HAPPY NEW YEAR

As we do every year, we thank each and every one of you for all you have done for Someone Cares, Yvonne and I, and Jake. 2004 was a banner year as our ministry again grew. Prayerfully, next New Years we will be skating on the Sea of Glass. We pray that God has blessed each of you this past year and will grant the increase in 2005. We don’t make resolutions, but think of better ways to improve God’s Ministry through us. Never in our wildest dreams would we have thought, when we matched just one inmate with a Pen Friend, that we would be overseeing a world-wide ministry.

Thank You, Jesus!

CHECKING THE LIST

I got a flu shot, then picked up a virus somehow and was pretty sick for four days. But during that time I went over our mailing list, checking the names and praying for each name. An amazing 81% who committed to writing are writing. We will be sending a note to the 19%.

Folks, we would like each of you to send us your name and Pen Name.

Some of you that we matched wrote and forgot to send the Blue Form back. Then you used a Pen Name, forgetting to tell us you were and what it was.

Over the last year we saw 387 inmates commit their lives to Jesus AMEN! We also have an amazing 31 of you recommitting your lives to Christ. What a Christmas present for HIM!

Once again, we are going to end the year in the black, making my fund-raising appearances slow down a bit. Our biggest prayer is that all our Faith Partners stay with us and that God will grant both you and us the increase. It would be real nice if every-one getting this became a Faith Partner for as little as a dollar a month in 2005. A little report: we received a real nice donation of $10,000 (thanks, M.J.), and a donation of 52 cents. Thanks, Jimmy. Please remember, your donations are tax deductible. You do not have to donate to be a part of this ministry. Prayer is a mighty donation.

Receipts are slated to be mailed in February

I BELIEVE
“I wrote to 18 so-called organizations to try to get someone to write. Six answered and wanted money or stamps. A friend told me about you and I sent a letter asking for a required application. I got the application with a letter from my new Pen Friend. I am truly blessed. I wrote to Focus on the Family and they referred me to your organization. I wrote to another prison ministry and they referred me to you.” [Sure wish they would send a few folks to write these folks.]

Please ask your Pastor to let you make an appeal for folks to write inmates through us. Please!!!!

ASK AND YOU WILL RECEIVE

“Several years ago (6) I was listening to you and Yvonne on Voice of Prophecy. My son was in prison and I knew so little about prison. To be truthful (I must be honest), I did not really know my son. After talking to both you and Yvonne I was amazed at your input. You enrolled me and George in a VOP study. You got George a Pen friend and then, an answer to prayer, one of your volunteers went, and got to visit. I was able to visit rarely, but once, my husband (not George’s dad) went along. They had not gotten along and part of the problem was this. That visit will change our lives forever. When we got to the visiting room, not a good place, we sat and chatted but it was not good. An inmate came over and told us the tension would be released if we ‘Let Go and Let God.’ The four of us had prayer, and the visit and our lives have been so changed! There are two checks enclosed—one from us, the other from George, who is out, has a good job and wants to be a part of the GOD SQUAD.”

ONCE LONG AGO ...

We were asked to give a Midnight Mass. I told the Catholic Clerk it would not be a mass, but if the warden agreed, we would give a midnight “All Faiths” service. My wife, a.k.a. Double Trouble, got permission from the Warden. Yvonne was at that time Chaplain of a yard with 900 inmates. The Christians got posters and we made arrangements for refreshments.

The Chapel would only hold 40 inmates. We opened the back door and all the windows, and to our total amazement, nearly 260 inmates were there! Our church services and Bible study groups increased in attendance by 25 %. Thank you, Warden and Thank You, Jesus.

3 ABN (THREE ANGELS BROADCASTING NETWORK)

have asked Someone Cares to be on one of their TV programs on February 22, and we gladly said we will be happy to. We hope to use this as part of the whole video we will do later next year, that hopefully each of you can show in your church.

I laugh as I think of the first time I was on 3 ABN. A few months later we were asked to speak at a convention in Washington. We got tied up and got a late start. It was a long drive home—we were in Kentucky at the time. We drove later than I wanted to, but had driven far enough, and it was hard to find a motel but we finally saw a Vacancy sign. I parked, went in and rang the bell.

A man popped out and said, ”You are not here, you can’t be!”
I said, “I beg your pardon?”

He asked me to come in and sure enough, the 3 ABN show was on that very minute. I explained it was shot several months earlier. To this day these folks are Faith Partners of Someone Cares.

FAQ:
(FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS)

How do I find out what I can send my Pen Friend?

I used to be able to answer that, but now you must write the Warden’s office at your Pen Friend’s prison and ask what is allowed.

Should I give my Pen Friend my Phone number?

I do not recommend it. First, it does give your location. Second, the rates charged for collect calls from prison are very high. (We would love to hear from some of you on this.) Most states are going through massive adjustments and moving inmates a lot. Your mail should be sent on. If not, find the State Capitol and call the Department of Corrections with your inmate’s name and number. Please make sure your friend puts a full name, real or Pen, on the envelope he/she sends to us. Watch for our “Lost Letter File.”

Can my Pen Friend have stamps?

Their application should say. If not, ask.

Can I send pencils or pens? No.

Do you read my letters? We monitor the mail only to watch for “red flags” such as an inmate asking for things that are not allowed, or requests for questionable activities, etc.

ALERT, ALERT!

This is just general information. We are working with several Federal agencies on this. If you get an E-mail from the wife and/or anyone saying they have lots of money, that they need help getting it out of [wherever] and they will give you 20 to 30%; if it sounds too good to be true, it is. Ignore this scam.

Another is: You won a sweepstakes you did not enter. No entry, no win-nings!!! Copy the E-mail, take it to your bank or call FBI Interpol and let them handle it. I am on the sucker list and so far have gotten “397 Million dollars!” I followed through on all offers with help from the Fraud Dept.

OUR GOALS FOR 2005

1. As God directs us, to help lead as many men, women, boys and girls to Christ as we can; 2. To help local schools deal with drug and gang problems. Someone Cares is under God’s
direction to grow and HE sure is busy. We need to plan God’s work and work God’s plan. Our postage cost during December tripled. A couple of large checks starting the year will help jump start the War against Satan.

Parents, Grandmas and Grandpas, talk to your kids & grandkids about drugs and sexual predators. Check where they go on the Internet. I often wonder if Ted Bundy’s folks had any idea how much perversion he had become involved with. He told me if he had never watched pornography he would not be waiting to die. We often get running so fast we don’t stop any more to smell the roses. It takes only a moment to find out where your kids are going on the internet.

A very neat couple was matched with James D. They wrote and became friends; did Bible studies, even played chess via mail. After several years James wanted and “needed to get off his chest” why he was in prison. For years, he had been a pedophile. Although he was a devoted Christian and Jesus had changed his life, he wanted to be open and honest. The couple’s five-year-old had been molested and this news destroyed them. The husband wrote a hateful letter and mailed it.

For many of you, I don’t read your mail as you are experienced and comfortable. They were, also. Why did I decide to open this letter? I don’t know. I was able to call them and get James a new Pen Friend. After about six months they called and said God had reached into their hearts and they were going to write again. James is playing chess by mail again. God put together “The Broken Pieces.”

FROM THE INSIDE

As I stated last month—in my drug-induced frenzy, I could not stop, I would not stop. My little boy’s knocks soon faded; the last thing I remember hearing was my ex-wife’s voice ....

"Come on, Jake, we’re leaving"

I don’t know how much time passed before I came out of the basement, but the house was empty. My ex-wife had gone to California to visit her biological father in California, and my son was at Grandma and Grandpa’s.

“Oh God, help me!!” Now, almost five years later, I still hear Jake’s voice in my head. “Daddy?”

I got to call him last night. He’s 10 now. He’s too old to call me Daddy any more, he just calls me “Dad.”

“Hey, Dad,” it’s good to talk to you... Dad, how’s it goin’?”

He tells me about his school, his guitar lessons, his best friend, his video game. I hold back the tears as he tells me how things are going, I know I’m responsible.

“I love you Dad! ,, I’m 5’4’’ now, Dad ... I wear 11 ½ shoes.” Our 15 minutes are up before I know it. This is a trail run, but if I iron things out, I pray it will be a blessing to those of you connected with Someone Cares, and those who benefit from it. To those of you in prison, share your heart with me, I’ll do the same. Poems, testimony, experience. Mike Coates. Write me, care
of Someone Cares.

By the way, this is the second time I blew it.

I’ll tell you what Don did last time.

YVONNE’S CORNER

We pray that all of you received happy & healthy holidays, and are all set to go for the New Year! From the stories and letters we receive it sounds like we all have a lot of sharing, caring and telling others of God’s great love.

We still pray that in the year 2005, God’s will be done. Could this be the year He comes? Please let us know how you like the newsletter, we need your input.

Food for thought:

"Don’t take life so seriously–You’ll never get out of it alive.”

Source unknown.

JEAN’S JOTTINGS

For some of us, the holiday season brings happy times. For some of us, the lack of sunshine puts us in the dumpster. For those who are parenting or shepherding an inmate, it’s a double whammy. When it’s one of our own flesh and blood, it ushers in a period of soul searching, prayer, and a lot of self-blame.

Working mothers who long to be home for their children become forced by Satan’s System into trusting young people to manage their time before they’re ready. It’s so easy for peer pressure to take over, and in order to be “cool,” we all know our children will be tempted to take the wrong path.

Did we not love our kids enough? Did we not talk to them about drugs and alcohol? Did we not shun those things ourselves?

Many of us are ignorant about how easy it is to obtain drugs, that in order to afford them after the “free trial offer” to satisfy the curiosity, they become manufacturers or dealers, or steal from parents, strangers, employers. Society is fair game.

“It can’t happen to my kid,” you say? Believing that line is as under-informed as falling for the money scams that are mentioned earlier in one of our stories this month.

Parents of inmates need a huge outpouring of prayer. Please, all of you, put them on your list, to intercede for them and their loved ones.

God tells us in Isaiah 49:25, “I will contend with those who contend with you, and I will save your children.” There is always hope. If our children become inmates, they have an advocate both in Heaven and on earth, who loves them deeply and will reach out with us to bring them
back. Whether they may be in a jail or a prison, they have 24/7 to meditate on their circumstances, decide that they don’t like them, enough to turn their lives around. I will include you in my prayers, and hope you will do the same for me. Agape ...