



HEARTBEAT

A Publication for the Swannanoa Correctional Center for Women Chaplaincy Committee

2018

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Visit Us Online:

www.MinistryofHopeWNC.org

Never-Ending Graduate Course in Personal Growth and Faith

Mary Thompson, SCCW Volunteer

As I begin writing this, I wish I could tell you I began volunteering at the Swannanoa Correctional Center for Women (SCCW) because of some sort of higher calling and having heard God's voice. I wish I could say that, but it would not be the truth.

I am a member of First Christian Church Disciples of Christ in Black Mountain. I knew there were several women at First Christian Church who volunteered at SCCW teaching classes, taking the ladies out on passes, and I knew my friend at church, Evelyn Trigg, was one of the women of First Christian who volunteered teaching. Ten years ago, Evelyn invited me to join her on Wednesday nights at SCCW to teach a class called ALPHA that is a basic walk through Christianity. I said yes to Evelyn's invitation because I saw it as an opportunity to be with my friend during the week and not just in church on Sundays. I never dreamt I was signing up for a never-ending graduate course in human nature, personal growth and faith, and how to make a tasty meal from food purchased in the SCCW canteen by the residents of the correctional center. I would not change a thing!

Our classroom was in the Chapel at SCCW. Because of this location, from the very beginning of my association with SCCW, I have been able to see the work the Chaplains do with the women there. It was and is amazing and moving to see the Chaplains shepherd the ladies through the chaotic environment of prison - guiding them gently with an open mind and heart. Four years ago when Chaplain Dalton asked if I would like to join the mentoring program the Ministry of Hope was beginning, I said yes without hesitation.

Through the years I have learned many things volunteering at SCCW. I've expanded my vocabulary to include words like recidivism, incarcerated, and a new definition of the word sentence. As part of the mentoring program, we all get together in the Chapel at SCCW the second Monday of each month. When I listen to the ladies, mentors, and Chaplain Dalton in conversation, I am always deeply moved by God's Grace in our lives. At each of these get-togethers, Chaplain Dalton has a question for us to discuss.

When we got together just before Christmas the question was: What is the best present you ever received in prison? Many folks spoke up, and yes the tissue box went around the circle more than once. At the end of our evening, Chaplain Dalton brought the meeting to a close with a summation of what the ladies had shared. She said the best present anyone can give is "...being fully present with someone, no strings attached." Chaplain Dalton spoke the truth and defined the mentoring program.



Mary
Thompson



OUR VISION

Believing that no one is beyond God's love, the Ministry of Hope provides safe experiences and develops supportive relationships at Swannanoa Correctional Center for Women. These will enable the discovery of and belief in hope for renewal, reconciliation, and restoration.



BRINGING IN A NEW YEAR, AND SOME NEW CHALLENGES

In the ongoing challenging conditions of prison, our chaplains provide a safe space in a quiet, peaceful chapel where the women are able to take off all the masks they wear for safety and sanity, and find acceptance in all their beauty, vulnerability, fear, confusion, strength, and questioning. Chaplains work to help women find new, positive answers within their own values, beliefs, and traditions.

"Both Chaplains helped me become comfortable with my very own spiritual journey."

At SCCW all of the women are within 5 years of release or parole so they are not simply slogging through their prison sentence but actively planning for life on the outside. Many of the women are aware that if they do not use their prison time to examine the root issues behind their addictions, they will go back to their old behaviors and end up back in prison. Chaplains help women prepare to re-enter the outside world as healthier people more able to contribute to their communities and families.

..But what else do our Chaplains do?

Besides the obvious spiritual support, our chaplains also provide the residents - and staff - with a wide variety of support services. All of the women at SCCW are separated from their family, friends, and home. Some are struggling with addiction. Ninety percent are survivors of trauma and abuse. Many of the women at SCCW will not receive either visits or mail during their incarceration, so Ministry of Hope chaplains (with help from support staff and volunteers) additionally facilitate these arrangements:

- Coordinating religious services for all faith groups approved by the Department of Public Safety
- Recruiting and supervising volunteers who lead religious groups
- Collaborating with mental health, substance abuse and programs staff
- Ministering to members of the staff in times of crisis
- Coordinating emergency leave passes for inmates who have had a death in their immediate family
- Allowing inmates to make phone calls in times of crisis or family members' medical emergency
- Arranging weddings, baptisms, special visits with clergy or family members
- Supervising the SCCW dance team "Kingdom Bound"
- Praying with inmates any time, hearing confessions, and visiting inmates in the hospital
- Taking inmates out into the community to share their stories
- Planning and conducting special worship services in the chapel
- Leading various kinds of groups (grief, support, inner healing)
- Coordinating our Ministry of Hope programs, including:
 - "Read Me a Story"
 - "Moms and Teens" & "Mother and Child" Retreats (as well as family mediation services)
 - The Mentoring Program (and transitional assistance)
 - Spiritual Recovery from Domestic Violence

And, due to recent system-wide institution policies that have been reviewed and adjusted over the past year, this now also includes the chaplains counseling our SCCW residents with new types of transition support – offering understanding and reasoning of policy changes, and adjustments to new rules and protocols on and off-site.



"My children recognize my voice when I call home because of the Read Me A Story Program."



"The mentoring program gives us encouragement that second chances are available for all who are willing to work for them. It helps by bringing in people who will help us understand how to transition to life outside of SCCW. It also reminds us of the importance of being honest with ourselves and others."



Introducing RECURRING GIVING to Ministry of Hope



Named after our longstanding newsletter, Ministry of Hope is introducing our newest option for giving, "HEARTBEAT Recurring Giving." When a donor signs up for this recurring donation program online, there are no checks to mail and no reminders needed - it's all automated! A monthly gift allows our supporters the option to spread the financial impact of their giving across the entire year, potentially lessening the acute financial impact. Supporters may end up giving more on an annual basis, but the distribution of payments across the year makes the commitment more manageable. This also makes recurring giving an especially effective way to increase gift amounts from committed supporters who might not have the financial resources to move up and become "major donors" with larger one-time gifts. Additionally, these ongoing funds will provide regular and predictable support for our ministry, allowing our organization to fund our ongoing operations overall, but also predict future cash flow - giving us a better lead in future planning and outreach.

Sign up now online at:
www.MinistryOfHopeWNC.org

THIS IS THE DIFFERENCE THAT THE CHAPLAINS AT SCCW HAVE MADE IN MY LIFE AND THE LIFE OF MY FRIENDS:

- They show us that there are nice people who accept and care for us.
- The chapel always feels like a safe place, where I am free to tell my story and let my tears flow freely
- I have learned how to meditate and calm myself.
- The Chaplain has taught me that I am worthy, and do not have to believe the horrible things said to me over the years.

"WHAT THE WOMEN ARE SAYING..."

...Did you know?

UPCOMING 2018 VOLUNTEER ORIENTATION DATES:



BLUE CARDS: (for on-site volunteers)
April 10th • June 12th • October 9th

ORANGE CARDS: (for off-site volunteers)
April 24th • June 26th • October 23rd



The Ministry of Hope is a community-funded chaplaincy program, which raises funds to employ on-site chaplains at the Swannanoa Correctional Center for Women (SCCW).

Our chaplains conduct religious services in the center's chapel and provide pastoral care and spiritual guidance to the inmates. Their guidance and leadership are crucial to helping these women, many of whom struggle with addiction, abuse, and grief issues. The women of SCCW are within five years of release or parole. Our chaplains offer them a sense of hope and real-world self-care tools to manage parenting, relationships, and employment with discernment and spiritual maturity.



BECOME A PARTNER IN THE MINISTRY OF HOPE!

Here are some ways YOU
can join us in our mission
to provide chaplains at SCCW:

- ♥ Schedule a speaker for your church or civic group
- ♥ Sponsor a fund-raising event for the benefit of Ministry of Hope
- ♥ Put the Ministry of Hope in your mission budget, either as a church or as a Sunday School Class/Mission Group
 - ♥ Make a one-time or regular contribution
- ♥ Request that you be put on the mailing list for our quarterly newsletter
- ♥ Schedule a tour of the facility for your group

CONTACT US TODAY TO LEARN MORE:

P.O. Box 998, Black Mountain NC 28711

Email: admin@ministryofhopewnc.org

SCCW Chaplains' direct number: (828) 259-6055

Online: www.MinistryOfHopeWNC.org



THANK YOU!

The generosity of these contributors has made an immediate difference in the lives of the incarcerated women at SCCW.

The following
INDIVIDUALS
have made a
contribution over
the past year:

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Betty Lou Jeffrey

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THANK YOU!

The generosity of these contributors has made an immediate difference in the lives of the incarcerated women at SCCW.

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Black Mountain Presbyterian, Elizabeth Circle
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Circle of Mercy
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ECW St. Andrews Episcopal Church
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...YOU'RE CORDIALLY INVITED!

Thursday, April 26th 2018

11:30 am SILENT AUCTION

12:00 pm LUNCHEON

WHERE: Historic Lake Lure Inn

TIME: 11:30 am for the Silent Auction

12:00 Noon for Luncheon

\$35 per Person

Send check payable to Ministry of Hope
or REGISTER ONLINE:

www.MinistryOfHopeWNC.org

This invaluable program is funded solely
by contributions. If you are able to make
an additional gift, you will help the
chaplaincy program better serve our
500+ women from throughout the state.

We thank you for your generosity.

