

REWRITING LIVES

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CHANGED CHOICES IN ACTION

An Amazing God—He sees our needs and rewards faithfulness!

Sometimes it is the small things that speak to us about the greatness of our God. Sometimes we are “hit over the head”. This is such a story.

Changed Choices has many needs as we make every effort to provide needed “tools” for the success of our clients. We sent out an email list of needed items to many of our supporters because we had a number of clients establishing new homes “beyond prison walls”. One of these clients (Lee) has been with us for several years and has done well in school – becoming the first in her family to get a college degree. She has worked hard at her job – reaching a position of great responsibility and influence. She is clearly doing her best to “leave the past behind” and to build a new life for herself and her children.

Another client had made some terrible decisions and had lost everything, including the job she had with Lee’s company. Now she desperately wanted to “get back on track” - to sever ties with the past and take the advice and assistance that she had rejected before. Lee took the risk of advocating with her management on this client’s behalf, asking that she be given another chance. It worked!

The next day, as we picked up donations, we were given the perfect set of coffee and end tables for Lee. Then I received a call about an antique bedroom suite and a set of dishes that the owner had planned to auction but was now donating to us. When we got back to the office, there was an email offering a glass top kitchen/dining set with four chairs. At this point it be-



Sorting Through Donations

came clear to us that the Lord was honoring Lee’s boldness in requesting another chance for our client!

God works both in us and through us. As each of us is obedient to His leading, there will be a tremendous demonstration of His glory and everyone will see what an amazing God we serve!

Mentoring Workshop for Changed Choices

A mentoring workshop was held for Changed Choices on March 24th. Our board members, current and prospective pen pals/mentors, friends, prayer partners, as well as a few of our clients were invited to attend. The training was helpful in many areas of our lives. Personal mentoring is the basis for the success of Changed Choices so is vital to our training and development as an organization.

Our workshop was led by Rev. Billy Flippin, the associate pastor at "Little Church on the Lane", who is an Arrow graduate. We thank Billy for a great learning and growing experience. No one left without having been challenged and encouraged. We need more committed mentors for our clients. Investing in a life can be so rewarding. Will you consider becoming a mentor?

From a Changed Choices Mentee:
Just wanted to thank you for all your unconditional love and support. You have helped me to grow spiritually as well as mentally since we met a few years ago. I think of and pray for you every day. Just know that I am eternally grateful and I hope one day to reciprocate. I won't let you down—I promise.

The "Mentoring Connection", a workshop developed by the Arrow Leadership Program, is a dynamic new three and a half hour workshop created to train mentors in the church or in a ministry context. Facilitated by trained Arrow Alumni, this workshop is designed to equip and encourage people to intentionally invest in others through mentoring.



Rev. Billy Flippin leads our group in the "Mentoring Connection" Workshop. We plan to have another opportunity to do this in fall.

CHANGED CHOICES IN ACTION

How does assistance with housing help our clients? Two of them speak out!

ANN: When I was released from prison to North Carolina, I had little physical or emotional security to fall back on. With an absent twisted, dysfunctional family to depend on and little resources, I was scared. That was until I learned to trust you, Changed Choices, for encouragement, support, and understanding of my needs. You had a keen sense of where I needed to be, even though I had doubted myself. The way I see it, I owe my achievements to God through Changed Choices. You provided me an apartment while I was going to school and working full time for about a year and a half. By not having a huge rent to pay each month, I was able to focus my energy into obtaining my bachelor degree and re-establish a relationship with my young son. Today, I have an awesome career, a nice apartment (that I can now pay on my own), and a new sense of security. This in turn has allowed me to help my husband, when he was released from prison, to find his own sense of security and confidence. Thank you Changed Choices for showing me that God will never leave or forsake me, even when I fail.

MARY: I never knew how difficult it was to find housing when you have a felony until I was faced with the situation. Upon coming out of prison, I had nothing. I was starting a new way of life and was faced with challenges that I had never experienced before. I was filled with self doubt and was frightened as to whether or not I could do this. It is very easy to get discouraged when it seems that you are being “pushed down” everywhere you turn – because of your past. But thanks to God and all the people involved with Changed Choices, I had someone in my corner fighting along with me. They not only kept me encouraged, but found me a wonderful home I could afford. That was not easy. They helped me with deposits and co-signed on my lease. I can well remember the feeling I felt when I first walked into the house and knew that this was my home. I can't put it into words – only that I don't think I have ever felt the love of God so strongly. I don't know if I would be where I am today if I hadn't had the help of Changed Choices.

We Need You! How Can You Help?

- **Become a pen pal.** By providing friendship and support, pen pals help our clients transform their attitudes and behaviors. Many female inmates have never known true and unconditional acceptance or love.
- **Mentor a client in transition.** Investing your life in the lives of others is a powerful demonstration of Christ's love. This role, when faithfully fulfilled, is very rewarding for you and most likely to result in success for our client.
- **Volunteer to assist on “moving days”.** Willing workers and trucks are welcome!
- **Assist in procuring donated space;/warehouse** for furniture and clothing storage.
- **Collect “guideposts” and similar publications** (only religious material that is easy to understand is acceptable). Remove address labels..
- **Collect paperback Christian novels**
- **Volunteer to become a part of our newer endeavors:**
 - use your gifts to organize programs for our children
 - plan events for our transitioning clients
 - assist in fund development
 - volunteer to be available to transport clients or their children as needed.

Changed Choices is a 501(c)3 charitable organization. Contributions are tax deductible to the extent allowed by law.

As you are led, please give generously and regularly to ensure the continuity of Changed Choices' programs and to provide for the hiring of staff. We need committed and qualified people to take on major leadership roles in several areas. This must begin on a volunteer basis but could lead to future staff positions.

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