

Berean Prison Ministries

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The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me; because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek; He hath sent me to bind up the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.

Isaiah 61:1

HANDS OF HOPE ILLINOIS- A BPM PARTNER

Meet Woodie and Catherine Stiltner from Joliet, Illinois who have a very unique partnership with Berean Prison Ministries. Woodie once ran a successful trucking company, but that all changed in 1999. God put upon the heart of Woodie, a vision of using his trucking company in a vastly different way by distributing food to the needy. Their first food drive occurred during the Christmas holiday of 1999. With food donations from KeHE Foods, they were able to make a difference in people's lives. Woodie then began hauling food to a Hope Center he opened that provided a variety of good quality food and produce to the needy members of his community who couldn't afford to buy them. No one is turned away from his unique "pay what you can" center. Once just a vision, Hands of Hope of Illinois is now a wonderful reality of what God can do through willing people who are "hearers and doers of the Word".

At Hands of Hope of Illinois, they live and experience the Gospel every single day. Through networking with local businesses and other food ministries, they are able to provide food, clothing, household goods, medical supplies and building materials to those in need. While they do provide goods to some missions out of country, 90% of their products are distributed here in the U.S.

Today, they assemble everything at their warehouse attached to the Hope Center in Joliet, Illinois and are now distributing on average over 90,000 lbs. of food per week. Through a partnership with Berean Prison



Ministries, Hands of Hope of Illinois annually distributes over one million pounds of food to 13 jails and prisons throughout Illinois, including the Peoria County Jail. They are blessed to be able to share God's Word at many of the recipients' facilities and churches. A prison ministry at Statesville Prison is a byproduct of this work.

Although they are a Christian Ministry and most of their recipients are faith based organizations, Hands of Hope of Illinois does not discriminate against any group or individual in need. "If you are hungry we will feed you."

This journey has become more than a mission for Woodie, his wife Catherine, all of the workers and volunteers. It is their life.

WOODIE STILTNER



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PRAYER REQUESTS:

- Various Jail/Prison Ministries
- Wisdom for the Berean Board
- The Ministries in Romania and Russia

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A BRIGHT SPOT by Ken Hoerr, Chairman

In this month's newsletter we highlight the physical and spiritual work of Berean Prison Ministries. They reflect the identity of Berean. Berean's identity is not found in a high class restaurant or the beauty of a symphony program. Rather, the brightest spot in a community is found in a jail or prison where Berean labors. Prisoners are well fed in the jails and prisons. However, there are many empty spots in souls who have lived and been involved in the dark places in the cities and towns where they came from. Many come from broken homes and lacked the income to live in a basic needs life. Violence and crime were their environment. Drugs and alcohol became a part of surviving and existing. For some, physical wounds have healed but the emotional scars are as fresh as the day they happened. Berean offers more than just the basics, which can only meet a temporary need.

Isaiah says "The spirit of the Lord God is upon me because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good teachings unto the meek; he hath sent me to bind up the broken hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound." Isaiah 61:1

Our volunteers are meeting the deep soul needs as the Word is taught, explained and shared with those seeking restoration. Counseling is available and many are thankful that someone cares and shares kindness that, for many, has been lacking. Jesus said "*I am the light of the world.*" John 8:12. The prisoners came because of deeds done in darkness. For some, their eyes have been opened by God to His dear Son, Jesus Christ. Today, some captives are finding the brightest place in town is not the skyline or river but the jail or prison. A bright spot in a special place.



INMATES REFLECTIONS: Jesus Truly Transforms Lives

I don't like being here (in jail), but I needed to be here. This is where I found Jesus and I want to help other inmates know Jesus also while I am here. I am at peace here.

I am not the same person that arrived at jail. I have time here to read and study the Bible and to do the Bible Studies that Berean gives us. I want to do good when I get out because I have done enough bad, but I'm different now.

Without being incarcerated, I would have continued down the wrong path for the rest of my life, but I found people that cared about me here. I never knew the story of Jesus and how to be saved, but I experienced it here in this cold place.

Thank you for not giving up on me!

Jesus said unto her, I am the resurrection, and the life: he that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live: And whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die. Believest thou this?

John 11:25-26 | He is not here: for he is risen!