



The WINGS Flyer

Issue #3

WINGS Ministry
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Issue #3
Summer 2004

WINGS for L.I.F.E.

Life-skills For Inmate Families & Education/Mentoring



Building assets—family love!

I like Wings for L.I.F.E.—

- I learn things & it's a lot of fun.
- Practical help for families.
- We are more alike than different. Everybody participates.
- I need the fellowship. Leadership. We support each other.
- How to be polite. Loving.

Life-skill:

How to shake hands

Firm grip—Eye contact—
Smile—Greet one another

Upcoming Dates & Events:

- Sonlight Backpacking—Aug. 1-7 Pagosa Springs, CO—11 teenagers
- Las Cruces Prison Volunteer Banquet—August 12
- Albuquerque Back-to-School Party—August 28
- Española, NM Contract Training—August 31
- South Central Chaplains Convention—September 13-15
- Los Lunas, NM Prison Party September 18
- New Jersey Faith-based convention - Newark, NJ—September 23
- South Carolina School Blind & Deaf—Oct. 23
- Thanksgiving Dinner—Nov. 25
- Albuquerque Christmas Wings Party—December 4

SEE Page 5 for Wings for L.I.F.E. dates.



Wings for L.I.F.E. has begun and we are having great fun! Each meeting we identify one of the 40 Developmental Assets from Search Institute.

Asset #1 – Family Support

Family life provides high levels of love and support.

Ideas:

1. Eat together.
2. Limit TV.
3. Read to or with your children.
4. Positive learning environment.
5. State and discuss your values.
6. Encourage active involvement in organizations, teams, & clubs at school, community or congregation.
7. Limit time spent alone.
8. Be a friend and asset builder for the friends of your children; welcome them into your home.

We discussed money & how to stretch a dollar, single parenting, discipline & chores, and even celebrated FATHER'S Day with a potluck dinner and games!



Above: Teens teaching & discussing discipline & chores



A Whale of a Good Time!

Las Cruces, NM Wings Party by Grace LaTorra



Above: Octopus, Angel Fish, and inside the whale!

Below: Fish of all shapes and sizes and a hand-knit sweater from Guideposts Magazine.



What happens when you combine 20 kids, 35 adults, and a 40 foot inflatable whale? A whole lot of laughter!

The second Las Cruces Wings Party, held at St. Andrew's Episcopal Church on July 10th, was truly a blessing – a blessing not only to the families who have a family member in prison, but also to the volunteers. Together we laughed, we prayed, we learned, we worshipped, and we shared a meal. And through it all, Christ's presence was very much apparent.

The party opened with enthusiastic worship of our Lord, Jesus Christ. The songs required audience participation, and the smiles that would be so apparent throughout the afternoon began to appear.

Worship was followed by the Bible Study. This was, of course, no ordinary Bible Study, as a 40 foot inflatable whale slowly rose from the sanctuary floor. Together we acted out the story of Jonah and the Whale, with some kids playing the sailors, and some kids playing the boat, and one teenager playing Jonah. Those in the pews were the wind and the storm, and they gave it their all. Afterwards we had an opportunity to discuss the story of Jonah as it applies to our own lives – especially on issues of trust, and prayer, and following God. The Bible Study ended with all the kids and Ann Edenfield climbing into

the whale together!

The joy on the kid's faces as they started doing the crafts was incredible. And the laughter during the table game, as each table decorated a person as an underwater animal (or mermaid) was wonderful. Even the tears, as Ann gave her testimony to the adults, were followed by smiles.

Throughout a Wings Party one notices the joy and the laughter. Laughter heals, and many who come to the party, both families and volunteers, are in desperate need of healing. It is when that laughter, and that joy, occur in the context of Christ's love, that truly amazing things can happen.

When I said, "My foot is slipping," your love, O LORD, supported me. When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul. - Psalm 94: 18-19

We experienced, through the ministry of the Wings Party, that joy that comes in Christ's presence.



Overnight Camping/Hiking Trip Cochiti Lake & Tent Rocks National Monument



The hikers— On top! —Tent Rocks—
Meals—Tents from R.E.I.—Swimming



Recipe for a WINGS Campout

By Cindy Davis

- Take a Dozen or more Young People.
- Place in a private campground near Cochiti Lake.
- Add a moderate amount of Adult Supervision.
- Stir in Tents & Sleeping bags.
- Combine with Hot Dogs, Watermelon and Chips.
- Top off with S'Mores and Singing.

"It was fun. I loved sleeping in the tents."

"This was the first campout I ever went on."

"The only thing I didn't like was packing."

"I never had S'Mores before—they're great!"

"Blueberry pancakes for breakfast— MMMM."

"I learned to swim!"

"I made it to the top! I can see 100 miles in every direction! We're on top of the 'Tents'."



TOUGH LOVE—A Parent's Letter to their son

Our son is in prison in another state. He is charged with several counts of manufacturing and dealing methamphetamine. He was arrested because I found out that while the rest of the family and I were on vacation, he had broken into our home. We had barred him from the house because of his involvement with drugs. I called the police and asked them to send officers to our home to arrest him. When the officers arrived, they found him "cooking" meth in our living room. In addition to the drug charges, I pressed charges for breaking and entering. Nevertheless, we are standing by him and praying that he will seek God and let Him work a change in his life. He recently wrote a letter, asking us to hire a parole specialist to see if his sentence could be reduced.

This was my reply.

Hi,

We received your letter. It was good to hear from you and to know that you are doing well. I won't beat around the bush. Your Dad and I talked it over, and we honestly don't feel that you are ready to get out. The minute we feel that you are ready, we won't hesitate at all to hire a parole specialist to see if he can help you. The cost is not a factor. The thing we are concerned about is that you are a "three-time loser" and if you mess up again, it will be for life, and no lawyer will be able to help you.

We would rather have you spend some time now to grow up a little more than spend the rest of your life in prison.

I realize that you probably will be hurt and angry to read the above paragraph, and you probably won't care about our reasons, but I want to explain them anyway. First of all, you talked about the burglary

charge. If you had needed a place to stay, and that was why you broke into the house, I never would have pressed those charges. But you were manufacturing that deadly poison in my living room.

You say that you are not like 90% of the

When you can understand exactly how much of a betrayal that was, and when you honestly feel that you deserve to be in prison because of what you did, you will be well on your way to being ready to get out.

people in the prison. I believe you. But in your mindset, you are very much like them. Don't forget, we see prisoners a lot

working with Wings, and I hear the same things from them that I read in your letters. There is a "prison mentality," and you have it. That's one of the things you need to grow out of before you will be able to make it on the outside.

You say that you can stick to any rules in existence. I don't believe you. You're far too confident about something that is horrendously difficult. When you get a little healthy fear about facing life outside, I will be more apt to believe you. What I have seen in the past few years has convinced me that only a strong, mature relationship with Jesus Christ can provide the strength an ex-con needs to make it. And that doesn't happen in a day or a month, or even a year. It's something that has to grow over time.

As far as the racist frame of mind you mentioned, that is another thing that convinces me you are not strong enough to make it on the outside. Only when you have matured enough to make up your own mind and not allow other people to influence your views and values will you be ready to be a responsible citizen. A large part of your drug problem stems from the fact that you have always been a follower rather than a leader. You go along with others who are doing the wrong things rather than making your own decisions. You seem to be doing better in that area, but you still have a way to go.

I'm really glad that you have decided that police are just people doing their jobs, not your enemies. They only seemed to be your enemies because you were doing the wrong things. Police are actually very hard-working, brave people who daily put their lives on the line to protect those of us who are trying to live decently and peaceably.

I know that you have kept the rules pretty scrupulously, and I am proud of you for avoiding trouble for so long. But you know, you have also pushed the limit in some cases. That's part of the "prison mentality." You need to live comfortably within the rules rather than always pushing the boundaries. That is the way normal people live, but that is still a foreign idea to you. You really need to have a change of mind in several areas.

By the way, I want to remind you that when you got out of juvenile boot camp, you said you would NEVER do anything to get yourself back in a place like that. How long was it before you got into trouble again?

We love you very much, and we really do want the best for you. If you are frustrated and angry about this letter, I understand. But we will stick by you until you are ready to get out and STAY out, and then we will do all we can to help you get out. You need to realize, however, it won't be anything you SAY that will convince us you are ready. It will be the kind of person you become. I am very proud of you for all the reading you have been doing, and how you have been keeping physically fit. I will definitely send you a Bible.

Don't try to "get religious." Just read it and THINK about it. God will speak to you if you are in the right frame of mind to listen. He's been there all along, even when you weren't thinking about Him.

Take care.

We love you and we pray for you always.



**Wings Party—Santa Rosa, NM
Guadalupe County Correctional Facility
June 26, 2004**



Left: Sweaters from *Guideposts*.
Right: Sister Vincentia using "Myrtle" for Bible Study.
Bottom left: Family photos—a special gift from Wings.



I came to the Wings Party—

- To be with my son and enjoy being with people who also share how we feel. Most people who don't have someone in prison just DON'T understand.
- To visit my dad. Also to worship God and thanking Him for everything.
- I'm an officer with the facility. I liked the music - food. Yummy! You are a very well organized group. Great job!
- So that I can spend time with my family and to be able to pray with them.
- I was one of the musicians to come praise and worship.

Highlights of the party were—

- Get to see my husband worship God and that made this place a good place - not just a bad one.
- Special thanks to the Warden and staff for allowing this ministry into the prison.
- Sister Vincentia's presenting Myrtle to the children. (The puppet in the Bible study.)
- Watching the kids sing and just be kids and the family being together freely, hugging and holding hands without the CO's all over them.
- The kindness of the volunteers, the friendship and love that everyone showed...AND, the pizza!
- To praise God and to do it with my family.
- Singing for God, taking pictures, eating pizza, and visiting.
- May God bless all the people that volunteered to donate and care for us and our families.
- Thanks to GEO staff and CO's for an accommodating atmosphere.
- I wanted to bring my granddaughter to see her dad, and she learned a valuable lesson of forgiveness.
- The Bible says to visit some one in prison - is very special to the Lord! Special time spent with my son, fellowship, meeting other families of inmates. Very special time. You can also feel the love and presence

Wings for L.I.F.E. Dates
Catholic Center, Sandia Room
4000 St. Josephs Place, NW—St. Pius HS
6:30—8:00 PM Albuquerque, NM

August 8	Oct. 24
August 22	Nov. 7
Sept. 12	Nov. 21
Sept. 26	Dec. 12
Oct. 10	Dec. 28



Rio Grande Food Project Community Service—Bagging Beans, Rice, & Coffee

Wings for L.I.F.E. "Olympic Torch Relay"



www.WingsMinistry.org

Vision:
To share Christ's unconditional love
with all families of prisoners.

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The WINGS Ministry
is a 501 (c) 3 Not-for-profit organization.
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WINGS Ministry

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It's a 40 foot whale!



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