



FOOTPRINTS

NEWSLETTER

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A Word from our Executive Director

Some of you may have heard my testimony, but I want to share a portion of my testimony again, to remind you that God is still a deliverer; that the same God who called to Moses out of the burning bush, and then brought the children of Israel out of bondage in Egypt; that this same God brought me out after 28 years of incarceration.

I am from a big family, six sisters and a brother. When I was six years old, my dad went to the hospital where he died from diabetes. Later that same month, our house burned down and we lost everything except the clothes on our backs. After my dad died, I began to get into trouble. My oldest sister said I turned mean. I assume too, like my mother, who had two nervous breakdowns, that I was overcome by the circumstances. At age 13, I started drinking and smoking and before turning 16, I had been to juvenile detention a few times for different things. At 16, I had literally fought my way right out of school into prison. My first trip to jail and on to prison was for having a stolen gun and car theft. Over the next few years, I was in and out of prison two more times for burglary, drug sales, and robbery. I had begun using drugs during this time and it became a part of who I was. This is a life-style that tends to take over a person's life and I was no exception to that rule, my life was in a downward spiral.

By the time I was 28 years old, I had 6 felony convictions, which classed me as a habitual offender. Some of you may remember the 3 strikes you're out, Habitual Offender Law that passed in 1980 and went into effect in May of 1980. In 1983 I was arrested for 2 robbery cases and was sentenced as habitual offender to 2 Life without parole sentences. This was my 4th trip to prison and one of my biggest problems was that I knew how-to live-in prison, but could not live free. In prison, the strong survive best and I was a fighter, I had fought all my life. Although we didn't have a boxing ring, we did have boxing gloves and I boxed. I was able to take care of myself in different ways, I ran a store, a football parlay, and did other things to survive.

So, when I got back to prison this last time, it was the same old same old for me, in and out of lockup. Anyway, while there, I heard about a ministry called Kairos and decided to sign up for this weekend event because they bring good food, cookies, coffee and lemonade. When I was released back to general population I signed up and was chosen to go. It was during that weekend, that I experienced the love of God in an overwhelming way!

Afterwards I knew 2 things: (1) That God is real. I had prayed before and was raised to believe, but He was never real in my life before this! I had done these things for selfish reasons. (2) That God loves me.

I wasn't able to make a commitment at the time, but 6 weeks later, the words I heard that weekend still burning in my heart and mind, I knew I needed to talk to God. I needed to explain to Him all the reasons I could not become a Christian in a maximum-security prison. Just like Moses, I gave God my long list of reasons, yet after our talk, all these things didn't seem to matter, and I made a commitment to Christ on December 31, 1984.

For the next 25 years I studied and literally experienced Romans 12:1,2 where Paul said. **"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your minds, so that you may discern what is the will of God – what is good and acceptable and perfect"** (Rom. 12:2 NRSV).

I went to a Drug Treatment Center called New Outlook Therapeutic Community. It was in the prison where I was, and I went to the program because the conditions there were better than any other place in the prison. It was an 18-month program, but it took me 2 years to graduate and I stayed with them 11 more years. I learned about human behavior, addiction, treatment, and recovery.

I said all that to say that I needed a lot of training before I could be released. God gave me a heart for



ALBERT PUGH
CREAA Executive Director



The Bryan Clay House

Our transitional home is not a handout, it is a hand up, and a way forward for those that truly want to re-start their lives. Our first Board of Directors meeting was held October of 2017. From that first board meeting we have not stopped, opening our first transitional home for men in Cullman, Alabama on April 1, 2018.

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men who have been through similar situations as me. After serving over 28 years, God made a way for me to be released on August 1, 2011. I worked in a Steel Fab plant for 6 months. This was my proving ground! Then I got a call from an old friend who had followed my life and knew I'd made changes. He worked for the Foundry Ministries and they had an opening for a Christian counselor. After 3 interviews I was hired by Pastor Bill Hintz and went to work on March 1, 2012. I worked there for 7 years before starting Cullman Re-Entry.

In September of 2017, through the grace of God and with the help of many friends, myself, Dr. Bill Peinhardt and Jo Kreps established CREEA, a mother I met through the Foundry and a mother who lost her son to addiction. The vision was a transitional home for men that would provide a safe place for those who had no place to go after completion of addiction-related programs, prison, and or other programs. I started CREEA because I had a heart for men who needed help. Plus, I had heard stories and seen many who were not treated

fairly and I wanted to make sure they were treated right! We all wanted to make a difference. Our transitional home is not a handout, it is a hand up, and a way forward for those that truly want to re-start their lives.

Just like Moses and the burning bush, I am living testimony that our God is still the Deliverer. By the grace of God, I am where I am, because my encounter with Jesus at Kairos changed the whole course of my life! I thank God that I turned aside to look at my burning bush because from that moment on, my life has never been the same. The ministry of CREEA is making a difference and has given me the opportunity to minister to men that our God is indeed real and that God truly loves them! In closing, I want to say thank you for all your prayers and support, we could not do it without you!

CREEA Executive Director - *Albert Pugh*



ROUNDTABLE SMALL GROUPS



For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.

(Jeremiah 29:11 NIV)



Mark and the new house dog Max

Volunteer Highlight—A Living Testimony

CREEA VOLUNTEER

MARK LAMBERT

What led you to the Bryan Clay House?

I met John Augustine at an AA meeting and through John, I was introduced to John Means, where I was asked to become a Roundtable Small Group Leader for Roundtables at the Bryan Clay House. In addition to leading Roundtables, a few days a week I come spend some time with the men in the afternoons. I also have been known to smoke some ribs for the men and I take great joy in seeing them enjoy some good food and good fellowship.

How has volunteering at the Bryan Clay House blessed you?

I have been building relationships here at the Bryan Clay House, which gives me the opportunity to lead men from where I once was, to where I am now. I see myself in them, so it gives me a unique perspective to understand what they are going through; to connect with them in real way, and to do for them what someone once did for me, that has brought me to where I am now.

What do you see in the men at the Bryan Clay House?

I see hope in the men, a hope with a future. I see hope build in them as they begin to change. I see hope firsthand as the process of change begins, and as transformation takes place in each of the men. I am proud to be a part of their change, as they take the necessary steps to move forward toward a successful life.

What life lessons do you see at work at the Bryan Clay House?

I see the staff of the Bryan Clay House leading by example and practicing on a daily basis what they are teaching. It is a ministry to the staff, and I have witnessed their willingness to go the extra mile to impact the men who come to the Bryan Clay House.

And what would you want others to know about the Bryan Clay House?

I would want others to know that everyone deserves another chance. I would others to know that there is hope with a future for the men here at the Bryan Clay House, and that I am blessed to be a part of what God is doing here.

Current Ministry Needs

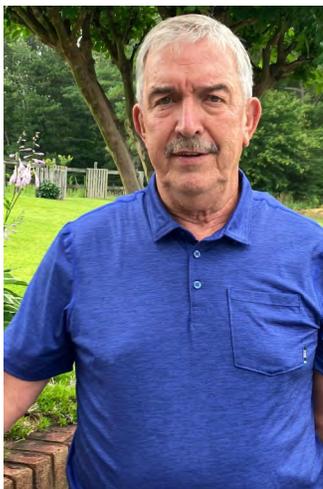
- ⇒ Replace Field Lines
- ⇒ Roof Repairs
- ⇒ Pressure Wash House
- ⇒ Repaint House
- ⇒ Replace Flooring in downstairs bathrooms
- ⇒ Take out carpet and replace flooring upstairs
- ⇒ Replace twin beds in Sanctuary
- ⇒ Replace Chester drawers in Sanctuary
- ⇒ Replace stove with Commercial Stove in Kitchen
- ⇒ Landscaping needs: replace flowers and shrubbery outside, add mulch
- ⇒ Clear Land and add dirt to future building sites
- ⇒ Build wood benches around three crosses in the side yard for outside worship services

Grants and Donors

Grants and donations are the financial backbone for any non-profit organization. We here at CREAA are primarily self-sufficient, but we also need financial support for our daily operations. And, we have never been short in meeting our needs. This is because of all of you who have supported our mission. We want to give a special thanks to everyone out there who has supported these young men and our mission. When a community supports a mission like this one, you support the men who use us for support. This also helps in fighting crime and recidivism. When a donor gives to a ministry like this they are directly involved in a societal solution to homelessness and incarceration.



New Camper Donated to CREAA



BOB BURGESS
CREAA Board Member

The Life of a CREAA Board Member

What led you to the Bryan Clay House?

I am a member of a weekly prayer-breakfast group. Several years ago, one of our members invited Albert Pugh to join our group. Within a year or two Albert shared with us that he was being called to develop a ministry to men who were coming out of rehab or prison to help them successfully transition back into society. Over the next six months or so, our table discussions and prayers led Albert to found CREAA and open the first Bryan Clay House. So, I have known about the Bryan Clay House since its inception. When CREAA was just a year or two old, I was asked to serve as a member of the Board of Directors. Shortly after we opened the current Bryan Clay house, I began volunteering on Thursday evenings and those meetings soon developed into the Round Table small groups that we have presently.

How has being a Board Member and volunteering at the Bryan Clay House blessed you?

As a Board Member, I see the inner workings of this ministry and am afforded the opportunity to have a role in helping CREAA grow to meet the varied needs of the residents that we serve. As a volunteer, I get to know some of the residents. As I share their struggles and celebrate their successes I am more and more impressed with the great work God is performing through CREAA. My involvement here has strengthened my prayer life, as I have committed to pray daily for this ministry and the guys in my Round Table group. Since my retirement, I have served God by being very involved in volunteer service at my church, St. Andrews. CREAA has blessed me to the point that I recently resigned from some of my duties at church in order to serve God by spending more time helping at the Bryan Clay House.

What opportunities do you see for the men at the Bryan Clay House?

Our residents are provided with a place to live that is safe and comfortable, where they feel accepted and loved, and where they can begin to take responsibility for developing a productive life again. They have the opportunity to prove their continuing success as they are monitored regularly and held accountable for the results of that testing. They are provided with opportunities for employment with companies that pay well enough for them to pay their way while they are with us and begin to save for a productive life upon leaving the Bryan Clay House.

Most importantly, through our staff and our volunteers, our residents have the opportunity to meet and get to know Godly men, who rely on God daily and credit Him with the success they have experienced in life. Our residents benefit most from these men showing up regularly to share the love of God with them.

What life lessons do you see at work at the Bryan Clay House?

Our residents are learning how to share, as they learn how to give and take just by living in community with 30 other men. They are learning accountability, as they are required to be on time for work, for meetings and services at the Bryan Clay House and for curfew. They are learning how

to manage real money. In some cases, more than they have ever had before. They are learning how to manage their idle time without reverting to the activities they once enjoyed. They are learning conflict resolutions that don't involve anger or physical altercation. They are learning that they are not alone in their path through recovery and on to productivity.

What would you want others to know about the Bryan Clay House?

The Bryan Clay House is not just serving the men who live here, we are serving the entire community. By giving these men the personal, spiritual and social tools that they need to succeed, we are significantly raising the probability that our residents will be able to overcome their addictions and leave the Bryan Clay House as better workers, better fathers and better neighbors, not only improving their lives but in turn we are improving our community with each productive citizen that we reintroduce to society. We won't ever have a 100 percent success rate, but we are doing a great work on a shoestring budget, 90 percent of which is self-sustaining. We need and deserve financial assistance from state and local governments as well as from civic organizations, churches and individuals. If we had the money, we could add more facilities and more services and make an even bigger positive impact on Cullman County and Alabama.

The Life of a CREA Resident

JIMMIE BATEMON

How did you find out about the Bryan Clay House?

My sister set it up through the Cullman County Sheriff's Office with Captain Potter and then Albert Pugh. When I was released from Florida, I took a cab from Florida to Cullman, paying \$500.00 cash to come straight here to the Bryan Clay House in Cullman, Alabama.

What did you experience while being at the Bryan Clay House?

I've experienced that before you can move forward with your life, you need to focus on what matters most in your future: family, kids, your self-esteem and confidence, as well as getting motivated for the future with the help of God and others.

How did it help prepare you to move forward to take your next steps toward a successful life?

It prepared me by motivating me to be successful in every aspect of my life; that if you believe and have faith in his word and Jesus, that He will take you towards the successful path that God has placed you on in life.

What were some of the key things that you learned?

I have learned that in life to be a leader not a follower, struggling is a part of life learning to deal with it on regular basis with build your strength to overcome obstacles in life and achieve your goals in any situation.

And what would you want others to know about the Bryan Clay House?

If you or a loved one is having trouble with substance abuse or being released from prison or jails, and are unable to get help, feel free to contact the local County sheriff's office or The Bryan Clay House. You can talk directly to one of the staff members or Albert Pugh, John Means, John Augustine, directors of the facility for help in your situation. It is a great opportunity to connect with your community and your family in every aspect of your lives.

What progress have you made since your arrival at the Bryan Clay House?

Since my stay here at the Bryan Clay House, I've become the manager of the transportation and a full-time van driver in charge of maintenance of the vehicles and their upkeep. I also transport men back and forth to work and assist them with obtaining jobs all over town with the temp agencies here in our community. We are connected with all sorts of jobs hiring in Cullman County and I love seeing the men of the Bryan Clay House working and moving forward in their lives!



"Thy Word is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."

(Psalm 119:105 KJV)

2nd Quarter Training - Association of Christian Recovery Ministries | HELD JUNE 22



SPEAKER: docsnipes.com

Dr. Dawn-Elise
SNIPES



CREAA Executive Director, Albert Pugh ministering at the Morgan County Jail



Moses was keeping the flock of his father-in-law Jethro, the priest of Midian; he led his flock beyond the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire out of a bush; he looked, and the bush was blazing, yet it was not consumed. Then Moses said, "I must turn aside and look at this great sight, and see why the bush is not burned up." When the LORD saw that he had turned aside to see, God called to him out of the bush, "Moses, Moses!" And he said, "Here I am." Then he said, "Come

no closer! Remove the sandals from your feet, for the place on which you are standing is holy ground." He said further, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And Moses hid his face, for he was afraid to look at God."

*Exodus 3:1-6
NRSV*



Will You Turn Aside and Look?

One of my all-time favorite stories in the Bible is found in Exodus 3:1-6, where Moses encounters the burning bush while he was tending the sheep of his father-in-law Jethro. I have often wondered what went through his mind when Moses saw the burning bush. I have also marveled at how this encounter with God would so dramatically change the course of Moses' life. The fact that Moses had even made it this far is a miracle in and of itself. His story is full of plot twists and drama. Yet, the real drama and plot twists for Moses were still yet to come.

There are also several questions that come to my mind as well. What would have happened if Moses had never turned aside to look? And how many times in my own life, have I missed my own burning bushes and my own opportunities to stand on holy ground? The truth we must embrace is that the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob never stops pursuing us. This is why I firmly believe in the mission and the ministry of CREA and what God is doing in men He has sent into our care at the Bryan Clay House. These men are burning bushes and it is our opportunity to turn aside and see the great work God is doing in these men. It is holy ground that I am standing upon and I am humbled that God has given me this opportunity to experience the miracle of these men. Many have counted them out; sent them out into the wilderness with no hope to return.

Yet, God has called each and every one of them by name. Their stories are far from over. I am convinced that their best is yet to come. There will certainly be plot twists and turns, but the dramatic plan of God is still in motion and God is not done yet!

I would like to challenge you to turn aside and look, so that you experience the burning bushes God has placed before you. Don't miss your opportunity to stand on holy ground or for God to dramatically change the course of your life! I would also like to invite you to be a part of what God is doing at the Bryan Clay House. There are many miracles just waiting for you to come on the scene and see for yourself that the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob never stops pursuing us even in the wilderness! God is not done with any of us yet! The best is yet to come!

Here are just a few of the ways that you can partner with us:

Prayer

Becoming an employer to residents

Becoming a Thursday Night Roundtable Small Group Leader

Becoming a mentor

Giving financially

Be sure to also check out our website for additional information on how to become involved: creaa.net

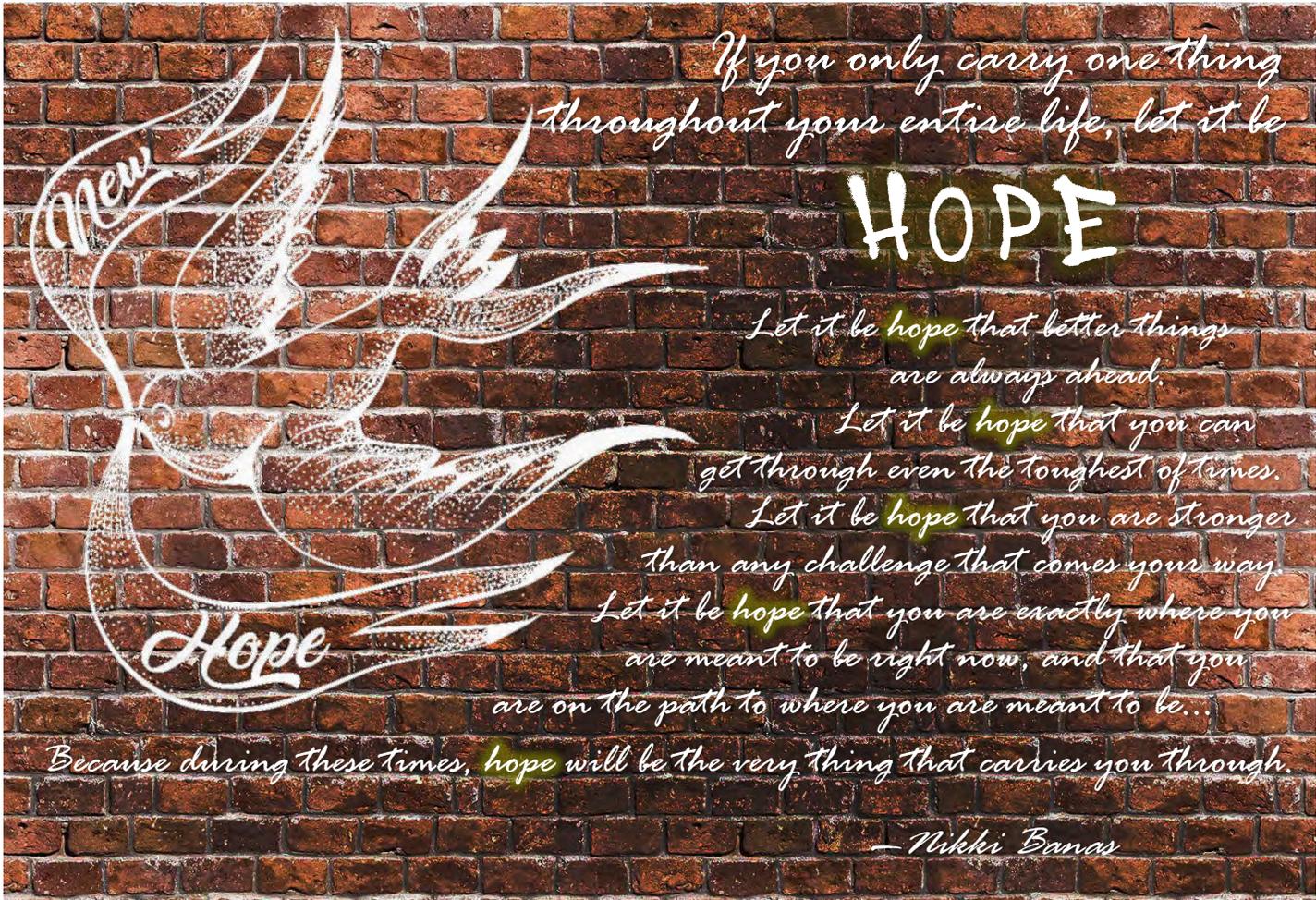
May God continue to bless you
as you turn aside to look!

In Him alone,

JOHN MEANS

CREAA Program Director





If you only carry one thing throughout your entire life, let it be

HOPE

Let it be hope that better things are always ahead.

Let it be hope that you can get through even the toughest of times.

Let it be hope that you are stronger than any challenge that comes your way.

Let it be hope that you are exactly where you are meant to be right now, and that you are on the path to where you are meant to be...

Because during these times, hope will be the very thing that carries you through.

— Nikki Banas



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