



# April 2015 Newsletter

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## *The Many Faces of FIT*

This month we will focus on what the Bradenton “Character Development” group has been able to do through teamwork. A year-and-a-half ago classes which meet at FIT headquarters were so small that there was one week in which noone showed up! Through persistence and working with the local Children and Families agency, classes have grown and we recently had 28 in attendance, including facilitators and clients. The group typically facilitates two to three different FIT courses simultaneously on Thursday nights from 7-9 PM. When groups get too large, classes are conducted in two separate buildings.

Many of the clients came to us as a result of being court-ordered to take an anger or parenting course but stayed on to take other courses such as Dating and Marriage and Handling Loss and Grief. Families have been restored, lives changed, and spiritual renewal realized.

The idea of a group approach came from Ellie Larson (second from right) and Suzanne Wilson (far right). They were the only people who showed up for our May 2014 leader training session and have been a pillar of the local group ever since. Every third Monday the group meets for fellowship, program development, and personal skills enhancement. They came up with a common set of rules (shown on next page) that fit the needs of the changing client pool. Formerly, the clients were older. Now they were younger, more undisciplined. Members help in other ways, too. -continued-

The snack table is always overflowing. Bus transportation is provided for those who need it, and the courses are free. For the unfortunate ones who relapse, team members counsel, take out to lunch, visit in jail and prison, write to the incarcerated. Members do not give up and continue to serve all who come. The team followed the progress of the inmate on the right as he went from jail to prison. The visits initially were made at the request of his mother, an attendee of the class.



One of the greatest success stories is that of Kenny Busch.



Kenny came to us in August through a family court referral. His first reaction was one of disgust at the idea that this was a “faith-based” course and that the Bible would be referred to. He said he would stay for the night, though. And stay he did. He completed the anger dynamics course and then brought his wife along for the Dating and Marriage class. Then he brought in his mother-in-law and wife in for the Handling Loss and Grief class. Currently, he and his wife are taking the Practical Parenting course. He and his wife have occasionally attend church and Kenny has expressed interest in becoming a FIT facilitator.

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## EXPECTATIONS FOR THURSDAY NIGHT CLASSES

### Snacks

All coffee and snacks must be taken to seat before beginning of class. Snacks will also be available at break time.

### Class Rules

Cell phones must be turned off. Babies and children are not allowed in classrooms. No sleeping in class. Weekly participation is required. Progress is expected. Classes start promptly at 7:00 pm and end sharply at 9:00 pm.m., Respect must be shown for every class member and their views. Sensitive information must be kept in strict confidence.

### Attendance requirements

No unexcused absences are permitted. Call if you cannot attend. To receive credit for class, you must be in class by 7:00 pm. Written homework and a minimum number of group hours is required to receive a graduation certificate

### Books

The first course book is free Books can be taken home but must be brought to class Replacement

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**Multiple Facilitators needed for Sarasota County Jail.** Talks are underway to offer mulitple classes and implement the entire 100-hour program. Call the FIT office, 941.799.4975, for information and forms.



**FIT Training on Saturday, May 2,** at FIT Bradenton, FL Headquarters.

**Facilitators needed** for Charlotte Correctional (Ft. Myers area) and DeSoto Correctional (Arcadia). Call Ted Gaines at 239.771.4924 for information.

**Geo Group,** with 100 prisons nationwide, endorses FIT program.