



A word from the Warden

by Robert Tanner

Starting in August 2009, smoking will be banned in all Louisiana state facility buildings. This will have a direct impact at Rayburn Correctional Center.

From the time dorm doors are closed at night until they are opened in the morning, there will not be an opportunity to smoke. For a time at least, we will continue to sell tobacco

products in the canteen, but in future years, even this may be banned by the Legislature.

Numerous studies have found that second-hand smoke can cause the same problems as smoking: heart disease, cancer, emphysema, and other diseases. The legislation for smoke free zones is designed to protect non-smokers from exposure from smokers.

Bans on smoking are not new. Pope Urban VII's 13-day papal reign included the world's first known public smoking ban in 1590, as he threatened to excommunicate anyone who "took tobacco in the porchway of or inside a church, whether it be by chewing it, smoking it with a pipe or sniffing it in powdered form through the nose". There are now 35 states with

some form of smoking ban. Some areas in California have begun making entire cities smoke-free, which would include every place except residential homes.

Many studies have shown nicotine to be more addictive than cocaine or heroin. I am not a smoker, and so I really do not understand the addiction to nicotine.

In order to help those individuals that wish to quit smoking, we will be offering classes. Now is a good time to consider quitting. For your health, for your pocketbook, for your family, and for your friends, I would encourage you to take advantage of the classes.

"God does bless Forgiven Ministries"

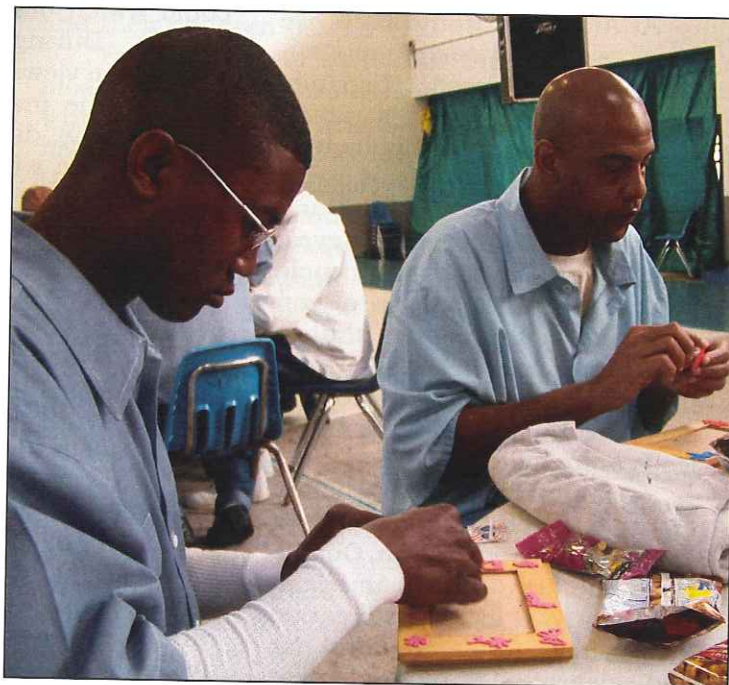
Fathers and kids gain from reunion

by Courtney M. Moses/ Kim Davidson

Forgiven Ministries is awesome! What started as a local function in North Carolina to help incarcerated parents rekindle relationships with their kids has expanded to nine states. One Day With God leader Scottie Barnes enlists volunteers to assist Forgiven Ministries in efforts to assure kids and their fathers have a blessed time in God's presence. Recently, RCC hosted the first ever One Day with God Reunion, and they pulled out all the stops to make sure it was a day to remember.

Twenty-nine dads and granddads, along with their kids, participated in this event. Actually, the kids were more excited about this reunion than their dads were. The way they were running around, laughing, and getting their faces painted, one would think they were going to an amusement park rather than spending a day in prison.

Poochie, the mascot for the event, led the kids to their dads and granddads who waited for them by the gym. As soon as the volunteers called the father's name to come greet their kids, you heard the kids yelling, "Hi Daddy! I love you Paw-Paw!" as they leapt into their fathers and grandfather's open arms. All of the kids came to previous camps so they knew what to expect. The way kids embraced their dads with smiles and tears of joy, it



Left, Eric Hogan and Ryan Fleming arrange stickers on photo frames that they will give to their children.

was evident that God's hand was upon this event.

Tracey Williams, a player for the Harlem Globetrotters, was the guest speaker for the event. Williams spends much of his time in prisons—building relationships and teaching why dads

[KIDS CAMP from page - 3]

make a difference. Along with his wife, Tina, they have collaborated with Forgiven Ministry over four years. As the kids gathered around Williams, he proceeded to tell them about obtaining their dreams. Williams left with a message for both the kids and their dads.



TOP – Poochie escorts eager kids through the gate. Below Henderson Palmer greets children.



“If you can dream it, you can achieve it,” Williams told the kids. “Always keep God first.”

To the dads, “You are the real stars,” Williams noted. “Tell your kids how you feel about them, how you love them, because in their eyes, you are the real stars.”

Throughout the event, kids and dads participated in games like a beanbag throw, tug-of-war, and race to the line. They even spent time planning vacations together. However, one of the memorable moments of the day came when each

dad placed a corsage on their daughter’s wrist; and they slow danced to Luther Vandross’, “Dance with my father.” Many dads will not be there to celebrate their daughters’ sweet 16, prom night, or wedding day; this was their opportunity to give their daughters the dance they deserve. Some dads had more than one daughter attending this event and hearing them telling their dad, “It’s my turn daddy,” was simply beautiful.

The sons were also presented with a gift from their dad. In a special bonding moment, each son was presented with a necktie from his dad and was shown how to tie the knot properly.

Barnes, the founder of Forgiven Ministry, understood the dynamics of keeping relationships between fathers and their kids in tact. Barnes started this ministry over ten years ago in North Carolina because God gave her a vision through her hardship of visiting her father for many years in the penal system. After a divine visit to the Philippines, Barnes sought to reunite incarcerated parents and their children. Her testimony about how God planted a seed in her heart to connect incarcerated parents and their kids, and the manifestation of this vision, is evidence that God is blessing and is still performing miracles.

The mission of the organization is to restore broken relationships between incarcerated parents and their children.

“From corner to corner in the United States, incarcerated men are losing their relationships with their kids. Forgiven Ministries is here to help,” Barnes said. “We are breaking that cycle! God created a plan called ‘One Day with God,’ so that parents will be able to reconnect broken relationships with their kids.”

In 2004, Chaplain Cook invited Mrs. Barnes and her ministry to RCC (formally WCI). Volunteer coordinators Mike and Jan Stevens were among the first to help Forgiven Ministry bring fathers and their kids together. Jan’s eyes light up whenever the subject comes up.

“There’s a quote from Joyce Meyers that I always use: ‘If you can help a child, you won’t have to repair an adult,’” Stevens said. “This is the 6th camp we’ve had so far and seeing these kids reunite with their fathers warms my heart every time I see them. I do seminars and Angel Tree, but this takes it to a new level.”

Because of Forgiven Ministry, offender Chaplain Christopher Pendleton was able to spend the day with his 14 year old daughter Uneicka. Uneicka stays in another state and the volunteers of Forgiven Ministry paid for her plane ticket so she and her father could attend the camp and enjoy one another’s company. Pendleton is very thankful for the One Day With God camps.

“Prior to the last camp, this was the 3rd time I

[KIDS CAMP from page – 5]

visited with my daughter in 14 years,” Christopher said. “I see our father-daughter bond has gotten much closer since the last camp. She’s more open and comfortable with being around me, and I credit all of this to God working through Forgiven Ministry.”

One Day With God camps not only help build relationships with families, they also help offenders become better individuals. The camp helps offenders to stay focused by avoiding write-ups. It also helps offenders grow spiritually and intellectually by attending monthly classes called Fantastic Fathers. Most importantly, offenders understand the importance of forgiveness, love, and God in their lives.

At the conclusion of the event, Pendleton said, “The kids and their parents grew near to each other within the course of seven hours. Despite how they may have felt before the camp began, at the end of the day, the tears of joy that ran down the faces of the kids and their parents confirmed that the One Day with God camp was truly “A Day with God!”

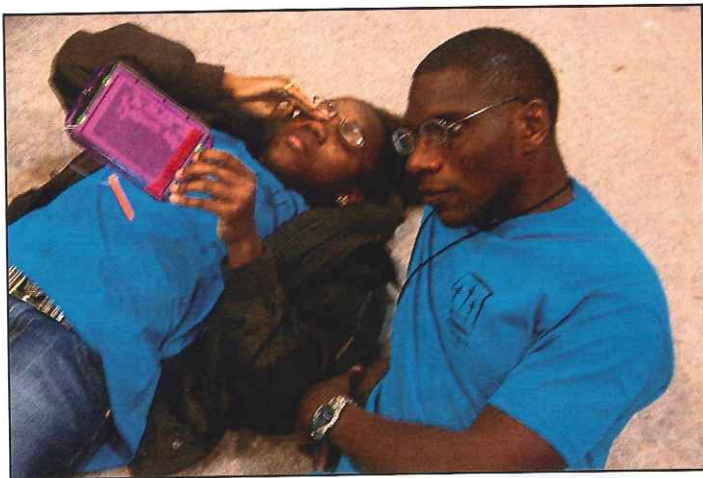
Those of you who have kids or grandkids and

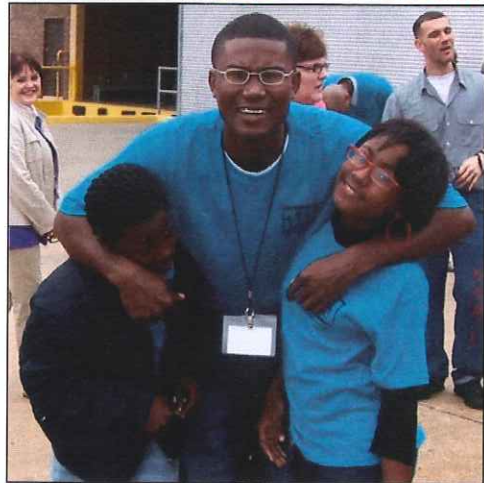
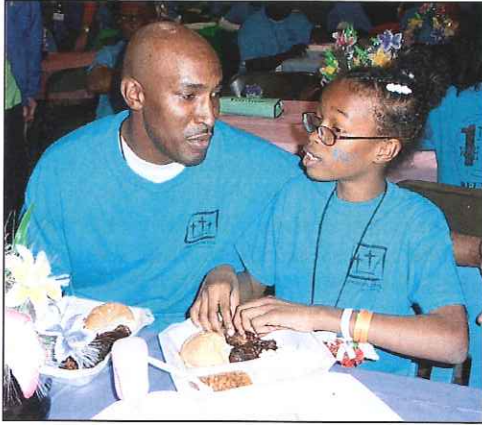
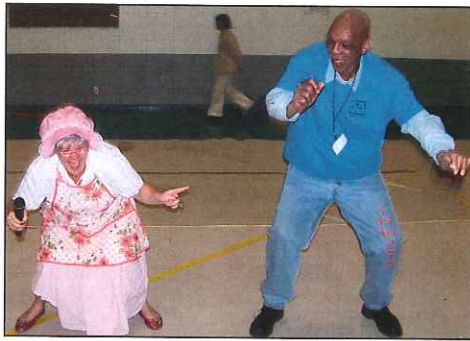


Scottie Barnes speaks with Warden Robert Tanner about the schedule for the Kids camp.

wish to participate in this life-changing event, see any one of the six Chaplain orderlies for information.

Special moments at Kids Camp





Chainlink Chronicle

Vol. XXV No. 1

January 2009

KIDS CAMP REUNION BIG SUCCESS

PRE-RELEASE HAS TOOLS FOR OFFENDERS

GRADUATION IS THE LARGEST FOR RAYBURN

RCC NOMINATES LOCAL NEWSPAPER FOR AWARD



A Prison News Publication of B.B. "Sixty" Rayburn Correctional Center