



Lisa

Hello, my name is Lisa. I arrived at Youth Challenge Mission for Women (YCMW) on Jan. 11, 2007. I had been released earlier that same morning from my fifth prison sentence at the Niantic Women's Prison, with a very extensive criminal record and a felony charge. Drugs led me deep into a life of crime.

Prior to my last arrest on Jan. 11, *I was living like a madwoman. Not only was I living like a madwoman, I was a madwoman.* Everything and everybody became second rate to my insatiable, obsessive addiction to crack cocaine and alcohol. I became involved in a different lifestyle, became a total menace to society, a street walking prostitute, an unreliable US class employee, a pitiful neighbor, and neglectful all around to my two young daughters. I am the mother of four children who are not with me because of my addiction. I abandoned my two older children back in 1992, leaving them behind in S.C. to become adopted. I also signed my two younger daughters over to the State of Connecticut on Nov. 5, 2005, because I was so caught out on crack that I saw no other

option. I was blinded by the addiction. It was too much for me. *After consenting to the adoption of my two little girls, I wanted to die.*

I had many visions of death in my head. I wanted out, it was enough, and I had had it! All hope was gone and I couldn't find "The Way". *My children in their absence encouraged me to live.* Otherwise, I considered getting a gun and blowing my hopeless head off. Although I did not, could not follow through with suicide, my addiction plunged on to an all time low. Two months later came the arrest. After serving my one year sentence, I knew in my heart that the gig was over. All else was gone; yet, I was still alive!

I have completed 18 months in the program of YCMW, and I am now staff. I have found the best friend that I've been seeking for my entire life. Jesus has always been there waiting on me to give me a new life, hope, and a new direction. *He has already lifted the spirit of confused identity and drug addiction off of me.* I am no longer bound in those areas, and I know without a doubt, if God can deliver me in those areas, He can do it in other areas. *I am willing and He is able.*

God has already started the process of restoration with my children. I know that it was God that saved me. Yes, the best is yet to come! I'm so glad the Lord didn't allow me to self-destruct and end my life. When nothing else could help, it was the love of God Almighty that lifted me. *"Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has gone, the new has come!"* 2 Cor. 5:17 (NIV) **THANK YOU, JESUS!!**

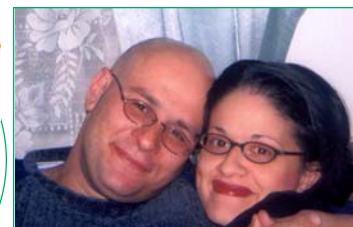


From Prison To Praise!



Congrats to Diane....

The newlywed and Graduate of 2008 from St. Joseph's College. We are proud of your accomplishments!! Love, YCMW



Jimmy & Diane - "Lovebirds" Married June 28, 2008



YOUTH CHALLENGE MISSION FOR WOMEN
32 ATWOOD STREET
HARTFORD, CT 06105
(860) 527-2000 - FAX (860) 525-5790
EMAIL: mfwo@youthchallenge.org
THE REV. MARVA DOWNES, DIRECTOR

YOUTH CHALLENGE MEN'S HOME
15-17 MAY STREET
HARTFORD, CT 06105
(860) 728-5199 - FAX (860) 524-0418
EMAIL: infoc@youthchallenge.org
DR. PAUL ECHTENKAMP, DIRECTOR

YOUTH CHALLENGE BIBLE TRAINING CENTER
111 STERLING ROAD
MOOSUP, CT 06354
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Yc HELPING THE HURTING

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Mount Denali, Alaska

Youth Challenge Mission for Women Climbs To Another Level



Mount Denali, Alaska

Two years ago, Volunteer, Rhonda Doney, participated in raising funds to renovate the Youth Challenge Mission for Women's (YCMW) kitchen. Rhonda used her

engineering skills to assemble the cabinets that were to be installed saving YCMW approximately \$4,000. In addition, Rhonda financed the paint and personally painted the kitchen and dining room which improved the overall presentation of the house. Thanks, Rhonda!

This year, Gerry Doney, Rhonda's husband took YCMW fundraising to another level. Gerry set up a website and inspired his family and friends to sponsor his Mount Denali Climb by sending their donations to YCMW. Here is the letter that was emailed to Gerry's sponsors which revealed his sentiment of YCMW and motivated them to support the Cause of helping hurting women.



The Rev. Marva Downes and Rhonda posing with the banner at the Women's Home

"West Suffield, CT resident and Wakefield, MI - born Gerry Doney has big plans for May and June 2008. He will climb Denali, the highest mountain in North America. **Gerry has chosen to climb Denali because it presents a rigorous test of personal strength - and to raise funds for the YCMW - a faith-based, residential outreach center located in Hartford, CT. The wonderful organization cares for women with substance abuse problems, who are facing emotional turmoil and pain.**"



Gerry Doney - Holding the YCMW banner 14,200 feet on Mount Denali

"YCMW offers an atmosphere for restoration and growth through biblical counseling, group sessions, work therapy, and personal studies. **Gerry's mission of climbing this monstrous mountain will deal with struggling to overcome hardship, pain, fear, the unknown - many of the same issues that some of the women at YCMW have experienced every single day of their lives...**Gerry has chosen to attempt the spectacular climb from May 18 to June 8 to challenge himself, and to challenge others to support the mission of YCMW. His goal is to raise \$5,000."

I am proud to report that Gerry climbed 14,200' of Mount Denali. Above, a picture can be seen of him holding a banner with a message of hope to women around the world which says "Youth Challenge Mission for Women, Helping Hurting Women." Since returning home, Gerry has continued on his fundraising mission to reach his goal of \$5,000 or more to renovate YCMW 2nd floor bathroom. **If you would like to be a participant in this project, please go to the website <http://web.mac.com/gldoney> for more information.**

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My name is Joyce. I'm 37 years old. I came to YCMW on March 30, 2006. I've been hopelessly addicted to methadone, heroin, and cocaine for over 15 years. Since my childhood I woke up every morning wanting to die. At age 13, I was in and out of psychiatric hospitals for trying many times to commit suicide. There were years the depression was so bad, I could not get out of bed or live a normal life. I could not figure out how to function like a normal person. I was diagnosed with Bi-polar, severe depression, social anxiety, post traumatic stress disorder, psychotic, etc. I walked in the door of YCMW expecting the same results that I had always received from other programs which was no real healing of my emotions or end to the depression or the drug abuse. I didn't think I really could be set free. I just wanted to hide, be safe, not hurt for a minute as well as figure out what my next move was going to be.

I came to YCMW with so many huge issues; pride, deceit, jealousy, bulimia, but even bigger was my hatred, bitterness, and envy (a few issues for someone who "had no issues!"). I hated God for the life he gave me, the parents he gave me, and the loss of my children. I dreaded every day of my life. I did not understand why God had created me.

I thought by the time I was twelve that the only reason God created me was for sex. The sexual abuse started when I was six years old. I was repeatedly raped by my last two step-fathers, their brothers, and friends. I started using pot and drinking to make the sexual abuse tolerable. I had such low self-esteem. I just wanted to be loved, acknowledged, affirmed. I believed I was not pretty, smart, athletic or artistic. I could not tell you one good quality I had.

When I was 15, I witnessed my mother's violent suicide. My mother was all I had, and when she died, I felt that I had no one. I also felt that I was free from the abuse. I was already locked in a prison of self-hatred, self-destruction and in a victim (poor me) mentality.

All I wanted was love, "real love." After my first failed marriage, I ended up on the streets of Manhattan as a teenage prostitute. My second marriage ended because of the life of escorting and a cocaine habit, which led to my third marriage to heroin and cocaine. *I abandoned my two children with their fathers because I had no idea how to live and be a wife and mother. I had no idea how to put someone else's needs first. I did what my mother and father did. I did to my children and husbands what my mother and father had done to me. I jetted, left, exited the scene. I had no stability to give my children or myself. Today, I am free, a living example of God's grace and love!*

When I came to YCMW I hated God, myself and everyone in the world. I just could not take one more hurt, disappointment or failure in my life. But for some reason God would not let me die. *My mother died when she was 35. God took a hold of my life at 35. God would not allow me to live my mother's life anymore,* He had a purpose and a destiny I could never imagine for my life. I finally realize that there is a purpose for my life. I am the deliverer of my family. I get to minister to other women who are broken. One day I hope to minister to children who have been broken, abused, and abandoned. I will give them a word of hope through Jesus Christ, He can heal every wound and trauma and He does it with love and patience.

God gave me a HOPE I never had; He gave me a hope I never knew was real. Jesus is real. God is healing my low self-esteem. God said that I am fearfully and wonderfully made and the apple of His eye. I am the daughter of the Most High God. I am now Junior Staff at YCMW and Local Missionary. I am so excited to go on my first missionary trip to Guatemala. I hope this is the first of many. God is doing something

new in my life. *Hello, I get to travel the world for Jesus,* who would have thought! How cool is that! God has already restored my brother. We were split up when my mom died. My sister has also been restored back into my life after nine years. I also know my children one day will be restored as well. God keeps His promises. 2 Cor. 5:17 (NIV) "Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old is gone, the new has come!" I am a new creation who does not want to die today! **Thank you Jesus, I love You! God Bless!!**



Joyce - Danced For The Devil,
Now Dancing For Jesus!

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Sponsorship is a great idea! If anyone who reads this newsletter feels inspired or energized by Gerry's story to do something similar, please give us a call at 860-527-2000 or email us at mfwyc@youthchallenge.org. Some of the needs of YCMW to be sponsored are: *Eight (8) student beds in which sponsors could choose the specific student bed or beds they would like to support; a brand new vehicle or one that is in excellent condition to transport the women on their appointments, recreational activities and other trips. A vehicle would also facilitate the weekly visits made by the YCMW staff to York Correctional Institute to conduct bible study with the female inmates there, whom we refer to as "Women of Truth."* Included in this newsletter is the story of a woman who came to YCMW directly from York after completing a one-year prison sentence. She just recently graduated the program and she is now staff. What a miracle!!!

Let me take this opportunity to thank Gerry and his sponsors for their tenacious approach in raising funds for YCMW. I would also like to send a 'huge' Thank You to all our 'special' partners who have supported us through the good and bad economic times. **SALUTE!!** As a reminder, please make your checks payable to: Youth Challenge of Ct., Inc. and in the memo write "MFW." "The Lord bless you and keep you, The Lord make His face shine upon you and be gracious to you. The Lord lift up His countenance upon you and give you peace." Numbers 6:24,25 and Galatians 6:9 - "And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart." Enjoy your Thanksgiving!

Rev. Marva Jones



The Reverend Marva Downes,
Director

Trinity College "Do It Day"

Trinity College Students posed for a photograph before resuming their Volunteer Community Service at YCMW on September 6, 2008



THANKSGIVING PIES

HURRY! HURRY! HURRY!

Order Your YCMW Homemade Thanksgiving Pies

FLAVORS:

Pumpkin, Apple, Sweet Potato, Cherry, Cheesecake, Blueberry, Chocolate Creme

Deadline for orders 11/21/08

Deadline for pickup 11/26/08

Sponsoring people to purchase pies - Not A Bad Idea!!

Financial donations or ingredients are welcomed!

Call us at (860) 527-2000

Upcoming Events

YC ALUMNI SERVICE

November 28, 2008
221-225 Greenfield Street
Hartford, CT 06112

YC ALUMNI HOMECOMING BANQUET

February, 2009
For More Information
Call (860) 728-5199