

# What's Inside!

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## Monthly Spotlight: **CHANGED CHOICES**

On September 28-29th, Hurricane Helene, the third-deadliest hurricane in modern times, caused devastating loss of life, flooding, and destruction throughout the Southeastern United States. Hit hardest was North Carolina, and western cities such as Asheville, where emergency supplies had to be brought in by mule and air due to roads being completely washed away.

The work to recover and rebuild will be extensive, and our concern for their community includes Serving USA's partner Changed Choices, based out of Charlotte, NC. Their major fundraiser 25th Anniversary Gala celebration, slated for the evening of September 28, was postponed at the last minute as dangers of the storm became most apparent. Changed Choices' funding needs are present and immediate today. In Mecklenburg County their outreach to currently incarcerated and reentering women, 80% of whom are mothers, is critical for these women to remain successful in their healing.

Please read this notice from their CEO/Executive Director, Diane Hunt:





## Monthly Spotlight: **CHANGED CHOICES**

*It was with a heavy heart that we had to cancel the much-anticipated Changed Choices 25th Anniversary Event. Our hearts and prayers go out to everyone affected by the destruction of Helene. We were looking forward to folks hearing directly from our Program Participants, women determined to change the trajectory of their lives. Many of them are well established or on their way to building a thriving life beyond prison walls, and others are more recently released and adjusting to life back in community. We are so incredibly proud of these women – for their tenacity, determination, strength, and perseverance. Change isn't easy, but we know it is possible. The Changed Choices Program is designed for deep relationship and discipleship, caring for women holistically and journeying with them for the long haul. Our graduates are a testament to the difference our program makes. As you pray for the folks impacted by Helene, please remember the women of Changed Choices.*

Take a moment to learn more about Changed Choices' work, which proudly reports its participants' low recidivism rate of under 2.3%, and how you can provide life-changing support to these women at:

<https://sharecharlotte.org/nonprofit/changed-choices> and

<https://www.changedchoices.org>

# POSTPONED



*Anniversary  
Celebration*



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Questions

**Q & A**

Answers



**REACH THE  
FORGOTTEN**  
JAIL MINISTRY



**NATE DEWARD**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
REACH THE FORGOTTEN JAIL MINISTRY

**Reverend Nate DeWard began working with Reach the Forgotten in 2014 after 16 years of working in ministry and non-profit settings. His professional life has included chaplaincy, recruiting, fundraising, church planting, and pastoring churches. As Executive Director, he focuses on strengthening existing missions, leadership training, donor development, and expanding into new Michigan county jails.**

Reach the Forgotten Jail Ministry (RTF), headquartered in Grand Rapids, Michigan, is a faith-based nonprofit focused on providing spiritual support and guidance to inmates in county jails across Michigan. Founded in 1966, the organization employs chaplains and over 2,000 volunteers to deliver services like Bible studies, worship services, Christian mentoring, addiction recovery classes, and Bible-based trauma healing. They emphasize redemption and restoration through faith in Jesus Christ, with the goal of helping inmates reintegrate into society as productive citizens upon release.

RTF operates in county jails throughout the state, offering programs such as Healing the Wounded Heart, a trauma healing initiative, and Bible mentorship in partnership with Crossroads Prison Ministries. They also facilitate Authentic Remote Ministry, allowing volunteers to connect with inmates via email, providing mentorship and encouragement.



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Questions

Q & A

Answers



REACH THE  
FORGOTTEN  
JAIL MINISTRY



**NATE DEWARD**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
REACH THE FORGOTTEN JAIL MINISTRY

1

**(Q) As the largest jail-specific ministry in Michigan, Reach the Forgotten serves in over 30 jails in 30 different counties. Providing shorter-term stays for inmates ahead of their sentencing or for lesser offenses than prisons, Michigan's jails are operated by local sheriff's department correctional staff and vary in size and budget pending their county's location. Understandably politics can intermingle with your ministry's mission. What techniques do you use to manage relationships with such a wide variety of correctional leaders, who may also be influential in accepting and/or implementing your programs in their respective jails?**

**(A)** We related to sheriffs and their correctional staff on three levels: local, regional, and statewide. At the local level our chaplains are the face of the ministry and the leader of our jail program in a specific jail. They work as guests of the sheriff in the jail to ensure that there is an organized program of volunteers who come in the jail to serve. Chaplains are responsible at the local level for recruiting, training, and managing volunteers in their jail. Chaplains report to the regional leader of Reach the Forgotten for the purposes of our ministry.

Providing Grace and Redemption through Christ for Prisoners, Women in Recovery, and Military Veterans

Questions

**Q & A**

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**REACH THE  
FORGOTTEN**  
JAIL MINISTRY



**NATE DEWARD**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
REACH THE FORGOTTEN JAIL MINISTRY

*We can encourage, equip, and hold our chaplains accountable as staff members who are part of our organization. This is important to make sure that our mission, vision, and values are represented consistently in the counties where we serve.*

The regional leaders build relationships with the jail administrators and the sheriffs in their respective regions. That way, when turnover occurs, we can work collaboratively with the jail to provide a new chaplain and keep our services going with minimal interruption. Our regional leaders work with our home office ministry leadership team to provide statewide governance, resources, and ministry support. Each year, we send representatives to the Michigan Sheriffs' Association conferences where we are warmly welcomed and invited to interact with sheriffs, undersheriffs, and jail administrators from all over the state of Michigan. The key to managing relationships with each county is the regional leadership team who advocate for our ministry and make sure things are running smoothly at all levels of our operations in jails.

Questions

**Q & A**

Answers

**REACH THE  
FORGOTTEN**  
JAIL MINISTRY

**NATE DEWARD**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
REACH THE FORGOTTEN JAIL MINISTRY

**2**

**(Q) Michigan Department of Corrections realizes the impact of trauma on both staff and offenders, and their strategic plan includes becoming a trauma-informed department by August 2026. Many groups in our community are looking into additional mental health healing and Reach the Forgotten is a steadfast leader in providing trauma healing programs and trainings to other ministry groups, in partnership with American Bible Society/Trauma Healing Institute. Please share how the process works and key reasons you might recommend the 'Healing the Wounded Heart' program to Serving USA's partners working with Prisoners, Veterans or Women in Recovery.**

**(A)** Reach the Forgotten began training leaders in the correctional version of Healing the Wounded Heart in 2019. We understood that we needed to make a multi-year commitment to training chaplains and volunteers who could learn a biblical model of trauma-informed care. Since we are training lay people, Healing the Wounded Heart was the perfect curriculum because it changed how we view and therefore treat inmates.

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Questions

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**REACH THE  
FORGOTTEN**  
JAIL MINISTRY



**NATE DEWARD**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
REACH THE FORGOTTEN JAIL MINISTRY

We now take into consideration the heart wounds (trauma) that can lead people to self-medicate through drugs and alcohol and commit crimes.

*Our ministry helps inmates identify the source of their pain and using the biblical language of lament, take their pain to the cross and be restored by the power of God.*

Our staff would love to help any interested organizations learn more because we have a team of “Master Facilitators” that now train people all over the world in this curriculum. It has been the most impactful program that we have been able to offer statewide in the last 5 years.

To learn more, reach out to Sallie at her email: [sallien@jailministry.org](mailto:sallien@jailministry.org).



Providing Grace and Redemption through Christ for Prisoners, Women in Recovery, and Military Veterans

Questions

**Q & A**

Answers



**REACH THE  
FORGOTTEN**  
JAIL MINISTRY



**NATE DEWARD**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
REACH THE FORGOTTEN JAIL MINISTRY

3

**(Q) Ahead of the trends you have long promoted the importance of chaplaincy. Today chaplaincy awareness and their extensive value in society is skyrocketing. Your ministry model relies on chaplains as representatives and leaders connecting with inmates inside jail, as well as overseeing the thousands of RTF volunteers who provide support and execution of your programs throughout the state. What characteristics do you look for when interviewing to add a chaplain to your team? What advice and observations can you share for someone seriously considering studying to become a chaplain?**

**(A)** Our chaplains believe that “No one is beyond God’s reach.” RTF chaplains understand that they may be meeting a person in jail at the absolute lowest point of their lives so they serve with a non-judgmental and compassionate presence. When we interview candidates for lead chaplain positions, we make sure they know Christ and have a good understanding of God’s Word. We screen our chaplains to make sure they have experienced grace on a personal level.

Providing Grace and Redemption through Christ for Prisoners, Women in Recovery, and Military Veterans

Questions

**Q & A**

Answers



**REACH THE  
FORGOTTEN**  
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**NATE DEWARD**  
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
REACH THE FORGOTTEN JAIL MINISTRY

*Many of our chaplains are former inmates themselves who have been given a second chance and want to preach and teach about God's forgiveness and love to incarcerated people.*

If a person is seriously looking into becoming a correctional chaplain, I would advise they volunteer at a local jail or prison near them to see if they are drawn to this kind of work. The Correctional Ministries and Chaplains Association is a great place to get training as well ([www.cmcainternational.org](http://www.cmcainternational.org)).

Providing Grace and Redemption through Christ for Prisoners, Women in Recovery, and Military Veterans

## Testimonial Spotlight

# EPIPHANY LIFE CHANGE & ORANGE COUNTY RESCUE MISSION



Houston-based Epiphany Life Change, led by Pastor Charles Anderson, continues their mission of educating and advocating for system-impacted men and women throughout the State of Texas Department of Criminal Justice. More than 400 students are currently enrolled Epiphany-led The Urban Ministry Institute (TUMI) courses, and recently **two TUMI graduations** celebrating completion of the Capstone Curriculum were held at the Terrell and Huntsville Units.

Congratulations to these graduates! Epiphany Life Change appreciates financial support to help offset program costs and provide stipends for their dedicated support staff. Visit: <https://www.epiphanylifechange.org>.



## Testimonial Spotlight

# EPIPHANY LIFE CHANGE & ORANGE COUNTY RESCUE MISSION



Randy Haskins and his team at New Beginnings Gold Country were voted #1 Best Charitable Organization in El Dorado County by readers of the Mountain Democrat. New Beginnings of Placerville, CA is a reentry and discipleship ministry where formerly incarcerated, homeless, and/or people living dead-end lifestyles can change their lives, free of charge. They operate a residential home, thrift store, Home Inspirations boutique store, and provide educational and vocational opportunities, all with a vision for their county to have the lowest homeless rate per capita in the United States. For more information, visit: <https://newbeginningsgoldcountry.org>.





## Testimonial Spotlight

# EPIPHANY LIFE CHANGE & ORANGE COUNTY RESCUE MISSION



Strong Beginnings provides a comprehensive and multi-disciplinary response to the needs of women escaping human trafficking. Their response avoids re-traumatization and provides trauma-informed care through a victim-centered approach. Strong Beginnings includes emergency shelter, transitional housing, care coordination, case management, advocacy services, mental health assistance, food, clothing, counseling, healthcare, and more. They recently received this heartwarming letter from a former student in the program:

*"Before coming into the Strong Beginnings program, I was lost, afraid, and alone. I was coming out of a life that I had trouble believing I was in, to begin with. I had nothing and no one. I felt completely alone, afraid, hopeless, and had no self-esteem or faith in God.*

***When I entered the Strong Beginnings program, it was the first time I had felt safe in a really long time.***

*I found the loving, encouraging, accepting, and patient support from staff and peers that I so badly needed. I was finally able to feel safe enough to sleep, eat, rest, heal, and even learn.*

## Testimonial Spotlight

# EPIPHANY LIFE CHANGE & ORANGE COUNTY RESCUE MISSION



***I finally felt safe enough to open my heart to God again and those around me.*** The Strong Beginnings program provided me the opportunity to learn more deeply about the experiences I had while being trafficked. They helped me know I was not alone. Although it was extremely hard at times, I was finally able to have hope for the future again.

*I knew that with God by my side I could regain my life again. Through the assistance of my Case Manager at Strong Beginnings, I was able to find a [long-term] transitional living program that is [for trafficking survivors].*



## Testimonial Spotlight

# EPIPHANY LIFE CHANGE & ORANGE COUNTY RESCUE MISSION

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*It has been two years since I left the Strong Beginnings program. I have graduated from my transitional living program and am now living on my own, working a meaningful full-time job.*

*The staff in the Strong Beginnings program made a significant difference in my life, continuing to be there for me even after I graduated the program. Helping to encourage and strengthen me with every challenge or achievement I've had along the way.*

***Strong Beginnings gave me something I could not find anywhere else. They gave me the resources and hope I needed to create a new life."***

Sincerely,  
A Grateful Survivor

## President's Corner



Greg Bruce  
President, Serving USA

At year end, expectations for the holidays may bring added anxiety along with the excitement and beauty of the nativity season. For nonprofit organizations this is their busiest time as the focus on fundraising and pressures to receive donations are heightened. It can be challenging for most groups, knowing nearly 50% of their annual revenue is expected to be raised between November 1st to December 31st. (1)

Along with Giving Tuesday this year on December 3rd, there are an increased number of organized campaigns reaching out for funding. The chatter and appeals for attention are hard to ignore as they come from every direction: mailers, email, phone calls, radio, television, and online. Serving USA's partners, needy charities and church leaders are amidst what many express "feels like a competition for dollars." Most of us, in addition to making contributions to our favorite groups, also have our own households and personal expenses to consider. Time, family and financial obligations can spread us thin, yet in reflecting on living out our faith, it does not have to be this way. We trust God will arrange for our needs to be met, or for our year-end campaigns to turn out as they should.

Today's world places pride and significance on being 'in control.' Appearances of success and perfection are flaunted through filtered photos on social media, and all seems well, until circumstances slip out of our hands. A force of nature, such as the recent destruction from Hurricane Helene, can quickly level the playing field and shock us back to reality. Such tragic times are a devastating reminder of the fragility of life, as noted this month by **Changed Choices' Executive Director/CEO, Diane Hunt.**



## President's Corner



Greg Bruce  
President, Serving USA

Living in our humanity and albeit anxious vulnerability, we are grateful to have our community, with whom we can ride through the storms, pray with and lean on for support. The commonality of our beliefs and love for Jesus Christ provide supernatural strength and empower us to be honest, unfiltered and truly present for each other. Our faith in Christ renews our resolve to remain, repair and rebuild. At this time of Thanksgiving, we give praise for the peace we may find internally, as well as within the world around us. We offer thanks to the greatest gift, eternal salvation, which we each have been offered through His sacrifice.

Peace, I leave with you; my peace I give to you. Not as the world gives do I give to you. Let not your hearts be troubled, neither let them be afraid.

– **John 14:27 [ESV]**

Thank you,  
-Dr. Greg Bruce

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## Get In Contact



### Reach the Forgotten

1480 Buchanan Ave. SW  
Grand Rapids, MI 49507  
Website: [jailministry.org](http://jailministry.org)  
FB: [Reach the Forgotten Jail Ministry](#)  
Email: [office@jailministry.org](mailto:office@jailministry.org)  
Phone: (616) 784-4620



### Epiphany Life Change

2103 N. Main Street Houston, TX 77009  
Website: [epiphanylifechange.org](http://epiphanylifechange.org)  
FB: [Epiphany: Life Change](#)  
Email: [info@epiphanylifechange.org](mailto:info@epiphanylifechange.org)  
Phone: (832) 487-6541



### Changed Choices

PO Box 34367 Charlotte, NC 28234  
Website: [changedchoices.org](http://changedchoices.org)  
FB: [Changed Choices](#)  
Email: [info@changedchoices.org](mailto:info@changedchoices.org)  
Phone: (704) 332-6388



### New Beginnings

4512 Missouri Flat Rd. Placerville, CA 95667  
Website: [newbeginningsgoldcountry.org](http://newbeginningsgoldcountry.org)  
FB: [New Beginnings](#)  
Email: [info@newbeginningsgoldcountry.org](mailto:info@newbeginningsgoldcountry.org)  
Phone: (530) 344-7200



Orange County Rescue Mission  
1 Hope Drive Tustin, CA 92782  
Website: [rescuemission.org](http://rescuemission.org)  
FB: [Orange County Rescue Mission](#)  
Email: [info@rescuemission.org](mailto:info@rescuemission.org)  
Phone: (714) 247-4300



## Questions?

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS,  
COMMENTS, OR CONCERNS  
REGARDING INFORMATION WITHIN  
THIS NEWSLETTER,

PLEASE CONTACT  
[INFO@SERVINGUSA.ORG](mailto:INFO@SERVINGUSA.ORG)

[@servingusa](#) | [info@servingusa.org](mailto:info@servingusa.org)

[WWW.SERVINGUSA.ORG](http://WWW.SERVINGUSA.ORG)

# Partner Events



*December 2 - 12th*

## **Brookside Community Development Corporation**

**December 2 – December 12**

### **Indianapolis Gives Challenge, Virtual Event (Indianapolis, IN)**

Brookside CDC will be participating in the Indianapolis Gives Challenge this year, a friendly fundraising competition where local charities compete to raise the most money. Their goal is to reach as many people as possible and raise money earmarked for their REENTRY and HOUSING programs. Help them keep changing lives in their neighborhood! There are several ways you can participate in the Challenge and support Brookside CDC:

- **Donate during the Challenge!** Every dollar counts – even \$10 makes a difference! Just make sure that you donate during the Challenge (**December 2-12**) and send your donation through official organization page on the [Indianapolis Gives](#) website.
- **Become a Fundraising Partner!** [View Toolkit!](#)
- **Follow on Social Media!** Engage with posts to show your support and reach more people. Brookside CDC on FB:

Link to donate here: [Indianapolis Gives](#)



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## Partner Events



### December 7th and 8th

#### Wings of Refuge

#### December 7th & 8th

#### Annual Tour of Homes for Wings of Refuge

#### Iowa Arboretum & Gardens, 1875 Peach Ave., Madrid, IA 50156

Get in the holiday spirit by touring the beautifully decorated homes all decked out for Christmas! Visit each house in any order and don't forget to come to the Arboretum where you can see the new treehouse exhibit, purchase survivor-made products from the ONE MORE shop, and A FESTIVAL OF TREES will be auctioned off. Tickets available:

<https://givebutter.com/c/tourofhomes2024>



### December 31st

#### New Beginnings

#### December 31st, In Bed by Ten New Year's Event

#### Mother Lode Lion's Club, 4701 Missouri Flat Road Diamond Springs, CA 95619

Come join us for a night of fun and celebration at the Mother Lode Lion's Club. Get ready to mingle, and ring in the new year with friends old and new. This in-person event promises to be the highlight of your holiday season, so mark your calendars and start planning your outfit now! We can't wait to see you there as we countdown to 2025 and welcome in the new year together.

