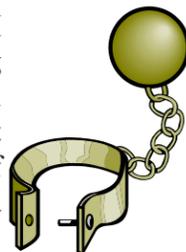


Testimonials from Inside participants in Florida

“I am writing this because I truly think and feel that (the) CRI class brought into prison where I’m at and has been beneficial to me and many others who are serious about a new life without drugs or alcohol in their lives. I’m familiar with Celebrate Recovery outside of jails and prisons, but never fully applied myself. Having this time in here, in this class, has helped me with many things, even apart from my addiction to drugs. Men and women that don’t even have a problem with drinking or using drugs can find help in this program. It’s also helped me in my walk as a believer in Jesus Christ. I’m very thankful for all the men who have brought this class to us: Jeff, John, and Arnold; this program has given me among other men hope. Thank God for what he has allowed us to learn, your brother in Christ, **Tommy B**”

“Cuando yo empecé vine solo por enrollo, pero todo cambió. Poco a poco las lecciones me fueron enseñando una nueva puerta donde poder examinar seguro y me han hecho crecer con mi fe. Mi mirada hacia el futuro cuando completo esta lección es estar limpio, positivo y seguir por el camino de la verdad con la ayuda de Dios. (A los quien están pensando en entrar es este programa) yo les diría es algo que poco a poco cambia tu vida de una manera maravillosa que te saca de estas paredes aunque sea por el tiempo de duración de cada clase y te hace crecer como hombre. Como amigo, y como padre.” Heyter H **translation:**

“When I first came it was just for the attendance, but everything changed. Little by little the lessons that were being taught to me were an open door where (there was) the power to safely examine (one’s self) and they have caused me to grow in my faith. My view towards the future when I complete this lesson is to be clean, positive, and following the way of truth, with the help of God. (To those who are thinking of entering this program) I would tell them that it is something that little by little changes your life in a marvelous way, that it takes you out of these walls even for the duration of the class, and makes you grow as a man...as a friend, and as a father.”



...And from Tallulah in Louisiana

Congratulations my fellow classmates. It has been a long and prosperous six months, but well worth the journey. On July 25, 1993 my only child died due to pneumonia, from that day forward my life has been out of control and taken a dramatic turn for the worse. I was angry with myself and God for taking my child. So, I chose to turn to drugs, partying and the fast life as a way of dealing with the pain. Along my journey of destruction, I hurt family members, friends, and anyone who tried to get close to me. I had lost sight of my goals in life and did not care if I lived or died.



During my drug addiction, I found myself incarcerated more than free. But it did not matter to me because I was never really free anyway. I carried so much anger, hate, and baggage around with me that it began to weigh me down to the point that I had gotten tired of being the person that I had become. In 2001 I went to a drug rehab to get clean from drugs thinking that was my “only” problem. I still felt empty inside. There was always something missing inside of me. So my life of destruction continued and I ended up here. On the first day of Celebrate Recovery Mrs. Mary asked us to open our Bibles. I’ll never forget the feeling of fear that came over me. Why? Because I had not talked to God in 18 years since my daughter died. Since I have been in Celebrate Recovery I have built a relationship with God again as well as others. I have forgiven myself for my sins, and all of the hurt I’ve caused to others during my destruction. I have now realized that all of the changes I have been making in my life has been “God” working in me. Without Him, I can do nothing. Tracy S.

CRI Newsletter interview with Heather Layne

Heather Layne is a unique and special person. She has been through the fire of trials and has overcome. She has experienced victories in her personal life, in her career, and in her recovery; yet she remains humble. She has used her gifting to reach out to the hurting, to be an encourager to those that need it, and has a heart for the incarcerated. She has taken her music and her message to various men’s and women’s facilities throughout the Western States, and appears on a yearly basis at many CR’s...a testament to the reception many have shown her. We caught up with her while on a tour that took her through California (where she is currently based), Arizona, New Mexico, Texas, Missouri, Kansas, and Oklahoma, which is where we sat down with Heather and Dennis, who is also her drummer, at Henderson Hills Baptist Church, in Edmond, OK, shortly before CR. Heather also shared stories in between songs that we’ll include as part of this interview.

CRIN: Your music story is entwined with your recovery story, but your story of hurts and healing begins much earlier, so let’s start there.

HL: Yeah, it really does. Like a lot of people, my young life had traumas of their own, and other aspects that were basically good, so that’s the person I always tried to portray. At an early age, I learned to put on the mask of “Everything’s alright”. In high school, I was valedictorian of my graduating class, yearbook editor and head cheerleader. If you’d have asked me how everything was going, I’d have said “Fine” but it wasn’t fine. I was living a nightmare behind the scenes. When I was growing up, we didn’t have Bibles in the house, we didn’t go to church, or have prayer in the house, or anything like that; but when I became a teenager, my parents were divorced and I started attending a youth group at a church. There was a man there who was ten years older than me, and I later found out that he was looking for a girl that he could “train” to be his wife...and I was the one he picked...unfortunately. I was fifteen! Here I was in a relationship, and was literally held hostage for about three years. I was followed, I was watched, and I was interrogated. I was being abused physically and emotionally. He was using mind-control techniques that he had learned in the Marine Corps...I was a mess. I carried that mess with me for years to come. God delivered me from that relationship, and I got married a year later that ended up in divorce after ten years. He was an addict who wasn’t dealing with his addictions, I was a mess he was a mess, and we were a mess. I was ignoring my mess and dragging it into other people’s lives.

CRIN: You know, most of us in recovery hit “bottom”, and for some there are several bottoms, through relapse or cross-addictions. Of course when we’re there it’s often difficult to look around and say “Hey...this is the bottom”, but as we climb out of it, and have the benefit of hindsight, we can look back and see it was a bottom for us. It’s often that bottom that can cause a change in our lives. Did you find that to be the case?

HL: Yes, at that point my life crashed. I was a divorced single mom, with very little to live on. I didn’t really know God then, but I went to my knees and said “I’m tired of living this way”; and God became my everything, my all-in-all. He became my husband, my provider, my father that I never had. I started going to a church, and seeking His plan for my life.

CRIN: And this was about the time your music came into play?



HL: Right. I felt like I was supposed to pick up the guitar, but I didn’t have a guitar, I was broke...I had five dollars to my name. Well, there was this torn-up guitar in my kids’ toy box, and I said, “God, I can’t afford to do anything to this guitar”, then I called the local music store to see what they would charge to put strings on it, and they said “Five bucks”...so God was really speaking to me in those early days. I was writing songs out of my brokenness, though I couldn’t read music, I didn’t know any chords, but these songs were just coming; and others, like my cousin, would pick out the chords as I’d sing the words and the melody.

CRIN: So that was what got you “in the door” to twelve-step recovery meetings, Christ-centered.

HL: Yes, initially, it wasn’t Celebrate Recovery. It was modeled on CR and they had been to the Summit. At first, we were doing praise & worship and one of my songs in with them, and finally the pastor said “I want you to do all your songs, because it’s Christ-centered; you’re writing about the Bible, you’re writing about recovery...you’re writing about healing”. That’s how it started, and I started playing guitar and learning guitar as I went along, and always had a recovery band.

CRIN: You’ve been playing guitar now for about 10 years. I know for myself, as a guitar player, I should be WAY better than I am for as long as I’ve been playing. But you know, especially in this type of music, the message is so important, and if the musicality detracts from the message, then how worthwhile is that? (At this point in our conversation Dennis joins in)

Dennis: God doesn’t want us all to be the same, I mean there was only one Stevie Ray Vaughn, but as individuals we gotta learn how to pull that out. So if it’s real simple strumming, it is the backbone of her music and songs have come from that. So now, it’s just the two of us traveling around...a pretty lightweight setup, but God said to us “I can be big in your smallness”. I play with brushes, or my fingers; God even spoke to me, as a husband, as a drummer, “Don’t run it over”. It ain’t about a bunch of noise, it’s about the heart of that song and what God is doing; and y’know ever since I’ve backed off and we’ve reduced everything, the ministry really started to take off...people were really starting to get it...the words were sinking in.

*Our interview with Heather continues next page
These are selected excerpts from the entire interview
To read the entire interview go to crinewsletter.com*



Interview with Heather Layne (cont'd)...

HL: Yeah, a lot of tears; and that's what I noticed the first time I went to a prison. There were groups...rescue missions and halfway houses coming to our recovery meetings, and they asked me if I'd do concerts. In the beginning, I was so nervous...I did it afraid, but I knew God was asking me to do it. So the first time I walked into a women's prison, I didn't know what the reaction was going to be, but by about the second or third song, most of them were just literally sobbing...and I thought "This is the most broken audience I've ever played in front of" and the God-spirit was just SO there...all I wanted to do was go back. We've played a few men's prisons as well; in California, Texas, and Tennessee. I know at Corcoran (Men's Prison in CA) they keep asking "When are they going to come back?"

CRIN: So how has doing prison ministry affected you? I know that doing prison ministry myself, I'm not sure who gets more blessed. (Denny and Heather both chime in "Yeah")

HL: You know it's really changed my perspective of humanity, and how God sees people; some of the Godliest people I've met are behind bars. I just have a huge respect for people that are following the Lord behind bars...I know it's not easy. I know it's not easy on the outside either, but I really know it's not easy on the inside, and I just really feel a connection with them because of my brokenness, and even though I wasn't incarcerated I understand being "imprisoned" within myself, and that's where I connect with them. I just have a passion to see people be free, but mostly to know the Truth. I want them to know the truth about God, about how much He loves them, that He's not mad at 'em. Y'know, He really wants to restore their lives, and I really believe that God can do great things with people that are just nobody without the Lord, 'cause that's what I was and He's done great things with my life because I said "Yes God, take my life" and so I believe that if He can do it for me, He can do it for everybody.

Heather will be out on tour into the Winter and Spring, with dates in California, Oregon, Washington, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, Tennessee, Florida, Georgia, and South Carolina. For more info, and how to buy music, read more about her, and read letters to her from prisoners to whom she has ministered, and more, go to <http://heatherlayne.com/> DJ



Tallahassee Graduation pics from CRI SR Laura Richie



Madison Parish Sherriff Larry G. Cox Celebrate Recovery Inside Graduation Class Mary Ann Collie Program Facilitator & Laura Richie La State Rep Celebrate Recovery Inside



Anyone who has never made a mistake has never tried anything new. At times, life's paths seem filled with many things that make the going rough and we wish there were a smoother road for we have had enough. But if we pause a moment and remember who is in charge, the mountains that are ahead of us no longer seem so large and every rock before us was not just a stumbling block, but one more stepping stone. No matter how things turn out, no matter what choices are made and the results that come from the decisions the days ahead will bring, one thing is clear, with God in your life, success is to be measured not so much by the position that one has reached in life, as by the

obstacles which one has overcome while trying to succeed. In life we find ever-increasing freedom to be who we really are in an identity that is continually emerging and never defined. Anyone can give up, it's the easiest thing in the world to do, but, to hold it together when everyone else would understand if you fell apart. That is true strength. We are now free to join the dance of life.

I pray the God will guide all of us one day at a time in this journey. I pray that for each day, God will supply the wisdom and the strength that we all need. *Catherine B.*



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12 step/8 Principle Graduation Ceremony

Waseca FCC

From Minnesota CR Inside State Rep Ashley Gorka

As we entered the chapel the sounds of clapping and rejoicing of the women was deafening. We were once again welcomed by a large group of women celebrating the joy of a Christ centered recovery group. The women had prepared a hilarious skit on Oprah that depicted "other" ways we can deal with addictions like chocolate. There were musical numbers and an interpretive dance in both English and Spanish. There were two incredible testimonies in both English and Spanish. Leticia shared Hebrews 12:1-2 and the spiral effect and emotional dissociation of her addictions. The women were vulnerable and shared openly, transforming the people who were blessed to hear them. This was a message of hope and victory through Christ's healing power and love.



Jackie played the first 2 songs, and our hearts and minds were opened to receive the gift of the Father's love and forgiveness. The message in these verses was about the grace that has been given to us that we can never earn. It is only through our brokenness that we can truly receive the gifts of the spirit. As I stood in front of these women and shouted "Hello Waseca!!!" the response was amazing. I spoke of the Passion of Christ, of unconditional love, selflessness, and the ultimate gift of his sacrifice. The price has been paid the debt has been paid and the slate is now wiped clean.

Jas & Claudia are the 2 main group leaders and it is obvious how much they are helping the women work the steps of the program. Hector presented the certificates to 86 women who completed the CR 12 step/8 principle groups whose lives have been forever changed because of Christ. Hector spoke of how much they have achieved and how they are setting an example for other institutions. They are the "world cup" holders of CRInside recovery!

Joe spoke of the importance of doing an inventory. Sometimes the hurts of our past are so bad we don't think we can love or be loved again. They've heard from the other participants that lives can be changed and we are no longer slaves to the sin inside us. We can experience a true sense of freedom even in prison. It's time to make a decision to turn our lives and our wills over to our higher power Jesus Christ. What a message of hope to be carrying to others on the inside.

Amazing things, God things, always happen when we come out of our denial and admit our powerlessness to control our tendency to do the wrong thing. It happens when we proclaim "we believe." It's almost as if our lives can be measured by the times we admit that we can't do it alone, but together we can do it with Him. Jackie closed with "Our God" and this song has been a favorite every time we go into Waseca. The message is about how great our God is and absolutely nothing can stand against us when He is for us.

My life and the lives of those who get to go in with me are forever changed through these women and I thank God every single day for the great opportunity He has given me to give back just a portion of what I have been given.



CR Inside State Rep Ashley Gorka (L) and National Director Hector Lozano Address the women at Waseca FCC in Minnesota