

# Grace House-E News

The Newsletter of **Grace House-Erie**

A Christian Transitional Care Ministry Toward the Ex-Offender



## Prison's Real Cost

Informing the public about the heavy financial burden we all bear because of crime & punishment in our society is only part of what needs to be done. Before there is a visible motivation to change, we must move the heart. Statistics using dollars and cents are helpful but they can also be cold and sterile. Human stories tell the real cost not numbers.

Wanda Ocasio-Claudio, wife of Pastor Ruben Claudio from Erie's *Heavenly Pentecostal Church*, shared recently about an incident not long ago at a church Prayer Meeting.

A young girl, about 8 yrs. old, came to the group and asked the others to pray "for her mommy". She was afraid that 'her mommy' would go back to prison. Her mother had just been released but had yet to come home. Within days the ex-prisoner was reunited with her daughter. The two have been attending church since. PTL!

Prison's real cost is priceless. It is fathers & mothers, daughters & sons. This is the story we at *Grace House* and those with us must tell.

## Grace House - Erie Launched!

February 4th will forever mark the birth of *Grace House-Erie*. This year on that date, 22 gathered at *The Family Worship Center* on Parade St., for a luncheon event and ministry ... >

Rev. David Bemis served as host. Special Guest, Rev. Terry King, *Saving Grace Ministries, Inc.*, Buffalo, made a moving presentation to a diverse local group bound together by a common goal - providing ex-offenders the help they need to make it on the outside. All heard that the miracles that were witnessed in Buffalo will be also seen in our own city.

The ministry's Executive Board of Director's President, David Sawtelle, reminded those in

attendance, "*Grace House* will be a reflection of the Erie church & community. If the church and community won't support it, it just won't happen."

By the response of the pastors, church and community leaders present, there will be plenty of help forthcoming. Erie seems ready to aid those ministries that will make a difference.

As the call for leadership went out, a group of men and women began rolling up their sleeves, as if to say, "*Let's get started!*" An idea born cannot be 'unborn'. *What a birthday it was!*



## You're Invited! "Welcome Erie Day"

Saturday, May

1st, is "Welcome Erie Day" at "Grace House" in Buffalo. Reverend Terry King, the Founder and Director of *Saving Grace Ministries, Inc.*, and the residents are planning to roll out the red carpet for the '*Grace House-Erie*' crowd. They are promising a 'lot of fun and surprises' for those who make the trip.

\* \* \*  
If you would like to join us and see "The Miracle Of Bailey Ave." for yourself and hear first-hand the story that is spreading across the country, this is your chance! But make reservations quickly because space is limited to 35. **(see contact information below)**

We are planning on transportation leaving *The 1st Assembly Of God* lot on Oliver Road at 9:00 a.m. and returning no later than 4 p.m. This day trip is for members of the *Grace House-Erie Team* and spouses. Lunch is provided. A donation will be taken for expenses.

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**CONTACT US:** For reservations to Buffalo on May 1st or for your response to this "E-Newsletter" click "Reply" on your email or call 455-7730 during normal business hours. Operators are standing by for reservations. (ha!) **Print up GRACE LETTER and share with a friend. Your articles and contributions are also welcome.**  
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# Investing In Lives



## Seeds

The writer of Ecclesiastes reminds us there is "a time to sow and a time to reap". Later on the Apostle Paul picks up the theme by stating the "Law of sowing and reaping": "If you sow sparingly you will reap sparingly. We reap what we sow." That is the way it is with 'Grace House- Erie'.

The seeds we are sowing are the seeds of a vision. The fertile ground is the one who catches the vision. With some we sow the seed of being a part of our leadership team. We are planting a garden that will produce a variety of necessary gifts and skills.

Other seeds consist of planting a vision with pastors and local churches about how we can work along side them and, with their resources helping us, produce the ministry to ex-offenders they see as important service to the community.

As a gardener, I acknowledged that planting involves faith. I have made it a habit to ask God to bless the seed and cause it to grow and bring a harvest in season. The 'Grace House -Erie Team' has just begun its 'sowing' but already we see evidence of an abundant harvest to come.

May God bless and grow the seed of compassion and caring for ex-offenders planted in you.

## NEWS OF NOTE



### LEADERSHIP TEAM is being assembled for 'Grace House'!

Rev. Floyd Lewis has come on board to serve as Chairperson of "The Social Agency Liaison Committee". As Founder and Director of 'Joel 2 Restoration Ministries', Rev. Lewis has worked with and served on various agencies committed to social change and community improvement. We are truly blessed to have this man of God serve and represent us.

### AN AREA-WIDE "PRAYER GATHERING" ANNOUNCED

The co-chairs of our "Prayer & Intercession Committee", Pastor Ruben Claudio and his wife, Wanda Ocasio-Claudio, have announced a "Gathering For Prayer For 'Grace House- Erie'" to be held monthly at their church, Heavenly Pentecostal, 1601 Sassafras St., to bear witness to the city and to heaven that we are one Body, united across cultural lines and denominations, to glorify Christ and seek God's favor on behalf of all the ministries to ex-offenders and their families. **The "Prayer Gathering" will be held at 7:30 p.m. on the 1st Tuesday of each month beginning Tues., May 4th.**

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### 'Grace House' Visits



**March 28- Sun.**  
10AM Worship, *The Family Worship Center* (Erie)

**April 25- Sun.**  
10:30AM Worship, *Christ Evangelical Free Church,*

(Venango/Saegertown)

**May 2- Sun.** 10AM Worship, *Grace Fellowship Church* (Erie)

### Prayer Requests

- For our video team headed up by Justin Coleman as we seek to produce visual media that touches hearts and tells our story.
- For Pastor John Finkbeiner, as he talks to other pastors and congregations sharing the vision and mission of 'Grace House- Erie'.
- For God's leading and calling as we assemble the 'Grace House- Erie' Leadership Team.

"Grace House- Erie" is a not-for-profit ministry of "Saving Grace Ministries, -Erie, Inc." (filing pending) and affiliated with "Saving Grace Ministries, Inc." Buffalo, NY. Direct charitable donations to "S.G.M.E., PO Box 247, Erie, PA 16512