



CHICAGOLAND PRISON OUTREACH



“Me and my pastor.”

To God Alone Be the Glory

An Inmate's Story

My name is Joe Starnes, and I am a former detainee of the Cook County Department of Corrections. I was detained for eight months following a guilty verdict after a trial by jury on a class X felony. Facing a possible thirty-year prison sentence, needless to say I was in a desperate and helpless place, mentally and spiritually. Though I knew about Christ, the last thing I wanted to hear about was God's love, when at this point I felt the most abandoned by Him.

I found myself in a section of the prison where Chicagoland Prison Outreach pastors ministered. Bitter and untrusting, I reluctantly participated in a Bible study session. But beginning at

day one, my life was completely transformed by the unencumbered Word of God and the Love with which it was delivered. I've learned the miracle of Jesus' death on the Cross and the victory that believers have through it, and the ministry of the Holy Spirit to teach us the about God's love towards us all through the Gift of Jesus.

“This ministry isn't about numbers or egos, but strictly about completing the great commission of our Lord Jesus Christ.”

To God alone be the glory for the things that He has done through Chicagoland Prison Outreach. Countless lives have been impacted through the knowledge of Christ. This ministry stretches far beyond the walls of jails and prisons, even into the lives of the families of those who are incarcerated. It isn't about numbers or egos, but about fulfilling the great commission of our Lord Jesus Christ.

This ministry needs to be further supported to impact every prison and jail in Illinois.

My life will never be the same because of my encounter with Christ through the assistance of CPO. It is my prayer that God will release CPO to reach every man and woman that enter these institutions of correction and be undergirded by those that support this ministry.

From a CPO volunteer: “Hope that someone cares.”

When I began volunteering with CPO and Angels of Hope I didn't expect to find the sheer love of stepping out of my suburban, comfortable bubble and ministering to “the least of these.” I've been on missions trips domestically and internationally, but I wasn't quite prepared to realize what was in my own backyard.

The complexities and struggles of the families we met weren't just physical poverty. Instead, they had an extreme emotional and spiritual hunger. Yes, there are people overseas who struggle and live moment to moment to find food and shelter, while here in the U.S. that is already provided. However, many here struggle with the loss or absence of a parent, unsafe neighborhoods, marginalization in the schools, or lack of stability that contributes to an environment in which these families somehow become entrapped in the violence and desperation that causes them to enter the world of prison. When that happens, not only is the inmate suffering but the families greatly, as well.

“There is a tugging at our own hearts that is unexplainable and draws us to their hurting worlds.”

- ANGELS OF HOPE VOLUNTEER



When Angels of Hope visits with their food boxes to these families, there is a glimmer of hope that someone cares. We talk, we share, we pray, we love on them. It is moments of this eye-to-eye contact that conveys compassion and strength to them. When we call each week to tell

them we are arriving, it is wonderful to hear their voices of excitement. So on our two Saturday mornings every month, we volunteers meet for breakfast in my home to pray and fellowship and then go into the field of those whom God would want us to reach.

For each of the volunteers, there is a tugging at our own hearts that is unexplainable and draws us to their hurting worlds. We so want to share our balm of emotional connection and what God has so graciously given us that it compels us to return. And return and return. May everyone be drawn to an experience like this: no job, no vacation, no car, no money will ever compare to the high of the Holy Spirit at work. We wouldn't trade it for the world. - Jan, a volunteer

Domestic HOPE Packs

It's an awesome collaboration between Chicagoland Prison Outreach, Elim Christian Services, suburban churches and inner-city churches to provide “Domestic Hope Packs” to school-age children of inmates!

It happens like this:

1. Parkview Church of Orland Park and Faith Church of Dyer will provide school supplies to fill the packs.
2. CPO will contact the families of inmates to see how many packs each family will need.
3. The packs will be assembled by students at Elim, a ministry for people with special needs in the Chicago suburbs.
4. CPO has contacted several inner city churches to be distribution centers for the families to pick up their packs later this summer.

You can find out more about Elim Christian Services at www.elimcs.org

||| WHO WE ARE |||

Chicagoland Prison Outreach is uncompromisingly and unapologetically a Christ centered, Gospel oriented ministry.

We are dedicated to the proclamation of the Word of God, the advancement of His Kingdom and the glory of His holy name. All of our practical programs are built on that foundation and designed to fulfill that purpose.

We are a Christ-centered relational, holistic ministry to the incarcerated, the formerly incarcerated, and their families.

For regular updates on our ministries, go to cpoministries.org/signup.

Find us on Facebook and Twitter!



Donations may be given on our web site www.cpoministries.org

**Chicagoland Prison Outreach | In-Prison | Post-Prison | Outreach |
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