

Transforming Jail  
Ministries  
August, 2011



*Worship Team of the Month  
Hartzell United Methodist Church*



L to R: Helen Jones, Jeannie Shilton, Gerry Coffey, Julie Dreigon, Sally McConaughy

At this time our team is made up of all women. We are dedicated to sharing our love of Christ by our actions and the Word.

We talk a lot about how Jesus loves us all, forgiveness and turning our lives around with God's help. Some of what we do is singing, prayer, Bible reading or other religious literature. We encourage our brothers or sisters to share with us. Maybe a song, a favorite reading or a thought they want to share. We hope we bring them a blessing and we know we receive one.

We've decided to have a brunch after services on Sunday to raise money for Transforming Jail Ministries.

## *The Economic Impact of Our Worship Teams & Chaplains*

The mission and ministry of TJM, through the work of the chaplains and worship teams, is to make a difference in the lives of those in jail in Hamilton County. Sheriff Leis, among others, believes that mission is being accomplished.

“Of the things that I have observed that do make a difference to those involved in crime,” said the Sheriff, “perhaps the most effective is our jail outreach program. The leadership and volunteers of TJM have served our corrections division very well”. And what Sheriff Leis sees in our jail is also being witnessed across our nation in terms of the success of faith-based programs in jails.

At TJM we don't often talk about or realize the economic and social impact that the worship teams and chaplains have on our community. But that impact is amazing. Consider the following excerpts from a report on recidivism:

“The rate of recidivism in the U.S. is estimated to be about two-thirds, which means that two-thirds of released inmates will be re-incarcerated within three years. High rates of recidivism result in tremendous costs both in terms of public safety and in tax dollars spent to arrest, prosecute, and incarcerate re-offenders. High rates of recidivism also lead to devastating social costs to the communities and families of offenders, as well as the personal costs to the offenders themselves. Due to these severe costs, programs for inmates and released inmates that reduce recidivism can be cost effective—even those that have modest rates of success.

**Substance abuse** is a widespread problem among the prison population, with re-addiction after release a frequent cause of recidivism and a barrier to obtaining stable employment. The report specifically examines the role of drug courts and mandatory treatment, which are associated with a 31 percent reduction in recidivism.

**Educational programs** address the needs of released prisoners to attain the skills to find and retain employment and typically include secondary, GED, higher education, and vocational training. Education is reported to reduce recidivism by 29 percent with the completion of high school education found to be the most pervasive need.

**Employment services programs** address the need of released inmates to find work and typically include job preparedness, career development skills, and job placement. The report specifically discusses New York's Community and Law Enforcement Resources Together program (ComALERT) as an example, which reports recidivism rates of 17 percent compared to 41 percent for those who do not participate in the program.

The report also examines programs that involve multiple components and are

## *The Economic Impact of Our Worship Teams & Chaplains (continued)*

used to varying degrees in many jurisdictions. **Faith-based programs** provide prison chaplain services to entire prisons run by faith organizations. Some faith programs report reducing recidivism by as much as 50 to 60 percent.”

It is clear from this report that faith-based programs like TJM have a positive impact on reducing recidivism rates.

But what about the economic impact for our community?

A recent report on the cost of incarceration states that the average cost per jail inmate in the U.S. is \$26,000 per year. Let's assume that each worship team “reaches” just one inmate per year and keeps that person out of the jail system. With 99 worship teams the economic impact is just under **\$2.6 million dollars per year** ( $\$26,000 * 99 = \$2,574,000$ ).

What you do is God's work and the spiritual impact that you have is what really counts, but don't forget that your work in this ministry has a significant social and economic impact on this community. Thank you for what you do!

*“Current Strategies for Reducing Recidivism”* by Lise McKean, Ph.D., and Charles Ransford; Center for Impact

*“The High Budgetary Cost of Incarceration”* by John Schmitt, Kris Warner, and Sarika Gupta, Center for Economic and Policy Research, June of 2010,

## **2nd Annual Volunteer Appreciation Picnic**

You & Your Family are Cordially Invited

Saturday, September 24th

2:00 - 4:00 pm

Gower Park

10990 Thornview Dr., Sharonville 45241

(across from Sharonville Rec. Center)

PS: You may want to bring a chair

RSVP to Laurie: [contact@tjmi.org](mailto:contact@tjmi.org)



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