

# JUST FOR MENTORS

Tips, inspiration and encouragement as you mentor men and women in prison



JULY 2019

Dear Mentor,

When Hendrina and I started facilitating a group in prison about forgiveness, the group members began asking us about our marriage. Their curiosity primarily focused on Hendrina's side of our story and her journey during and after my incarceration.

Many of the men in the room had left behind their own wives or girlfriends or were longing to be in a healthy relationship someday, so the topic of a strong marriage hit home. During the discussion, I told them that Hendrina allowed me to take on a leadership role again after I returned home. They didn't fully understand why this was meaningful, so I explained what I meant.

When the handcuffs were placed on my wrists, Hendrina took the sole leadership role in our household—a responsibility she was not expecting to fulfill. I had failed as a leader in my family and that role was taken from me. Our marriage could have ended abruptly and no one would have been surprised.

But something miraculous happened. At the time, the idea of forgiveness was a new concept to me. But it became very real as my wife embodied it in our relationship. Because of Hendrina's deep understanding of God's grace and forgiveness, she was able to extend the same to me in my darkest hours.

Hendrina's connection to the God of grace and mercy allowed her to show that grace to me and to our entire household. Despite the huge mess and heavy responsibility given to her, Hendrina grew in grace and forgiveness while I worked to live my life differently.

Many Crossroads students struggle to comprehend the vastness of God's grace and the unlimited nature of His forgiveness, whether they are trying to understand God's forgiveness in their own lives or trying to extend grace to others. Here are a few tips for your letters this month:

- Share what grace and forgiveness mean to you. Encourage your student to read Psalm 103 and reflect on this verse: "As far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us" (Psalm 103:12).
- Share this verse with your student and ask them what thoughts, emotions and stories come to mind when they read it. "Then Peter came to Jesus and asked, 'Lord, how many times shall I forgive my brother or sister who sins against me? Up to seven times?' Jesus answered, 'I tell you, not seven times, but seventy-seven times'" (Matthew 18:21–22).

Our journey through incarceration and reentry and into new life together led Hendrina to understand how much God has given to her and, in turn, she has extended the same to me. She has not forgotten the difficulties that I brought upon her, but she has chosen to remember them differently and graciously allow me to take on the role of a leader in my family—even though I'd failed them miserably and didn't deserve it.

Because of my wife, I understand God's grace a whole lot better. Let's help every Crossroads student understand and experience God's love, grace and forgiveness.

Serving alongside you,



Douglas Cupery  
Church Mobilization Director

**"Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you."**

- Colossians 3:13

# NEWS & NOTES FOR MENTORS

## Change to Christmas Card Program

If you have been a mentor for a while, you are probably familiar with our annual Christmas card program. In the past, mentors have purchased, personalized and mailed Christmas cards to the Crossroads office, which we then forwarded to all our students. In recent years, due to restrictions in numerous facilities, many of these cards have been returned to our office. This year, we plan to create our own Crossroads Christmas cards that fit within the policies of all facilities and send them to our students to ensure that each student receives one. **How can you help? You can make a donation to help cover the cost of printing and mailing the cards.** Go to [cpministries.org/donate](http://cpministries.org/donate) to give!

## Urgent Need for Volunteers in Home Office

We have an **urgent need** for mission support volunteers to fill key roles in our home office. We are looking for team members with any of the following: data entry skills, customer service experience, facility maintenance/custodial experience or a creative eye for artwork and poetry. If you or someone you know lives in the Grand Rapids area and is interested, please contact Joni at [jjessup@cpministries.org](mailto:jjessup@cpministries.org) or 616-208-1480.

## Reminder About Student Progress Reports

If you submit progress reports via phone or email, please don't forget to report the **lesson ID#**. It can be found in the bottom left corner on the back cover of the lesson.

## You Don't Need to Say Goodbye to Your Student!

Wish you didn't have to say goodbye to your graduating Tier 2 or Tier 3 student? Now you don't have to! We are changing our policy to allow mentors to choose whether they would like to continue their friendship with their Tier 2 or Tier 3 student even after the student finishes all the courses available to them. Mentors can continue to send letters to their students through the Crossroads office. If you decide you would like to continue corresponding with your student after they have completed their studies, please contact Jen at [jkimball@cpministries.org](mailto:jkimball@cpministries.org). However, if you decide the timing is right to stop writing to your student once they have completed all their studies, please write a goodbye letter and thank the student for the opportunity to get to know them.



**ARE YOU INSPIRED BY  
THE ART YOU SEE IN  
THE CROSSROADS  
JOURNAL OF THE ARTS?**



Your church or organization can host an exhibit of the Crossroads Prisoner Art Project. Want to learn more? Email the Prisoner Art Project team at [eyeong@cpministries.org](mailto:eyeong@cpministries.org)