

Volunteer spotlight: Jim Karr

Jim Karr has been a loyal New Life volunteer since May of 2013. Jim and his wife Jerri live in Runnells with their family. They attend Federated Fellowship in Pella. Jim's life models Federated's motto: "We care more about where you're going than where you've been!"

Why do you feel inspired to help men in prison?

I've been in and out of trouble most of my life so I know the road most of the guys at the prison are traveling down. It's so hard to get off of that road. Christ helps me steer them in the right direction.

In your opinion, why is it crucial for New Life to reach out to people in prison?

Because most people in prison are at their lowest low and don't know where to go from there. We have the opportunity to let them know that people do care. In Christ, we can give them hope and direction.

How is prison outreach making a big impact?

We go into prison and share the Gospel of Jesus Christ with these men. Some of them have never heard about what Jesus has done for us. I think that takes a big weight off their shoulders—when they find out that there really is a God who loves them.

What was it like for you to give your testimony during the New Life worship service?

It was very rewarding for me to know that my testimony could have an impact on so many people's lives. Going in there every week to spend time with them, they now know that I've also been down the same road that they're on. There truly



Jim Karr also serves Vital Men's Ministry.

is hope for them, and the playing field is level at the foot of the cross.

What do you enjoy most about your time as a volunteer for New Life?

There are so many things. I really like the looks I see in their faces when we first walk into the room. Their faces light up when we tell them that we're glad they came, and we're glad to see them. I enjoy hearing their stories and when they ask for advice about situations in their lives.

Any other comments?

I love and look forward to every Thursday night. The inmates are always thanking us for coming as we are thanking them for coming. What that says to me is that we are blessing one another and that is what it's all about!

Prayers & praise

We give thanks for:

- The many men who have signed up to attend Brothers in Blue (a spiritual retreat at the prison) April 3-6.
- Men seeking a new life in Jesus Christ.
- A great visit with the New Life Board and the Christian Reformed Home Missions Leadership Team, including Peter and Ruth Kelder.
- Our dedicated volunteers, prayer warriors, and those who financially support New Life.
- The revival happening within the prison walls!

We would like prayers for:

- The men who are getting out on parole, work release, or other. May they stay strong in their faith and find the support they need to make it on the outside.
- Men who are struggling with depression and other mental problems.
- Health and safety for the many families who have a loved one incarcerated.
- The strength to stand up to the attacks of the devil for those inside and outside of the prison.



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One amazing moment



by Pastor Rick

I have to tell you about one amazing moment at our Thursday night Bible study. I wasn't the only witness; 5 volunteers and 28 New Life participants were also in the room. On March 6, we were having a typical Bible study. We started with fellowship, singing, announcements, and prayers. After watching a video about teaching by Francis Chan, the Holy Spirit broke into our meeting. In one incredible moment, William stood up and got our attention. He said, "Wait! I have something to say. This isn't easy for me because I'm uncomfortable speaking in public. But I have a secret."

Then he paused. I waited nervously wondering if he was about to confess something horrible in his past. Instead it was good news when he continued, "I believe in Jesus Christ. I'm ready to follow Him." Immediately we rose up to give him a standing ovation.

I thought to myself that this is what it's all about. It gave me great encouragement to know God is blessing us by His Spirit. I forget what I said in response, probably something like "That's awesome!" or "That's great!" It certainly was an amazing moment in time. I wish I somehow had a recording of his statement of faith, because I would watch it over and over again. The spontaneous profession of faith brought tears in my eyes and made me think of the book of Romans. William was not ashamed of the Gospel (Romans 1:16-17). And William had the guts to overcome his fear of public speaking to confess that Jesus is the Lord of his life (Romans 10:8-10). Pray for William to stay strong in his faith. Also pray for New Life that by God's grace, we may continue to experience many more amazing moments.

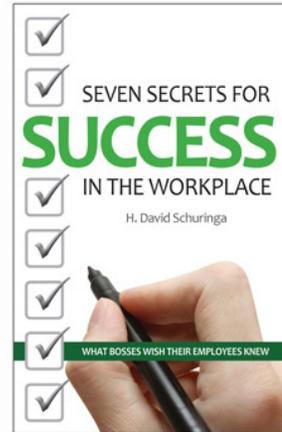
Pilot Program *by Pastor Rick*

New Life recently participated in a pilot program for Crossroad Bible Institute. Last fall, Erin Zoutendam emailed me with this message: "CBI has just released a small group study for Dr. David Schuringa's book *Seven Secrets for Success in the Workplace*. Dr. Schuringa was wondering if you would be interested in participating in the piloting of that program. We would send you a leader's manual and copies of the book to use in a small-group setting in the prison, and we would appreciate your feedback after the experience. Let me know if that's something you would be interested in, and I will get the materials to you."

Of course, I said yes. What kind of Dutchman would I be if I turned aside free stuff? Besides, New Life has had a long and healthy relationship with CBI. In fact, I was a Crossroad instructor long

before I became a prison pastor. Volunteering for CBI became a springboard for me to plunge enthusiastically into prison ministry.

The *Seven Secrets* book was beneficial for the men in my Tuesday afternoon prayer group. This practical resource encouraged men to live out their Christian faith in the workplace. New Life volunteers aided the effort by sharing about their own experiences at work. Each participant in our group received his own book. Even though the seven-session study is now complete, we plan to continue our relationship with CBI. Dr. David Schuringa is scheduled to preach the good news to the men of New Life Prison Community on



The Crossroad Bible Institute book we used in our prison Bible study group.

September 18. He will also preach at Calvary Christian Reformed Church in Pella on September 21.

The devil is not going to stop us *by Rose Admiraal*

Every third Thursday we have a two-hour worship service with the men at Newton Prison. There has been a pattern of bad weather that comes on Thursday evenings. The January worship service was held during a blizzard, which came out of nowhere as we were in transit to the Newton Prison. God allowed us to have the worship service that night and kept everyone safe. In February, bad weather began before we even left town. Unfortunately we had to cancel that worship service.

But God is GOOD, and we were allowed to worship the following Thursday, although the guest pastor and praise team were unable to reschedule on such short notice. Instead, we had some incredible special music featuring a New Life member (Bob), an incarcerated opera singer (Gary) and a New Life volunteer (Ron Fulker).

Then again on March 1, we had to cancel the Piercing the Darkness concert because of an incoming winter storm. Lord willing, we hope to host the Christian rock band in the prison gym on Saturday, May 3 instead.

There are many examples of inclement weather we have experienced on Thursdays. Many volunteers have also commented that there has been some crazy weather on Thursday evenings. I believe the devil does not like what is occurring in the prison (REVIVAL), but we will NOT let that stop us. We're reminded of the reality of spiritual warfare both inside and outside of correctional facilities. "Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. Put on the full armor of God, so that you can take your stand against the devil's schemes." (Eph. 6:10-11) Please pray that God will keep us encouraged and protect us from the evil one.