CONNECTIONS
PRISON MINISTRY

April 2025

Zechariah 3:3-5, 'Now Joshua was fully dressed in filthy rags as he stood before the angel. The angel said to those standing before him, "Take off his filthy clothes." Then he said to Joshua, "See, I have taken away your sin and instead have placed fine garments on you."

Dear CPM Family,

I've been thinking this month about Spring Cleaning, which is always appropriate this time of year. Now, weekly, we're at Kindness 4 or 5 days a week, and there also, we are trading out clothing for what is more suitable for the season we are entering, boxing up the coats and flannels for next winter, unearthing sundresses and shorts and flipflops for what promises to be right around the corner. You know, out with the old; in with the new. Yet, even though Spring is just ahead—the frumpy coloring of fall and winter will soon be packed away and replaced with bright cheer of spring greens and baby blues and pretty pinks—everywhere I look, I see *tired*. It has been a difficult season. Fatigue seems to have settled in faces, drawn wrinkles like road maps of where we have all been, leather skin weathered by wind and experience, eyes that have seen too much and carried weighted and worried sorrow which stopped flowing when tears like the energy dried up.

I'm thinking about the hard season just passing as we hang out new outfits and box up woolen jackets and hats and scarves. Right next to the Easter dress I place on the rack, I am suddenly reminded about the garment of praise with which He outfits me. I think about my filthy rags He discarded so I could step into the royal robe He designed for this daughter of a King. I think about the years and the seasons that have swathed all of us before, and I stare at the fine attire Jesus offered each of us at the foot of the Cross as the past falls around our feet. Those scraps are no longer needed as He stitches our sin with His forgiveness, adorning His children in garments of grace. The patchwork pieces of yesterday are simply nothing more than a marker of His kindness as He exchanges a tired wardrobe for a new one that readies us for what is next.

What ***is*** next?!?! At Kindness, we have some things up our sleeves (lol). Please mark your calendars for June 21st, beginning at 11am, for our "Open House" parking lot, sidewalk and indoor event. We need exposure so please tell your friends, church members, and family and neighbors as we want to make a Big Splash on that day. We hope you will order food and that you will find hidden treasures inside the closet, and, most of all, that you will meet Jesus inside the Café and be able to feel what others feel when they walk inside and stay for a while.

We are also committed to taking our food trailer to a couple events this Spring to again inspire exposure, to get known and to cook some amazing food fare for those who haven't yet discovered the Kindness Café. We are seeking the Lord's timing to begin a monthly Saturday night praise and worship service, as well as a men's weekly Bible Study. We intend

to use what the Lord has gifted us with in the physical place of the Kindness Café & Closet to spread the Good News of Jesus' love and grace for all people. We continue to help in any way we are able with those transitioning from the justice system to the outside world, and we are so pleased over the growing ministry with the high schoolers who have really found a safe haven at Kindness. We are going to miss them this summer!!

In all things, we beseech of you, please remember us daily in prayer. We would be lost without His guidance that you are seeking Him for on our behalf. Please save your gently used clothing for our closet. There are people of all ages and walks and styles who are blessed by your donations. Please think about ways you'd like to get involved. You'll read about Bruce in this newsletter, and his humble service is not at all hidden and so very needed. Please tell others about Kindness also; tell your church about what God is doing at this little hole in the strip mall called Kindness. We need churches to come alongside us and help the desperation and needs we encounter. And lastly, we need your financial support more than ever. Our sales don't come close to matching the monthly need—but God! Somehow, we keep moving forward and helping others move forward also. When we say we need you, we truly do. Every kind thing you do for CPM is a kind act that is passed on to someone else. You matter more than you could ever know.

Every week, we are placing mostly men, but also some women, in housing and employment. We are feeding people not only with delicious homecooked food, but also feeding them God's Word, fellowshipping with anyone wishing to, fattening them with Jesus' love and kindness. And through your generous donations, we are outfitting people in clothing, in shoes, keeping them warm wrapped in your winter coats, and providing for essentials you and I take for granted. God is disposing of the filthiness of the rags our past lives outfitted us in, and exchanging old wardrobes for the skin of salvation, garments of praise, and the full armor of God.

Much love,

The CPM Team

Isaiah 61:10-11, "I will sing for joy in God, explode in praise from deep in my soul! He dressed me up in a suit of salvation, He outfitted me in a robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom who puts on a tuxedo and a bride a jeweled tiara. For as earth bursts with spring wildflowers, and as a garden cascades with blossoms, so the Master God brings righteousness into full bloom, putting praise on display before the nations."

KINDNESS KORNER**MEET BRUCE!

It was a perfect fall day when Bruce happened to Kindness. Bruce Kowalchuk is, by nature, a "Thrifter", which is why he came by. Driving by, he had seen the sign for a new thrift store in the neighborhood which he had not yet visited. Bruce left a new friend that day, and our friendship has only grown deeper and sweeter in these passing months.

Bruce has been fascinated by Connections Prison Ministry. He is impacted by the stories and touched by the new relationships he now is a part of. They say, you can't outgive God, but Bruce is a close second. No one is more generous than Bruce. From buying meals for customers, helping students with purchases, making sure people's needs are met, purchasing clothing for someone who has nothing, helping with vehicle repairs for individuals who don't have the funds, donating a plethora of items needed by Kindness, a generosity of time he freely offers, even helping a homeless man get on his feet and be introduced to Jesus. There is no shortage of ways in which Bruce has given so generously to CPM, to Kindness.

Recently, we even got to meet Merry, his sweet wife, who is just as hospitable as Bruce. Bruce and Merry have been married for many decades, and their lives have been marked by service to others. Their childhoods both began in missions, Bruce a missionary kid in Peru, and Merry, a ministry kid in a rescue mission in the Midwest. Their stories are endless. Bruce has been so fascinated by the beginning of someone's story as they come out of incarceration and attempt to start fresh. He has not known the limitations and obstacles standing in the way of a new beginning for our guys and gals; simple things like ID's and basic essentials, like undergarments and socks to housing and employment, to being accepted and welcomed by a church to attend services and find fellowship.

Bruce, we do not know what Connections did previously without you, and while we know you and Merry give all the glory to God and want none of it for yourselves, we want to say thank you for walking alongside us and becoming amazing ambassadors of this ministry.

Jesus...ridiculously KIND!

Lawrence enjoying a breakfast burrito at Kindness.

Lawrence has been kindness in action. He has been sacrificial in his giving and support for others not wanting accolades but serving behind the scenes. He will say often, ***"The Lord has blessed me, so I will share my blessing with others."*** Lawrence recently completed his parole sentence and finding great success living his best life. He is currently employed with RLS as a delivery contractor. He wants everyone to know ***"That I am loved, blessed and forgiven, and I will live each day knowing this truth in my heart."***

Please continue to pray for Lawrence and the many others who are part of the CPM family.

Financial support

As always, thank you for your financial support!
Your generosity continues to meet needs and provide support for those in need.
We can't do this without you!

There are several ways to give listed below.

Financial donations can be made via the following money transfer apps using the CPM contact number (720.579.5122)
Zelle, PayPal, & CashApp.
You can also send a check made out to Connections Prison Ministry.

***Check it out...**A new way convenient way to support Connections.
Scan the QR code to set-up a monthly gift or give a one-time gift.

All gifts are tax-deductible.

Scan – Read – Pray - Grow!

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