

Renewal at Brothers in Blue

by Phil Goodyk

Phil Goodyk loves New Life Prison Community. He is a faithful volunteer as well as a New Life board member. He and his wife Laurie attend Third Reformed Church in Pella. Phil enjoys taking long walks, but he enjoys spending time with his children and grandchildren even more!

Springtime is a season of renewal and new life. It's a time for new beginnings. Spring is no doubt my favorite season because I can see the amazing handiwork of God. His creation is physically coming to a newness of life in the plant world, the animal world, and also the spiritual world. The Brothers in Blue retreat is a parallel image of this springtime. We see men budding and blossoming and glowing in Christ before our very eyes. Taking place on April 23-26, this year's retreat blessed the men at the Newton Prison.

The words of Romans 12:2 come to mind: "Do not be conformed to this world but be transformed by the renewing of your minds." This was our main focus in these three-and-a-half days. We had 62 men this year from all different walks of life, yet all were fundamentally the same. We had men who were strong in their faith but wanted to grow closer to Christ. We also had men at the opposite end of the spectrum who had no idea what to expect. Both were looking for the hope that would give them stability in their life.

Brothers in Blue is all about growth,

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Corrine Verschuure at the Mississippi River last July

Pedal for Prisoners V

by Pastor Rick

Can you believe that it's already our fifth year of Pedal for Prisoners? This year, New Life is represented by three dedicated and determined bicycle riders: Corrine Verschuure, Bill Schinkel, and Pastor Rick. Last year we went our separate ways, but this year all three veteran riders will tackle RAGBRAI (Register's Annual Great Bike Ride Across Iowa). An experienced biker, Corrine rides in her 19th RAGBRAI. In contrast, this is only the 3rd attempt for Pastor Rick. Each year the route changes. This year we start in Sioux City and end in Davenport. (Find out more at www.ragbrai.com.) These are the same starting and finishing towns of the very first RAGBRAI of 1973. The route for RAGBRAI XLIII looks to be a fairly tame tour across north-central Iowa but still covers 462 massive miles in one week. Of course the legendary 3 H's of heat, humidity, and hills will inevitably come into play.

Pray that we will rise to meet the challenge.

Will you also rise to the challenge by offering your financial support? All three of us are riding for one purpose—to help New Life make a big impact on the men at the Newton Prison. **This is our biggest fundraiser of the year, so it's your opportunity to shine. Will you respond by sponsoring one of us?**



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www.facebook.com/NewLifePrisonCommunity

Please support Pedal for Prisoners 2015

Contributions may be sent to: **New Life Prison Community, 408 Maple St., Pella, IA 50219**

I'd like to donate \$ _____ to Pedal for Prisoners to support

New Life Prison Community.

NAME: _____

ADDRESS: _____



Phil Goodyk and Pastor Rick

Renewal at Brothers in Blue *continued from front*

transformation, and renewal. This one was all of that and more. I've served as a volunteer in three Brothers in Blue retreats, and this year's event went to the top of the list. This year's retreat seemed to flow seamlessly. Mark Willson did a great job as our leader. I could certainly see God's hand in all areas of each day. Each day the right people were doing the right talks at the very right time. After attending the retreat, Trent reflected: "The personal stories of the speakers touched me; it was a big inspiration for me."

Late Saturday morning was when it all became real and really hit home for the five men in my table group. This took place during the family group time when we gathered together in a circle and had prayer time. Stephen commented later that this family group time was so very powerful, and it opened his eyes and softened his heart to let it all soak in. The transformation that we all experienced through the retreat was a beautiful picture of God's love. He is standing there waiting for all who choose to run into His open arms.

There were 19 volunteers from around the state of Iowa. Two of them had formerly been prisoners themselves. These men and women were a special bunch of people who allowed Jesus to do His work through them. We give God all the praise and glory for the happenings of this year's Brothers in Blue.

A different opportunity *by Rose Admiraal*

Jesus said, "Do not let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God; trust also in me." (John 14:1).

Jessie was released from prison in early May. He passed away just two weeks later, ending his battle with the voices that often tormented him. Beginning a new life in Christ, Jessie was baptized by Pastor Rick during New Life's worship service in June of 2014. "My son was 10 feet taller after his baptism," shared Jessie's father.

The day after finding out about Jessie's death, his father called Pastor Rick. Rick gave him words of comfort that Jessie was now in the presence of his eternal Father. Half an hour later, Jessie's step-mom called for comfort and reassurance. Later that same day Jessie's mom called for consolation. Little did Rick and I know how much our love for "one of the least of these" would impact Jessie's friends and family.

The following week Pastor Rick was leading Jessie's funeral service with many in attendance who did not have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. Five volunteers from New Life attended the funeral with us. I sang "Precious Lord Take My Hand" and Rick shared

words of comfort, pointing the way to Jesus through the words of John 14.

At the end of the service he told the family and friends we had Bibles to give them at no cost. God's Spirit had prompted us to take about a dozen Bibles to the funeral. All but two of those Bibles were given away. Seeds of comfort were planted as they heard the good news that they could one day be reunited with Jessie if they would only put their faith in Jesus Christ. We pray that God will water those seeds of love and grace.

A Poem

written by a friend of Jessie in prison

*I thought I saw your face today
in the crescent of the moon. Then
I heard an angel say, farewell my
friend, I'll see you soon. The wind,
the rain, the sun, the moon will
always be around to remind us of
the love we shared and the peace
that Jessie found!*

Equipped for Service Team takes step of faith

by Pastor Rick

We're taking a step of faith at the prison with the formation of the new Equipped for Service Team. The primary purpose is to form a core group of participants from New Life's group meetings.

This group of six men will learn to work as a team, serving others in New Life Community. The initial core group will be selected by Pastor Rick with advisement from our loyal volunteers. The men selected will be frequent attenders who demonstrate maturity of character and strong faith. Our meetings will be held twice per month beginning in July.

We'll focus on prayer, discussing effective ministry practices, and discipleship training. We've had good cooperation from Mike Johnson and Ascending Leaders. His organization has provided the booklets "Nurturing Goodness" for our discipleship training. We're grateful that they offered us a substantial discount on these resources. Please pray that the Holy Spirit will give us discernment in choosing the right men to serve. Pray for God to bless us with a great start!