



Texas Epiphany Ministries

Manifesting God to Incarcerated Juveniles

Volume V, Issue VI, Winter 2014

www.texasepiphany.com

From the Chair's Corner:

As many of you know, Sinda Berge resigned from the Board in July. She had served the Ministry in many ways over the past several years, including being a faithful team member for the Giddings community, board member and then Chairman of the Board for 5 years. As a team member she served as outside kitchen head many times. She was diligent in organizing and chairing the Board meetings. She volunteered to help provide lunch for the meetings many times and her sense of humor helped keep the Board meetings going. Her service and her servant heart will be missed. We wish her the best as she moves on to another ministry. The By Laws dictate that the Vice Chair fill the role of Chairman for the remainder of the term of the Chair. So until February elections I will be your Chairman; I covet your prayers and your help during this time to continue to make this the best ministry possible.

The Ministry is going strong. I attended the Giddings weekend recently as a Board Rep and saw Christ in action through the work of the team and the Super Stars. For example, a Star was standing by himself, not with his family, during singing in chapel. An adult urged him to join the family but he refused; a Super Star spotted him alone, came over, put his arm around the Star and together they joined in the singing. I know these sorts of things take place in all the units, little moments of spontaneous grace. That's what makes this ministry so special for the young men and for us as team members.

Blessings,

Powerful/Patient Pat

The Spirit of the
Sovereign Lord
is on me, because the
Lord has anointed me
to proclaim good news
to the poor.

He has sent me
to bind up the broken
hearted, to proclaim
freedom for the
captives and release
from darkness
for the
prisoners.

Isaiah 61:1



Epiphany Weekend Reports

Brownwood #26--Some last minute changes at the beginning caused some confusion with the JCO's which wore the runner-driver out. These were not major issues just last minute changes that called for the team to be as flexible as possible. A highlight of the weekend was when the volunteer in the role of John entered the room singing a hymn and left singing a hymn. This really touched the girls.

Two epiphany girls who had been released from this facility served on the outside team. Amanda and Sam were very hard workers. Team members were able to minister to these girls and encourage them. The girls in the unit were excited to hear about being able to come and serve on outside team like their peers.

Gainesville #27--The team was well put together and guided in prayer, love and the Holy Spirit. Overall it was an excellent weekend. Open mike time was awesome.

Giddings #22--The weekend was scheduled to start late on Friday morning due to a federal mandate to have "snapshot" day in the educational classrooms. Chaplain Kennedy took the team on a prayer walk around the campus where there was prayer at every building. This was an unusual weekend in that all 36 young men showed up smiling and ready and participated early in the day. A smooth weekend even with late start until 4th day speaker did not show up but God had it covered. One of the team members also works Kairos and he had brought some letters that some of "his" men had written to the boys. With the chaplain's approval, 4 or 5 letters were read from men who had started out like the young men they were writing. Their advice was to get out of this kind of life now. Prison is not someplace you want to be. The letters really had the boys' attention.

Corsicana #22--cancelled--Corsicana facility was closed.

Clemens #36--There were 17 stars attending with 12 in lockdown. We had 5 students who spoke no English. With team members who were bilingual, a Spanish speaking table was created for these 5 stars. It worked well.

Post #13--Everyone knew what to do and it turned out to be very organized. The physical facility was difficult. An excellent music team handled terrible acoustics well. Of the 27 stars, 3 were girls but it worked well. Had a Spanish speaking table. One of the talks was given as a paragraph in Spanish and then the same paragraph in English. Sunday morning the stars had to leave us as there was an incident and the facility was on lock-down.

Gainesville #28--All 35 youth who began the weekend, completed the weekend. 11 Super Stars were selected to serve their fellow youth. Our Super Stars did a most excellent job!! We were pleased to hear from several youth during open mic time at closing ceremonies. One youth shared with us that he has been in and out of jail/prison since he was 11 years old. He shared that each time he has been in jail someone has been there to tell him about Jesus. He said, however, that during the Epiphany weekend he was introduced to Jesus for the very first time. Hearing that sweet testimony reminds us all that the hours of preparation, the covering of prayer, and the long days during an Epiphany weekend are worth every minute invested in these youth for God's kingdom.

Krier #15--Weekend went well. Couple of obstacles noted causing time constraints but the team did an excellent job of getting back on schedule with minimal disruption. 36 boys attended with 3 dropping out with the 33 who remained each accepting his cross and all participating in the forgiveness lists. One highlight of the weekend occurred after day 2 as a result of the forgiveness talks/skits. A star requested forgiveness from a peer in his dorm that night and shared this with his table family and during closing. All honor and glory go to our risen savior and Lord, Jesus Christ. He is responsible for Epiphany 15's success. The team prayed and trusted Him, and He answered prayer!

Gainesville Epiphany Community

It is with great pride and appreciation that one of our own, Ms. Judy Davis, was recognized by the Gainesville State School Volunteer Council and nominated for Volunteer of the Year. Judy serves the Gainesville campus as an integral part of the volunteer community where she has wisdom and experience as a youth mentor and volunteer instructor. Overall, the Epiphany Community for Gainesville racked up a total of 4831.50 volunteer hours during FY 2013.



Letter from Dotty Luera, Community Relations Coordinator, Gainesville State School to the Gainesville Epiphany team:

Thank you so much for providing a Christmas gathering for our boys with sandwiches, drinks, chips, cupcakes, etc. I know the boys really enjoyed it? We estimated the cost at \$400.00.

Epiphany is my favorite group! Our boys really need to learn about forgiveness and that God knows them personally. By you all getting to know each boy individually, you are teaching them that! My favorite part is that you kekep coming back with reunions and gatherings. That is crucial for our boys. They have suffered so much abandonment in their lives.

Thank you again for your kindness and generosity. We appreciate everything you do!

Save the date so you don't miss the 2014 Annual TJJD Golf Tournament on Saturday, May 10 at the Roy Kizer Municipal Golf Course in Austin!

This is the annual tournament organized by Bill Holland and this year's tournament benefits the Giddings Community Resource Council and the youth at the Giddings State School.

Tournament information will be coming to you in February! Everyone is invited to join in on the fun!

Tammy T. Holland, CVA

Texas Juvenile Justice Department

Manager of Family, Community, and Chaplaincy Programs

P.O. Box 12757, Austin, Texas 78711

Phone 512-490-7090

FAX 512-490-7712



**Webmaster Position Open
Texas Epiphany Ministries
Contact your board representative
or Pat Holden, State Board Chair**

Letter from Former Star "How are you all doing today? I was so glad to see you all today, and I wanted to let you all know that I am about to leave next month on the 8th of July; hopefully. So I just wanted to tell you all - know that I love you, and thanks for everything. The reunions help me get close to the Lord, and taught me how to love and forgive one another. When I first came to Epiphany "19" I wasn't close to God, but now I look up to Him as my Savior. Every time I go to bed I pray and talk to Him. I will be missing you all so much, and I am so sad to leave you all. when I get out I plan on going to college to be a veterinarian tech. I chose that because I love animals, and dealing with them. If my case worker don't finish my packet by the end of this month, I will see you all in the next reunion I am about to close this letter for tonight. I love you all, and good night. Crishon, Star on Giddings #19

Epiphany Volunteers Appreciate Facility Volunteer Coordinators



Barbara Arteaga, Community Relations Coordinator

Ron Jackson State Juvenile Correctional Complex (Brownwood, TX)

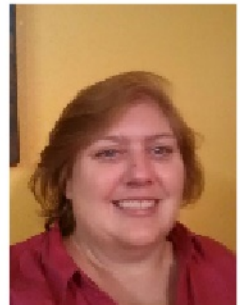
I graduated with my B.A. in English from William Smith College in Geneva, New York. Before coming to Texas, I spent 7 years in the field of human services as a career counselor/case manager. Since my arrival at Ron Jackson in July 2012, I worked as the clerk for the Community Relations Department for 8 months before being promoted to Community Relations Coordinator. Epiphany builds and

reinforces connections on so many levels. Epiphany volunteers become very involved in the ongoing life of our campus as mentors and Chaplaincy volunteers. Their loving behavior towards the students provides excellent examples of redemption and grace.

Dianna Hughes, Community Relations Coordinator

McLennan County State Juvenile Correctional Facility (Mart)

I hold a master's degree in counseling from Midwestern State University. Before coming to TJJD in 2005, I spent many years working with youth and volunteers as a program director with Camp Fire USA and Children's Sunday School Department director. I made the move from Psychology to Community Relations in 2009 believing that volunteers are the key to meeting the needs of the youth in our care. I have 3 grown children and 3 amazing grandchildren! I have had the honor to work with the Epiphany team at Al Price and Corsicana. To see our youth feel God's love from these great people is a blessing. Many of the youth have never felt so accepted in their life.



Dotty Luera, Community Relations Coordinator, Gainesville State School

I have been with TJJD for 12 years - 7 with Corsicana and 5 with Gainesville. I have my Bachelor's Degree in Sociology and Criminal Justice and graduated from TWU. I was an Associate Minister for 9 years at First Christian Church in Richardson, TX before coming to TJJD. Epiphany is one of my favorite ministry groups! The volunteers don't

just come, get the youth all pumped up, and then leave them. You keep coming back! You have reunions once a week and gatherings once a month. You mentor youth and STAY connected, even after they are released. That is the impact that I see and hear about from the youth. They know that you can be trusted to stand by them and show them the unconditional love that Jesus Christ taught us.

Cindy Allen, Community Relations Coordinator, Giddings State School

I have almost 10 years of experience working with juvenile offenders. I began my career with adult probation. I then began working in the court system. Prior to coming to Giddings State School, I was executive director for Bastrop Teen Court and was a municipal judge with the City of Martindale. The impact that our Epiphany Team has made in our school is beyond words. Our Epiphany volunteers work hand in hand with our students. They provide friendship, worship, and play a large role in the re-entry process. Our students look forward to our Epiphany Members every month. Our security referrals also go down on Epiphany Weekends. We are very fortunate to have Epiphany Ministries on our campus and I am sure that other Campuses can agree.



Fidel Garcia, Community Relations Coordinator

Evins Regional Juvenile Center (Edinburg)

After having worked in the non-profit sector for 15 years, Fidel Garcia started his career at Gainesville State School in 1999. He has been finalizing the details for the first Epiphany weekend at the Evins Regional Juvenile Center in The Valley, where he has worked for the past several years. Fidel vividly remembers his first Epiphany weekend in Gainesville and the enthusiasm of the volunteers who were involved. The boys at the facility whole-heartedly embraced the Epiphany volunteers, and so did he and all the other staff. Fidel is a strong supporter of Epiphany and will do all he can to facilitate these important events.



Chaplain William "Tony" Shaw, Ron Jackson Facility, Brownwood

Please join me in welcoming **Chaplain William "Tony" Shaw** to the Ron Jackson facility starting Sunday, December 15th. Chaplain Shaw comes to us from Pollock, Texas where he pastored Pollock Baptist Church for the past three years. He has pastored several other churches starting in 1990, most recently Amelia Baptist Church in Beaumont, Texas and First Southern Baptist Church in Eloy, Arizona. Chaplain Shaw also served as a Chaplain Assistant in the U.S. Army from 1993-1998. He is nearing completion of a degree in religion from Liberty University. Chaplain Shaw was actually hired a couple of weeks ago as a JCO, so he's already involved in new employee orientation! He'll be transitioning to the Chaplain position on 12/15/13. His office will be located in the Chapel. Chaplain Shaw's wife was recently hired as a case manager at the Ron Jackson facility, as well. A big welcome to the Shaw family

Sister Kathleen Eggering, Chaplain, Bexar County's CT Krier Juvenile Correctional Treatment Center

Sister Kathleen was born & raised in St Louis, Missouri. She entered the Sisters of Notre Dame school in 1954. She graduated from Notre Dame university with a degree in Theology and then gained a Masters degree in Education from Our Lady of the Lake in San Antonio. She began her ministry as a teacher of 4th and 5th graders at St Aloysius, a school in San Antonio. Sister came to the Krier Center, a 96 bed county correctional and treatment center, in 2004 when the unit had both boys and girls. The girls were transferred out about 4 years ago and now the unit houses about 80 boys. She loves her boys and she loves Epiphany. She participated as a retreatant in both a Cursillo retreat and a Walk to Emmaus. She was a strong supporter for starting Epiphany at Krier in 2006 and has lovingly supported Epiphany teams since then. The Krier Epiphany team loves Sister Kathleen and all she does to help the young men grow to be Godly men.

Testimonial from a Star now in TDCJ!

The difference God and Epiphany have made in my life? Epiphany was a unique experience to me because I saw the love that people displayed. Until then I knew of God, I'd heard of Him, even prayed to Him, however a personal encounter with His love I had not had. Singing, dancing, lots of physical affection--that I had not had up until then. That chapel in Giddings was like a whole different world. I actually felt really bad once the weekend finished. The foundation had been set, however. I was going to develop as a Christian. That encounter prepared me for this, being unjustly sent to prison. Epiphany taught me how to lean on and trust God. Life-changing.

Thank you for allowing me to testify of how Epiphany has influenced my life as a Christian.
In Christ, Luis--Romans1:16 "Unashamed" (Star on Giddings #12)

Bus Station Ministry - Kingwood United Methodist Church

Texas Department of Criminal Justice releasees arrive at the Greyhound station from a Houston-area women's facility, most are overwhelmed and scared. "Welcome in the name of Jesus Christ", is the greeting that is heard. The women are escorted to a service center, provided lunch and asked to choose an outfit, shoes and tote bag for their travels out of Houston. Volunteers pray and encourage them before they are sent to their next destination. Sometimes, an indigent woman is escorted to a shelter such as the [Salvation Army's Sally's House transitional shelter](#). The Bus Ministry has existed for 6 years and is organized and funded by volunteers from the [Kingwood United Methodist Church](#) and [Kingwood Christian Church](#).

More than 80 ex-offenders are met each month and guided through a safe release. The Bus Ministry is wishing to expand their services beyond just Wednesdays and Fridays to include Monday - Friday. --From the *TDCJ Volunteer Services Newsletter*, January 2014

RJMN 20th Anniversary Celebration -March 28-29, 2014, HRJMN 20th , *RJM Newsletter*, November 2013

Emmett Solomon founded RJMN in 1993 after taking early retirement from Texas Department of Criminal Justice where he had served as a chaplain for 20 years and Director of Chaplaincy for 10 years. His vision was to build a network of churches and ministries to encourage active participation in the restoration of incarcerated offenders, released offenders and their respective families and to encourage/refresh those doing ministry by introducing them to each other through a quarterly newspaper and conferences. He never took any pay, travel expenses or compensation of any kind from the ministry. Instead he invested a lot of his own finances, time, energy and knowledge to develop and engage others in restorative justice ministry. Over the years we have seen many innovative and effective ministries developed as

a direct result of Emmett mentoring men and women interested in serving this people group.

The ministry began as INforms Ministry. The first statewide ministry conference was held at Sam Houston University. Emmett expected an attendance of about 50. Instead 250 showed up. Anita Parrish began working with Emmett as a volunteer after reading an article in the *Huntsville Item* about the conference. The first quarterly edition of INFORMS was mailed to 3,000 households, ministries and churches in April 1994, with six additional volunteers helping to get it out. The last mailing of the newspaper totaled 60,000 with a volunteer force of around 50 from various churches, ministries and towns. In the meantime, a name change occurred and the ministry became Restorative Justice Ministries Network. Emmett envisioned the ministry lasting about 10 years. From his personal contacts and various other sources, the first mailing list of 3,000 was compiled. Today the database contains more than 96,000 names that have been accumulated over 20 years. The vast majority of people are Texans who over the past 20 years have been involved in ministry in one way or another to those whose lives been touched in some way by the criminal justice system.

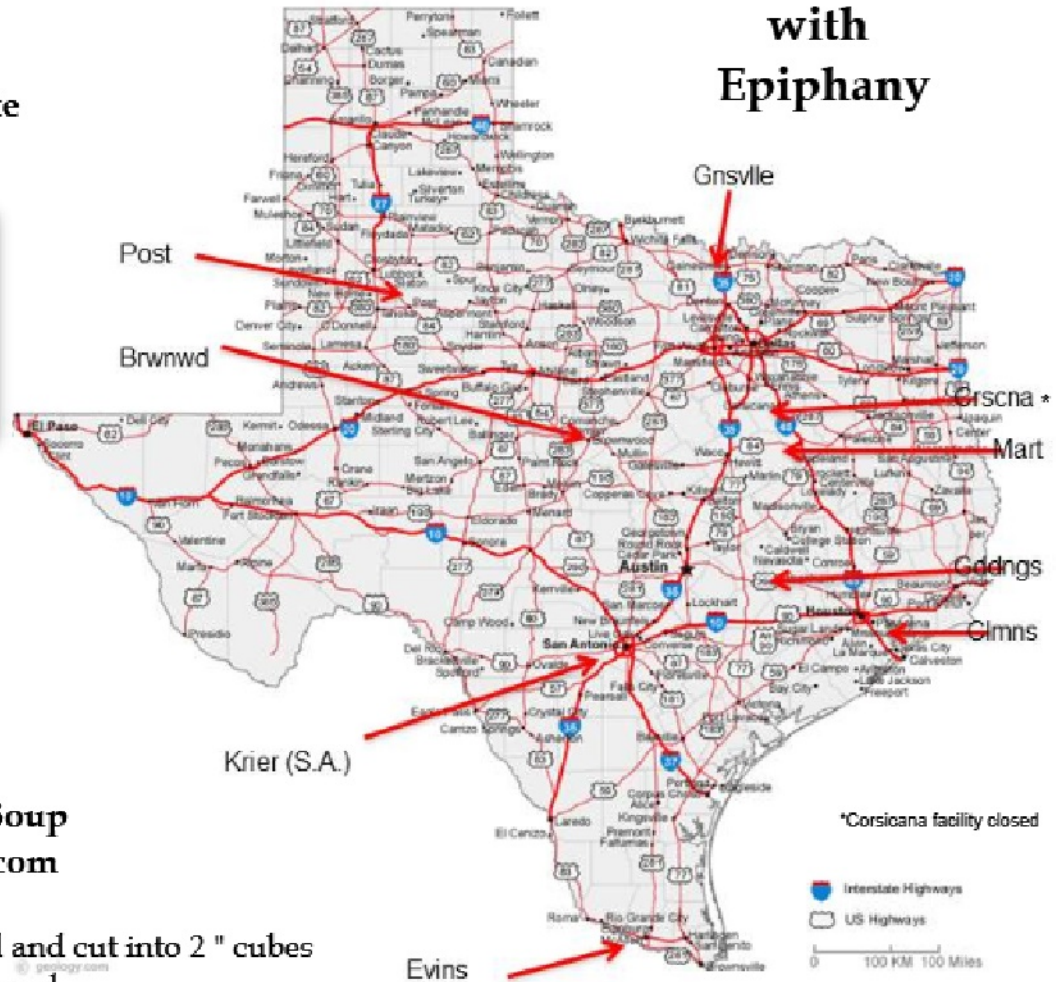
Put the date of March 28-29, 2014, on your calendar now and join with us in celebrating this wonderful man sent by God to penetrate the darkness of prison and bring compassion into the lives of all affected by crime. You can help make the celebration an event to remember. Countless numbers of lives have been positively impacted by RJMN either by becoming involved in ministry or by benefiting from it. Please share your story of involvement with Emmett and/or restorative justice ministry by sending your story and any photographs you'd like to share to Anita Parrish at arparrish@sbcglobal.net or Restorative Justice Ministries Network, 1229 Avenue J, Huntsville, TX 77340. A book will be compiled to tell the 20 year story of Restorative Justice Ministries Network.

Please pray for Emmett Solomon.
He is battling MDS, a form of leukemia.

Facilities with Epiphany

Texas Epiphany Ministries State Board Meetings

February 22
May 24
August 23
November 22



Hearty Potato Soup from penzeys.com

- 4 med potatoes (about 2 lbs) peeled and cut into 2 " cubes
- 4 ribs celery chopped
- 5 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 1 large onion chopped
- 3 cups water
- 1-2 tsps whole celery seed
- 1/4 tsp cayenne pepper
- 1 tsp salt
- 1/2 tsp freshly ground pepper
- 6 cups milk, divided
- 2 TB cornstarch
- 1 1/2 cups corn kernels
- 5 pieces bacon, cooked crisp and broken up

Cook the potatoes, celery, carrots and onions in water until tender--15-20 min over med high heat. Add celery seed, cayenne, salt and pepper. Add 5 1/4 cups milk and stir well reserving 1/4 cup milk in a small bowl. To the reserved milk, add the cornstarch and mix until all lumps are gone. Slowly pour into the soup while stirring. Heat the soup until near boiling, stirring constantly, for 1-2 min until the soup starts to thicken. Reduce heat to med-low and add the corn and bacon. Cook 10 minutes.

Serve with your favorite crackers or muffins.

Serves 10-12

What of the wisdom from above? First, it is pure, and then peaceful, gentle, obedient, filled with mercy and good actions, fair, and genuine. Those who make peace sow the seeds of justice by their peaceful acts.

James 3, 17, 18

Future Weekends to keep in Prayer

- Brownwood #28
- Clemens #37--April 11-13
- Gainesville #29
- Giddings #23--March 14-16
- Krier #16
- Mart #20--March 14-16
- Post #14--March 7-9
- Evins #1
- Crockett re-opening

TJJJ Youth Characteristics (full report at www.TJJJ.texas.gov) as taken from the TJJJ Annual Review of Treatment Effectiveness 2013

TJJJ's new admissions declined from 860 in FY 2012 to 818 in FY 2013. Of the FY 2013 new admissions, approximately

- 86% were 15 to 17 years of age,
- 84% had below-average IQ scores,
- 76% were on probation at the time of commitment, and
- 64% had a prior out-of-home placement.

Median math and reading achievement levels were 5.5 years and 5.2 years, respectively, behind the expected grade level for the youths' age. Thirty percent of TJJJ new admissions were eligible for special education services, which is almost four times the typical rate in public schools. Forty-eight percent of new admissions had a need for mental health treatment and 98% had a need for specialized treatment.

This report focuses on outcomes of youth who were released from TJJJ facilities in FY 2011 and FY 2012 (i.e., between September 1, 2010 and August 31, 2012). The majority had multiple, co-existing risk factors, or characteristics, that often required specialized treatment interventions. Although this report focuses on youth who were admitted before FY 2013, those youth share many of the same characteristics as the youth admitted in FY 2013. There has not been a shift in youth characteristics in the past year.

TJJJ Specialized Correctional Treatment

Youth receive a comprehensive clinical assessment when first entering the TJJJ system. TJJJ's assessment and placement process is designed to ensure youths with the most severe need and/or high risk for violent reoffending are assigned to specialized residential treatment programs.

The Giddings State School operates a **Capital and Serious Violent Offender Treatment Program** for youths that are committed for murder, capital murder, and if the offense involved the use of a weapon or deadly force. The program helps these young people connect feelings associated with their violent behavior and to identify alternative ways to respond when faced with risky situations in the future. Participants in this program are required to reenact their crimes and to play the role of both perpetrator and victim.

The Giddings Capital and Serious Violent Offender Program has gained worldwide attention and been featured on several national news programs. It is one of TJJJ's most promising specialized treatment programs. Research shows that participation in this program reduced the likelihood of being re-incarcerated for any offense by 55%, and for a felony offense, by 43 percent.

Specialized treatment for sex offenders is provided at three TJJJ institutions. The **Sex Offender Treatment Program** builds on the agency's treatment program using cognitive-behavioral strategies and a relapse prevention component. Youths in the program receive additional individual and group counseling interventions that focus on the youth's deviant sexuality, in particular, and on deviant arousal patterns and deviant sexual fantasies, which contribute to the youth's sexual abusiveness.

Additional program components include psychosexual education and, for those with histories of abuse, trauma resolution therapies. The latest research shows that participation in this program reduced the likelihood of being re-incarcerated for a felony offense by 50% —continued top p. 9

TJJD Specialized Treatment--continued from page 8

Alcohol or Other Drug Abuse treatment programs are located at all the institutional facilities and several half-way houses. Youth are placed in treatment based on their treatment need. Program components include evidence-based treatment curriculum and substance abuse education, social skills training, group and individual counseling, and relapse prevention. The criminal behavior is addressed through linking the use of drugs to the youth's life story and offense; participants examine their life stories, offense histories, and relapse cycles.

The number of youths committed to TJJD with severe mental health problems has increased greatly in recent years. The severity of these problems also has increased. All the institutional facilities are staffed with Mental Health professionals providing services to meet the youth's treatment needs. Youth diagnosed with severe mental health problems and/or illnesses may be placed at the Mart Residential Treatment Program to address these treatment needs. Those with unstable mental illnesses who are also dangerous to themselves or others receive care at the Mart Stabilization Unit. The immediate goal for this group is treating the basic mental health problem or illness and allowing the youths to regain control over their behavior. Once this is accomplished, the young person is better prepared to benefit from treatment that focuses on changing the delinquent and criminal patterns of behavior. The final goal concerns reintegrating the young person with his or her family and community in a program that addresses his or her mental health and correctional therapy needs. (from www.TJJD.texas.gov)

An Overview of TJJD Youth and Gangs at Epiphany Facilities

In general, the TJJD facilities do not condone gang life and behavior at the facilities and it is dealt with by the case workers, JCO's, staff, and teachers. Part of all of the treatment programs is about making better choices and that applies to the gang life, too. TJJD youth have all committed felonies. Youth committing misdemeanors are remanded to facilities under Probation and Parole such as Krier in San Antonio and Garza County Regional Juvenile Detention Center in Post.

Ron Jackson State Juvenile Correctional Complex, Brownwood, TX

Ron Jackson 1 is the only long-term girls' facility within TJJD. They also have a girls' halfway house and have the orientation program for Texas where youth are housed for 28 to 35 days while undergoing testing.

The girls' population is between 89 - 101. Ron Jackson has all of the Treatment programs for girls including Alcohol and Other Drugs, Chronic and Violent Offenders Treatment program, Sexual offender treatment, mental health treatment and trauma therapy. The female population is as follows: African American 44%, Caucasian 28%, Hispanic 25%, and Other 3%. Gang related activity among the female population is very low with an average of 1 or 2 incidents a month. Information graciously shared by Barbara Arteaga, Community Relations Coordinator.

Davy Crockett Regional Juvenile Center, Crockett, TX

This facility will open April 1 as a Cornerstone facility contracted with TJJD. It will serve male youth. Superintendent Tyrene Green is anxious to get Epiphany on campus as soon as possible.

Gainesville State School, Gainesville, TX

Gainesville can house 231 male students and currently has a population as follows: Black 44%, Hispanic 36%, and White 19%. Approximately 60% of the youth at Gainesville are or have been involved in gangs in their lives. The predominant gangs represented at Gainesville are Latin Kings, Crips and Bloods with various neighborhood factions of those represented by area codes, street names, regional city area, etc. In most cases, the family hasn't been there for the kids so they turn to gangs who will be there for them. Since the gang culture is the one they know, they try to fit it into their incarceration location. Paul Bartusch, Superintendent, said that he has been working with youth offenders for 25 years and he is seeing a greater number of gang affiliations than in the past.

Gainesville is going to be piloting a 12-week gang intervention program starting soon under contract with Alfonso Herrera. Kids who really want out of the gang and want to change can go to McFadden Ranch, if sent to a halfway house, where they can get their gang tattoos removed so they have a better chance of getting a job.

Giddings State School, Giddings, TX

Giddings has a population of 233 that is Hispanic 42%, Black 41%, White 16%. According to Daniel O'Donnell, Gang Intervention Specialist, approximately 80% of the kids there are in gangs. Gang activities taking place on campus are theft or extortion, drugs, prostitution. A large percentage of the kids are from Houston with the next largest numbers from Dallas and San Antonio. Daniel attributes the high percentage of gang involvement as kids looking for a family – they want to belong and they want the protection the gang offers.

Seventy percent of the kids have had trauma in their lives. They are raised with prejudice in primarily single-color neighborhoods. The gang members are in for murder, aggravated robbery, and assault. Most of the gangs represented at Giddings are Bloods, Crips, or MS-13. They also have a group who are affiliated with the Juggalos. There are many street or neighborhood subsets of the Crips and Bloods. Gang code says you cannot be a member of a gang if you are a child molester or have committed rape. They are seeing less emphasis on gang tattoos because admitted gang affiliation means serving at least half of the TDCJ sentence before consideration for parole.

McLennan County State Juvenile Correctional Facility, Mart, TX

Mart is composed of two sides. Mart Side 1 is the Treatment Center where they have treatment programs for mental health and sex offenders. There are less gang issues with this group. They are currently 46% Hispanic, 29% Black, 28% white, and 1% American Native. Mart Side 2 is for long term incarcerated youth with 37% Black, 35% Hispanic and 29% White. Dianna Hughes, Community Relations Coordinator, provided the information.

Evins Regional Juvenile Center, Edinburg, TX

Population is currently 144 with ethnicity breakdown of Hispanic 93%, Black 6%, White 1%. Most of the population has been adjudicated for assault. There is an extremely high gang presence of Treses (MS-13), Bloods with Latin Kings joining forces with them, and Crips. Most of the gang activity is throwing signs and making their calls or noises with assault being the prevalent activity. In the past month there has been a concerted effort to have a zero tolerance policy toward gang-related behavior and there has been a decrease in gang behavior. Evins has treatment programs for aggression and chemical and other dependencies. They have education classes and a construction class. These kids are mostly from the Valley. Leonel Martinez, Gang Intervention Specialist, provided this information and expressed his desire to see Epiphany begun at Evins.

Bexar County Cyndi Taylor Krier Correctional Treatment Center, San Antonio

Current population is 74 kids, all male, 40% Hispanic, 30% Black, and 30% White. It is a 96 bed facility. They have not had gang on gang fighting issues but most of the fighting has been individual vs. individual for some perceived wrong. These kids are primarily misdemeanor offenders with some juveniles with pending felony cases. If the kids come in and follow the program, they can generally leave within 9 to 12 months. Mr. Roy Washington, Superintendent, stated that the kids are receiving individualized treatment and family therapy with 1 counselor per 12 kids. Each counselor must see each kid at least once a week. He stated that having people who have an interest in them, such as the Epiphany team members, has more impact on these kids who want to change, than the authority figures of the facility telling them they need to change.

Garza County Regional Juvenile Center, Post, TX

The Post facility is a 96 student facility with both male and female areas with kids ages 10 to 18. Current student count is 66 males and 6 females (federal). These are 50% Hispanic, 35% Black, and 15% Caucasian. Garza County serves TJJD, Garza County and the Federal Bureau of Prisons for youth. TJJD kids are served in one Epiphany weekend with the next one serving county and federal kids. Program highlights include certified drug and alcohol treatment, licensed sex offender therapy, gender specific programming for girls, a certified school, vocational training. Native American youths participate in culturally relevant programming designed specifically for their unique needs. The median age is 16. Gangs are not an issue. Median age is 16. All students are in educational classes. Mike Breedlove, Interim Superintendent, provided this information.

What can Epiphany teams do to help?

Advice from the various superintendents, staff, or gang intervention specialists was as follows:

*Don't let them get away with gang body language, hand signals, gang symbols/tagging etc. Tell them that this is not the time or place and say nothing more. If they continue, tell Epiphany leadership so they can communicate with the chaplain or volunteer coordinator.

*Don't be lax with the rules – never leave a star anywhere by him or herself and never be with a star by yourself except the spiritual directors who remain in line of sight of the lead spiritual director.

*Serve the food to the boys so they cannot use the food as a control

*If they start repeating a particular sound, leadership can check to see if that is a gang noise so it can be addressed.

*Dress in non-form fitting clothing. These are teenagers with raging hormones.

*Remember that many of these kids are practiced "manipulators."

*Continue showing love and acceptance, per Epiphany guidelines and rules, as we do now. Positive attention goes a long way to encourage change.

*Listen, Listen, Love, Love

*Pray

Gang Graffiti Signs and Symbols

Symbols are an important part of the gang culture - to both street gangs and prison gangs. Signs and symbols are used to identify a particular gang or to intimidate gangs and disrespect rival gangs. While most symbols are used to identify individual gangs, some signs and symbols are used to identify a gang as part of an alliance of many gangs, sometimes called a "nation." These symbols may be seen in many forms. Some are known universally, such as a heart, a pyramid, a walking cane or a five or six pointed star. These symbols have all been adopted by gangs and have become nationally known symbols used to represent certain gangs. Other symbols have been created or drawn and have also become well known.

The Federal Bureau of Investigation, or the FBI, describes a street gang as, "A criminal enterprise having an organizational structure, acting as a continuing criminal conspiracy, which employs violence and any other criminal activity to sustain the enterprise." In other words, a gang is an organization whose purpose is criminal activity and violence.

Most street gangs are made up of teens and young adults that act together to commit criminal acts. Most gangs, but not all, sell drugs. Others commit other crimes to support themselves and the gang, such as robberies and prostitution. Usually, a gang claims a certain neighborhood, street or area as their "turf," and they defend it as if at war for the property. Each gang has their own laws and customs within the gang. Gangs can be identified by their clothing, the way they wear it, as well as the colors, tattoos, graffiti and hand signs. They also have their own slang. Some examples:

Crips/Bloods

- Cuz: Crip gang member greeting or referring to another Crip.
- Scuzz/Crab: Derogatory terms used to identify Crips.
- Slobs: Derogatory term used to identify the Bloods.
- ADDIDAS: All day I diss all slobs.
- What it B like: Blood gang member greeting another Blood.
- What it C like: Crip gang member greeting another Crip.
- Damu: Term for Blood in Swahili.
- Piru (Blood): Name of the street in Compton, Calif., where the Bloods were formed.

General terms

- Slippin: Gang member letting his guard down.
- Put 'em in check: Discipline or correct a member of the gang.
- Violation: Punishment for a gang member who breaks the rules.
- Mad Juice: Respect for.

Others

- Beat in: A prospect's initiation into the gang by fighting established members.
- Sex in: A female prospect's initiation into the gang by having sex with its member(s)/leadership.
- Cheddar/Snaps: Money.
- Chop it up: Talk.
- Area codes: Members use area codes to identify their geographic areas, i.e., Miami (305)/Los Angeles (213), etc.
- 187: California penal code for murder.
- OG: Original gangster.
- BG/Pee Wee: Baby gangster.
- Banging: Gang fight/shooting.
- MOB.: Money over bitches.

This information from: essortment.com, gangorus.com, hendsonpub.com, buzzle.com

Gang signs of Bloods, Crips, Mexican Mafia, Tango Blast, Latin Kings, MS-13, Aryan, Juggalos including various neighborhood or area subsets :

pitchforks--upside down or right side up

clowns, jokers--Juggalos worship or idolize clowns and are avid fans of Insane Clown Posse

teardrops or raindrops

happy faces

five pointed and six pointed stars, crowns

clusters of anything in 3

Numbers--3, 8, 5, area codes

Dog paw print

crowns, broken star emblem

picture of a nickel

capitol building

Devil or devil's tail, devil horns, devil's pitchfork--frequently on a heart

Black rosary

palm trees shaped in V

XXII, Mexican war shield, Mexican eagle

lightning bolts, swastika, shield with sword, neo-Nazi symbols, circle shielded by a diamond, diamond shielded by a swastika, Silence is Golden

Athletic team symbols and city symbols--H town for Houston, Chuco town for El Paso

various styles of crosses, bunnies, walking canes

cartoon characters--pink panther, tweety bird, tinkerbell, King Kong, woodpecker, guy with spikey hair running with hatchet in hand



These were Christmas bags decorated by the Epiphany stars at Giddings that included the following gang signs:

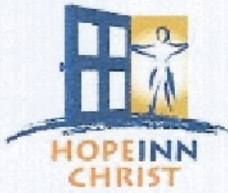
Grinning puppy face for This Crazy Life

3 bleeding dots--Blood oath, Blood burden , and Blood set

upside down Christmas tree is marijuana leaf, embellished stars with lines and dots

clown faces, stars,

numbers 3, 5, 8 hidden in designs, flower has 3 lines and 3 dots in each petal, tear drops, raindrops



A home for young men coming out of the Texas Juvenile System

“May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in Him...”
Romans 15:13



Fall 2013

In May when Gabriel, Raven, Quinton, Chris and Jessie all left within two weeks time, I was devastated. As I cried out to God...What did we do wrong?...Why did this happen?...Why are we even trying? The name that came to my mind was, Jeremiah. And I started thinking about how Jeremiah preached, begged and pleaded with the Israelites to turn back to God. And I tried to remember if anyone ever did what Jeremiah was telling them to do. So I googled it. And guess what, no one did. So I asked God if Jeremiah's life had been wasted. He told me that it had not been wasted, because Jeremiah did what God told him to do. That the results were up to God, not Jeremiah. And that we wouldn't have the book of Jeremiah in the bible to guide us, if he hadn't followed God. So, I am back to the basics: God is God and I am not! We now realize that Donald needed that time to heal physically and we both needed the time to grow closer to each other and to God.

So I start each day face down on the floor, prostrate before God, laying down my dreams, thoughts, desires, plans, and my will. Then I ask God to raise me up to do His will. God's timing is rarely, if ever, the same as mine. I would have never had a time when this house was without youth. But, God knows what he is doing.

Each week I go to one of the TJJD units in Gainesville or Roanoke to visit with young men that are interested in coming to Hope Inn Christ. I am quickly reminded of why we were called to take in young men from TJJD. They, like all of us, need hope.

We should be getting a young man from the Gulf Coast Trade program in the next few weeks and another from McFadden Ranch in early November. Five more young men should be coming between December and February. As I am learning, it is all in God's timing. Please keep us in your prayers. Thank you so very much for your continued support.

Light your world!

Cindy Willis
Executive Director/House Parent