

Human Kindness Foundation

a little good news

Spring 2005

TRANSFORMATION: JAMES' STORY

[Editor's Note:] This is the fifth in a series of interviews with people who have gone through significant spiritual change while in the prison system. We at HKF find these stories powerful and inspiring in two ways: First, they serve as a voice – however small – opposing the popular attitude that all prisoners are dangerous criminals incapable of change; second, as a reminder of hope and encouragement to all of us who wonder whether our own transformation is possible.

[from Josh:] James Shute is 14 years into a 45-year sentence for murdering his own great-grandmother – his father's grandmother. He was 19 years old at the time, and a drug addict. His relationship with his dad remains estranged since the murder. His mother (no longer married to his father), inspired by the spiritual transformation James has gone through in the last few years, has moved to North Carolina and now works full-time for Human Kindness Foundation. My mom Sita and I spent about three hours talking with James at Northeast Correctional Complex in Mountain City, Tennessee.

Josh: Let's start with a little bit about who you were before you went into the prison system. In one of your letters you called yourself "a self-centered coward."

I was. Anything I ever did, if there wasn't nothing in it for me, I wouldn't do it. Selfish and very immature, I turned nineteen, like a week before I committed my crime, and I looked about sixteen and I acted about fourteen. I was very, very selfish.

J: Did you have any plan for your life? Like, "When I'm twenty-five, I want to be...?"

Nothing. I didn't have anything really.

J: How old were you when you started messing with drugs?

Fourteen or fifteen. My mom stuck me in treatment a few times over the next few years, but I fought it because she drank a lot and she was out a lot and I thought, *well, she's the one that needs to be in treatment. I don't need to.* When I was seventeen, I got into trouble with crack, and emptied out my mom's bank account and smoked it all up. Now I knew I had messed up. That was the last time I lived with my mom. After that, she put a run-away warrant out on me.

When I got caught, I went into treatment. I stayed there for a month or two and got kicked out for my attitude. I went in there knowing I needed help, but after a month, I just wanted out of there. So I left and thought I could go back home to my Mom's.

My mom picked me up, and I thought I was going home. I was kinda happy. Then she took me to this center where a bunch of people from NA and AA hung out. She gave me a few bucks and she was crying. I didn't know what she was doing. She said, "I can't do anything with you. I hope you stay clean. Call and let me know how you're doing." And I was like, "What?" She left and I just sat there for



Josh Lozoff (left) and James Shute

awhile. Then somebody there ended up talking to me. So I stayed with them for awhile. The next six, seven months I stayed clean, but I ended up getting back on crack.

I stayed off and on with my great-grandmother on my father's side. I called her Granny Ruby. I started stealing stuff from her. I'd steal money, even though any time I needed money, she'd give it to me. I ended up stealing a bunch of CDs from one of my old sponsors and got arrested for it. I spent three days in jail, and it was horrible. It gave me time to think about things, and I promised myself I'd straighten up. I meant it at the time. Finally Granny Ruby bailed me out. She gave me \$20 and went to bed. And I didn't even think. Next morning, I walked out and smoked it up.

That day I finally called my mom and told her I needed help. She knew I just got out of jail and she was real happy I think. She was going to come and help me. But her boyfriend at the time said, "He's got to do it on his own. We can't do nothing for him." And, you know, I understand. They had done everything they could. She wanted to help, but didn't know what to do. She still feels guilty about not coming that time. She did what she thought she had to do. So Granny Ruby came again and

gave me \$30 and I thought I'd smoke one last time and then call the treatment center. By Sunday, I don't remember what was happening but I knew something had to give, this wasn't going to work. I don't know how I got to thinking that I'll just go kill Granny Ruby and take her money.

J: Had you ever done anything violent before?

No, no. I was a coward. When I'd steal stuff from people, I always convinced myself that they owed me. So I was feeling like that about Granny Ruby, like she owed me or something.

So I took a taxi to Granny Ruby's house, and I walked in and she was sitting there at the table playing cards. And I think she said, "What are you doing?" I acted like I was going to play cards with her. I walked in and I picked up an electrical cord, and I walked up behind her and I strangled her. I had a taxi waiting downstairs.

I think about it. All I had to do was take the money. She would have given me the money. And for a long time, that's what everybody was thinking, "Why?" I don't know why.

Sita: Were you high at that time?

Oh, yeah, that was the deal. I was high. And I took her and put her in the closet. I stayed there for the next two days off and on. I ended up selling some of the stuff in her house. My grandmother, who took care of Granny Ruby, was calling, "Where's your great-grandmother?" I said, "She's not here. I don't know." She knew something wasn't right. She just didn't know what was going on.

J: How could they possibly imagine the truth of the situation?

Right. So I'd sleep for a little bit and I would wake up and go sell a radio and go smoke some more rock. And it didn't really hit me until Wednesday morning. I woke up and it was the worst thing I had ever, ever felt, cause it really hit me what I had done. So what do I do now? I didn't know. The deal was, I was going to kill her and then I'll smoke all this crack and then I'll kill myself and that's the way out. And if I'd had a gun I really would have. But I didn't. So I'm thinking of all this stuff I can do. I can walk down and jump off the bridge. Then I thought, I could let the police get here first, and I would pull out some knives to make them shoot me, you know what I mean?

So I'm just sitting there on the couch just waiting. And my grandmother called and said she's coming up. And I said, "You can come up. Everything's all right." So I put the

knives under the couch and heard a knock on the door, and there was the police with her.

J: You called the police, or your grandmother had?

She had. So they came in and I'm trying to act all cool. It was crazy. One of them held me while the other one walked around, and I'm thinking, "Well, they won't see her in the closet." They looked around for a minute and they called some code and put me in handcuffs. That was like a daze, that whole next hour or two, while they were doing their investigation, taping off the crime scene. And that whole time, the only thing I was thinking was, *how can I get this guy's gun and start shooting people or get them to shoot me?* Of course I was in handcuffs. They took me to jail, and I remember telling them, "Man, is there any way I'll get the death penalty over this? I want the death penalty." I told them everything they wanted to know. Everything I could think of.

J: So, you never went to trial?

No, I pled guilty to Second Degree. I got 45 years at 45%. I go up for parole next year for my first time – I don't expect to make it.

J: Okay, now we're getting to the "transformation" part. Do you relate to that word? Do you feel that's what you've gone through?

Right around four years ago, everything started falling into place. I was in a drug class, just because I needed a job and that was how to get one. Everyone was thinking how full of shit this class was and how much they didn't like it, but I kind of liked it. Being around that atmosphere and listening to the guy talking.

J: Was it spiritual at all?

No, it was just something more positive. Someone gave me a copy of *We're All Doing Time* about four months before and I remember looking at it and I thought, *here are some crying convicts, just crying because they can't do their time.* So I threw the book in a box. Then, when I was going to the drug class, things just snapped. I started seeing where I was going. I started noticing all my junkie friends, and I saw that what *they* were doing, I was starting to do. Even though I wasn't using, I hadn't changed. I talked the same. I still acted the same. I saw everybody else and it hit me, *that's going to be me.* Or, *that is me, that's what I'm doing.*

Then I had a dream. Granny Ruby came to me and smiled and she said she wasn't mad. That was it, that was all the dream was, but it felt like more than a dream to me. So I tried to pray. I couldn't even say the word, "God." I made up a nickname to call Him. That was probably the first



Sita, James & Josh

time I'd ever really prayed. And I think that night, I picked up *We're All Doing Time*, and it just started clicking then for real. Then I started meditating.

J: And did your perception at that point change pretty dramatically?

Oh, yeah, like overnight. I came out the next day and I was glowing. I was trying to act normal, but I was glowing. I'd sit at the end of my bed – I had just started meditating – and I would sit there with the TV down low in case my cellie woke up, then I could open my eyes and he would think I was watching TV! That's the way it started. I didn't understand meditating, but I knew there was something to it. It just felt good, even though it didn't make sense.

J: Did your friends notice a difference?

Well, I was real scared of how people were going to take it, so I kept it all to myself. But people did notice it. All my friends were the last I thought would respect it. The one person I was scared to put my values in front of, was the one I ended up with in the cell over here. He was one of the persons who respected it most. He would come get me and say, "You got your hour, are you going to go in there and meditate?" He didn't understand it, but he respected it. The main thing is, I knew it was real. Most of my friends saw I was really changing, that it wasn't just talk. And they really respected it more than I ever thought they would.

J: Did you begin to have a regular routine?

Yeah, I was in a dorm. I thought I could sit on my bed and everybody'd be sleeping at four in the morning, but everybody was walking around. It just wasn't happening. After a few months I finally figured out how to do it. I'd wake up at 3:45 and go downstairs. I found a little hallway in the corner of some offices and it was probably the best solitary place I ever could have found. It got to be real special. I was kinda sad leaving there. I almost didn't come here, because this place has cells.

J: Tell me a bit about the thirty-day silent retreat you did a couple of years ago. How did that come about?

Bo was in silence at that time. And I read about it and thought, *I wonder what people will think of me if I do this?* The only reason I saw for not doing it was worrying about what everybody would think. So then I had to do it. I followed the instructions I got out of the newsletter: no TV, no music, no reading and writing, and eating one meal a day. That was a big deal because I was working out a lot. That part was harder than "no talking." No talking was excellent – I loved it. I could have "no talked" forever. I planned everything in advance. I told everybody around me what I was fixin' to do and I carried a little note that said, "I'm doing spiritual practice for 30 days



and I'm not talking, but if I need to speak, or if I'm causing trouble, let me know and I will."

J: So what would you say was your deepest reason for feeling like it would be a positive experience?

It was just something I felt drawn to do, an intuition thing. Plus it was an offering to God. It's a way I can say I appreciate everything that is going on. That's why I meditate – as my offering, more or less. I did have one problem with staff. They ended up drug-testing me. They thought I was high because I wasn't talking. Even after they saw my note, they were asking me, "Are you on strike? Are you mad?" So they ended up piss-testing me just to make sure. After that, everything was all right. I was sad when the 30 days were over.

S: Any other practices that you're doing now?

Yes. I practice the Presence of God [from Bo's book, *Deep & Simple*]. It's something I do. Maybe I'm schizophrenic or something, but sometimes for the whole day I'm talking to God and it's just my way of doing it. None of this started out with God. Like I said, I had a nickname for God – I couldn't say the word because it felt out of place. Now everything just flows into God.

J: And do you continue to use *We're All Doing Time*?

Oh yeah. Especially the letters. Everybody I talk to about this book, I tell them about the letters. It's mainly Bo's responses to the letters. Because any time I have a problem and I go and look at those letters, I can relate whatever my problem is to one letter or another. He'll say something that just makes sense – that'll make me able to handle it. I think I always felt I was given a second chance at life, but wasn't sure what to do or how to go about it until Bo reminded me. And having hated myself and my life and praying every night to just let me not wake up or get some terrible disease, now it just feels good to be alive, relieved that life wasn't what I thought – that there really is more. I wake up and fall asleep saying thank you. All through the day I can't tell you how many times I just say thank you.

S: Do you have any service opportunities here?

I don't like using the word "service" for some reason. It's a good word when I'm talking to you guys, but when I'm talking to someone else, I just say "do good."

J: Is "doing good" an important part of your path?

I guess so, not in any big ways. I read about other guys in the newsletters starting these programs, and I was thinking, *I have to do some of that.* It never worked out. I tried a few times. I asked a counselor about getting someone to come talk and lead meditation. He said the warden didn't like that kind of stuff. It never seemed to work out.

I always used to wonder, *what can I do? I know I can make it better around here.* Something that bothered me was the trash and how people would leave a mess in the

community bathrooms. I'd go in there and clean up and I'd be cussing. Now I clean it up on my own. Once a night, I'll go around. I figured if I'm not going to do anything about it, I don't have any business complaining. It's something small, but that's what my intuition told me to do.

Plus, this place needs some positive things going on, some positive people. I try to be one of them. I've been the peacemaker sometimes. Sometimes all you have to do is tell somebody, "You know you don't have to do this." I remember a bunch of times, some stuff was fixing to go down, someone was fixing to go stab someone. I know I can't stop everything that happens in prison. But when I was around, I would make a point to tell them, "Hey, look man, you don't have to do this." That's all they needed, because everyone else was egging them on. All they had to hear was somebody telling them they didn't have to. Sometimes it's a matter of saying, "Yeah, I understand."

J: Would you no longer describe yourself as a self-centered coward?

What's the correct definition of self-centered? Just thinking about yourself all the time?

J: To me it means not thinking about how your actions affect other people. One thing that stands out is when you were in Granny Ruby's house and you thought, "Well, maybe I'll just let the cops kill me." It didn't even occur to you how that might affect that cop for the rest of his life. It was all about you. That's a self-centered person.

I hadn't thought about it like that. No, I'm not like that any more. I think about how I affect people all the time.

S: Do you think you're getting out?

I pray... Yeah, I will someday. As long as I don't catch any more charges in here, and I don't die, then they would have to boot me out. So I will, eventually.

J: How do you think your spiritual perspective would change if you were never getting out?

Right now? Not a bit. It wouldn't make a difference. Because when it all started coming together, it made sense that if it wasn't this, it would be something else. You know? Wherever I'm at, I'll smile, I'll laugh, I'll cry. I hear people saying "I'll start living when I get out." And they've been locked up ten years. I ask, "Man, what have you been doing for ten years? That's not living?"

J: Plus it's tough out here. It's tough in prison, but it's not a piece of cake to be outside.

Right. Right now, I understand, this is what I've got and it's cool with me.

J: What does your relationship with your mom mean to you?



James and mom, Pam

Everything. We didn't talk for so long, you know. When I started using drugs, she was into Tough Love. She wasn't going to put up with it. And before I got locked up, I was mad at her for dropping me off after I got out of that program. So we didn't talk until I got locked up. Even then

she didn't know if she was going to come back into my life. But now she's one of my best friends. What I think about all the time is, even if all this was crap, and I was just playing games to myself, it wouldn't matter, because my mom has told me many times she's proud of me, and that is just worth everything. After all I've done, to have her say that and trust me is worth a lot.

S: I see your mom sometimes on a Saturday after she's visited you. She's always beaming.

Yeah, everybody here trips because they say, "You and your mom are close, aren't you? She loves you a lot. You can tell by looking at her." I guess that's different with their moms. I would never do anything to mess that up.

J: I know that you and your dad don't speak to each other. Do you think he knows that you feel remorse?

He probably does, somewhat. He hears stuff from my grandmother. I keep in touch with her. And I told my dad and my grandmother that if they have a problem with my parole, if they didn't want me to get out, I would just not go for parole. I feel so strongly about not putting them through anything else, if that's what it takes, that's what I'll do. I would tell the parole board that I wouldn't go. Then we'll try next time or whatever. I wasn't just bluffing; I meant it and I'll tell them again.

J: You still feel that way?

I should have talked to my mom about it first. She's got her heart set on my parole. But yes. I'm prepared to go with it. As far as my view on Granny Ruby, all she wanted was for me to be happy, everybody tells me that. I didn't have a clue. She was my great-grandmother, she gave me stuff and that's all she was to me. Now, I talk to her all the time and I have more love for her than I ever did.

J: Have you had any more dreams or any feeling of response from her?

Not directly, but I can tell. When I'm doing what I'm supposed to be doing, she's smiling. When I'm not, she's not. She's telling me, "Do something better than that." I tell her every morning I'm going to do something with this day. I'm going to make the best of it – for her. But it's for everybody else as well, and myself.

LETTERS

Dear Bo,

I'm in an INS detention center about to be deported in February. I want to share with you the disease I learned I have – I am bipolar, and mood swings are my worst enemy at this point.

Bo, on top of that, I can't overcome memories from the year of incarceration I spent. The anger toward my attorney who fooled me and the District Atty are so powerful. I have crazy ideas and I am afraid of me. I pray every day to the Lord, I ask forgiveness and wisdom to be able to control my emotions. Bo, I have faith that you can give me some advice.

Sometimes I think putting a bullet in my head is the solution. Way to deal with all the misery and crap we get from this world, why suffer, why bring suffering to my family, they will understand. It might be better to die, regardless of where you go, hell or heaven, light or darkness.

I suffer everyday, I just don't know how to overcome this. Reading and studying the bible helps a great deal, but then the anger and thoughts come back. I'm dying. I think my family will understand if I take my life, and that will be the end of suffering for them, no more pain, no more little problems, just one big problem and one big pain, that at the same time will be the end of everything, the end of me.

Bo, you and your books were a lot of help when I was in jail, you saved my life, but I am about to lose it, I can't battle anymore.

I am about to lose all of my family by being deported. I'm still trying to process that data in my brain, I'm still trying to accept the pain of being deported after nine years in this country.

What is the system doing, what is this country trying to prove, what is the real truth of all?

*"People walk, people think, people dream,
people die"*

"Hope, hope, hope, then faith"

"Me and my life, me and my pain, me"

*"You can help, you can try, you can. Then
we will be friends"*

*"Your light saved my life, your hand writing
gave me a new start. Tomorrow another
letter, another book"*

Thank you Bo, thank you HKF.

I love you, I hate you, D

Dear D,

I'm so sorry to hear about the troubles you're having. It seems like many people are having the hardest times of their lives right now. These are truly tough times all around the world, so please don't feel alone.

I am familiar with suicide. Forty years ago, I tried to commit suicide the week of my eighteenth birthday. Life was horrible and I couldn't imagine any brighter day or happier time for myself, so I took 144 sleeping pills. But my wife, son, and about a million prisoners around the world are glad I was not successful. I'm glad, too. Life has often been painful, but also a very deep adventure of the human spirit.

I know of the unbelievable unfairness and stupidity and cruelty of the INS. It's horrible. I feel our entire country is in the grips of a right-wing dictatorship, and hard times are ahead for all of us. But our spiritual journey is not just about happy times. Our spiritual journey is The Grand Adventure, it's a big movie with each one of us as the star of the movie, and every good movie has tragedy as well as the good times. Look at the life of Jesus. He too was scorned, falsely imprisoned, mocked, tortured and executed. Yet His adventure story is still with us, isn't it? There would be no resurrection without first a crucifixion.

Jesus says to us, "pick up your cross and follow me." Your cross is upon you – you are being unfairly deported and torn away from your family. Jesus says "love your enemies, love those who persecute you." He is giving you the opportunity to reject anger and hatred, and that struggle is upon you also.

I'm trying to show you that God is WITH you, that God is behind all of this, that this is the biggest scene in your movie and you are the hero of the film. You say your family will "understand" if you take your life, but that is not true, my friend. Your family will feel abandoned by you. Your family will see suicide as the answer to hard times.

The government has no more power over your SOUL than Pontius Pilate had over Jesus. Pontius Pilate said to Him, "Do you know the power I have over you? I can free you or crucify you!" and Jesus said, "You have no

power over me other than the power My Father gives you." The government already has your body, don't give them your soul! Your family needs you to stay strong for yourself and them.

This difficult adventure movie is what all my books are about, dear friend. I have had a painful life, and many of my friends around the world have had very painful lives too. There is so much cruelty and unfairness. I feel very close to you in your unhappiness, and I am telling you as your brother, there is a brighter day within you even now, even where you are, as you turn your life over to God, and agree to be a hero in your movie.

By hero, I mean do the right thing: Be strong, be a man of faith, do not hate your enemies, turn your mind to God and offer your willingness to follow His guidance and to receive His help as you move through this frightening deportation. Don't give up your family, be strong for them and continue to help them, to be the man, from wherever you are. Know that God has a solution for you, and pray to recognize it as He reveals it to you. A mind clouded with anger and hatred cannot recognize God's help.

Keep yourself in prayer all the time – not to be *relieved* of your cross, but for the strength to bear it and carry it with dignity. Do the practices – meditation, yoga, breathing, service to others wherever you are. Fill your day and your mind with God's work, don't waste your precious spiritual power on hatred, bitterness or self-pity. God knows and God cares, I promise you. This terrible time in your life is a mystery, not a mistake. Be a man of great faith and great strength, and God will reveal Himself in this. Let me hear from you, okay?

Love, Bo

Dear Brother, thank you for your support. I'm going back to Ecuador tomorrow, I would like to hear from you in the future. These people had me on some medication to control my anger, I hope that when I stop taking this medication I will be able to control my emotions and anger, I've been thinking of coming back to this country and put a bullet in the head of my ex-attorney, and other stupid but refreshing thoughts.

This anger is in my veins, my breath, my heart, I am all fuct up.

I feel a lot better when I help people, my heart enjoys when I can give support to others and that is what I will do in Ecuador, I will visit people in jail and prisons to help them with their suffering.

In God I Trust. Thank you Bo

God Bless All.

Dear D,

I hope this letter finds you safe in Ecuador. I am so sorry for you being deported. I feel this INS stuff is one of the worst cruelties of our government.

And meanwhile, I hope you make the most of it as a spiritual pilgrim who knows he is always with God and never "far from home" in the deepest sense.

D, don't allow yourself excuses for committing violence. Whether you have medication or not, you always have prayer and God. You do not "have to" harm people, including yourself.

There is an ancient prayer you can use for protection from these forces of anger and violence. Sit still and straight, and slowly repeat "The power of God is within me, the Grace of God surrounds me." While repeating the first part, picture yourself strong and still and immovable. While repeating the second part, feel a blanket of golden light surrounding you. I know it sounds corny, but this is a powerful old prayer of protection and it does work if you have the discipline to sit still when you feel like going on a rampage.

Please let me hear from you if you receive this. You can be a good man wherever you are. No excuses.

Love, Bo



Bo & Sita at Welikada Prison in Sri Lanka
August 2004



Dear Friends at HKF,

In your most recent letter you mentioned that many are living healthy, productive lifestyles while in prison. That is exactly what I have been doing. In fact, my life has never been better. My spiritual discipline, working with others each day, and my studies, make all the difference in the world. In fact, if I was not in prison, (got out) I would be doing the exact same things that I'm doing right now. Life is great wherever I go. Not always what I (ego) wants, but most definitely what R needs. I continue to grow and learn. Sometimes painfully, sometimes not. But I'm moving forward ever so slowly and I have no regrets. I'm happy and at peace.

Love & Kindness, R

Dear Bo and Sita,

I've been doing meditation 3 times daily and doing yoga every morning. I used to be angry all the time about being in prison. I was projecting all of my anger outwards towards everyone around me.

You see, I was angry about why I'm here. I was dating this girl who told me she was 19. She even had I.D. stating she was. As we became more involved things happened, all 100% consensual.

Then I ran across somebody who had known her for a long time. This other person said she was only 17. I was really freaked out by this. I did the proper thing and went to the local police station with her I.D. and started asking questions.

They first informed me that she was in fact 17. I showed them the I.D. and they informed me it was fake.

Before I knew it I was detained pending possible arrest. I was 100% honest and even though the I.D. was fake and I was under the impression that she was 19, I ended up in prison for 8 years.

I was in a state of shock for weeks. Thrown in prison for an honest mistake. I was getting into fights left and right. Anger consumed me like a cancer.

A fellow inmate one day put his hand on my shoulder while I thought I was alone crouched down with tears in my eyes. I

had reached total rock bottom. I felt there was no where else to turn.

He stood there with his hand on my shoulder and asked me if I was OK. I didn't reply. After a few minutes he left. I didn't see or hear him leave.

When I finally re-composed myself and looked around, I was alone on a bench, no one was there. When I looked back down on the bench to the right of me was a bible. Below the bible was a book entitled We're All Doing Time.

I took both books back to my cell and set them on my desk, washed my hands and face and peeled an orange.

I began to read We're All Doing Time. I spent the next 3 days not once leaving this cell and read that book from front to back. I tried to find the inmate who left the books and a week later he stopped by my cell to ask how I was doing.

We talked for about 2 hours discussing the book and I went to hand the books back to him. He held up his hand and said "I tell you what, go ahead and hold onto them. When you get your own book in the mail, give 'em to me then."

To look back on now compared to then, I have to laugh. It's like it was a lifetime ago. Maybe that's why what happened to me happened. I honestly now believe that this is part of my journey on the road to inner peace. I had to hit bottom before I realized that the times of doing drugs and drinking needed to end.

I know I've got many miles on this road yet to travel but I believe I'm off to a great start so far.

Thank you both for founding the Prison Ashram Project. I hope it helps many fellow inmates in the future as it is helping me.

Peace, love, and Blessings, LT



GOODWORKS

ART BEHIND BARS

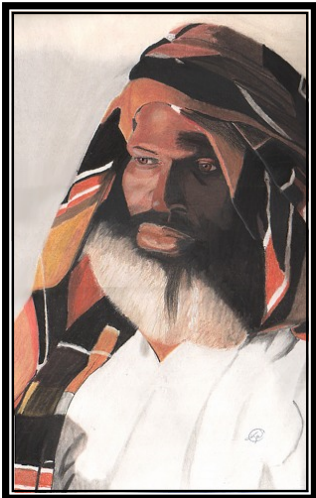
ART BEHIND BARS was started in 1994 by Lynne Vantriglia, to bring out the creative vein she believes is in everyone. She began an art program for women in the Monroe County Detention Center, in Florida, and in 2001 a men's program was started as well.

Their mission, through skill-based training and art education, is to give inmates an opportunity to contribute to society through the donation of artwork. Through both inmate and ex-con art donations, ART BEHIND BARS has raised more than \$64,000 for numerous non-profit organizations nationwide.

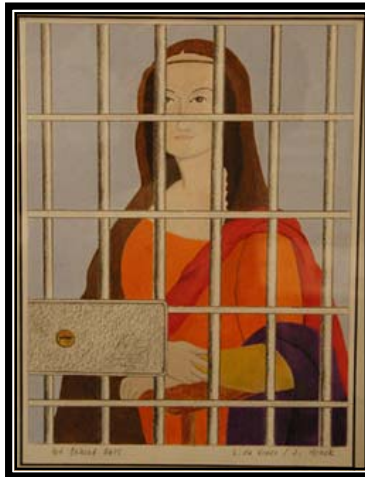
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ART BEHIND BARS participants at an art showing.



Desert Dweller / Leamon Williams, FL



Art Behind Bars / Joseph Houck, VA



America, Home of the Brave, Still
Eric Hines, FL

NEWS, NOTES, AND OFFERINGS

SRI LANKA UPDATE

For those of you who missed our last newsletter, Bo and Sita were invited to Sri Lanka last August by the Sarvodaya Movement – an organization which has brought hope and help to thousands of Sri Lankan villages. Since the tragedy in Southeast Asia last December, we've heard from many of you requesting information about our friends in Sri Lanka. They seem to be safe and are able to be the helpers rather than those in need of help. They've told us of so many heartbreaking stories. Please keep all of the victims of the tsunami in your prayers, dear friends, even though the tragedy is no longer in the headlines.

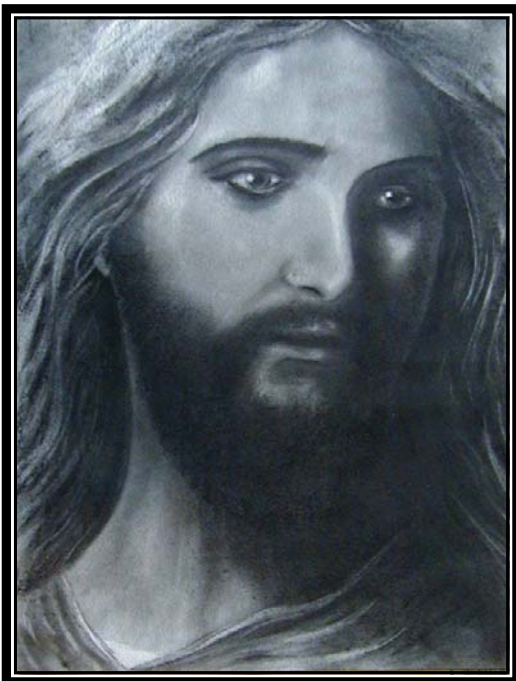
INTERFAITH ORDER OF COMMUNION & COMMUNITY

Become a part of an interfaith "distant" spiritual community. If you are willing to take vows to (1) develop a daily spiritual practice, (2) be tolerant of others in all religious and spiritual paths, (3) not smoke or drink alcohol, (4) not use pornography, (5) not use violence and (6) avoid mind-numbing behavior, we will help and support you on this journey through monthly correspondence. Serious inquiries:

InterFaith Order of Communion & Community
PO Box 211
Sciota, PA 18353

a little good news

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"Jesus" by James Shute
(James is interviewed in this newsletter.)

NEW!

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