



TRACK MINISTRY NEWS

Race Track Chaplaincy of America, Pennsylvania Division, Inc.

www.rtca-pa.org

Sharing God's Love at Philadelphia Park

FALL 2017



A few weeks ago on a Sunday night we had a spaghetti, meatballs, and salad dinner. It was all provided by an extended family that had asked to do this. That night someone asked if they could share their testimony. I read a Scripture that they wanted read and their testimony was the sermon for that service!

We thank God for answering our prayers to bring many to the saving knowledge of Jesus Christ. Please continue to pray this and that all those saved would also grow in all ways pleasing to the LORD.

Worshipping the Lord Together

Leading people to Jesus and worshipping the LORD together are the two greatest things that I do as a chaplain at the racetrack. Worship services are times when we pray together, sing praises and worship, read Scripture, and there is teaching from Scripture. At least once a month we also celebrate the Lord's Supper.

It is always a great inspiration when race trackers themselves are willing to lead portions of the service. Lending their talents in leading the praise and worship time, reading scripture, or anything!

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MESSAGE FROM THE CHAPLAIN



In 2008, Matt Weinstein and his wife lost their entire life savings when Bernie Madoff's 'investments' were discovered to be a Ponzi scheme. Bernie Madoff had been the former chairman of the NASDAQ. A very trusted person, but when he got caught, tens of thousands of people who had trusted Madoff to invest their money lost it all. There were Madoff customers who had to take their mothers out of the nursing home because they couldn't afford it anymore. There was a 94-year-old man who took a job working as a box-boy in the supermarket. There were many people who were very bitter.

Matt says that he was, "numb...I had a huge amount of shame. You know, it was all-encompassing...I couldn't go to sleep without thinking about it. It was just overwhelming." It was only by breaking through his isolation and connecting with other people that Matt was able to start the process of recovery. Not long after Madoff's scheme was exposed, others who lost their savings in the scam got together one night for dinner.

When they met, they went around, and answered the question, "If you had to have done one thing different, what would you do differently?" The first three people that spoke all said, "I would not change a thing. My heart is so open. I feel so connected to other people. I feel so connected to myself. I feel so present and alive right now, no amount of money could bring me to this place."

There was a lot of anger. There was a lot of shame. One take-away was - I don't have to be a perpetual victim. We will experience crisis in our lives. What

¹ God is our refuge and strength, an ever-present help in trouble. ² Therefore we will not fear, though the earth give way and the mountains fall into the heart of the sea, ³ though its waters roar and foam and the mountains quake with their surging.

– Psalm 46:1-3 (NIV)

matters is how I internalize this. One can believe that whatever happens, I can grow from it, I can learn from it, and I can get stronger from it.

Epictetus taught that people are not disturbed by things but by the view they take of them. Pain and suffering doesn't come so much from what happens to us, but from the stories we tell ourselves about the consequences, the future, and what is going to happen as a result. Epictetus' famous quote is something like, "We cannot choose our external circumstances but we can always choose how we respond to them." We can always choose how we react.

In a few weeks we Americans will celebrate Thanksgiving - that special holiday where celebrants choose to give thanks for the past year, and the promise of the year ahead. Thankfulness or gratitude is the most important quality in human life. It is the most important response, the most important reaction, which one can take. If one is not grateful he or she will almost surely think they are a victim; and a sense of victimhood is the single biggest reason people commit evil. Ingratitude is also the source of unhappiness. Gratitude is the indispensable element of happiness. In order to have these they must be practiced. God help us to count our blessings – Amen!

And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.

– Romans 8:28 (NIV)

Several New Workers and Volunteers – PTL!

We have been blessed to have **Tricia Morrissey** start to work for the Chaplaincy at the beginning of August. She is working two to four days a week. You may have spoken with her on the phone. We thank the Lord for sending her to us.

Fran Siegel has been volunteering three to four days a week for over a year. She is learning to do everything and is a great help.

Carmen Harris is still with us as well. She works two mornings a week and helps as needed. She will probably be doing a lot of shopping the next two months as we prepare to celebrate the birth of our Savior!

Bob Valentine continues to drive people to doctors' appointments and a host of other things. We also have **JD Graham** who has been doing this faithfully for over a year now!



Racetrack Chaplaincy 2017 Harvest Party. Top: Fran, Kelly and Rey. Bottom left: Tricia serving at the Harvest Party. Bottom right: Children enjoying the party.

Upcoming Special Events:

- ◆ **10/28** Harvest Celebration
- ◆ **11/23** Thanksgiving Service and Feast
- ◆ **12/16** Childrens Christmas Party
- ◆ **12/25** Christmas Service, Gift Giving, and Feast for residents and anyone who would like to come



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ANNOUNCEMENTS

Special Needs:

Thanksgiving Turkeys, Hams, and other traditional food items
HELP WITH PURCHASING AND PREPARING CHRISTMAS PRESENTS

We have many basic needs for household items, clothing, and food. Donations can be accepted seven days a week from 8 am – 9 pm. For special arrangements do not hesitate to call the office. Please do call ahead and/or email so we can send a thank you, and leave time for us to get back to you so you know that security has been notified that you are coming.

If you are not sure whether we can use what you have to donate feel free to call, but most likely we can use it or have a friend who needs it.

We now especially need REFRIGERATORS, MICROWAVES, WORK BOOTS/ SHOES (of all sizes), BELTS, SPAM, BAKED BEANS, RED BEANS, CANNED SOUPS, STEWS/CHILIS, CANNED FRUIT, AND TOILETRIES.

Evidence of God's Work at the Track

Ruiz is a tough guy. Anyone would tell you that nothing could get to Ruiz. Little did anyone know. Ruiz has struggled with depression and a sense of inferiority from, among other things, the inability to read. This winter when his trainer was not able to pay him most of what he was owed things really came to a breaking point.

I got him to talk to me a few times when I noticed he didn't seem to be himself. He told me about his financial trouble and how his family was counting on him to send them money. He didn't want to ask for help. He didn't want to even accept help. Gradually I got him to accept various forms of assistance by asking him to, "Please, let me help you. We have plenty. It will just go to waste," etc. We became friends. We speak a few times every week, not usually in my office.

We were in my office on one occasion, not long after I had given him a Bible. He brought his Bible with him and asked me about places on the web where the Bible could be read aloud. I helped him download an app onto his phone, praying that I could find something that would help him, because I had never done this. He then just confessed that he could not read. He started to talk about a number of things, mainly about God, and things I had been sharing with him. The next thing I know we were praying to God and talking to one another. The next thing I know he was praying and asking God to forgive him, confessing his faith in God, and asking the Lord Jesus to be His Savior....I have also helped him to begin attending a class for adults who want to learn to read.

Suzette has been through many trials and temptations, over many years on the backstretch of several tracks across the country. She has struggled with abusing more than one substance. I helped her get clean from one a



few years ago. She stayed clean for longer than average, but sometime shortly after she left PARX for other tracks she started drinking. As so often is the case, alcohol was considered OK by her. It is legal and she thought it was different.

Now she knows she has a personality that makes using intoxicating substances especially dangerous for her. It is common for someone who stops abusing substances to relapse. Relapse happens, typically, more than once before the user stops abusing for the rest of his/her life.

In Suzette's case I am especially optimistic this time because she also has embraced her need for the Lord. She prayed with me a few weeks ago to ask Jesus into her heart and asked Him to help her stay clean for good this time.

She has learned a lot about herself. She has been greatly humbled. She is far more open to receiving the long term ongoing help that she needs - going to meetings several times a week, praying and reading Scripture. Pray that she continues to heal and grow. She has lost her license. Please pray that we can continue to get her to some outside meetings as well so she can establish healthy friendships.

Racetrack Chaplaincy Joyful Thanksgivings:

When I attended the **Tioga Association** meeting I was overwhelmed by the donations that were gathered! It was a great joy to fellowship with you. The two truckloads of item are blessing many here at the track. Special thank you to Pastor Glenda Hammond from Tioga Baptist Church for organizing this.

Tony and Vicky Carango have been volunteering their time by delivering food on Tuesdays and Fridays. They have been doing this for several months and are very dedicated to this helpful task. I had been doing it, but they have a bigger vehicle and it is a tremendous help!