



Alamance Orange Prison Ministry

“Continue to remember those in prison as if you were together with them in prison, and those who are mistreated as if you yourselves were suffering.” Hebrews 13:3

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It is with great joy to update you on several accomplishments AOPM has seen over the course of this year and some things to expect as we approach the end of 2018.

Year highlights

January

With the start of the year we have repromoted Fabulous Fathers as a consistent program that is essentially used to encourage Fathers while incarcerated and to prepare them for One Day with God. Also, this month we had a guest presenter, Ms. Phyllis Dooney. She presented a Social Documentary entitled, Fatherhood, Families, and Incarceration.

February

Over the years, many have been blessed by our cook school instructor Ms. G. I was truly touched to meet her and hear how great an instructor she was. She not only taught several men about cooking and serving but was a mother figure to many. In her retirement we received Ms. Black. She has served OCC before and has hit the ground running.

Also, in this month we established the first official Black History program. Personally, it was one of the best programs I have ever been a part of. Several volunteers came out and the guest speaker, Ms. Soteria Shepperson gave a powerful message of hope and encouragement. We had over fifteen performers, that blessed the audience through



song, rap, spoken word, musicality, and poetry. One of the poets, Michael Sullivan, who has been released lifted this poem that I shall never forget. He was inspired by the poem, "The Rose that Grew from the Concrete," by Tupac Shakur. He mentioned to us that night how he began to reflect on the audacity of the Rose. As well as how necessary it can be to assert that rebellious attitude in oppressive environment in order to survive. This poem is about just being who you are in spite of negative influences.

In Spite of All (The Rose):

Despite the concrete
The Rose
Despite the Odds
It Grows
Despite the Gray
It's Color
Despite the Lot
None Other
Despite the Trash
It's Scent
Despite the Precepts
It's Dissent
Despite its Meagerness
It Demands
Despite its impotence
It Stands
Despite its Station
It Grows
In Spite of it ALL
The Rose.

March

The Ready Singers performed at the Pardoned By Christ's Annual Celebration. They have provided the music for several years and did a wonderful job again. A 9-16 week bible study on the book of Ephesians was initiated back in February and was going well. This bible study was co-taught by Prof. Douglas Campbell, New Testament & Director, Certificate in Prison Studies of Duke Divinity School. Prof. Campbell was excited about the opportunity and is excited about future opportunities where Duke Divinity students can get involved.



April

Parent day was a great success. Several of the men have been before so they knew what to expect. Several shared with me, how hard it is to see them leave but very grateful for the opportunity. Resurrection Sunday was assisted by Holy Catholic Family. Annual training took place and we had a great turn out of new churches and sponsors. Lastly, we closed the month out with a Volunteer banquet served by the cook school. Volunteer of the Year was Awarded to Mrs. Janet Flowers for her dedication to serving the men and leading Yokefellows.

May

This was a God moving month for the camp and myself. This month I completed my Doctoral work at Drew University. I graduated with my Doctor of Ministry degree with a focus on Pastoral care and Incarceration. The encouraging words from volunteers and the men at the camp has inspired me in ways beyond measure. I am very grateful for all the prayers and support. However, I was not the only one graduating. Men that I have met when I first began were now completing their own studies in Light Construction and Culinary Arts. We had thirty-three graduates. Several staff members of Piedmont Community College including the President, Dr. Pamela Senegal was present. The men walked across the stage proud of their accomplishments walking in their gowns and caps, their head held high and a bright smile across their face as they received their Certificate of Completion. Family members and supportive volunteers were there to witness this great accomplishment. One of the men mentioned to me that this was the first time his family watched him graduating from anything. I was extremely proud of the men.

June

This month I welcomed Philip Zoutendam, a student from Duke Divinity to shadow me at OCC. He assisted me in several programs and in ministry. Some of the workshops were Christianity 101, Grief Share and Mancave: Discussing critical life principles associated with Manhood. It was a great joy working with Philip. He continues to make a great impact on the men who come down for Yokefellows. He still volunteers and has become a sponsor. He is looking forward to bringing men out to his church in the future. Philip will be graduating in the coming years. I asked him to write a brief reflection on entering into the prison. Below is a piece of his writing.

Scores of volunteers come in every week, and, more surprisingly, scores of men— “residents” in the volunteers’ humanizing vernacular—go out every week on work passes and sponsored church visits. A lot of light gets in, too, both natural and spiritual...

In addition, to Philip, I welcomed The Human Kindness Foundation. This foundation has been doing Prison ministry for over forty years. The founder and board members shared



their purpose and offered their assistance. Some of the board members also put on a mini concert that turned into a talent show. We had a wonderful time. One of the board members wrote, "What an amazing, awesome, anointed time we all had! I left OCC feeling great and humbled too." They plan on returning before the year is out.

July

Yokefellow had their annual cookout. On the outside, we fired up the grill and cooked hamburgers and hot dogs. On the inside there was a good spread of chips, drinks and snacks. I enjoyed manning the grill with volunteers and the profound conversations we had. However, I was motivated to have a deeper variety of foods on the grill in the future. We talked about ribs, chicken and having a pig picking. The men enjoyed the time of wonderful fellowship and food.

In this month we completed the workshop on Manhood with two great speakers:



Dr. Baba Prasad *President and CEO, Vivékin Group, Fellow, Wharton Financial Institutions Center and author of the book "Nimble."*



Rev. Dr. Luke A. Powery, the dean of Duke University Chapel and associate professor of homiletics at Duke Divinity School. Both of them on different days filled the Peace Center and all our hearts with wisdom, leadership, hope and joy. I am enormously grateful for the presence of these men.

August

Over the summer we partnered with the Light Construction school and was approved to reconstruct the cloth's house. The old clothes house was falling apart. Animals and rodents were finding their way inside, causing me to get rid of several clothes. The men enjoyed this project and the new clothes house is beautiful.



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August

My first, "One Day with God" was one for the history books. The work that Forgiven Ministry's does is amazing and life changing. Several men were able to spend quality time with their children.



Newsletter Fall 2018





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I was able to fellowship with the men and their children in a new way that I am unable to behind the fence. One of the utmost praises was that several of the men and children received salvation that day! We serve an amazing God.





Newsletter Fall 2018

September

Pre-Release course is back for the second time this year. But this time with a more practical feel. The Pre-Release over the years, from what I have learned, has provided sound knowledge and preparation for men returning to society. The course is always looking for ways to improve and this year has enhanced the teaching, so the men will be more equipped.

October

This month we had a Baptism worship service. Five men were baptized. DayStar Baptism church came with food and a large portable baptismal pool. The Speaker was Min. Steve Kitchens who told his testimony and gave a wonderful message about Baptism.



November



Pecans and Stew Pickup Nov. 10 and Nov. 17

Ready Singers ---Concert Oct. 28

Thanksgiving meal Nov. 13



December

Christmas Special week Dec. 14-19
Concert's

Ready Singers

When I first arrived at AOPM over a year ago. I was overjoyed to hear the blessed vocal sounds coming from the men, to witness the great gifting of the musicians and to receive the powerful testimonies coming from these brothers. The Ready Singers continue to bless my soul every time they serve on the outside but also on the inside. They continue to inspire communities, churches and organizations everywhere they go. The Ready Singers have at least one engagement per month, but many times are consistently invited somewhere every other week.





The Ready Singers consist of a larger group on the inside with several men that are allowed to go out. I have witnessed the gifted men, minister to many and then watch some of them transition back into society into new careers. There are several success stories that evolve from the Ready Singers. People have become Pastors, Ministers, Professional Barbers, entered into professional jobs. Enjoy some of the pictures below of the men giving testimonies and singing at some of the functions we had in 2017-2018.





Two Individuals from the Ready Singers have moved into jobs working for the State and with Gov. Copper. They ensure the right resources are being provided to several incarcerated men. One is Mr. Demond Wells (on the RIGHT and the other on the LEFT) is Mr. Antioone Lyles). Please continue to pray for them and all those that are still in and who have been released.





ReEntry

ORANGE COUNTY, NC – The North Carolina Department of Public Safety has awarded a contract to the Orange County Criminal Justice Resource Department to establish a local reentry council to help people released from prison successfully transition back into the community.

A contract for \$150,000, renewable at the same amount for up to two additional years, will enable Orange County to hire two full-time positions in the Criminal Justice Resource Department (CJRD) to coordinate the local reentry council and provide supportive case management services to reentering individuals and those who experience barriers due to former incarceration.

Reentry councils are networks of community-based stakeholders and organizations that work together to assist people reentering with necessary local services such as housing, employment, treatment resources, medical attention, transportation and mentoring. Their mission is to develop and coordinate resources and innovative responses to help formerly incarcerated individuals transition back into the community and to reduce recidivism.

Christmas Toys and gift bags

There is a busy schedule of activities during December at OCC. Some of these are traditions that have been ongoing for several years. Now, many of you have been involved in making the activities possible. Perhaps one of the most meaningful to the men and their families is the TOY PROJECT. For those who may not be familiar with this project, churches and individuals donate new toys for the men to pick-out and give to their children during family visitation at Christmas. The unwrapped toys should be delivered to the Peace Center between **Nov 27-30**. Please call and ask to speak to the Chaplain before dropping off. Toys and gifts are for children from infants to age 16. Lastly, the gift bags are given to all men at the facility. We need **220** bars of soap, lotion, shampoo and condition, baby powder, toothpaste, toothbrush and deodorant. If you are able to help in providing these gifts, please let me know by **Dec. 7**. Thank you in advance for helping make Christmas more meaningful for these men and their families. I hope you feel the blessing of this wonderful season when we are reminded of God's presence and graciousness in our lives.



Christ The King Christian Church

To further help prepare the men for a stronger transition back into society. God has led us to form a congregation inside the facility. The congregation is nondenominational and Jesus as the Pastor. I have learned that when you are given responsibility in the congregation we not only grow in relationships with one another but also grow spiritually. Overall, I want to help everyone be familiar with congregational life and give the opportunity for those on the outside to join a congregation like no other. We have several churches join us for worship throughout each month. If you would like to host a service, please let me know. This congregation is open to anyone and everyone, including those on the outside. If you would like to join us for worship, we have services every Sunday at 7pm. We are working on beginning a Sunday school at 5pm. We look forward to seeing you and thank you for your continued prayers and support.

Vision

We are determined to be a Faithful, growing church that demonstrates true community and true dedication of our lives to Him.
(Micah 6:8)

Mission

To be and to share the Good news of Jesus Christ, witnessing, loving and serving from our location to the ends of the earth.
(Acts 1:8)