



August 2014 Newsletter

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FIT successful at Harvest House Ministries in Sarasota, FL.

Betty Drawdy and Linda Coker (seated) are continuing to find FIT ministry to be immensely rewarding (see the smiles on everyone's faces). Harvest House operates residential centers for both men and women and is a new location for FIT. "Miss Betty" started the first class there this year. The photo shows most of the graduates of the Anger course which ended on August 4. "Pastor Pratt" of FIT assisted in the ceremony.

"Miss Betty" is no stranger to FIT. She was trained six years ago and has taught 6 courses at FIT's Thursday night program and 2 at Harvest House for a total of 24 course graduates or 472 student-hours. They liked her so much at Harvest House, she was asked to teach Sunday School for the girls. Free to Grow has been selected for the next FIT class.

Linda Coker has been around at FIT for an even greater period of time. She was trained 6 1/2 years ago and has taught 31 courses, had 110 graduates for a total of 1,887 student-hours. Eighty-four of these graduates were from the Sarasota County Jail and 26 at the FIT office.

Sarasota County Jail still holds the record for most graduations

Who says FIT can't be successful in jails? The argument is sometimes given that because jails are short-term with so much transitioning in and out that it is not a practical place in which to hold classes because the prisoners are not there long enough to benefit from them. SCJ, along with a number of other jails we service, has proven this notion wrong. SCJ boasts of 1,221 FIT course graduates for a total of 11,845 student-hours. Our hats are off to the administration and staff at the Jail for making all this possible. FIT holds numerous classes there during the week, and staff and officers must take the time and effort to plan for the visits and move inmates from their various cell blocks to the meeting rooms.



Robin Rogari

It is obvious that rehabilitation is a priority at this jail. Not only are the officers keeping the community and inmates safe during confinement, they are, by making the extra effort, helping us to make the community to be more safe and productive once the inmates are released. FIT is committed to making better citizens for society and for God.

FIT has had a long and consistent presence at the jail. Robin Rogari, Inmate Program Director and FIT facilitator, has been with us for almost as long as FIT has been around. She has herself taught 9 classes, five at the jail, 3 at FIT headquarters, and one at Harvest House, where she assisted. It was in one of Linda and Robin's first classes at the jail that they ministered to Melissa Webster, a reluctant participant who just went

because "she was bored". What a change took place in that class! Melissa turned her life over to God and began her long journey toward being a wonderful citizen.



Melissa and Eric Dort

To make a long story short, after release, Melissa regained custody of her child through courses offered at FIT headquarters, became a facilitator, taught FIT courses at the same jail she came out of, started a whole new career, graduated from the University of South Florida with a social work degree, got married, and is now working in the social work field. Melissa has facilitated 12 courses for us, 9 at the jail and 3 at headquarters. Her father, Paul, impressed by all this, joined us as a facilitator and served at the jail for several years until he had a stroke. Paul taught the men the Parenting 101, Personal Insight, Free to Grow, and Anger Management courses. He had 81 graduates in 18 courses.



Paul Webster

LEADER TRAINING

Bradenton, FL, August 2, 2014

This fine group of people came from all over the west coast of peninsular Florida, from Brooksville in the north to Naples in the south. It was made up of individuals with different ministry interests. Some were interested in jail ministries while others' focus was on prisons or recovery centers. As always, there were questions about how to start a new ministry and how FIT could enhance personal ministries already in existence.

The next scheduled FIT training will take place in Jacksonville on October 11.

