

# Epiphany Tidings

## Roy's Ramblings...

Hi All,

This installment is actually a note from both my wife Lu Ann and me. As a lot of you already know, we have returned to Texas and are very happy to be home. As a result of the move back, I am no longer on the National Epiphany Board. Lu Ann and I are no longer on the Kansas State Epiphany Board. We will likely continue to work some of the Kansas Epiphany weekends since we actually started Epiphany in Kansas. We tell you all that so that you know what we are going to say next is founded in fact and experience.

Texas is also the greatest state in the country to do Epiphany. Now please don't jump on us with comments about Texas pride. We are proud to be Texans, but the comment has nothing to do with that. All of us who work in Texas Epiphany can point to examples of Stars who have maintained contact with the Epiphany team. We can name Stars we have mentored while they were incarcerated. We can name Stars our teams have supported and mentored after they were released from the facility. We can name Stars who have gotten out, become a success and come back to work on Epiphany teams. We can name success story after success story. Epiphany in Texas is in so many units, many of us volunteer in multiple facilities

We are allowed by the State of Texas to maintain contact with youth who participate in Epiphany, not just while they are still incarcerated but after they are released. The State encourages that contact and recognizes the positive affect that Epiphany can have on the outcome of a Star's life. Not every state allows Epiphany team members and Stars to exchange letters after the Epiphany weekend concludes. In some states, like Kansas, the only contact that can occur after the Epiphany weekend is the monthly reunions. Some states (including Kansas) also forbid contact with Stars for two years after their release. We all know that the first two years "in the free" is a crucial time that can determines the fate of these youth.

Texas is the greatest state in the nation to do Epiphany because the TJJD recognizes, enables, encourages, and supports Epiphany volunteers to continue to be part of the lives of our Stars long after the weekend is over. We are extremely fortunate to operate under a juvenile justice system that acknowledges what God and His people can do and allows us to make the maximum impact on the lives of youth. Please keep the State of Texas, TJJD, and all those in power in your prayers because without them, Epiphany Ministries of Texas would not exist.

**"Live simply, love generously, care deeply, speak kindly, and leave the rest to God."**

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## Epiphany Events

- Gainesville #37: July 20-22
- Evins #7: July 28-30
- Brownwood #36: September 1-3
- Post #23: October 5- 7
- Mart #29: October 26-28,
- State Board Quarterly Meeting: August 25,2018.



REFLECTING THE  
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LOVE OF CHRIST  
LOVE OF CHRIST  
TO YOUTHFUL  
TO YOUTHFUL  
OFFENDERS.  
OFFENDERS.

## Continuing the theme of lives changed by Texas Epiphany Ministries here are a few of the messages that made their way to me these past few months. . .



### **Kate Mellina, Epiphany Mart:**

God Is BIG Enough! Baptized 18 young men at TJJD in Mart, Texas today! The look on their faces as they came out of the water.... what a blessing it was to be there. (Facebook post April 15, 2018)

I just want to brag on our Chaplin Larrye Weaver. He is the best. We are having a 'second Sunday' baptism each month. Last month we baptized 18 youth. Of the 18 youth, we had 8 of them in Epiphany 28. He is having another one this weekend but we will miss. Its been amazing. Such an answered prayer for Mart.

### **Sue Kalka, Epiphany Mart:**

Well today at Wal Mart in Bellmead, I had walked in about 5 minutes and I hear Sue, is that you! I turned around and saw John V.

After we hugged we got to talking. He's doing great. Will be graduating from TSTC, in auto mechanics. He is already getting offers from companies to hire him.

What made my heart sing, was when he told me Epiphany had saved his life. God had sent us into his life along with the other guys. I almost started crying when he said I didn't know if you would remember me! I then hugged him again and told him that we all shed many tear for him and some others that were on E5. How could we forget him! Just wanted to let you know I saw him, most of all. Also wanted you to know that we do save some of them! He is only 1 of many young men that we have helped! Just know there is more out there! Some we remember some not. Know that God put us in their lives for

### **Post Epiphany #22 - Reflections from the Prayer Chapel**

Just wanted to give an update on Epiphany #22. We started the weekend with 13 boys and ended with 11. The first day started out really well. The boys actively participated in the worship, discussions, posters and rec.

We were so encouraged to have so many want to come into the prayer room for prayer and how often they asked for prayer through the prayer boxes. Saturday and Sunday were much more difficult.

It was clear that the enemy was not going to loosen his hold on some without a fight. But this team has some spirit filled, ninja level prayer warriors! As well as having a team made up of veterans of Epiphany with many years of experience. In the end we saw strongholds broken. We saw walls come down. We saw hearts softened. We saw the glory of God fall on this place.

It's difficult to find the words to describe the experience of seeing God change a persons heart. Their whole countenance changes.

All eleven boys accepted their crosses and openly professed their love for Jesus. There were some boys that took the experience much more seriously than some of the others. But seeds were planted. We will continue to

disciple them. We see them every month and continue with the work that God has given us.

We had four Super Stars serve on the Epiphany team. They are four young men that attended Epiphany #21 and are still at the facility.

I was so proud of how they conducted themselves. They helped with Agape, they helped set up the tables for meals, served the meals, cleaned up after the meals. They were in the skits and the scripture readings. They served the tables snacks and water.

We got to know them better this weekend than we did in all the six months we've known them. They opened up to us and shared so much more.

I look forward to seeing all our boys in a couple of weeks. I love these children. The girls in Kansas and our boys at Garza County Epiphany. They are so lost and broken.

Thank God for Jesus who will mend their hearts and spirits. Thank you prayer warriors for always praying so faithfully! Couldn't have done it without you! Thank you for everyone who gave monetarily. I hope that you will all continue to keep them in your prayers. The work has just begun.

God Bless You,  
Linda Roberts



### **Mart Epiphany joins in National Day of Prayer services at Mart TJJD...**

We had 10 Epiphany team members at the morning worship and breakfast in visitation on side one at the Mart TJJD. Five of us had either said a prayer or read scripture in the program. We provided two egg casseroles, coffee and cups for 40 people.

Later at 5 pm we met at the facility to pray and handed out cookies to the youth and staff. We invited our Emmaus community and had 11 volunteers. 5 had never worked an epiphany. We handed out 600 bags of two cookies each to staff, teachers, security, nurses

and youth. Chaplain asked a youth from each dorm to come out of his pod and pray for the youth and staff of his dorm. And then one of the adults prayed. We had a threat of rain so he had decided not to bring the super stars out to walk with us.

Lives changed by Texas Epiphany Ministries: continued...

Pat Doughty, Epiphany Giddings:

( 3/28/18  
 Dear Pat  
 Morning- This morning started off bad was giving negative feedback but I always wake up like that grumpy.  
 I Prayed to make threw the day  
 (This portion of the letter has been excluded)

Evening- started getting aggravated having real had negative way of thinking thoughts talked to M.R.O about it then some of my Peers started provoking me then my stress/anger bar just started rising I could feel it I started shaking and I was grinding my teeth together. I don't know its really starting to get to the point where I'm just getting tired really tired and just want to give up but I can't and am not why because the good lord say  
 Proverbs 18:16 your gift will make room for you and bring you before great men.  
 ( And as far as my knee I see the doctor on the 6 hopefully they give me good news but I can't do is stay Prayed up.  
 (This portion of the letter has been excluded)

I got your letter Happy easter to you to.  
 the letter smells good because my room smells like it because of my soap Ever since I gave myself to god I feel good I pray and read the bible every day I cried like a little baby when I went to my room the last day of the epiphany because I miss the love + fun Praying we all had together I told my mom I was born again and she cried and told me that she was proud of me and that she loved me so much.

## Brownwood Epiphany #35

February 17-19, 2018

Brownwood Epiphany 35 was held at the Ron Jackson facility. There were 29 Stars, it was a very successful Epiphany. All the Boys participated, and all chose to receive their Crosses on the final day. "Epiphany Band" was in the house, first time in five years they played together, but it was a rocking good time for all.

The Lay Director was fighting an uphill battle right from the start as illness took its toll on this Epiphany. We weren't exactly sure who, as team, was going to walk in the front door on the first day or which talks would need to be covered by a backup speaker. On top of that the facility was changing Stars up to the last minute.

I have to say that overall it was a very good Epiphany for the Stars. The Lay Director had some obstacles to overcome but given the circumstances she held it together well.



### Brownwood #35 in pictures. . .



"Epiphany Band" "Reunited and it 'sounds' so good...."

Stars at worship....



Pharaoh...Pharaoh.... "This is How We Do It"



## UPCOMING EPIPHANY WEEKENDS

| Facility    | E#   | Date          | LD             | ALD                  | WC                 | SD        | B. Rep       |
|-------------|------|---------------|----------------|----------------------|--------------------|-----------|--------------|
| Brownwood   | E 36 | September 1-3 | Anna Jackson   | Becky Reynolds       |                    |           |              |
| Clemens     | E 45 | TBD           |                |                      |                    |           |              |
| Evins       | E 7  | July 28-30    | Jamie Martinez | Marisielda Hernandez |                    |           |              |
| Gainesville | E 37 | July 20-22    | Dave Casey     | Michelle Miller      |                    |           |              |
| Giddings    | E 32 | TBD           |                |                      |                    |           |              |
| Krier       | E 25 | TBD           |                |                      |                    |           |              |
| Mart        | E 29 | October 26-28 | Chris Kenney   | Klaus Strassmann     |                    | Ken Berry | Mike Mellina |
| Post        | E 23 | October 5-7   | Cindy Johnson  | Tina Wuenche         | Christy De La Cruz |           |              |

### Evins Epiphany #6

January 19-21, 2018

Epiphany #6 was a blessing for the stars and for the team. The Holy Spirit showed up and helped the team overcome the challenges that came with having only 20 team members. I first realized how short the team was when Sue Vasquez and I arrived at the unit for set up and there were only two people there; the four of us did all the set up on Thursday afternoon. Thursday night at the meeting the spiritual director explained that two team members giving talks had to drop out due to illness; he requested volunteers to give the clergy talk You are Not Alone and the lay talk Prayer. Since I had given the You are Not Alone talk in the past, I agreed to giving it. It would have been much better if the Lay Director had contacted me about giving it before I left San Antonio since then I would have brought my printed talk with me and the Powerpoint. Sue Vasquez (the other San Antonio volunteer who was also the music team) agreed to give the Prayer talk

even though she had never given it because none of the other team members volunteered. Both of us also served at tables.

Two new team members served on tables without having had any team meetings to teach them what to expect. But with the exception of a little confusion the first morning because they didn't know about being weekend guides, the two bonded well with their table families; the man who served with me at the table of Joy was exceptional in his conversation with the boys. Because there were no assigned team members to do rec and skits, the head spiritual director took on those roles. Team members played the key roles with superstars assisting, and the skits were excellent. The talks followed the outlines and time limits, and the speakers' stories were a witness to God's transforming power. The outside team did a good job of preparing the meals. My only criticism is that they gave unlimited refills both at

meal times and snack time, and consequently the boys were drinking a lot of punch. Restroom breaks ended up taking so much time that we didn't have as much rec as the boys needed.

Because of the distance, I did not attend the team meetings so I can't speak to the team's preparation. I know that recruitment of team members is a major need for the team, and I plan on contacting one of the Methodist pastors in the Edinburgh area to encourage her to participate. All in all, the Holy Spirit showed up and it was a successful weekend. Through the power of God, the boys responded to the message. 23 boys started the weekend, and 19 boys accepted their crosses on Sunday.

I am so thankful that I could serve as Assistant Spiritual Director and Board Rep on Epiphany #6. I hope that other board members will think about helping this group because they are working hard to keep Epiphany going at Evins.

Sarah Holden

## Gainesville Epiphany #36

Gainesville Epiphany #36 started with 32 stars and 12 super stars. By the end of day one we ended with 30 stars and 11 superstars, day two 27 stars and 10 superstars. The final number was 26 stars and 9 superstars. We lost two team members during the weekend one to illness and one to anxiety and stress of the environment of the state school.

The weekend was eventful, and Spirit led. The curriculum was followed as directed and the schedule was well executed. The team worked well together however, there were a lot of small conflicts between the lay director and various team members. Much of this was contributed to personality and work style of the lay director. He was very meticulous and methodical (great traits) at ensuring that the team was on time but struggled with any deviation from his arrangements and schedule which is bound to happen on any Epiphany weekend. He was very much, my way or the highway, making it difficult in rearranging the team when we lost members and not being open to new ideas and flexibility. This did cause some tension throughout the weekend, but the Lord used all of the differences in team members and He was glorified.

The boys of this Epiphany weekend were excited and enthused. This was the first epiphany where Gainesville focused more on boys who wanted to participate rather than using whole dorms. They were excited from the beginning, engaging in conversations, participating in activities and were really absorbing all that was being presented to them. There were a few boys that struggled with the curriculum in that it was too advanced for where they were spiritually, causing them to be overwhelmed with the advanced "Christian lingo." These young men however, were graciously placed at the same table with some of the most patient and well-versed team members which allowed them to gain a lot from the weekend. The stars that were lost over the weekend were due to things outside of Epiphany's

control. The superstars were amazing, coming every day willing to help and serve wherever they were needed. There was one incident at the very end of the weekend just prior to the cross ceremony, where a superstar and star got into an altercation that was unfortunately brought on by gang activity and instigated solely by the superstar. This was disappointing as it caused the star to miss out on the cross and closing ceremonies, as well as the powerful 4<sup>th</sup> day talk. This was the only behavioral problem from the superstars we had over the weekend.

All the staff that served this weekend volunteered to work and had a huge impact on the weekend. They were all well-aware of what Epiphany is and were dedicated to helping the team in any way possible. They were truly God-sent and made this weekend a huge success. The closing ceremony was one of, if not the best closing ceremony I have ever been to. Yes, the fourth day speaker was powerful, but the real testament of God's work was through the testimonies of the boys. They talked about how their hearts had been broken this weekend. Stars gave stories about how this was the first time they had ever had a birthday party. A couple others had never eaten dinner family style at a table and how it caused them to know not only what it's like to be a part of a family, but what it means to be a part of God's family. They shared about being adopted and never realizing the anger they had towards their birth family and how a weight was lifted when they were able to finally forgive them. Another shared about all the struggles in his life, the pain he had and how he can now point out all the times the Lord was with him in the darkness.

Gainesville Epiphany Weekend #36 was both exhausting and exhilarating. There were trials and struggles but, in the end, the work and Glory of the Lord was bigger than all of the flaws.

## Photos from Post Epiphany #22



Sue and Jay on loan from SA Krier! So much fun!!!



Setting-up at Post is not for the faint of heart. First time team member Neely Landrum studies the stacks of material waiting to be loaded through the gate....If they ever get it open.



Most people try to get out of prison but we're trying to get in prison! Dan Swanson and Darrell Browning trying to get the gate open.



## Epiphany Prayer Vigil

*Begin by asking God to clear your mind. Place your thoughts with the people & event that you have come to Him to bless.*

PRAY for the Weekend Lay Director for discernment, wisdom, peace, strength, patience and that he/she walk in HIS SPIRIT.

PRAY for the Spiritual Director for discernment and wisdom that he/she may truly be an instrument of HIS SPIRIT.

PRAY for the Epiphany Team for discernment, wisdom, peace, strength, patience and that he/she walk in HIS SPIRIT.

PRAY for the Speakers to remember whom they represent, to lay down self and glorify GOD... to allow the Holy Spirit to work through them.

PRAY for the Talks, Meditations and skits...for the messages they give and the person who hears it.

PRAY for the youthful offenders, STARS, as they attend the weekend.

- The ones who cannot leave their thoughts behind
- The ones who cannot sleep
- The ones looking for magic, not miracles
- The ones who are open and receiving
- For all the conditions known to God

PRAY for the fun and fellowship that will warm hearts and help keep our focus on GOD.

Lastly, turn it all over to Christ, asking for HIS blessing and presence with all connected.

**May HIS will be done!!**



Shown above is the form used by SA Krier for their prayer vigil. It was so good that I thought I should share it. On the left is a photo of their prayer chain ready to present to the Stars.

**p** Prayers  
lease 

## Snapshots from Mart #28

Photos courtesy of Kate Mellina



A few pictures of the graphics on the Mart Trailer. The side bears the Texas Epiphany logo. The back reflects the heart of our ministry with an invitation to join us.



### Mart Epiphany 28 Team.

Missing a few who blessed us in the kitchen.. Pauline Dagen, Kathy Kuehl Kunkel, Russ Kunkel, Cynthia Purcell Wagner. I know we had a lot of prayers!! — with Randy Pitcock.

Now we know what you find at the end of the a rainbow On St. Patrick's Day...  
LEPRECHAUNS!!  
THEY ARE WORTH MORE THAN GOLD!

