



Pathway To Freedom, Inc.

November 2023

Family Christmas is Back!

By Scott McLean

As we reflect over this year prior to the Holiday's and the close of another successful year, we can't help but think about our partners and volunteers. Thank you partners and volunteers for your ongoing support of our mission in fostering hope and seeing prisoners' and formerly incarcerated individuals' lives transformed. PTF remains committed to our Christ-centered approach in bringing hope and a new start at life to those broken and without hope. This is the message of Christmas! God's gift to the world through Jesus. The One promised to bring hope, salvation, and freedom to the captives.

As you ponder year end giving, we would like for you to consider the cost-effective quality of our program. PTF's approach not only enables prisoners to become contributing members of society but helps to reduce the detrimental effects of crime upon the families and children of prisoners. The community involvement and the generosity of private donations has assisted us in reducing the high rate of criminal recidivism by changing behavior, lives, and

saving tax-payer dollars. Our annual operating budget is \$590,781. It's through your support that we can remain operational and continue to relish in the amazing service God is doing through PTF.



Nothing better than Family!

I am excited to announce that for the first time since COVID, we have been approved to continue our Family Christmas Banquet at the prison. Our men are finally able to enjoy a meal and Christmas festivities with their families. I'm sure you can all understand the significance of this time our men will be able to enjoy with their families during the Holiday season. We ask your prayerful consideration of a generous gift to help us cover the \$5,500 cost of the Family Christmas Banquet. One of our graduates, Michael McCray shared some thoughts below to express the significance of our Family Christmas Banquet.

By Dr. Michael McCray

As a graduate of Pathway to Freedom, I can remember that the Christmas Banquet was an exciting event that everyone looked forward to, as it was a time to celebrate with our loved ones the redemptive, loving power of Christ and God's favor upon this program. An event many will never experience inside any other prison. And so, when COVID-19 appeared in 2020; it shut everything down, including the Christmas Banquet. Men were disconnected from their loved ones; filled with so much loneliness and despair. We are so grateful to God for making all things possible by blessing us to be able to bring loved ones together again at the Christmas Banquet. Now, as we prepare to celebrate another holiday season with an expression of preparations on display, and a sensitivity towards aesthetics that brings about a gentleness in men that is reflective of Christ spirit; a spirit that is only experienced in prison here at Pathway to Freedom, I would like to thank our amazing donors, sponsors, volunteers along with the ADC for their generous support.

Thank God for Second Chances!

By Charles Uribe

I was born in Washington State and lived most of my life in the Pacific Northwest. My formative years were unstable. At seven years old, I walked into a situation where one of my family members was involved in drug use. This was my first of many interactions with drugs. I was also considered the “misfit” of my family. My life at that time consisted of no stable home life. I would often move from place-to-place living with certain relatives and friends. As I became older, I also used drugs, which in turn, lead me into toxic relationships that were not healthy or good for me. Unfortunately, my father reached out to me on several occasions because he was living right, however, at that time I avoided him because I was doing wrong. Eventually, I began selling drugs and would travel across state lines to make drug deals. I met a lady who was on parole that I entered a relationship with and that led to marriage. At the time, I did not realize how unhealthy the relationship was. She had her parole switched to Arkansas and that is how I ended up in the state and eventually became incarcerated.



I was approached by a friend while at the Ouachita Correctional Unit who spoke highly of the Pathway to Freedom program. I applied to the program and was accepted. Once I became immersed in the program, I discovered that I became more “open-minded” regarding my thinking. I became less “rigid” to other people’s viewpoints and increased my capacity to not cling so tightly to my toxic thinking patterns. One class that impacted me greatly was Criminal and Addictive Thinking. Because I was so “rigid” in my thinking, I learned what “thinking distortions” I had and the tools I needed to overcome the distortions. Another class that affected me greatly was “Every Man’s Battle.” This class taught me the importance of not jumping into a relationship quickly and what a healthy relationship with the opposite sex looked like.

As I approached my parole date, I felt confident that I had received the tools necessary not only to meet the challenges of re-entry, but also to build a new life for myself. I secured employment with George’s Chicken in Springdale, and God blessed me in such a way that my fines got dismissed in other states. This allowed me to obtain my driver’s license while meeting my re-entry goals. I bought my own car, joined a support group (NA), and eventually secured a maintenance technician position with Tyson Foods. I also had the help of my re-entry mentor, Jim Womble, to come alongside me in my re-entry journey to help me in decision-making, building pro-social relationships, and be a “listening ear” as well as a non-judgmental presence in my life. I became deeply involved in my NA support group and now am giving away through mentoring to other individuals what PTF invested in me. Recently, I graduated the PTF Re-entry program and received my graduation certificate, plaque, and remain grateful for the PTF program and to God for giving me a second chance at life.

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Group 40 with counselor Jon Justice, celebrates pre-release phase completion

 **Pathway to Freedom, Inc.**
restoring lives, families and communities

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