

SECOND CHANCES



Spring 2018

Volume 3, No. 1

is family.

Vision & Mission

Dismas, Inc. is a 501(c)(3), nonprofit transitional housing program that serves individuals recently released from incarceration. Our ultimate goal is for those we serve to remain free from incarceration by becoming self-sufficient, contributing members of society. It is our family-oriented, holistic approach that makes the Dismas model unique. From the moment a new resident walks through the door until the day they leave, Dismas is "home" to our residents - they are "family" forever.

Dismas, Inc. is a not-for-profit 501.c.3 organization. Donations are tax deductible.

Meet Dismas Resident

Man, this is nice!" That's how Alex reacted when he first arrived at Dismas House. He is sincere, unassuming, and very gracious when he speaks about his experience here on Music Row. He has been to two other transitional houses, so he speaks from experience.

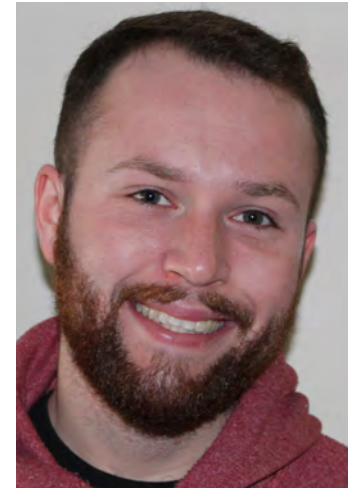
Alex, 24 from Manchester, TN, started getting in trouble when he was 18. He lived on the streets for a year and a half. He's been in and out of prison, but he said the last sentence of three years is what made him seek out a place like Dismas. "It just broke me. Three years did it to me," he said. "I came here, because I don't want to go back to jail.

"I struggled for a while," Alex said. Going back to the criminal lifestyle crossed his mind. "But things are going so well, I'm just not going to let it happen." Alex is now

living a sober, happy life as a productive citizen. After just three months at Dismas, Alex has been able to regain his driver's license, signed up for health insurance and has improved his overall physical and mental wellbeing. He has a job where they are training him to go into management, and he just bought a car in March.

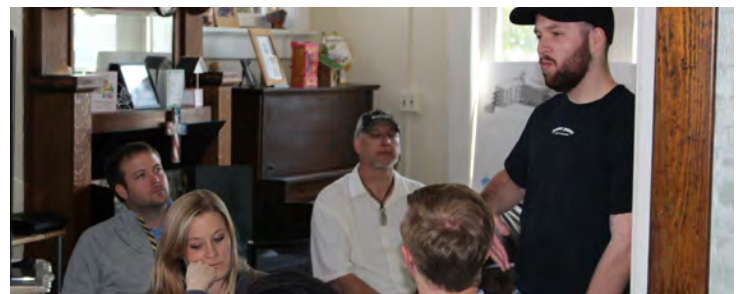
"Everything is coming together for me," said Alex. "I'm blessed. God has a reason for everything."

Alex in particular pointed to the Community Dinners where volunteers bring and share dinner with the residents every Monday



Alex

through Thursday. "They are pretty cool. No other transitional house does them that I know of," he said. "They really helped me get rooted. It was also a very nice foot in the door - some of the volunteers offered me jobs and job interviews."



FORGIVENESS Luncheon



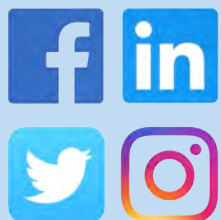
GUEST SPEAKER
Mayor David Briley

SAVE THE DATE
May 24, 2018
11:30 AM to 1:00 PM

Renaissance Hotel
611 Commerce Street
Nashville, TN 37210

RSVP: Contact Gerald Brown at gbrown@dismas.org for more details on how you can attend.

To learn more, visit us online at:
www.DISMAS.org





From the CEO

We devote this issue of Second Chances to our Volunteers. We held our first ever Volunteer Appreciation Dinner this year, and the feedback was overwhelmingly positive. The common thread in the feedback, too, was that the volunteers really enjoyed meeting other volunteers and hearing their story of how they became involved with Dismas.

Approximately 300 individual volunteers serve dinner every Monday through Thursday, even on holidays. Most volunteer groups serve on a monthly or even more frequent basis. Thank you! Without our loyal and loving community, we could not provide the family atmosphere that we know is a vital component in helping former offenders return to society as healthy, happy, law-abiding, productive citizens.

Every single resident, when interviewed after they complete the program, points to the community dinners as having a huge impact on their welfare. For many of our men, this is the first opportunity to interact with other people in a positive manner and in the safety of a family home. And many of our volunteers report to us that this is their first experience getting to know a former offender. They learn that our residents are ordinary people; they just didn't have access to the tools or education that lead to success, or they just made some bad decisions along the way.

Similar to spring being the season of rebirth, our residents are reborn with a second chance in a life outside of prison. You, our supporters and volunteers, make that happen when you share your time, talent, and treasures. Thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Partnership Provides for Critical Education in Financial Literacy

Fifth Third Bank is an invaluable community partner for Dismas. Volunteers from the bank come to the house weekly to teach Financial Empowerment, which is one of our core pillars of programming for the residents. The classes are part of regular programming, which takes place 7:30 p.m. to 9:00, Monday through Thursday.

"I'm so proud to be a part of 5/3 Bank's Financial Education program at Dismas House," said Ginny Burnette, one of the volunteer instructors. "It really shows that financial literacy is so often taken for granted. Many of the men we educate and counsel have never had any guidance in managing their finances. And if they are



to remain out of jail and in society, financial skills will be critical to their success." Both Ginny and teaching partner Brad Bars say

they really enjoy being a part of the Dismas family. "The Dismas community is full of talented, great people and I love to see them win," Brad said. "Being a resource for their finance needs and seeing progress, big or small, is the best part of all."

The class teaches all the basics in the beginning stages, but does include coverage on investments and economics in the later stages.



Please help us provide food, clothing, shelter, bus passes, and other essentials for our residents as you participate in The Big Payback. This is a 24-hour, online giving day on May 2, 2018, and is designed to increase philanthropy in the 40 counties served by The Community Foundation of Middle Tennessee. The goal is to inspire Middle Tennesseans to come together, show their pride in their community, and contribute to the life-changing work of your favorite local nonprofit organizations. This collaborative, inclusive event



shines a spotlight on LOCAL giving and creates a new sense of energy around philanthropy. Please select Dismas House as you participate in this year's Big Payback. Thank you!

Dismas Recognizes Loyal and Faithful Volunteers, Community Partners and a Special Resident of the Year

Dismas House of Nashville recognized and honored its most outstanding volunteers and residents Thursday evening, January 26, 2018. More than 100 volunteers were in attendance at the event held at Rocketown. Six awards were given out in five categories. The emcee for the event was Michael "Moose" Moore, and the special guest speaker was long-time volunteer Peter Martin.

John Jenkins, Jr. Resident of the Year Award

The John Jenkins, Jr. Resident of the Year Award was given to Stan Helterbran. The award is named for a resident who embodied the mission and principles of Dismas House. Unfortunately, Jenkins passed away in September of 2017. The award was presented by his sister, Cora Lanier. The person who nominated him said, "Stan has an out-sized love of life, and he believes that reaching out to others will enrich his own life. It seems to work out that way for him."



Community Partner of the Year Award

The Community Partner of the Year Award was given to Mercury Court Clinic, which displayed a commitment to supporting Dismas House by working directly with the residents in providing health care services. "They serve 'the whole person,' in my opinion," the nominator said. "For example, they realize that some of the patients lack basic supplies such as clothing and hygiene supplies, and they take up collections to provide for them."

Community Partner of the Year
Mercury Court Clinic
Aaron Scott and Jenna Smith

“Volunteers are an integral part of a nonprofit organization’s mission,” said Brown. “That reigns true for us here at Dismas House of Nashville. Volunteers and program partners are key components to our program delivery and have been since our inception in 1974.”



Volunteers of the Year Lynne McFarland and Pat McDougal

Volunteer of the Year Award

The Volunteer of the Year Award was given to Lynne McFarland and Pat McDougal. There were co-recipients simply because the selection committee valued each of their commitment and tireless support. Each has made outstanding contributions of their time and talent. A nominator said of Pat: "Pat is one of those 'invisible' volunteers, who quietly makes things happen for the Dismas men. He has recruited his friends and members of his Sunday School class to remember Dismas when there are opportunities to help out a group." Lynne's nominator said, "She is always an inspiration to me, and she always makes me feel important. I've seen her treat everyone this way."

“We could not meet the goals of our residents without the support of our volunteers, said Dismas House CEO Gerald Brown. “We are appreciative of their commitment to our cause, and this dinner was a small way for us to show our gratitude for their time.”

Volunteer Appreciation Dinner - 2018

Board Member of the Year Award

The Board Member of the Year Award was given to Kay Kretsch. Kay has shown an extraordinary level of commitment and service. She leads committees, supports fundraising initiatives, and she has been instrumental in the effort to expand the organization. She is a strong advocate for Dismas House in the community. One of her nominators said, "Kay is not involved with the work of Dismas for superficial reasons but because of a deep commitment to compassion and justice."

Board Member of the Year Kay Kretsch



Grace Morales Lifetime Achievement Award recipient Jeff Lynch

Grace Morales Lifetime Achievement Award

The Grace Morales Lifetime Achievement Award was given to Jeff Lynch. This award is named in memory of Grace Morales, a 39 year veteran volunteer at Dismas House. The award was presented by Grace's son, Tom. Jeff Lynch has displayed a commitment to Dismas ever since he was a student at Vanderbilt University. More recently, over the last eight years, he has led the organization through difficult times. He contributes generously with his time, talent and treasures. He diligently recruits community leaders to join the board and to volunteer for community dinners at the house. One of the nominators said, "Jeff joined as the organization was having very difficult times and was one of only a few board members to help steer Dismas through those turbulent waters."

Supporter Spotlight: Jeff Lynch Cares Deeply about the Dismas Mission

Why does Jeff Lynch support Dismas with his time, talent, and treasures? "When someone makes a commitment to change while in prison, we have the obligation to do whatever it takes to help them. We should honor that and celebrate that – and that is what Dismas does," Jeff said.

Jeff first learned about Dismas while in school at Vanderbilt through the Vanderbilt Prison Project. Dismas was part of the VPP; however, Jeff became involved with a different part of that program that provided tutoring to prison inmates. His two students were convicted of murder. "That was hard for me as a 19 year-old college student. I had never met someone who killed anyone, so I had to explore what that meant for me – should I help someone who has done something that bad?"

But that's where Jeff's faith provided the direction. "God loves everyone – and if He loves and wants the best for this person, then that's what I should be doing too." And this is the time in Jeff's life where he was introduced to the concept of helping people in jail or recently released. "In many ways the obstacles the men face once they are released are worse than when they were in prison. It's like trading in one set of challenges for a whole other set."



Jeff Lynch

Now Jeff fulfills his obligation to help these men by being a faithful supporter, volunteer, and board member at Dismas. Why is it important that people support Dismas with so much time, talent, and treasures? "We cannot do what we do to help these men without money. If we deeply care about our mission, which I really do, we need to ask people to share their treasures. The way I look at it is it's our obligation to share our blessings." However, he said we also cannot do what we do without other people's time and talent. "One person's treasure is not another person's treasure. If what you have to share is your time and talent, then, yes, we badly need that too. These men need support. It can be anything – 12 step sponsor, spiritual guidance, tutoring, anything."

One thing that keeps Jeff engaged with Dismas is something he says makes Dismas unique. Whenever he is involved in charitable work, he says two things happen. "First, I always feel like I get more out of it than I put in – whether it's my time or financial resources. Second, I am helping to change someone's life – a person who otherwise would be back in prison. But Dismas has this third level that's really awesome – a societal benefit where we are making for a better and safer community. It's just icing on the cake. Many charities do the first two, but do not have that third level."

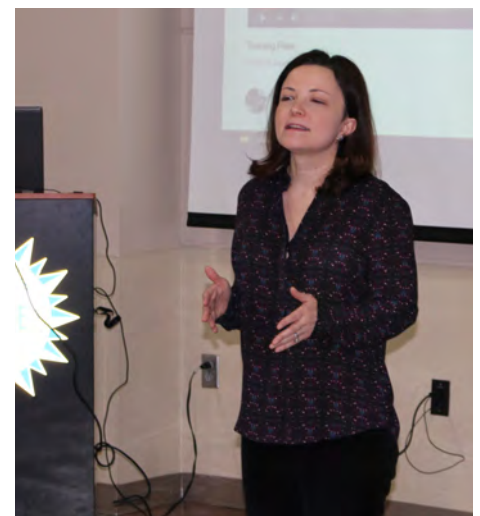
Violence Interrupted Program Aims to Prevent Gun Crimes and Incarceration

According to the Tennessee Bureau of Investigations, gun related crime in Tennessee increased 24.8 percent between 2013 and 2016. Murder involving a firearm increased 54%, and aggravated assaults involving a firearm increased 30.5% in the same time period. In an effort to reduce gun-related crimes, Dismas, Inc., launched a program called Violence Interrupted in conjunction with the District Attorney's Office.

Violence Interrupted was created by Davidson County Assistant District Attorney and Dismas, Inc. board member, Jennifer Charles, with the vision to create alternative sentencing and give a second chance for offenders.

Men and women charged with possession of a firearm without a permit are given the opportunity to avoid criminal charges by attending the one-day class held at the Metro Police South Precinct, 5101 Harding Place in Nashville. The most recent edition of the quarterly class was conducted on February 3, 2018, with 35 attendees. Only two of the first 65 to take the class were later charged with a gun offense.

"This program is an opportunity to empower men and women on the verge of incarceration and encourage them to lead a life free from violence and narcotics," says Gerald Brown, CEO of Dismas, Inc. "We're proud to partner with the District Attorney's Of-



ice to bring this innovative approach to gun violence prevention."

During the class, participants hear testimony from former offenders as well as victims of gun violence and receive information about the criminal justice system and available resources.



DISMAS
is family.

1513 16th Avenue South
Nashville, TN 37212

The Future of Dismas

Expansion Update



It is common knowledge that approximately 100 people move to Nashville every day, but many people do not realize the same number are being released from Davidson County jails every day. Dismas receives more than 300 applications annually. This is precisely why we are expanding to a new facility. We will go from 4,000 square feet to 24,000 square feet; from eight beds to 76 beds. The expansion will allow us to help more men and women stay out of jails and prisons.

The expansion will allow Dismas to serve up to 200 male former offenders annually with housing, supportive services, and evidence-based programming that is proven to successfully transition our clients back into society. The new campus will also afford us the opportunity to provide new programming for non-residential clients that will focus on prevention or an intervention to incarceration, and we are investigating how we can play a role in restorative justice.

We are about 60% of the way to \$10.3 million needed to complete the project. The grading permit was recently issued, and we will be breaking ground very soon.

We have received very generous support from local corporations, foundations and individuals. Thank you! To learn more about how you may become involved in our expansion project, visit www.dismas.org or reach out to Gerald Brown, Chief Executive Officer, at gbrown@dismas.org.