

To Our Readers

By D. Rainer Rabb, Feature Reporter

SEPTEMBER IS SUICIDE Awareness Month. We feature a candid discussion about mental health and suicide, how the population has been affected since covid-19, and about the 988 mental health suicide/addiction hotline initiated a year ago (pg. 17).

Learn about the healing power of art and awakening unused potentials on pg. 28. On page 34, we talk to Walter Deckert about his near-death experience. We also learn about writing contest exams (pg. 26), prison marriage (pg. 30), and incarcerated students seeking master's degrees (pg. 33).

We greet new readers on the GTL tablets. We welcome your readership and, hopefully, your subscriptions (guidelines pg. 3).



Prison Fellowship Academy graduates in June from left: Carl, Sandy, Francis, Marissa, Magdi Gorys, Robert Gay, Willie Noble, Joseph Noble, Janet Gaddy, Travell Wilson, Robert Stanley, Caesar Lopez, Nervus Tashchyan, Dennis Patrick, Randy Cole, Tony.

at the table behind.

Prison Fellowship Academy Graduates 12 Participants In June

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ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 14, 2023, 12 Mule Creek State Prison residents graduated from the Prison Fellowship Academy in the Facility 5 Chapel.

The graduates were Randy Cole, Robert Gay, Magdi Gorys, Israel Gaddy, Caesar Lopez, Joseph Noble, Willie Noble, Dennis Patrick, Stanley Premier, Rene Stanley, Nervus Tashchyan, and Travell Wilson.

Prison Ministry manager Tony Fennel welcomed the men who sat in a semi-circle in caps and gowns. He noted that the course which they completed usually takes a year to complete. However, due to covid-19, additional time was required to finish the program. Fennel acknowledged the graduates' commitment to complete the course within their community. He spoke of change, growth, improvement, and the need for positive networks.

"Help other Academy members now enrolled in the course," Fennel concluded with this call to service.

Jeff Koon, pastor of men's ministry at River City Christian Church, addressed graduates with a reflection on the need for community.

"Men tend to be isolated," said Koon. "Encourage men to live lives worthy of the kingdom," he added by reflecting on Paul's letter to the Thessalonians. "Seek out community. Men grow strong in company of men."

Pamela Gonzalez, southwest regional director of the Prison Fellowship, commented that today's academy is the only one still graduating students. She also noted that the Prison Fellowship is the largest prison ministry in the world, began by Chuck Coleman in