



September 2015 Newsletter

www.familyintegrity.org

\$9,455 raised in 2015 FIT Fundraiser!
Only \$545 left to reach our \$10,000 goal



The 2015 Online Giving Challenge is now history. \$5,505 was donated and approximately \$3,950 generously matched by the Patterson Foundation. Several people missed the 24-hour giving period and are wondering if they could still. Give. YES! Beverly Shatterly, above on left, would love us to reach our \$10,000 goal. Beverly is our representative in the Florida Panhandle who contacted people in her area prior and during the event. Ellie and Suzanne, shown on the right in their FIT T-shirts, worked the phone for seven hours calling people in our overall service area. We salute these ladies for the phenomenal job they did in getting the word out.

Second from the left, President Don Pratt is thanking the congregation of Journey Church for the phenomenal support for the fund-raiser. Journey Church generated nearly two thirds of the total proceeds. The church had promoted the fund-raiser heavily with bulletin inserts and admonitions from Pastor Don Carter, standing to the left of Don Pratt. Journey Church also buys the books that facilitators from the church needs. It is hoped that other churches will do the same next year and take advantage of the matching funds that may be available at that time.

FIT has been there for you for several years now, providing free materials and official certificates when needed for our trained and dues-current members. Our bottom line has been steadily dropping for years and this fund-raiser will help, but funds are low right now and our check from the foundation will not be received until the end of October. Donations received through the month of September will apply to this month's fund-raiser and will help us until we receive our check. Donate through our website at www.familyintegrity.org. See below for a breakdown of our system-wide, FL Panhandle, and Journey Church campaigns.

2015 FIT Giving Campaigns

	System Wide	Journey Church*	Board Members*	FL Panhandle*
Donations	\$5,505	\$3,650	\$3,105	\$1,305
Matching (est)	\$3,950	\$2,400	\$1,800	\$1,000
Total	\$9,455	\$6,050	\$4,905	\$2,305
% of Total	100%	64%	52%	24%

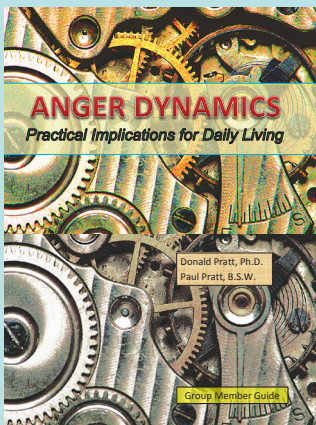
*categories overlap

FIT Salutes Gordon Thomas

This month we salute Gordon “GT” Thomas, a faithful facilitator at the Sarasota County Jail since 2009. He reports that he can identify with his classes as he has had a lot of ups and down in his own past. That past was a long time ago, about 50 years, when he was in and out of jail twice as a young adult. After a career with GTE for 31 years, he is now retired and still very active in jail and prison work, especially with the Kairos ministry and FIT. He has been married to a lovely woman for 21 years and has 3 children.



His first prison ministry was at Raiford State Prison in Starke, FL in the seventies. He started with Kairos, going in for four-day weekends to minister and has been active with that ministry for the past ten years. At about the same time, he became involved with the Sarasota County Jail and has ministered in a number of ways there since then. GT was ordained by Dr. Landry at the Sarasota Baptist Church four years ago. GT is known to be consistent in follow up and does not give up on his clients. He is loved by them. He has shown the knack to bring together whites, blacks, and Hispanics.



GT received his training as a FIT facilitator in 2009 and has been active ever since with the Sarasota County Jail. He likes the results that he gets with FIT. He reports that “you can actually see the change that the program induces by the power of God in these men. The Anger Dynamics book, which came out in 2013, has helped immensely in opening the men up through discussion. The personal illustrations are real-life situations that the prisoners identify with. It also helps that the course has been approved by the 12th Circuit Court. The joy of using these studies shows us how God changes lives through the Holy Spirit. It helps me every time I teach the course. I learn from the course and I learn from them. It is a great tool through open discussion. I have people on the waiting list to get into the next class.” GT has the respect of most of the jail personnel

with some very strong supporters (there are always a few that do not like what we are doing).

GT runs a tight ship, and those that don’t want help are invited out. In the first two or three weeks, those that don’t want the class lose interest and are weeded out. “People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care. Making Jesus real in their lives is what they need.” Gordon feels that the certificates that FIT provides are extremely important. “They are needed in court and provide a sense of accomplishment. Many of the inmates are not used to completing tasks. You have to love and respect those men if you want them to come back.”

Editor’s note: FIT is proud of the work that GT is doing. He is patient with the men, loves them, and gets them to open up and listens to them. He is a facilitator in the true sense and is more interested in seeing his charges succeed than personal glory!