

# The Blueprint

Winter 2013

A Publication Documenting God's Work In  
The Stephenson County Jail

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## Master Builder Jail Ministries Changing The World One Inmate At A Time

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## Murph the Surf headlines successful MBJM Banquet, fund raising for job center continues

Joseph's Training Center will have new computers and Stephenson County Christians have been given a new vision for jail ministry after the 1st Annual Master Builder Banquet this past November 30th.

The event was headlined by Jack "Murph the Surf" Murphy, an ordained minister, evangelist and crusader for prison reform. Murphy was involved in what was then known as "The Jewel Heist of the Century" when he stole The Star of India and other jewels worth over \$2 million from the J.P. Morgan collection in the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. Murphy was eventually sentenced to life in prison in Florida for a murder, and it was as an inmate that he faced the cold reality that his life needed to change. He gave his life to Christ and has spent the years since ministering to prisoners, first on the inside and then (after being paroled) as a speaker for prison ministries.

During his speech, Murphy often used humor when referring to his time in prison, such as when he demonstrated the exaggerated swagger he used on the day he was released from prison to hide a rip in the back of his suit. But he also described how he had gone to buy a drug fix and gun right away the previous time he left prison because he felt "change and rehabilitation and doing the right thing weren't for guys like me."

Murphy also discussed how he had responded when a prison chaplain pointed out that if the best a person could do was to be locked up "day and night with nothing to your name but a prison uniform," they had managed their life very poorly, "but a young man named Jesus" could be the manager of their life and do amazing things for and through them.

How did he get from buying guns and drugs to accepting Christ? "People

just like you," Murphy said, sweeping his hand over the crowd, "wrote to me to say they were praying for me and they meant it. People just like you came into the prison to tell me about Jesus."

Murphy challenged the attendees to do the same for local inmates and encouraged them to support the Master Builder vision for local jail ministry and an ex-offender training center.

The initial offering taken at the banquet was enough to cover purchase of computers and software for job training and case management at Joseph's Training Center. Additional contributions are anticipated and MBJM supporter Kathy Knodle announced there will be an event in the Spring designed to involve members of the business community.

Murphy was not the only stirring speaker the audience heard from. Other speakers included:

- Chaplain Sowell presented an overview of MBJM's methods, current ministry work and future vision.
- Jail Administrator Dean Schroeder made brief remarks on the impact Master Builder and Malachi Dads have had on Stephenson County inmates.
- Former inmate and Malachi Dads graduate Aaron Lambert gave a testimony about his journey from incarceration to faith in Christ to music ministry through the work of Chaplain Sowell and other MBJM volunteers. He performed a song he had written while incarcerated and accompanied his wife, worship leader Nastasia Lambert, as she performed a song from her new album.

Supporters wishing to help make Joseph's Training Center a reality can use the donation form on page 2 of this newsletter or call 815-978-0715 for more details.

## Building Stronger Families: Malachi Dads graduations continue

As 2013 draws to a close, Stephenson County's Malachi Dads program continues to grow and to give inmates "the skills and focus to be the kind of father God wants in every family."

On December 10, fifteen men graduated from the program at a ceremony attended by Master Builder Ministries Executive Director Chaplain Michael Sowell, Education Volunteer Eddie Rudy and County Jail Administrator Dean Schroeder.

The program is named for a passage in the fourth chapter of Malachi: "And he will turn the hearts of the fathers to the children and the children to the fathers." The curriculum is based on a proven method first developed at Louisiana's notorious Angola Prison by the Awana organization. Local volunteers focus on five areas of training—fathering, spiritual, educational, moral and vocational—to help detainees prepare to build a stronger family after they are released. The program also has a proven track record in Rockford, where Chaplain Sowell graduated 200 inmates in two years.

There is a strong need for



fatherhood programming in America's correctional facilities; Studies show the children of inmates are seven times more likely to be incarcerated than their peer group and having a jailed parent is a contributor to a number of other social problems, such as increased levels of drug use and increased dropout rates.

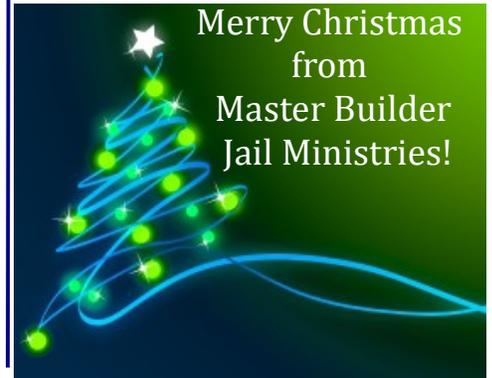
The Malachi Dads program will continue through each cell block in the jail on a rotating basis, and other certificate programs for inmates—including a GED program—will be launched in the near future depending on available funding.

## MBJM offers manual for life-changing jail ministry

The correctional mission field is vast, the individual needs are great and you feel the call to ministry. But what are the best ways to bring the Gospel to inmates? Where should you start?

In the comprehensive guide *Tools for Effective Jail Ministry*, experienced Chaplains Michael Sowell and Laura DeVries provide the tools you need to succeed in this exciting area of God's work. You'll learn the role of the chaplain, safe jail policies, what your kingdom assignment is and how to understand your audience. Most importantly, you'll learn the importance of a kingdom mindset and the need to view jail ministry as spiritual warfare.

This guide is available from Master Builder Jail Ministries for only \$9.99. To order, see the donation form below.



## Rebuild Lives With A Donation to Master Builder

Changing the life of a single inmate can change a family, a neighborhood or even whole communities for eternity. Please support this vital work with a financial donation today.

- I am interested in volunteering with Master Builder
- I am interested in having someone from Master Builder speak at our church or organization.
- I wish to make a monthly donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_

- I wish to make a one-time donation of \$\_\_\_\_\_
- I wish to order \_\_\_\_ copies of *Tools for Effective Jail Ministry* at \$9.99 each.
- I wish to sponsor textbooks for the Malachi Dads program (\$20/book) \$\_\_\_\_\_

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