



# New Beginnings

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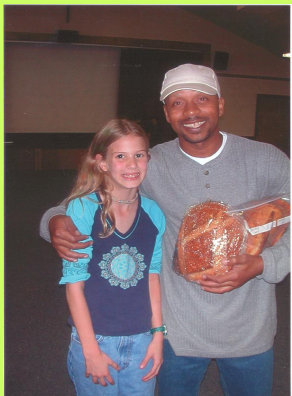
December 2002

## Reggie's story

"I came to Koinonia House<sup>®</sup> in search of spiritual discipline. My past relationships were based solely on my needs and when those needs didn't satisfy, I usually self-destructed.

At Koinonia House<sup>®</sup> I was introduced to a strict regimen of study in the Word and how to use that discipline in my relationship building.

So far it has been good. Although I still struggle with some of my old self, such as isolating myself and withdrawing, I am learning to communicate effectively, and I believe that over time I will be able to assist someone else with similar or worse problems."



Reggie with Kate Yeazel. She is the daughter of board members Mark and Joy Yeazel.

## First resident finally arrives

In early October Chaplain Dick Swan called from Marion Correctional Institution. Reginald Darden was being released early from prison.

Reggie, as he is called, is 38 years old. He spent most of his childhood in foster care until his feelings of abandonment and anger led him to prison. But during his last incarceration he gave his heart to Christ and learned about Koinonia House<sup>®</sup>.

Although several men applied to come here, we took Reggie because he had the one thing we were looking for.

"Spiritually I won't make it on the outside without help," he told us during his first inter-



Reggie with members of Grace Brethren Church (l-r) Pastor Daniel Pierce, Reggie, Judge Jon Hein and Wheeler Cockrell.

view. "I need Koinonia House<sup>®</sup>."

### Community welcome

When our supporters in the community heard that Reggie had arrived, they all pitched in to welcome him. The best news is the Grace Brethren Church in Greenville has offered to be his home church. Pastor Daniel Pierce will be his spiritual mentor. This will benefit Reggie and the members of Grace Brethren Church will see firsthand how Christ can change

even a man in prison.

### We benefit too

The first night Reggie was here I said to Kathy, "Our lives will never be the same again." That has definitely been true these past two months. Yes, it's

been different living with someone you

have only known for a short time. Also dealing with all the issues associated with prison has been a learning experience. But Kathy and I both feel we are doing real ministry for the first time.

Having Reggie here has made real what Jesus said in Matthew 25:40. "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me."

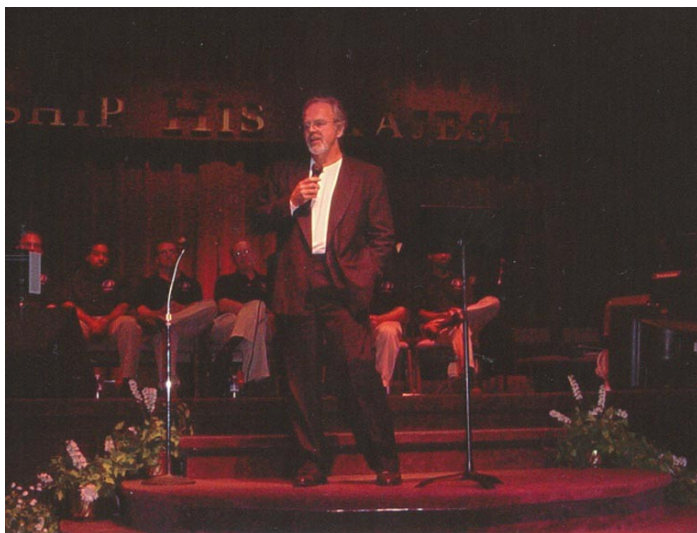
# Some memories from the Fall Rally Oct. 4

More than 180 people packed the Lighthouse Christian Center Oct. 4 to support Koinonia House® West Central Ohio.

The event opened with Promise Singers leading the audience in celebrating their faith in song.

But the highlight of their performance was the impromptu testimony of one of their members. He had been in prison prior to his conversion, but had never felt safe enough to admit it publicly—until now.

“We feel we took away from the event more than we contributed,” Promise Singers director Steve Storer said. “Thank you for allowing us to share our love in a small way during the opening moments of your Koinonia House® ministry in Greenville.”



Koinonia House® West Central Ohio Discipleship Resident Director John Graham shared that this ministry has revitalized his faith more than any other experience since entering seminary 14 years ago.

“I left the construction business to enter the ministry because I wanted to make a difference in the lives of hurting people,” he said.

While pastoring people in the church was rewarding, he said it doesn’t compare with the pleasure of reaching out beyond the church walls and helping to heal broken people.

## Dynamic speakers too



Although he is not directly connected with Koinonia House®, Chaplain Dick Swan's work with the ministry is critical. He is the chaplain of Marion Correctional Institution and directly responsible for the spiritual direction of the 1,800 inmates.

Under his direction more than 500 men have come to Christ in the past six years during the 11 Kairos spiritual retreats there.

Not only have these men been changed, but the whole prison has been changed as well from a violent and dangerous place to dynamic church behind bars.

It is through Chaplain Swan that Koinonia House® residents are selected.

John Beason spent 26 years in prison for murder. During his incarceration his hatred and violence was so great that at one point he even plotted to kill the deputy warden.

But when he became a Christian six years ago, not just his life changed, but the lives of hundreds of men in Marion prison changed as well. His conversion was so radical and so complete that the other inmates were deeply impressed with what Christ can do in the heart and life of even the worst of them.

Not only did he commit his time and energy to sharing his faith while in prison, but when released in 2001, he continued that commitment by sharing his faith every chance he gets.

"I took a life. Now I feel I owe my life back," Beason told the audience.

But he admitted being a Christian is not enough for ex-felons like him to make it on the outside. They need hands-on support.

"I thought when I found a church everything was going to be fine, but it didn't happen like that."

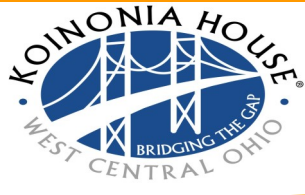
While his faith has not diminished since being released, he said

it has been difficult to find acceptance, even among Christians.

And that, Beason said, is why he supports Koinonia House® ministry.

"They're out there," he said referring to ex-felons living in the community. "But with Koinonia House® you can have a choice in how they turn out."





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**JOHN & KATHY GRAHAM  
RESIDENT DIRECTORS**

*Building a bridge to the future*

**We're on the web!  
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# Your help is needed

It's been a busy summer for Kathy and me. Mostly we spent our time painting the outside of the house. It was always our hope for Koinonia House® to be the most attractive home in the neighborhood, and now the neighbors can see progress.

More important, we spent the summer - and especially September - getting everything ready for Reggie to come. But we had lots of help from supporters in the community. When they heard Reggie was coming sooner than expected, so many pitched in to help get him settled into Koinonia House® that it was clear there was wide support for this ministry.

We could never have done it all without your support, help and prayers. Thank you.

## **Just the beginning**

But Reggie's coming is only the beginning of our ministry. The real work - and real expenses - have just started. The board estimated it will cost \$67,000 per year to run this ministry. Although we only raised about \$17,000 last year, we felt that was a good start, especially since we didn't have a resident.

Now with Reggie here - and we expect our second and third residents in the next 12 months, it's apparent we will need full funding to operate this year.

We will apply for several grants in January that will greatly help us meet our budget. And if you know of any other grants available, and especially if you know someone who can write grant applications, please let us know.

But even if we do get these grants, it will take months to get the funding. So your help is needed now more than ever.

Talk with your church mission committee members. There is no greater mission than helping our Christian brothers in prison grow in the faith when released.

Best of all, the national ministry has again offered to match whatever you and your church gives. So every dollar you give now will go twice as far.

Also pray about being a regular monthly supporter. Not only will your tax deductible donations go directly to the support of this ministry, but your support will have an immediate impact on Reggie's life and faith — and the life and faith of all the residents who will follow him. Will you help?