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QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF YOKEFELLOW PRISON MINISTRY OF NC



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SHARE YOUR STORY!

How did you get involved in prison ministry? Chances are that somebody talked with you about prison ministry first, and then God moved your heart to respond by volunteering. You can now pay this forward by talking with the people in your life about prison ministry. Yokefellow volunteers are some of the most passionate Christians on the planet, but people won't know about this passion unless you tell them! Talk about prison ministry with your family, friends, and church family. Who knows? God might lead them to join you!

"Let the redeemed of
the LORD tell their story."
~ Ps. 107:2

Local Coordinator Appreciation

Executive Director Vita Alligood and State Developer Carlton Gooding (pictured above with Henry Williams, Esther Perara, and Clara Murray) have been traveling across the state to meet with each of Yokefellow's 37 local coordinators to thank them in person for their hard work and dedication to Yokefellow. Each local prison ministry has a volunteer local coordinator who is responsible for administering all logistics for the local meetings. Those duties include, but are not limited to, coordinating the meeting times with prison personnel, communicating schedule changes to the local volunteers, tracking how many inmates are

served each week, and providing mentoring and guidance to both new and seasoned volunteers. That's a lot to ask of a volunteer, but Yokefellow's local coordinators rise to the challenge, with many serving in this capacity for several years!

Across the state, the local coordinators say the same thing: they get even more out of serving the Yokefellow volunteers and inmates than they give. The Yokefellow Board of Directors, staff, and volunteers are grateful for all of our local coordinators' hard work and dedication. They are the backbone of this ministry!

Prison Lockdown — Now What?

You've driven out to the prison, assembled with the other Yokefellows in the lobby, and prepared yourself for going through security, only to learn that the prison is on lockdown, meaning that the Yokefellow meeting is canceled for the night. Now what? Rather than simply going home, why don't you hold a prayer meeting right there in the lobby? Pray for everyone involved in the lockdown, even though you don't know the cause. Pray for the safety of the prison personnel during the lockdown. Pray that God will

encourage the Yokefellow inmates to support one another as they await the next Yokefellow meeting. Pray for God to intercede in the situation that precipitated the lockdown in a way that He is glorified. Not only will you be inviting God into what might be a bad situation, but you will also be a powerful witness to the prison staff who see you praying and hear your prayers. Don't miss out on this opportunity to share your faith and glorify God by holding a prayer meeting, right there in the prison lobby!

DONOR SPOTLIGHT

Yokefellow asked Donor **Barbara Bayes** why she supports Yokefellow financially. Here was her response:

"One of the chaplains where I volunteer told us that the men really look forward to coming to the Yokefellow time because they get to talk to someone who actually listens and cares. And while it's Christian-based, inmates of other faiths feel comfortable attending because we are willing to consider their questions and concerns without pressure to convert.



"The prison where I volunteer is a processing facility for young men. There is a lot of turnover of inmates. So, I may or may not visit with the same men each week. I never know how the evening will go. But I feel God's presence the whole time I'm there that is different from other places in my life. HE guides men to my table. Sometimes their stories make me uncomfortable or sad. But I feel I'm presenting some image of Christ that might lead to their first step, or a further step, to a better life in faith. I feel blessed when I leave the prison.

"I support Yokefellow to partner in the goal of growing this mission to more prisons across the state of North Carolina."

Why do you financially support Yokefellow? Share your story at yokefellowprisonministrync@gmail.com.

IN THE SPOTLIGHT

Learn more about Kyle Fishbaugh,
Member of Yokefellow Board of Directors!



What brought you to Yokefellow?

My friend and fellow board member David Canady introduced me to the Yokefellow ministry by inviting me to attend a Yokefellow meeting at Scotland County Correctional. It was my first time going into a prison; I was very anxious. I went to the chapel and sat with a group of five inmates. My goal was to listen and learn from their dialog with each other. Five minutes into the meeting, one of the men in the group turned to me and asked, "Don't you want to add something to this conversation?" From that moment, I began to really enjoy

being a part of the small group interaction; it was refreshing and energizing. I kept coming back week after week and became a Yokefellow volunteer in August of 2015. Within a year, I became a Board Member so that I could really understand the big picture of Yokefellow Prison Ministry in North Carolina and how I could contribute to its future growth.

What is your vision for YF?

The great part of Yokefellow is how we embrace diversity in community. Yokefellow is not exclusive; we invite men and women from all



denominations and races to come together for an hour each meeting to engage in the conversation of life. We invite God into our circles to be a part of the conversation, but we don't preach to each other. We utilize the Bible to find answers to our questions, but the meeting is not a Bible study. My vision for Yokefellow is that the model we use for our meetings not only transforms communities inside the walls of the prison, but outside the walls as well.

What do you like to do for fun?

I'm an ice hockey fanatic, so you'll find me watching a game on TV or attending a game at a local arena. I also enjoy traveling to new places. Planes, trains, automobile, or boat—I enjoy exploring new adventures in new territories around the world.

Anything else to share?

Yokefellow has had a tremendous impact on my life and ministry. Before I became a prison chaplain, I was a Yokefellow volunteer. Having the opportunity to listen and talk with inmates about issues that really have meaning to their lives has given me the insight needed to be a better chaplain to the inmates and staff that I serve on a daily basis. Being a part of Yokefellow each week has been a blessing to me as well as the inmates that participate in the program. If you want to be a part of a ministry that makes a difference, consider being a part of Yokefellow in some way. You won't be disappointed!



Congratulations to Bill Boyle, Local Coordinator for Polk Correctional, for winning "Volunteer of the Year" at the North Carolina Department of Public Safety at the State Level! We are so proud of you!!!!!!

*Pictured with
Jana Demetral*

Western Training in Black Mountain



Twenty volunteers and two chaplains attended the Western Training Session in Black Mountain on April 28, 2018. Thank you to everyone who attended! A special thank you to Priscilla Durkin and First Christian Church for their hospitality!



MESSAGE FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

It's difficult to focus because everything moves so quickly. We all strive to focus on something. At times, we are intentional, and at others, we're quite unintentional. And sometimes our view is so divided that it is as though we have no focus at all. I've met people so overwhelmed that they have no starting point because it's all a jumble. We can easily identify with a child riding a bike for the first time

without training wheels who is completely frozen because of fear or indecision. And at other times, we can identify with the person waiting anxiously for a fun event, frustrated by the slowness of time. Time seems to stand in our way.

As a Yokefellow Prison Ministry family, we are constantly challenged to evaluate our focus. We must always be mindful as we keep our vision alive. We constantly find ourselves moving in a thousand different directions. And many times, we become so focused in one direction that we fail to see the things happening around us.

A danger in the church is what the early church referred to as "being curved in on oneself" or "being focused on oneself." It's easy to be focused on what we want, our

schedules, or our priorities, which the early church described as *sin*. The remedy is having a clear focus on God and being fully engaged and oriented to what God is doing.

Something amazing happens when we find our focus. Our anxiousness and impatience wane and fade when we are connected in relationship with God and what He is doing. We see more clearly, and, as a result, have the ability to live more fully. This is all easier said than done. By the grace of God, when we are able to step back, become focused, and direct our time, talents and energies toward God, incredible things are possible.

This is true for us at Yokefellow Prison Ministry. We are called to prayerfully discern God's call to focus as we step back from our

own agendas and schedules. We can thaw when we think we're stuck. We can accept and give away God's grace when we feel anxious, angry, or upset. God will use us, individually and as a community of faith, to do amazing things. We'll see the results in our own life, the lives of many around us, at our churches, during our volunteer fellowship times at the prison, and throughout God's kingdom.

I invite you to join me in prayer, reflection, and participation together in acknowledging where we have been focusing, our strengths and weaknesses, and our energy, as we discover where God is calling us. May our Lord bless us as we focus on His loving grace.

David Morton, President
Yokefellow Prison Ministry of N.C.





Yokefellow Sunday is Returning!

Our seasoned volunteers may remember celebrating Yokefellow Sunday years ago. Yokefellow is bringing back this treasured tradition, so mark your calendars!

Reviving a Treasured Yokefellow Tradition

**Yokefellow
Sunday returns
on
September 23!**

We need your help to make Yokefellow Sunday a success. Reach out to your local church and ask about participating. Participating churches will receive a two-minute promotional video, with a 30 second personalized introduction, explaining who Yokefellow is and what we do. In addition, they will receive bulletin inserts that

share additional information about Yokefellow, including how to support our ministry through prayers, volunteerism, and financial support.

We are asking participating churches to air the video during their worship services on **September 23** as well as to include

the bulletin inserts in their bulletins for the day. Churches can learn more about Yokefellow Sunday or sign up to participate by contacting Vita Alligood at (336) 724-9801 or yokefellowprisonministrync@gmail.com.

Thank you for your help in reviving this treasured tradition!

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