



Building new lives beyond prison walls

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Inmate Clients Give Thanks

- Though it's not often that I will send a card or email, I want all of you to know how much I appreciate all that you do not only for me, but all of us. The cards, notes and emails always seem to come at the right time. Whether I am feeling down or not, they always place my heart and mind at ease. Sometimes I get teary-eyed just knowing that I have people who care and who in a sense are "my family away from family". Thank you so much for your prayers, uplifting words, short stories and most of all the sincere love. **~Kaleiba**
- I would like to thank each and every one of you for writing me. I have gotten something every day. The encouraging letters and cards are wonderful. You made me feel like I will make it, as long as God is on my side. **~Marsha**
- Thank you for writing. "WOW" I've really been blessed with lots of mail and the encouragement is unbelievable. ☺ Thank you and please tell everyone hello and I truly appreciate the encouragement. I have written my pen pal twice and look forward to hearing from her again. **~Bonita**
- Thank you so much for accepting me into your family. I was absolutely astonished and overwhelmed at all the birthday cards and welcome notes. I received more mail in one week that I have in a year! Honestly – it brought tears to my eyes. God did say to me , , "when your father and mother forsake you, He will uphold you." Once again He has shown me His favor, love and grace. May God bless each of you 100 times more than you have blessed me! **~Violet**

We Added New Staff

We are happy to welcome Karen McNary, pictured left, to our Changed Choices staff as Operations Manager. Karen joins us with the unique background of having spent two years on our Board of



Directors. This has given her a new perspective but also an understanding of the mission of Changed Choices. With a background in human resources and education, Karen will be a true asset to the team.

In November, Stephanie VanderLugt, pictured left, agreed to become our Inmate Services Manager. We are excited about having Steph join us because of the "heart" and skill set she brings. Other



programs tend to overshadow this important aspect of Changed Choices and having a dedicated staff member in this position is vital. It is during this phase of our clients' lives that they need the encouragement and support that we are known for.

Visit Our Websites:
www.changedchoices.org
www.secondhelpingcharlotte.org

Find us on Facebook
 or Twitter: @changedchoices
 @2ndHelpingCLT

SECOND HELPING UPDATE

Second Helping, our small business to create jobs for our clients, has experienced incredible growth since our last newsletter. In the midst of operating Second Helping's initial ventures, two cafe stands, we determined that we needed to secure our own kitchen in order to create more jobs. Thanks to generous donations from many of you, we were indeed able to rent and equip a commercial kitchen located at 2903C Central Ave. (between the Plaza and Eastway)



Second Helping Employees

With the help of a significant grant from the Reemprise Fund, Second Helping opened up a take-out and catering shop, creating five additional jobs! Charlie Elbersen of The Reemprise Fund has been a true Godsend, opening many doors for us - and our clients - that we could not have imagined.

Since the kitchen's opening, it has been a true whirlwind! Second Helping has garnered impressive reviews and has been featured on several local news programs and two national magazines. Client Initiatives Manager Melissa Mummert and Monique Maddox, Second Helping's Catering Manager joined Mike Collins and Sheriff Chip Bailey on Charlotte Talks, which exposed Changed Choices/Second Helping to thousands who didn't know of our work before. The media exposure helps fulfill one of Second Helping's goals, to highlight the need for jobs for people with criminal records. Most importantly, Gigi, Nelta, Rhonda, Candice, Kandice, Nicole and Monique (pictured above), Second Helping's employees who were all once incarcerated, are doing great with their added responsibilities and are productive members of our community.

How You Can Help

While there has been much excitement and good news, Second Helping's resources are stretched extremely thin. Many of you have asked how you can help. What we need most right now is a regular customer base to both purchase food at our shop and order catering. This is not a sacrificial assignment! Second Helping serves up delicious southern style food (we recommend the Fried Green Tomato Casserole and Black-eyed Peacakes!) as well as sandwiches & salads at great prices. We are currently seeking Second Helping "Second Liners," folks who will commit to coming by the shop to pick up dinner or lunch once a week. Second Liners receive a free customized Carolina iced tea with every visit!

Second Helping is also seeking congregations, offices and daycares to enroll in our new "Goodness to Go" family meal delivery program. "Goodness to Go" participants receive weekly deliveries of family-style meals. This creates wonderful convenience for our busy customers and a regular revenue source for Second Helping, a win-win!

We have learned that it takes a village to operate a social enterprise. We are grateful to Barry Ahrendt from Five Diamond Communications for providing essential marketing assistance and restaurant consultant Paul Start for his generous help. Melissa Van Halsema, Amy Silverman and Resa Treadaway and many more volunteers have devoted a great deal of time and energy to ensuring that our dream of creating jobs for women with criminal records is realized. We are grateful!

Visit www.secondhelpingcharlotte.org or call Second Helping for Catering: 980-272-8427 To sign up for "Goodness to Go" at your office, congregation or daycare, contact melissa@changedchoices.org

Facing Giants at the Annual Retreat



On October 18-20 Changed Choices held the 4th annual Retreat in Montreat, N.C. Clients, board members, volunteers and staff came together to renew, to grow and to fellowship with each another. Teenaged daughters of clients attended and each enjoyed the time with their mothers. It was a wonderful time of introduction for some and reconnection for others. Music played a key role as always and throughout the weekend, songs were chosen and their special meanings were shared with the group. The weekend kicked off with definition of a giant: battles that appear bigger than life and beyond our ability. We began identifying personal giants in preparation for learning how to face and defeat them.

On Saturday morning, Valerie Williams, MACC and former Changed Choices intern led the discussion on identifying one of our largest giants: facing ourselves and our fears. She skillfully related how poor self-concepts lead to fear and insecurity and taught on ways to master fear. Through exercises and small group discussions, each person began the work of learning about our identity and self-concepts.

The afternoon was a time to enjoy the beauty of Montreat, N.C. and time was spent hiking, shopping and getting to know one another on a deeper level. We also had fun making a cross, which commemorated the weekend beautifully. Saturday evening ended with Ruth Snyder and Karen Kovach sharing their common experiences as children of missionaries. As self-described "hidden immigrants", their unique upbringing helped explain the reasons for their unusual compassion, wisdom and the ability to relate to all people.

The weekend came to a close as Ms. Williams focused on the beauty and inner strength of each individual. We broke into our small groups and spent time telling one another why we are beautiful, admired, and strong. God met each person in Montreat, N.C. in a unique way and lives were transformed.



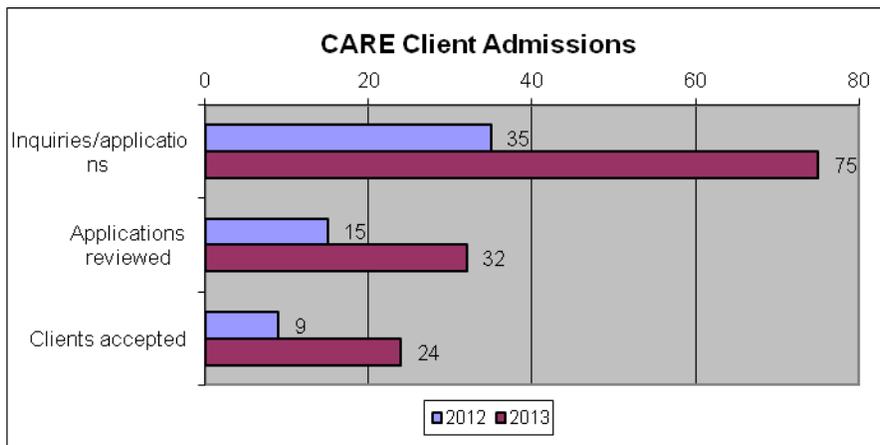
Changed Choices Growth Trends

Although Changed Choices touches many women and children through their various programs, the primary focus has always been the CARE (Comprehensive Approach to Reentry Effectiveness) Program that is comprised of our clients. These clients undergo a rigorous selection process through our Admissions Committee. This includes an extensive application form and a letter of explanation from the applicant that demonstrates a desire to change the course of their lives, the willingness to make hard choices and accept responsibility, be accountable, have a minimum of two years of incarceration remaining, receive a professional referral and live in the greater Charlotte area.

Once accepted as a client, there are numerous forms of support that is provided both while the client is still an inmate as well as when she is released. Comprehensive services include everything from pen pals, card writers, books, newsletters and stipends, all the way to mentors, clothing, food, housing, recovery support, counseling, job application guidance and support for the family when the client is released. Each client added is like a new family member and requires a tremendous increase in time, volunteers and finances. It is this client oriented, relational approach that makes our CARE Program a tremendous success!

CARE Client Admissions*	2012	2013	% Increase
Inquiries/applications	35	75	114.3%
Applications reviewed	15	32	113.3%
Clients accepted	9	24	166.7%

*CARE: Comprehensive Approach to Re-entry Effectiveness



Christmas with Changed Choices

If you would like to help with a specific Christmas gift for a Changed Choices child, please contact info@ChangedChoices.org or call 704-332-6388.

Gifts are needed before **December 14th**.

