



Sharing God's Love at Christmas: A Look at the Apple Tree Program

Jesus is God's Gift to Mankind. This is the Season for us to share the Good News of Christ's Birth. The Holidays can also be a time that hurts the most, especially when you are down and out. It is hard for many people to spend a Christmas without presents or a table of plenty. This could also be a time when people will walk past brightly decorated houses yet know they are returning to a house without heat, lights, food or gifts under the tree. But it doesn't have to be this way. Those with a generous heart can fill the void in a child's heart at Christmas. For over 33 years, Kingsway Prison and Family Outreach has been collecting presents for the children of incarcerated parents. The children are innocents caught in the middle of a bad situation they did not create. The Apple Tree Project let's them know there are many people who care about them and their well being. The inmates first fill out an application stating the child's name, age, gender and address. Kingsway then collects donations, toys and books, wraps them according to gender and mails them to the addresses given. We rely solely upon volunteer help and they put in many hours of service to make the Apple Tree Program a success. Last year, Kingsway packaged and mailed out over 400 boxes of presents to those children in need. Through this project, Kingsway emphasizes that Jesus, God's Gift to all Mankind, is the reason we celebrate Christmas and looks to share His Eternal Love with the World.

Volunteers Needed

We deeply appreciate the help provided to this ministry each year for The Apple Tree Project and Inmate Christmas. You may also want to consider volunteering with wrapping and packaging this year. Wrapping begins in December. Call the office to find times available during the day, or arrange to bring a group at a time convenient for your group.



¹⁸ But Jesus said, Suffer little children, and forbid them not, to come unto me: for of such is the kingdom of heaven.

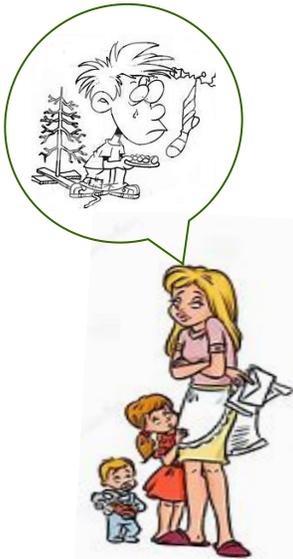
Matthew 19:14 (KJV)



Volunteers Wrapping



Why Apple Tree?



Apples have seeds and we pray that these seeds will grow as love grows in the receivers and the givers and together we can see a harvest of life changing events and have negative cycles broken. Now it is harvest time and there is a chance to share the Love of Jesus with the children as well as their parents and guardians. People often ask why we care about these people who have committed horrible crimes or are struggling with drug addiction and who find themselves incarcerated. The answer is that God and Jesus Love and Care for them, therefore, so should we. A realistic fact is that the vast majority of those imprisoned will eventually return to their communities. We want them to return as reformed people who are responsible and caring, who want to make a positive contribution to society and not return to a life of criminal behavior. We want them to be accepted as people who have paid their debt to society and want to live their lives with New Hope and New Beginnings. Kingsway wants to help these people, once seen as criminals, to lose their negative stigma and become prosperous individuals who can then share their time to help others who have been in their shoes.

Thank You Letter

To whom it may concern,
 My name is Ms. Georgia, I would like to thank all of you for all the gifts that my grandson Kayden received on Christmas Day. God Bless you all, Kingsway Prison & Family Outreach, and Christian Community.

“For Every Mountain You Brought Me over, For every Trial You’ve Seen Me Through. “Hallelujah”!!
 Thank You Kingsway Volunteers
 God Bless,
 Georgia & Kayden



*God Sent His Son in the Form of Man
 That Event Changed the Course of Man*

So Let Us Rejoice

*The Battle Has Been Won
 For Those Who Accept His Son*





God's Christmas Miracle



A good many years ago, when we were in the midst of the Apple Tree Project, an incident happened that I will never forget. We had come to a place where most of the presents were packaged and ready for shipment. That year, someone had donated sports-based winter coats and food boxes for Christmas dinner. A lady came in and asked if we could help her with Christmas gifts for her children. The Salvation Army had sent her to Kingsway because she had missed their deadline for the application process. They told her Kingsway might be able to help her with the gifts. We had very little left over, but sometimes people bring in extra presents and that year they had. She then proceeded to tell us her story. This lady had always volunteered at non-profits such as the Salvation Army. She was a single mother with three children, two teenage boys and a girl. The father was in prison and had not been involved in their upbringing. She had always been employed and kept the household running. But this Christmas had turned out to be different for her. The week before she had lost her job. She had planned out her paydays so that she could buy gifts for her kids. The circumstances now made that impossible. Her oldest teenage son had taken it hard when she told him that there would be no Christmas presents that year. She said he was bitter with life due to his father's incarceration and their financial circumstances. The woman said the children had requested specific gifts for Christmas. We showed her where the leftover presents were and told her to pick out some things for her children. When she came back with the gifts, she was crying. One of the winter sports coats had a team logo on it. It was the one her oldest son had wanted for Christmas. She also had a football with the specific name brand her youngest son had wanted and the gift for her daughter was something she had requested. The woman wrapped all the children's gifts, crying with joy the whole time. As she started to leave, we asked her if she had food for Christmas. She replied, "No." We then gave her stuffing, mashed potatoes, cranberry sauce, a turkey and biscuit mix. She started crying again and thanked us for our kindness. **God had created a Christmas miracle.** It should be noted that Kingsway is one of the few agencies that give gifts to children over 12 years old.



Inmate Christmas Bags



For over 30 years, Kingsway Prison and Family Outreach has been putting together gift bags for inmates at Christmas. The items, which are approved by the Correctional Facilities, include toothpaste, chap stick, a notepad and pencil. Kingsway feels the Love of Jesus and the true meaning of Christmas need to be shared with everyone, including those who are incarcerated. Volunteers and donations are what make this program such a success. On average, Kingsway will distribute around 5,000 of these gift bags each Christmas.



Kingsway's Programs Helped....

***410** Children received Christmas Gifts through The Apple Tree Project 2017 (Christmas for Inmate Children)

- *5,000+** Inmate Christmas bags in 2017
- *Weekly** Fellowship at Kingsway Office
- *Ex-offenders** were supplied with hygiene products and bus tickets. Household items were supplied for ex-offenders trying to make a new start, such as air mattress, sleeping bags, towels, wash clothes and dish liquid. Food items from our small pantry.
- *220** Inside Prison Church Services & Bible Studies
- *Women** in Rockingham/Harrisonburg Regional Jail and Middle River Regional Jail were visited weekly
- *1,060** Birthday Cards sent to inmates
- *5,690** Holiday Cards sent to inmates
- *Encourager** Program (correspondence with inmates)
- *Over 300+** request letters from ex-offenders and inmates

Inside Prison Services

- Augusta Correction Center for Men:** *Six times a month*
- Fluvanna CC for Women:** *Weekly Bible Studies*
- Middle River Regional Jail:** *Biweekly Bible Studies*
- Rockingham/Harrisonburg Regional Jail:** *Weekly Chaplain Services*
- Coffewood CC:** *Every Other Month*
- Cold Springs:** *Once a Month*



Why I Volunteer at Kingsway Ministries: A True Story of Redemption and Salvation

In the winter of 2015, I had just been released from incarceration and was told of a place that helps people like me: Kingsway Prison and Family Outreach. And so I went in and was immediately immersed in the chaos that is the Apple Tree Project. Ever since that day I felt that the Lord had called me to continue this Good Work and as a result, I started coming every day I could and three years later I am still coming in every day the office is open to do God's Work in helping people both inside prisons and those reentering society. Kingsway has given me a purpose in life and has truly redeemed and saved this once lost soul. May God continue to Bless Kingsway and its mission to care for all of God's Precious Children!

Wayne Berman, Volunteer

**Louise's Corner**

Sometimes you feel you have really failed with a person trying to do right and return to society. This happened to me a couple of months ago. A young lady, a repeat offender, was released after spending 4 years in prison. She came to Kingsway for help and also to a Peer Support Group. She came out of prison homeless and had come to see me because I was her chaplain when she was in jail. We tried to find her a place to live or a shelter to get her off the street so she could start over. We took her to the Salvation Army, but to no avail as she had caused problems there years ago and they were not willing to take a chance. I called Staunton Mission, and she was taken to them. She was helped and found her son in the Tidewater area of Virginia and went there. I lost contact with her and was afraid she was back in the system. I checked, and she was not, and that same day I went to the Post Office and had a letter from her thanking us for everything we did to help her. The first week she was in Newport News she got a job, the second, she got a company vehicle and the 4th week a 2 bedroom townhouse to live in. God is good. Her words to me were thanks for not giving up on me and encouraging me not to give up on God. She is now active in a church. Praise God.

Our Mission:

Our Mission: "Ministering through the heart of Jesus to the broken hearts of those impacted by the criminal justice system, both those incarcerated and re-entering and their families."



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The Banner is published as a bridge between you, Kingsway's supporters and the hands-on prison and family outreach ministry of Kingsway.

The Banner welcomes your comments, suggestions, and questions.

Is there something of interest you would like to know about?

Let us know.

Also remember, the Banner is a means of raising funds to carry on the work at Kingsway.

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