most special day of the year...Jesus' birth. Your contribution of a gift to a child whose parent is in prison could help inmates drop to their knees seeing Jesus' love through you. We have heard it so many times, even from young adults that we have served as little children telling us about the love they felt when they received their gifts. This reminds them that Daddy or Mommy love them and so does Jesus. They are not alone.

"Above all, love each other deeply because love covers over a multitude of sins."

I Peter 4:8

Jeanette Graves - Restoring what was broken



Before

I grew up in chaos. Both parents were addicts, and my father was physically abusive. When he died of an overdose and my mother went to prison for second-degree murder, everything changed. I was adopted by my aunt, who showed me love and compassion. Most of all—she taught me how God loved me. Even with her example, I fell into the same generational curse of addiction as a teenager. My son Daniel was born while I was using drugs. Eventually, I gave up my parental rights to my adoptive mother. I felt hopeless—until God stepped in.

Coming to **Hannah's Ranch** has turned my life around. Here, I've developed a personal, loving relationship with God. He has opened my spiritual eyes, and the Holy Ghost has helped me begin changing my life. God is restoring the years "the swarming locusts have eaten" (Joel 2:25) as my family relationships heal. My son and I have seen each other on numerous occasions, and my adopted mother has seen the special bond between my son and me. My adopted mother has recently told my son that I am his birth mother. While my son has many questions he was excited and I know my God is with us and will continue to guide our growing relationship. Knowing he was adopted, he told me one day, "I wish I knew whose belly I was in." And now he knows.



After

God knows the desires of my heart and blesses me daily with His presence. For the first time in my life, I feel true peace, joy, and completeness - all because I opened my heart to the Lord. I'm so thankful for **Hannah's Ranch** and **Mission Gate Ministry** for a safe place to grow in faith. Most of all, I'm thankful for God's unending mercy, love, and power to restore what was once broken.

"The thief comes only to steal, kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly." John 10:10

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Scott Rudolff (2007 graduate) - "I was the kid that finished the race."

In 2006, I was in my twenties with a good job and a promising future. But I wanted more and turned to crime to get it. Instead, I lost everything and found myself in prison, talking to a God I didn't even know. I said, "God, I tried it my way, but I can't do it." An hour later, a man invited me to an AA meeting. After that I began reading the Bible, and God showed me through His Word He was real. I prayed and asked Him into my heart. There I left my old life behind to walk with Jesus while still stuck in a cell at Moberly Correctional Center.

As I was getting closer to my release date, I started to panic. Friends and family had given up on me, and I had nowhere to go. Then I heard about Mission Gate. I applied because I knew they could help me avoid old temptations. Afraid they wouldn't take me; I begged my sister to call and tell them I had changed. When no one else would help, Mission Gate was there for me.

Life there wasn't easy. I was angry and had a bad attitude. One day, I was rude to Trish, and she told Rick. Later that evening he called me to come to the Lodge and said, "You're like the kid who starts the race but never finishes." I didn't want to be that kid anymore, so I apologized. Trish was my counselor and knew I didn't get along with the program director at that time. She sat us both down and said, "You are two grown men who love the Lord, work it out." She left the room and we worked it out.

I graduated in 2007. Today I live in Florida with my wife and two sons. Life hasn't been without struggles, but the enemy has never taken us down. When I think of Mission Gate, Trish, and Rick, I get tears in my eyes. Where would I be if they hadn't helped me walk steadily with Jesus Christ?



Trish Mathes, Executive Director - Why family day means so much to me

We host Family Day at Fort Good Shepherd twice a year. It has always been one of my favorite events that I get really excited about! It's a great time of sharing food, fellowship, testimonies and healing when our residents' families come to visit. But this year I took a step back and understood why it means so much to me.

As the overseer of guidance and counseling at Mission Gate, I meet individually with many clients on a regular basis, and oversee counseling at other sites. We put together goals that form a plan to work through difficulties from their past and build a path for the future. We all talk one-on-one with our residents. But on Family Day, our discussions get put into action within the context of the most profound connections in their lives, their families of origin, their children, brothers, sisters, aunts, and uncles.

I see families who are astounded at the progress of their adult children. They understand why it wouldn't have been good for their sons to come home after prison...right back into the neighborhoods where they got into trouble. We've heard so many say with gratitude, "Thank you for saving my son." But we know it was the Lord that drew them and gave them a chance to be still and focus on Him and His will for their life. Other families are skeptical. I see tears of sorrow. They are not sure if the changes they see are sincere or will last. This tells me that the residents and we have more individual work to do.

All in all, it is a beautiful day filled with fun, laughter, bonding and hope for the future. I'm so grateful the Holy Spirit revealed new insights that will improve and enhance our counseling program...always taking family relationships into account as we help them move forward in recovery. It also confirms why Family Day brings me so much joy.



"I have no greater joy than to hear that my children are walking in the truth." 3 John 1:4