



May 2014 Newsletter

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15 GRADUATE FROM JOSEPH SHEEHAN'S ANGER DYNAMICS CLASS AT SANTA ROSA CORRECTIONAL INSTITUTION (FL)

Testimony of inmate Wilburn H. F. Rutherford (third from right in back row of photo): I've taken six anger classes since being in prison since 2010. The last two [FIT Anger Dynamics] were with Mr. Sheehan. Being a facilitator/teacher, the classes he taught were much different. He would always open with a prayer. I truly believe that was the difference.

Long ago my godmother, Mrs. Edna. P. Lewis, who is a very godly person, told me that I had something to do for God. I ran for fifteen years because I thought I was inadequate. Ms. Lewis told me that one day God would put me somewhere where I couldn't run anymore. She also told me that I would have three angels to help me in my journey. They would help me on my way with God's plan for me.

From the time I met him, Mr. Sheehan worked with me and asked many questions. He found that I was very empty, upset, angry, and mad at the world. I blamed everyone but the right one – myself. Mr. Sheehan taught me that I was my own worst enemy. He had me take a long look in the mirror. I did and didn't like what I saw very much. He let me talk about my past but let me know I couldn't change it. I would have to cut the garbage and let it go. I had to stop looking back on my past because I was missing all of the blessings that God had right before my face.

Mr. Sheehan dug me out of my own grave, one class at a time.

Mr. Sheehan was one of the angels who came into my life. God led him my way to help me. My godmother had told me of this long before it happened. This class really saved my life, spirit, and soul. It helped me grow in way that I have no words for. I found that I was my own worst enemy. I was trapped into believing that I had no value. I only trusted in what I could touch, money, house, cars, and women. I had no firm foundation to build my faith upon. When I came to prison I was spiritually dead. I was six feet under.

Mr. Sheehan dug me out of my own grave, one class at a time. He opened my eyes, unstopped my ears, and cleared my mind. I found out that "any man can conquer another man but the man who can conquer himself is the real winner!" I was taught that I am somebody. I do have value. I can be at peace. Peace is on the inside of me not on the outside. Mr. Sheehan should have been a great teacher, but he takes his precious time and helped the lowly of God's people. He never judged us in any way. Thank you for your love, Mr. Sheehan. "A true blessing". - Wilburn H. F. Rutherford

Testimony of facilitator Joseph Sheehan (far right in photo): FIT has provided me with the opportunity to speak truth and hope into the lives of convicted felons. We're all guilty and in need of a Savior. Thankfully, He meets us where we are with the offer of forgiveness, purpose and a bright eternity. He's willing to use you and me to look into the eyes of captives and speak words of freedom on both sides of prison walls. It's not about us, it's about them. But I must be quick to say that these are some of the most personally fulfilling and rewarding times of my life. Joe Sheehan

Editor's Comment: We continue to be blessed by the spectacular dedication of our FIT family. They face huge challenges which must be overcome just to get to minister. They do not flinch at the size and nature of the problems that our clients have or the lifetime of impoverished living that has led to them to a state of despair, crime, and worthlessness. They accept the personal cost that will cause them to come back week after week and course after course to chip away at the negative thought patterns that hold our clients back. They help them to new patterns in thinking clearly and godly and growing in self-reliance, industry, and integrity. FIT strives to provide the very best in materials and comments received often reflect appreciation for the comprehensiveness of the program. Key advantages of our program are appealing to clients' desire to live godly lives, providing godly mentors who "walk the walk" as well as "talk the talk", and directing them to church environments where they can be nurtured and find friends who can be a replacement for the addicted and criminal ones who are the only friends they know.

TWO LADIES TRAINED IN BRADENTON ON MAY 3

Suzanne Wilson (left) and Eleanor Larson completed their one-day training on May 3 to become the newest FIT facilitators. These ladies are close friends and are already actively planning to begin FIT ministry. They are looking at all the options: jail, prison, involving their church in court-ordered classes and classes for anyone in the community. They plan to work together and "apprentice" with one of our veteran FIT facilitators at the Sarasota County Jail as well as help out at FIT headquarters on Thursday nights with our Character Development program.



Happenings:

Our First Annual Online Fundraiser was held on Tuesday - Wednesday, May 6-7. \$2,075 was donated during this period and plans are underway for an even bigger event next year. Donors contributed from all over the state of Florida. Thanks to everyone who helped us with this event. It is an ideal fundraiser because it lets everyone in our service area have their own regional events and still participate online to benefit the entire organization.

On **May 10**, FIT Secretary Helen Campbell and President Don Pratt met with the assistant warden and the chaplain at the Florida Women's Reception Center (state prison) to discuss implementing the FIT program in their main unit. The FWRC is the initial processing center for all women sentenced to the state prison system. As a result of this meeting, there will be a need for additional FIT facilitators to implement the program to meet a variety of needs. Because the FIT transition course is made up of standalone courses, it provides other options in meeting local needs such as being a part of other projects and working jointly with other ministries and organizations.

May 22 FIT President Don Pratt and Board Members will be meeting with a committee of six members of the contract agency for the Department of Children and Families to enter an agreement to provide services for the District 20 court service area.

From the main office: Our business plan to have churches and individuals support us has its advantages. We get calls from small, struggling ministries who are amazed that we can help them get the books and certificates they need.