



# Texas Epiphany Ministries

Manifesting God to Incarcerated Juveniles

Volume IV Issue V, April 2013

[www.texasepiphany.com](http://www.texasepiphany.com)

## From the Chair's Corner:

Spring is in the air! The Bluebonnets are covering the Hill Country displaying God's magnificent artwork!

Please welcome our new State Board Members. Paula Swanson of Post Epiphany is our State Agape Coordinator. She is contacting 3-day communities and gathering Agape for our 3-day weekends. Please contact her at [pjc903@aol.com](mailto:pjc903@aol.com) for your next Epiphany. Loretta Ehler of Giddings Epiphany is the new Giddings UAC Rep. Kate Mellina of Mart Epiphany is representing the North Region.

Epiphany Ministries of Texas had the great opportunity to work with John Stutz, the TJJD State Chaplaincy Coordinator. Several months ago John decided to take retirement. We pray that this chapter in his life will be filled with physical healing, love, and many wonderful memories. John's position has been filled by Tammy Holland. Tammy has taken on a double role with being the TJJD State Volunteer Coordinator and State Chaplaincy Coordinator. Our prayers go out to both these courageous saints.

The Growth and Development team is currently talking to the Evins Unit in Edinburg, Tx about starting an Epiphany for their youth. The facility is anxiously waiting for their first 3-day weekend! One delay in getting Evins Epiphany up and running is the lack of community involvement. Please add this concern to your prayer list. (con't top page 2)

**Praise be to the God  
and Father of our  
Lord Jesus Christ,  
who has blessed us  
in the heavenly realms  
with every  
spiritual blessing  
in Christ.**

**Ephesians 1:3**

(con't from page 1)

I know I speak for all the volunteers of Epiphany when I say that our hearts and prayers go out to the victims and families of the Boston bombing, the fertilizer plant explosion in West, Tx., and the ExxonMobil fire in Beaumont. We pray for salvation and healing.

We are so blessed to serve in this ministry. May Abba, Father God, continue to walk with us as we take His Word of Salvation into each facility.

Your State Board Chair,

*Sinda Berge*

## Epiphany Weekend

### Epiphany Weekend Reports:

**Clemens #35**, April 12-14--a tough weekend on team with prayer requests from stars causing many tears with prayers.

**Corsicana #21**, Jan 19-21--38 stars with two asking for spiritual directors before it was even announced.

**Gainesville #26**, Jan 19-21--number of team dropping off last minute with health problems. This group of stars represented unusual security risks. Another challenge was an inexperienced Spiritual Director.

**Giddings #20**, Nov 30-Dec 2--tough group of stars. Most impressive team and LD.

**Giddings #21**, March 15-17--Great weekend with star participation almost immediately. Small team with 30 stars, 28 completed and accepted crosses.

**Mart #19**, Feb 16-18--Had 2 Muslim boys on weekend. One shared at the end and gave credit to God.

**Krier #13**, Nov 16-18--difficult weekend for team leadership. All in all a great weekend with all accepting crosses.

**Krier #14**, April 12-14--The team, from at least 5 different denominations, was truly flexible as several key team members had to drop out in the week leading up to the weekend. The love amongst the team was demonstrated as they prayed for each other and for those sick and injured team and family members not present. The chaplain selected 36 Stars to start the weekend and 34 finished it. In spite of a pre-weekend report that the several of young men might not get along with others, there was no conflict during the weekend. The Stars participated in the singing from day one and took to heart the messages from the speakers. Prayer requests for family, levels, etc. began coming in on Friday morning and continued through the weekend. Many Stars met with spiritual directors to discuss serious concerns about themselves, others and God. On Sunday all 34 accepted their crosses. The weekend was covered in prayer and was flooded with a rich array of Agape, much of which came from the State Agape Coordinator. The outside kitchen team headed by Craig Savage, a former restaurant owner and chef, dished out some very, very tasty meals which the team and young men appreciated.

**Post #11**, Oct 5 - 7--began with 22 young men and 3 young women. It was a weekend full of interruptions as we lost 4 stars, 2 team members, and 1 clergy at the beginning of the weekend. An upbeat team and overall good weekend.

"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."  
Frederick Buechner



**Why Serve? ---**

### **Because Epiphany Weekends Change Lives**

He is a tall, thin, good-looking 17 year old young man who had been locked up for 2 years. His name is Art\*. He came to the weekend not knowing what to expect but was clearly worried about many things. One of the first talks was about how a team member had been asked to sell his soul to the devil. Art realized that he had been very close to doing that and was very worried for himself and his one year-old daughter. During Weekend guide time, he asked his guide if God would forgive him. After being told yes, he was directed to a spiritual director and was given the assurance that God can forgive any sin as long as the person has a repentant heart. He repented, his heart was lifted up and he enthusiastically participated throughout the rest of the weekend, accepting his cross on the last day.--Pat Holden, Krier

*\*Star's name has been changed.*

### **With Volunteers' Help, Teens at Halfway House Will Continue to Soar**

By Jennifer Rogers, TX Criminal Justice Coalition

For the past 10 months, I have volunteered at a minimum-security halfway house in Austin where teenage boys live as a result of their juvenile criminal sentence. And the past 10 months have changed my life.

The Texas Juvenile Justice Department (formerly the Texas Youth Commission) has been embroiled in difficult discussions with legislators and community leaders about policy, politics and performance for as long as most of us can remember. But what people like you and I often forget, or never think about, is that there are kids at stake. (con't next column)

(Con't from column 1 below) Regardless of political party affiliation, it is in everyone's best interest that these kids get enough counseling and education that they are able to support themselves and that they learn to see themselves as capable of achieving their goals off the streets.

One of the boys called me recently to share that he was accepted into the University of Texas. He is currently studying at a community college on a partial band scholarship and is thrilled at the opportunity to start a new life. Another boy called me to share that he had been given a promotion at his job and that he received his GED results; he passed all of his tests. From the excitement in this boy's voice, anyone would assume he had won the lottery.

The stories go on and on, but the point is that these boys, like every other teenager, need someone to hear them, to see them, to build up what they are capable of so that they themselves can believe what they are capable of, too. This is why volunteer mentors can really make a difference in the lives of youth in the community.

Most of them want to go to college and would be the first in their family to do so. There's no reason they shouldn't, given the practical and realistic goals many of them have that can be accomplished, whether in community colleges, trade schools or larger institutions. But they need our help.

To look into the bright, wide eyes of a 17-year-old who wants nothing more than to get home so he can help financially support his younger siblings is both beautiful and tragic at the same time. Over the past 10 months, I have been floored by how smart, creative, funny, curious and brave these kids are (and then I'm embarrassed that I'm floored; why wouldn't these kids be all of those things?). (Con't next page)

( Con't from previous page) But they are scared, proud and clueless, too, just like other teenagers. And whatever I may bring to the table as a volunteer, the reality is I'm the winner in the equation because they enrich my life 10 times over.

These kids need support from us on the outside; people they hope to be one day. People with a job and a family and something to feel good about.

Can you help? With all the humility and sincerity in my heart, I ask that you consider it — join us at the halfway house, and be part of a child's dreams for a better life.

Volunteering doesn't require special skills or expertise. One of the volunteers brings a birthday cake once a month (the kids don't otherwise have any birthday acknowledgment). One does Bible study. Recently, a volunteer started doing a writing workshop. The house always needs more tutors and mentors. Volunteer service can fit within your schedule one hour a week, or one hour a month. Anything you can spare is appreciated. On behalf of the boys, we thank you.

*Rogers is a partner at Glenn Rogers PLLC and serves on the board of directors of the Texas Criminal Justice Coalition, a nonpartisan, nonprofit research and advocacy organization committed to facilitating solutions for juvenile and criminal justice issues and inequities.—Reprint from Austin American Statesman, August 28, 2012*

### **Note from Pat Doughty, Giddings Team**

This article resulted in 10-15 new volunteers for Turman and some mentors, two new Bible study leaders and someone teaching cooking classes. At the recent awards ceremony they said one of the new mentors is THE MILK MAN. He has been delivering milk to Turman for years and had seen the guys. The building is totally unlabeled so he didn't know what it was all about but asked, got connected to Tammy Holland and is now a mentor.

## **TJJD Employee Responses to Survey about What They need from Volunteers**

Here are some of the responses reported by Tammy Holland, TNJD, Administrator for Volunteer Services, Austin:  
\*Volunteers make a meaningful contribution to TJJD.

\*I couldn't do my job as well if it wasn't for volunteers!

\*These volunteers give youth who have no contact with their families a much needed feeling that someone cares about them.

\*It shows the youth that people in the community do care about them and what happens to them and would like to see change.

\*Volunteer programs make a lifelong impact on the lives of TJJD youth.

\*I have observed the positive influence that volunteers have on a youth's life during incarceration. It provides a positive role model from someone in the free that looks at the youth not from a punitive standpoint but a non-judgemental standpoint.

\*It teaches responsibility.

\*They are able to teach life-skills in a non-threatening manner.

\*Some of these youth have never had a positive adult in their lives. It gives them a new perspective.

**\*The Epiphany Ministry Program makes a huge difference.**



Chaplain Allison Voss, Ron Jackson<sup>4</sup>  
see bio on page 5



## **Chaplain Allison Voss, Ron Jackson State Correctional Facility (Brownwood, TX)**

Chaplain Allison Voss first became involved in the juvenile prison ministry through Epiphany Ministries, serving as a kitchen assistant on the first Epiphany weekend at Gainesville in January 2000, Chaplain Voss felt a calling to this specific type of ministry. While continuing her volunteer work at Gainesville, she received a Bachelor's Degree in Education from McMurry University in Abilene. After graduating, Chaplain Voss taught high school and worked as a social worker, both of which she credits in preparing her for a ministry with incarcerated youth. Shortly after earning her Master of Divinity from Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Chaplain Voss was given the opportunity to serve as the chaplain at the Ron Jackson State Juvenile Correctional Complex. Ministering to juvenile female offenders has always been a special passion for her. Chaplain Voss feels called to spread the Gospel message of hope and love to the students and staff on campus. Chaplain Voss feels grateful to minister alongside such committed volunteers, whom she lovingly cherishes as her friends. In 2011, she graduated from Tarleton University with a Master of Education degree in counseling, which she is able to put into use on a daily basis at the facility.



**Chaplain Bob Boggess**

**McLennan County State Juvenile Correctional Facility  
Mart**

Chaplain Bob Boggess is from Indiana and has been a Chaplain in TJJD since 2008. Chaplain Boggess served as a youth minister for most of his years in ministry. "Young people always have had a special place in my heart. The young men at TJJD need to know someone cares," said Chaplain Boggess. Much of his time is spent encouraging the youth that God has a plan for their lives. Even though they have made some mistakes, God wants them to reach their full potential. Chaplain Boggess completed theological training in Kansas and clinical pastoral education in San Angelo. He is endorsed by the Baptist General Convention of Texas (BGCT).



**Chaplain Philip Payne**

**Gainesville State School**

Chaplain Philip Payne resides in Gainesville with his wife, Rosa. He holds a B.A. in Theology and History from Southwestern Adventist University, and a Master of Divinity from Andrews University. Chaplain Payne was ordained in 1980 and holds a ministerial license from the Southwestern Union Conference of SDA. He also holds both Basic & Advanced C. P. E. (Clinical Pastoral Education) Certifications from Methodist and Parkland Hospitals in Dallas. In 1994 he became a Board Certified Chaplain & Fellow with the College of Chaplains and is Ecclesiastically Endorsed as a chaplain for both Healthcare & Corrections. Currently he is the Secretary for a North American Correctional Chaplains Association. Chaplain Payne has 17 years of experience in youth & pastoral ministry in Texas, and 28 years of chaplaincy ministry in varied settings: Corrections, Behavioral Health, Trauma, Hospice, & Bereavement Care. He debriefed and counseled 1st responders, victims, and families of such critical incidents as Delta Flight 1157, Luby's Cafeteria in Killeen, Waco Tragedy, and Oklahoma City Bombing. Chaplain Payne is an Artist & Carpenter and a passionate advocate for youth and their spiritual healing.

**Chaplain Terry Kennedy      Giddings State School (Giddings)**

Chaplain Terry Kennedy is TJJD’s newest chaplain and joins the team at the Giddings State School. Chaplain Kennedy comes to TJJD from Manor where

he pastored the Manor First Community Church since 2006. Chaplain Kennedy pastored other churches in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. Chaplain Kennedy earned a Master’s Degree in Cross-Cultural Ministries and a Certificate in Biblical Studies from the Dallas Theological Seminary, and an undergraduate degree from the University of Houston. Chaplain Kennedy lives with his wife Rachel in Manor and enjoys his two adult children and beautiful granddaughter.



**Chaplain Ron Leggett**

**Corsicana Residential Treatment Center**

Chaplain Ron Leggett has been at the Corsicana Residential Treatment Center for 3 years and prior to that served at Victory Field Correctional Academy in Vernon for two years. He is an ordained Elder in The Church of the Nazarene and a graduate from Nazarene Bible College in Colorado Springs, Colorado with a bachelor in biblical studies. Chaplain Leggett was a senior pastor at three Churches, two in Arkansas and one in Oklahoma. Chaplain Leggett is retired from the military, serving 7 years in the Marine Corp and 13 years in the Army. He is married with 4 adult children and 7 grandchildren. His wife, Janie, is a volunteer at the Corsicana facility and serves by his side. Chaplain Leggett and his wife have both taken part of an Emmaus Walk (356 & 357) at Disciple Crossing and are an active part of the wonderful Epiphany team of Corsicana. Chaplain Leggett believes he is truly blessed to work alongside some of the best coworkers and volunteers in the state of Texas.



**Tammy Holland**

**TJJD Manager of Family, Community, and Chaplaincy Programs**

Tammy Holland is TJJD’s Manager of Family, Community, and Chaplaincy Programs and works at the agency’s central office in Austin. She is certified in volunteer administration (CVA), and holds a master’s degree in public affairs from the University of Texas’ LBJ School of Public Affairs, and an undergraduate degree in social work. She has more than fourteen years experience as a senior-level manager in the former Texas Youth Commission and the Texas Juvenile Justice Department administering the statewide community engagement program. Tammy is responsible for writing and implementing the state agency’s policies and procedures incorporating community volunteers into the rehabilitation program of youthful offenders. She also provides executive consultation and leadership to 17 nonprofit organizations that partner with the state government agency. (con’t top p. 7)





(con't from p. 6 Tammy Holland)

She has been a featured speaker and workshop leader at conferences such as the National Conference on Volunteering and Community Service, National Youth Service Institute, Texas Volunteer Management Conference, and Texas Governor's Non-Profit Leadership Conference. She is a published author in Volunteer Management Review, Nonprofit Boards and Governance Review, and We Review, and a contributing author in the new book "You and Your Nonprofit: Practical Advice and Tips from the Charity Channel Professional Community".

### CMCA 2013 Correctional Ministry Conference Wheaton College, Illinois, May 30 - June 1

Website is:

<http://www.cmcainternational.org/2013-conference/>

#### OVER 40 WORKSHOPS

- What Works in Reentry/ Evidence-Based Practices
- Prison Ministry in the 21st Century
- Empowering Churches for Correctional Ministry
- Busy about My Father's Business
- The Impact of Religious Services for Sexual Offenders
- A Biblical Guide to Mentoring
- Building Prison Congregations: A Win-Win
- Helping People with Barriers to Land Jobs
- Not Beyond Redemption: The Church's Role in Helping to Bring Justice to the Juvenile Justice System
- How to Assimilate Recovering People into Church
- Addressing Criminogenic Factors

More information at website.

### From Murder to Forgiveness

On January 22, 1995, a Sunday, Azim Khamisa stood in the kitchen of his condo in LaJolla, CA, straining to comprehend the words coming from the phone. "Your son, Tariq...shot...dead..." Surely there was a mistake. .... An emptiness settled over the room. Khamisa's friend shook his head. "I hope they catch those bastards and fry them," he said. (con't top next column)

(from below) Khamisa's response was slow and startling. "I don't feel that way," he said. "There were victims at both ends of that gun." The words rolled out of his mouth and when he heard them, the meaning rang true. He felt they came from God.

On the morning of January 23, 1995, Ples Felix sat in his car outside a modest apartment building in the middle-class San Diego neighborhood of North Park, 15 miles southeast of LaJolla. Minutes earlier, he'd called the police to report that his 14 year-old grandson, Tony Hicks, had run away and was holed up here, inside the apartment. Before watching the officers disappear through the front door, Felix warned them there were probably gang members inside.

Tony had stopped doing his homework and started ditching school. Felix, whom Tony called "Daddy" had tried to talk sense into his grandson. But over the weekend he'd returned home to find Tony gone--along with Felix's 12 gauge shotgun. A brief note read, "Daddy, I love you. But I've run away."

Tony was the first 14 yr old to be tried as an adult in California. November 3, 1995, Khamisa and Felix met for the first time in Tony's attorney's office. Felix told Khamisa that he had been praying daily for Khamisa and his family. Khamisa told Felix that, "We've both lost a child."

**The Forgiveness Project** website has more information about the work being done by Khamisa and Felix.

<http://theforgivenessproject.com/stories/azim-khamisa-ples-felix-usa/>

A great book by Azim Khamisa is *From Murder to Forgiveness, A Father's Journey*. Khamisa had completed the book when he met Tony for the first time. At the end of the book he added chapter 1 of his second book, "Meeting Tony Hicks". That book is *From Forgiveness to Fulfillment*.

## **Fewer Texans Return to Prison as State Focuses on Rehabilitation Treatment**

From Texas Baptist Christian Life Commission Written by Mike Ward of the *Houston Chronicle*, excerpt from the April *R.J. News*, Restorative Justice Ministries Newsletter

Thanks partly to greatly expanded rehabilitation and treatment programs, Texas sent 11 percent fewer ex-convicts back to prison in recent years, a significant drop in recidivism that is being replicated across the country, according to a new study.

The study, recently released by the Council of State Governments' Justice Center project, shows that Texas' recidivism rate — the number of felons who return to prison within three years after they are discharged or paroled — posted the doubledigit drop for prisoners released in 2007. Between 2000 and 2007, the recidivism rate dropped 22 percent, according to the report. "The numbers are significant, but the real impact is fewer crime victims," said Senate Criminal Justice Committee Chairman John Whitmire, D-Houston, an architect of reforms starting in 2007 that greatly expanded rehabilitation and treatment programs. "For every person who doesn't go back to prison, there is one fewer crime, one fewer crime victim." The report generally hails the dropping recidivism rates as proof that the emergence of additional rehabilitation and treatment programs is working, even as some criminologists note that the average age of offenders is rising — and older people tend to commit fewer crimes than younger ones.

For Texas, the 11 percent drop meant that 1,212 fewer felons came back to prison — one of several reasons the state's prison population has continued to decline. Most other states' prison systems are a fraction of the size of Texas'. Even a small drop in Texas' recidivism rate can mean big cost savings for taxpayers, as prison costs continue to spiral.

"While the decline is significant, as is the state's low recidivism rate relative to other states, we realize there is more work to be done," said Brad Livingston, executive director of the Texas Department of Criminal Justice. "In order to sustain our momentum, continued investment in offender rehabilitation is critical."

## **Could This Be Why Violent Crime Is in Decline?**

by H. David Schuringa, Crossroad Bible Institute from April *R.J. News*

But the experts may have overlooked a possible link. Over the last 20 years, prison ministry has finally gotten back on the church's agenda. There are not only large, national ministries like Bill Glass Champions for Life, Kairos, Prison Fellowship and Crossroad Bible Institute, all dedicated to preparing inmates for reentry, but also thousands of smaller groups and churches going into prisons and jails to bring the Good News.

A suggestion of a correlation can be discovered by comparing the 20-year growth of Crossroad's imprisoned student body and the decline of crime during the same time period. Crossroad's program could be seen as a reflection of the entire church's stepped-up efforts to remember those in prison. The link is certainly as plausible as abortion, lead or increased incarceration rates, if not more so, considering Byron Johnson's compelling studies indicating reduced recidivism rates among disciplined prisoners. Surely there is no one reason crime rates are dropping, but let's give credit where credit is due. Prison ministry's effect on recidivism rates should be good news for our communities - whether one buys into the faith-based approach or not.



**Chicken Spaghetti**

Jean Conley, Giddings team (given to her by Terri Read from Mart)

5 large chicken breasts (boneless, skinless)

2 or 3 large onions quartered

2 boxes chicken broth

Put the chicken, the broth and the onion in large pot and add water.

Boil till chicken is cooked then cover and turn off heat. Let the chicken sit in liquid while preparing the other ingredients

1 ½ large onions

1 large bell pepper

1 small stalk celery

Salt, pepper

1-1lb pkg. of spaghetti noodles (broken in half)

Clean and chop veggies then sauté in very small amount of oil till translucent. Season with salt and generous amount of pepper.

Remove the chicken and onions from the pot. Discard onion and shred chicken. Put chicken in a bowl with some of the liquid from the pot and set aside. Put the pasta in the pot with the remaining liquid and cook al dente as directed. (Do not drain)

1 lb Velveeta cheese

11oz. Cream of mushroom soup

11 oz. Cream of chicken soup

Cut Velveeta into squares and mix with the soups in a microwave safe bowl. Heat mixture at 1 minute intervals-stirring well after each minute. Heating at longer intervals and not stirring will cause Velveeta to burn. Cheese should be completely melted and mixed with the soups. Mix the shredded chicken, the veggies, and the soup mixture thoroughly in a large bowl. Take the pasta right out of the pot and stir into bowl. (Reserve liquid)

Put mixture into greased baking dish (make sure baking dish is large enough to hold mixture and several cups of broth with room to spare). Pour enough of the broth liquid into the pot to make the mixture the consistency of a thin soup, stir to incorporate.

Cover and bake at 350 for about 1.5 to 2 hours, stirring every 30 minutes and adding more of the broth liquid as needed.( it tends to dry out quickly while cooking) The final consistency should be one of a thick soup. If you like spicy, you can add 1 seeded & chopped poblano pepper ( or pepper of your choice) to the veggie mixture before sautéing.

Please send pictures, info, etc for the newsletter to Marilyn Jackson at [msjack99@att.net](mailto:msjack99@att.net)

**Krier Team**

The Krier team is going to miss two pastors, Phil and Laura Holck, who have been very involved in the local Epiphany ministry for several years. They will be moving to Canada; we will miss them immensely as they have served the young men and the team in so many ways. We wish them Godspeed as they take on a new pastorate in a new land.

**Directory of Prison Ministries**

for each state is listed in the R.J. News newsletter. The link below will take you to the newsletter and you can scroll down to the directory.

<http://www.restorativejusticenews.net/NewsletterApril2013.pdf>

**Texas Epiphany State Board** meets at St. George's Episcopal Church, Austin, TX, beginning at 9 am on the following dates:

May 18

August 24

November 16

All are welcome to attend.



Mart Epiphany Team  
McLennan TJJD Facility