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NEWSLETTER | SUMMER 2022

And he said to them, "Follow me, and I will make you fishers of men."

Luke 5:10



Photos courtesy of Josh Umlah and Sean McNulty

I Will Make You Fishers of Men

BY HANK DUNN

Community is a great thing. God has been building community at the Transformation Project (TTP): upstairs in Transformation House, on Thursday nights when we have some food and open God's word, and when our partner churches come for Worship Nights. We are so grateful for how God is knitting us together into community. The Worship Nights have started engaging more people to tell their stories, and people are being encouraged.

Recently we had a TTP fishing trip. Eleven of us went up near Gilead, Maine, for some fishing and some fun. It was then that it occurred to me that this time of community

was more than us catching fish. This community is something that attracts others to say, "What's happening?" At first, I didn't see that this time of fun and community was bigger than just that. The way God has grown our community has helped us be more than fishers of fish, but fishers of men (and women).

In addition to the fishing, we cooked over the campfire, threw the football and played cornhole, all while sober. Who knew you could have that much fun while being sober? We thank God for the community He is building and what He is doing. Community is more attractive than any fishing lure or fly.

IN THIS ISSUE

I Will Make You Fishers of Men

Remembering Justin

Life With the Volume Up

There Are Times

HELP SUPPORT OUR MINISTRY!

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Remembering Justin

BY SEAN MCNULTY (AS TOLD TO HANK DUNN)

"Love one another with brotherly affection. Outdo one another in showing honor."

Romans 12:10



Justin K. Stout
June 18, 1988 - April 28, 2022

"A man of many companions may come to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother."

Proverbs 18:24

The first time I saw Justin, I remember that vividly. I was maybe a week or two sober and a guy was getting pulled from a vehicle. I was in Deering Oaks Park with the Serenity House, doing some volunteer work. Justin was having an overdose. That was in 2015.

Later at an AA meeting in the summer of 2015, I sat down, and Justin sat down next to me and introduced himself. We listened to the speaker, and I shared. I got raw and real. Justin could relate to it. He shared from his heart, and from that day on we became really close.

Hitting meetings, doing fun stuff, going fishing, going to the gym, four-wheelers in Rangeley; we did a lot of fun stuff together.

We would do AA commitments together. When we had joined an AA home group and were actively working the 12 Steps, we would get asked to speak. And we did in Maine and New Hampshire. We were both passionate about recovery.

We helped start another group called Steel on Steel. Taking feedback from your brothers and hearing hard stuff was awesome and a way forward in our growth as

men. We were up against the same struggles...our relationships with women and substances. Justin had more experience with faith than me. He overdosed many, many times. Even though he had his struggles that would eventually claim his life, he helped me with my faith in a way that's hard to explain.

When he travelled to different states, I would tell him that I missed him. When he came back to Maine, he went to St. Mary's and went to a sober house in the fall of 2021. That's when he connected with the Transformation Project. At Christmas, he helped Vinny hang a cross with lights in front of the Transformation Project.

He went to Providence Retreat and found some peace. He reconnected with Gary Lamson who owns and manages the retreat. He started going to Eastpoint Church. When Justin got baptized on January 2, 2022, Pastor Keenan Eaton asked me to join them in the baptismal pool. A lot of people in recovery came up to talk with him afterwards, and people were encouraged.

I thank Justin for reaffirming and strengthening my faith. Justin came back from all those overdoses



"As iron sharpens iron, so one person sharpens another."

Proverbs 27:17

Sean McNulty (left) and Justin Stout (right). Photo courtesy of Sean McNulty.

because God wanted him. I know that Justin is in heaven. The time he had on Earth impacted me and so many others. God used him.

To honor Justin's memory, I want everyone to know this. The biggest things with doing the walk are:

- It is ok to struggle!
- Please reach out and talk to somebody.

Everyone is struggling in their own way, and there are people who understand and are willing to talk and walk it out with you.

MAKING CONNECTIONS INSIDE. CREATING COMMUNITY OUTSIDE.

Life With the Volume Up

BY HANK DUNN

This article has been really hard to write. Sometimes it seems like we are living life with the volume turned up way, way too high. We have had some really high points and some very low points.

This spring, two Transformation Project Board members, JD and Dave Libby, and I got to go to an AA meeting where two of our guys celebrated. One was celebrating one year of sobriety and the other celebrated 12 years of sobriety. Recently, another one of our guys celebrated 7 years of sobriety. We've had scholarship support from our church partners. (Thank you to Eastpoint, South Portland Church of the Nazarene, and Community of Grace.)

We have had many occasions to thank God. One of those occasions was when one of our guys was baptized recently. There has been blessing after blessing. We have gotten to see lives change. We have seen God work.

The hard part is meeting with people and then seeing them "go

back out" and relapse. I wish I could tell you there was only one relapse since our last newsletter. I wish I could tell you there was only one each month. Every time we take a step forward with our God, it seems like the Adversary is right there trying to drag us down.

In this newsletter, we remember Justin Stout who lost his battle with the disease of addiction. We continue on, even though the loss of a friend comes like a gut punch. We are walking by faith and not by sight. When we struggle with life with volume turned way up, the Apostle Paul has some words for us:

"Not that I have already obtained all this, or have already arrived at my goal, but I press on to take hold of that for which Christ Jesus took hold of me. Brothers and sisters, I do not consider myself yet to have taken hold of it. But one thing I do: Forgetting what is behind and straining toward what is ahead, I press on toward the goal to win the prize for which God has called me heavenward in Christ Jesus."

2022 WORSHIP NIGHT CALENDAR

7:00 p.m.

July 31
August 28
September 25
October 30
November 20
December 18

INSIDE MAINE STATE PRISON

COVID-19 shut down all kinds of volunteers being able to go inside corrections. Now the tide is starting to turn. We've had the opportunity to go back into Maine State Prison with Prison Fellowship. Inside, we are seeing men who want to do life differently. It is great to see.

We ask for your prayers for all of the chaplains and volunteers who are starting up programming. We also want to offer our thanks to God that hope is being offered to men and women in corrections.

12 STEPS FOR CHRISTIANS

A 12 Steps for Christians group will be offered at Lighthouse Christian Church beginning on July 22, 2022.

Contact Terry Hamm at (207) 712-0023 or Vinny Clark at (207) 615-4915 for more information.

ACCOUNTABILITY

In our last newsletter, we talked about the structure we have created to facilitate growth within our organization. One thing we didn't do is tell you that while we created more positions, we weren't spending any more money. JD, our Chairman, and Hank, our Executive Director, are unpaid. Our house manager, Vinny, gets a small stipend and because we can't pay Rebecca what she's worth, we gave her a nicer title (Administrative Director) to show some appreciation. The fact is, she is part-time and hourly.

We want you to know that we take seriously our duty to be good stewards of the resources God and you have entrusted to us. We were proud to become ECFA certified, and we still are.

VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITY

Prison Fellowship is looking for volunteers!

We need volunteers to work on an ongoing program at Maine State Prison in Warren. In the future it is hoped to run a similar program at Maine Correctional Center in Windham.

For more information contact Deborah Jacobs at deborah_jacobs@pfm.org or call (207) 405-8336.

The article below was written in May before summer really started. We had a few delays in getting the newsletter out, so it seemed appropriate to write a preamble explaining the article. It also gives me an opportunity to let you know many of the concerns in the article are coming true.

Rising prices are real, and they do impact how this ministry moves forward. We view each donor and every donation as a gift from God, and we understand that when donations are down, we must adjust ministries to the funds we have available. Please know we continue to need your donations as we all move through these difficult times. God bless, and I hope you enjoy the article.

There Are Times

BY JD SCHNACKENBERG

There are times each winter when daylight is in such a limited supply and cold temperatures seem so abundant that I find myself longing for summer. Many like myself have learned to cope with those long cold days by telling ourselves that Maine summers are worth the wait, and they are. Then I remember God gives us the cold dark days just as He does the bright and sunny ones.

Men who come to our Thursday night Bible study and meal come all through the year regardless of the season. They are drawn to our Bible study not because it is a warm day or a cold one. It's the hope they find in the Bible that draws them and that is the very reason why we continue to host the study in rain, sleet, snow, or even sunshine.

Here is the issue: this article is not about TTP ministries and all the blessings we receive from doing them. This article is about the humdrum issues of owning a building, running an organization, and the cost of making all these ministries happen.

Please don't misunderstand me - having our building and running the organization is a real blessing and a responsibility. The men who live in the Transformation House upstairs in our building provide many, many stories of men whose lives are being changed through

the discipleship program that is at the core of that ministry. Because we are an organization almost entirely run by volunteers, approximately 90% of every dollar donated finds its way into ministry. Praise God for dedicated volunteers and generous donors!

But just like your home, facilities have to be maintained. Our second-floor roof needs to be replaced, and increases in food, natural gas, and electricity are having an impact on our budget. We have learned the importance of being good and diligent stewards of the gifts God gives us. Your donations of time and money are a blessing from God, and we put our trust in His provision.

We ask you to pray for us as we balance the desire to increase our ministry to men who can't live in the Transformation House but desire to be discipled in a similar way. As more and more prisons and jails start to open up, we are anxious to restart our ministries in those facilities.

And finally, seeing the challenges that face men whose lives have been impacted by drugs, prison, and homelessness, we have a desire to find a ministry for women with similar issues. We have much to do and no lack of opportunities to minister, which makes every day valuable, even the ones when the sun isn't shining.