



Focus Group Prison Ministries/ 865-694-3837

## F.O.C.U.S.

Following Our  
Choices Unto  
Success



Chief Pete Garza with the Knox County Sherriff's Office spoke at our Annual Banquet in April



FOCUS Christian Academy Students participating in class discussion with Program Manager Del McCartney



## IN TIMES OF NEED – FCA REACHES OUT

BY TODD O'DELL

On May 7<sup>th</sup>, FOCUS Christian Academy students partnered with members from West Hills Baptist Church to assist victims in Greene County with Tornado Relief. FCA student Todd O'Dell shares his experiences:

"Upon arriving among the half-ripped trees, twisted wreckage of cars, trucks, and foundations of homes, I can only tell what I experienced but could never go through the 'feelings' of what these people went through. After cutting trees with chainsaws and trying to catch our breath to carry away more twigs and branches, we fought and struggled to keep going on. Many of us men and women worked together in such a bond to help who we could. As the day went on, my heart grew bigger. I wanted to do more but humbly told myself I did what I could do. I'm sure the others felt the same too. It feels so good to help others in need. After all, that's what it's supposed to be like.

[FCA student] Kevin Jones and myself decided we better rest for a while so we walked down the road and encountered more devastation. "Is this real?" I thought to myself. Kevin and I had to compose ourselves as we examined even more sites that were gut wrenching to see. We walked up to this one couple who looked like they lost not only their best friend but looked as though they still couldn't believe what had happened to them. A tent was all they had to live in now, with a cooler for food. We talked to these people and much to our surprise; they really wanted us to talk to them. I've never had to do such a thing like this before, but it was feeling so good to see these people so thankful to have somebody to talk to. My eyes flurried with tears to hear their saddened stories. Kevin and I prayed with them and they too tried so hard to hide the tears as well. I'm still coming to terms with hoping somebody helped these people even more than we could. It's God's will – He puts people in our lives at the strangest moments in life and he has us doing things for people at the times in their lives we never thought we'd be doing. I'm so glad that we took that journey up the road.

On our way back, we saw from a distance the area we had been working on all day. It seemed like nothing had changed after all that time. But in the eyes of others and neighbors from next door and down the road it was a blessing to them to see all of us workers helping out from the churches and groups that had gathered. I'm so glad now I had a personal experience helping the needy. Thanks to FOCUS and many others trusting in us to give our time and share our sensitive and spiritual kindness. Everybody that helped that day was very sociable despite the tragic scenes we encountered. Some folks joked with us a little (maybe their way of breaking the saddened triumph they endured). But it made the day go even better knowing no matter how bad things can get there is always someone who cares and sends His people to help those who are desperate. I'm so thankful for the brothers of FOCUS Christian Academy and all the others who helped us do all we could that day."



FCA Students and members from West Hills Baptist Church help tornado victims in Greene County, TN.



(L to R) FCA Students Todd O'Dell & Kevin Jones

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FOCUS PRISON MINISTRIES

### Ministry Needs:

1. Donated vehicles for 'Wheels For Success' – a program for FCA graduates
2. A seven passenger vehicle to transport FCA students
3. Employment Partners for our back-to-work jobs program
4. Funds for literature for the Exodus Projects (\$2,000)
5. Capital Funding for the Men's & Women's Residential Facilities and Ministry Training Center at 826 Broadway)

826 Broadway - Future Home of  
FOCUS Christian Academy.



## FCA EXODUS PROJECT

BY STEVE HUMPHREYS

God has provided an incredible opportunity for us - we met with the Knox County Sheriff's Office Staff in June and they have organized a new Unit at Knox County Detention Facility that will house 196 men in 4 different pods:

- Pod 1: Programmatic pod to provide "Intensive" counseling and other treatment regimens for those with addiction issues,
- Pod 2: Mental Health Pod to try to stabilize the participants on their medications
- Pod 3: Education pod to allow participants to concentrate on meeting their educational goals (eg, Adult Basic Education or GED, etc),
- Pod 4: "Faith-based" pod that FOCUS has been given the opportunity to provide the programming for: 48 men 7 days/week 10-12 hours per day.**

Maybe you've been praying about what God might have you do with this ministry. Now is the time, as we have an ongoing need for:

- Support Group Facilitators

- Classroom Instructors
- Celebrate Recovery facilitators
- One-on-One Mentors
- Clergy/Chaplains for Church services

No previous experience is required for some of these volunteer positions and we can schedule during days or evenings for as much or as little time as you can give us. Go to the FOCUS website and complete the Volunteer Form – upon reviewing your application for acceptance, we will then e-mail the appropriate documentation required by Knox County.



Knox County Detention Center

## A NEW HOME FOR FCA

BY SCOTT PARKER



Jim Cosby, Assistant Commissioner of Rehabilitative Services with the Tenn. Department of Corrections, helped launch our FOCUS Christian Academy Mustard Seed Capital Campaign June 16<sup>th</sup> at Broadway Baptist Church. Jim stressed the importance of helping ex-offenders transition back into society and reminded us that 97% of Tennessee's inmates will be released and return to our communities. As our transition ministry grows, weekly we encounter people that have no safe place to go upon release and we must turn them away due to lack of space.

### ABOUT US

Focus Group Prison Ministries is a nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization founded in 1992 to help build a bridge to the community for a segment of society that is often forgotten. We seek to help inmates and their families to know Jesus as their Savior, to mature in their faith, and to help ex-offenders to transition back into society as good citizens through Focus Christian Academy. Our efforts at providing support, hope and encouragement have been recognized by the Tennessee Department of Corrections, twice naming Focus Group Prison Ministries the 'Best Non-Profit of East Tennessee.'

We have watched this year as God has 'expanded our vision' and believe He wants to meet this great need. We have before us an amazing prospect to inhabit a facility that will house more than four times the men we can now accommodate, provide a training center for ministry, office space for our jobs program and a worship center for the ongoing Living Free nights. We are raising \$500,000 to purchase 826 Broadway (4 apartments, 17 bedrooms, + 8,000 sq. feet of unutilized space) and the current FCA facility at 706 Wells Avenue, which would become the home for the Women's Transition Program.

Jim Baugh, our Board of Directors Chairman, stated at the launch event that we are not about buying real estate. But we are about meeting needs and changing lives all to the glory of Christ Jesus – this is a means to an end. As you are contacted by FOCUS staff and board members, take this need before the Father and please be in prayer about how God would use you to be a part of this campaign.