

Each year, approximately 23,000 inmates are released from Florida's prisons back into our communities. Approximately 500 are released back into Alachua County alone. At release, the inmate is given \$100 and some clothing, is bussed to the receiving community of his or her choice and is released. The same influences that led to prison initially lie in wait for the ex-offender upon release. Moreover, as an "ex-convict," he or she is shunned by many people and has difficulty finding gainful employment. Sixty-seven percent of those released commit new crimes and are re-imprisoned within three years.



Because of limited space, the House of Hope currently can accept only five men every three months, or a total of 20 men a year. This falls woefully short of helping salvage the lives on a waiting list that often exceeds 25 men at any one time. Also, women ex-offenders currently cannot be ministered to at all, since there is no facility to minister to women leaving prison. This is an important need which must be filled.

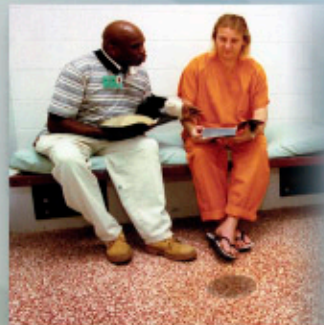


The House of Hope of Alachua County was founded to break this cycle. Headquartered in Gainesville, it provides a rigorous, Christ-centered, three-month program which teaches Christian living, responsibility, and self-discipline to recently released male inmates.

Christ is calling the House of Hope to expand this ministry. The vision He has provided has two phases. The first phase involves purchase of 6½ acres of land, two residences, and a closed storefront. The smaller of the two residences currently is rented for the men's program.

This first phase includes:

- ✦ Utilizing the larger residence to house 10 men at a time. *This will immediately double the men's ministry.*
- ✦ Converting the existing men's residence for use as a women's residence. *This will begin a ministry to women ex-offenders.*
- ✦ Renovating the closed storefront for a ministry office and training and education classrooms. *This will provide for continued Christian education and permit teaching valuable skills for employment.*



Each House of Hope participant must:

- ✦ Live an accountable, responsible Christian life
- ✦ Join and tithe to his church of choice
- ✦ Attend mandatory Bible studies
- ✦ Obtain and hold a steady job
- ✦ Pay all outstanding fines, restitution, court, and supervision costs
- ✦ Set up and maintain a savings account for all earnings
- ✦ Participate in life skills training, anger management training and drug counseling
- ✦ Comply with 34 strict program rules and regulations
- ✦ Perform community service



History has shown that nearly 87% of all graduates from the House of Hope program remain productive, law-abiding, responsible men of God. Only 13% of program graduates are ever re-imprisoned.

photographs courtesy of THE GAINESVILLE SUN

The second, future phase will involve developing the vacant land, perhaps in a series of steps. This development is envisioned to include apartment units to provide additional Christian living facilities, additional training and education facilities, and a small Chapel.



Call to Action...

The cost for the first phase of the program is \$200,000, including the purchase of all property. If you feel called by Christ to help salvage the lives of the men and women who may be lost without this ministry, please contact Steve Sammerlin at 352/372-3681.