



Pathway To Freedom, Inc.

March, 2016

Group 11 - Completes 18-Month Pre-Release Phase



Twenty-one Group 11 members (shown with their Program Counselor, James Dalton) worked hard, persevered, and encouraged one another in order to complete PTF's 18-month pre-release phase. We celebrated with them on Wednesday, January 6, 2016. Congratulations to each one!

In this issue:

Group 11 Completes 18-Month Pre-Release Phase	1
You Must Kill the Biggest Giant	1
This is My Story: Dennis MacDonald	2
Vo-Tech Training Program Set to Launch in April, 2016!	2
Volunteer Training!	2
The 540 Group (February 26, 2016)	2

You Must Kill the Biggest Giant

Dalton Smith, shown in the front row center of the photo above, was elected by Group 11 members to serve as their spokesman during the Completion Ceremony. Here's part of Dalton's speech: "When we began this program we set a standard for how we wanted to live it out. God's favor was on us as we were learning lessons here, and we were blessed to have a group of men that are such strong leaders. But, with favor comes testing.

During this time we began to encounter a giant, who opposes all that God does. It did not want change. It did not want accountability. It did not want restoration. It did not want integrity. The only thing it wanted was to remain the same. This giant was self and it was much like Goliath, the defiant giant in Scripture that refused to give way to the Living God of Israel. Let me take you into the heart of this battle. There was a valiant King, a mighty army, and a shepherd boy. This was for the safety of a nation. There was one giant in its way. Who went after Goliath? The King? The rest of his mighty army? No. The most amazing thing about this story is that David, the shepherd boy, insisted that he would slay the giant. He was small and didn't have the physical strength to defeat the giant.

The men that stand with me today continued through the worst storms and battles to make it to this day. They daily had to slay self. Let's face it, living at PTF is far from a walk in the park. We, for a moment, have conquered our giant to complete this program. That battle doesn't end here; it is for a lifetime.

There was a time when I didn't think I was going to defeat my personal giants and make it through this Program. Every man in Group 11 has been in the same position, but God has been faithful. When you want to give up you have to remember that the battle belongs to the Lord. God will use your greatest weakness as His greatest strength. There is nothing inside of you that makes this possible, but God makes all things possible.

I believe that there is a generation of men who are going to rise up and take this state, nation, and world for Christ's glory. It starts by saying that I will not accept less than the victory God has given me through His Word. It takes acknowledging that there is a God who is bigger than our circumstance or situation. Today, take what God is doing and stand. Cut the head off of your giant because God has made you mighty men of valor. Remember, with Christ all things are possible."

*And I will give you a new heart, and a new spirit
I will put within you. And I will remove the heart of stone
from your flesh and give you a heart of flesh.*

Ezekiel 36:26



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Vo-Tech Training Program Set to Launch in April, 2016!

We are very excited to announce that an agreement has been reached between PTF, the ADC, and Riverside Vo-Tech to set up a training center here at the Wrightsville Hawkins Unit. Training will be available to both female and male inmates at the Unit. Participants will have the opportunity to learn valuable work skills such as sewing seat covers and other tasks. Special thanks to those at Falcon Jet for their guidance in helping us get the training center started. We are very optimistic that having access to this training will dramatically increase the employment opportunities for the participants and will be an important component of helping them to become contributing members of society and staying out of prison.

Volunteer Training!

If you are interested in becoming a PTF Volunteer, register for our **Volunteer Training Class** scheduled on **Saturday, April 9, 2016 from 8:00am to 1:00pm at the Wrightsville Hawkins Unit for Males, 22522 Asher Road, Wrightsville.** This training is for men who want to come into the Unit and teach a class, facilitate a small group, or serve as a mentor and also for those who want to serve as a mentor out in the community. **Info will need to be submitted for an ADC Background Check by no later than Friday, April 1.** Email the PTF Office Administrator at mmealler@ptfprison.org, or give her a call for more info and to obtain the Background Check Request Form. If members of your church are interested in getting involved in prison ministry - with PTF or elsewhere - we highly recommend this training and would invite you to contact us.

This is My Story: Dennis MacDonald

I grew up in Jacksonville, Arkansas with my mom and sister; Dad had moved out when I was 7. My mom worked several jobs to take care of us, so I had a lot of unsupervised time. I started doing drugs at the young age of 13. Although I grew up in church, when I was 16, I decided not to go any longer. I quit school when I was 18 and started working. My daughter was born when I was 19. I followed in my Dad's footsteps: I wasn't there like I should have been for her. Drugs kept me from the values my Mom taught me as a child and in 2004, at the age of 24, I went to prison for the first time. Since then, I've been re-incarcerated four times.



When I was at Brickeys, a friend of mine told me about the PTF Program. Several other men explained that it was great and that, when you are released, help would be there for you. I knew I needed something besides just sitting in prison. I applied and, three weeks later, in January, 2013, I was at the Hawkins Unit. I made a conscious decision that I was going to change – I do not plan on leaving prison the same way I came in.

In April, 2014, I started teaching in the computer lab, which helped me come out of my shell, become more pro-social, and build relationships with others in the community. I completed the 18-month pre-release portion of the PTF Program in October, 2014. Next I enrolled in the Entrepreneurial Mindset class and learned about starting my own business, prepared a business plan for it and plan on pursuing that dream when I'm released. This class taught me not to let my circumstances dictate my future and how to add value to yourself by helping other people solve problems. Today, I live by PTF's six core values: integrity, responsibility, restoration, community, productivity, and affirmation.

I thank God for second chances! I thank God for the PTF Program and the relationship I now have with Him. He has also restored relationships within my family and I get to see my daughter every other weekend during visitation.

The 540 Group (February 26, 2016)



This fine-looking group of men are commonly referred to as "The 540 Group" because they

come from churches in the River Valley in Northwest Arkansas along Interstate 540. This particular group is from Harvest Time. Different groups come in several times each year to encourage and build relationships with our members and accept them when they are at their worst. Our members know they will be accepted when they return home and begin their second chance at life, and that is priceless! Community involvement plays a huge role in changing lives and stopping the cycle of incarceration. If your church is interested in participating, let us know!

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