



INSIDEOUTSIDE

November 2009

KRISTINA'S STORY

I was made a ward of the State at the age of 13 and moved from hostel to hostel throughout my teenage years. I tried to get my mother to love and accept me, but she only ever rejected me which in turn I dealt with by trying to kill myself. From the age of 13 to 17 I overdosed 89 times, which resulted in being hospitalised and having my stomach pumped with charcoal. Each of the 89 times I also went through a phase of getting into trouble with the law and being placed in the Youth Training Centre (YTC). After the first time being there and then being released, all I ever wanted to do was go back as I had people who cared about me, taught me how to cook and something of the necessities of life. I grew to love the workers as my family.

I had my 18th birthday in a YTC and a couple of months later was invited to join Laurel on one of the Christian camps to Queensland. The YTC Manager gave me permission to attend. I had known Laurel throughout the whole time I had been going in and out of YTC, as her and the other ladies came in every week to do activities with us and going on that camp was, and still is, the best ever experience during those years of my life. It made me realise that there are a lot of good people in the world. I was eventually released from YTC and was no longer a ward of the State. I had grown up a lot and learnt to come to terms with my mother rejecting me and I no longer attempted to take my life.

After being out of YTC for two days I met a boy 3 years older than myself. From the day we met we were inseparable. He was a bit wild in his ways but I didn't care as I had someone of my own who loved me and who I loved in return. The one thing I had longed for. I fell pregnant after a few months of being with him, but when I was 7 months pregnant he was imprisoned and didn't come home until our son was 3 months old. During the last part of my pregnancy I had an elderly lady who always came to my house just to make sure I was okay and she would take me to church.

I had always believed in God and had gone to church throughout my life, but it did fluctuate from time to time. When something bad happened I never understood why God would allow it and I would become upset and angry with Him. While going with this lady to church I began to understand a bit better why God lets things happen, whether they are good or bad. While attending church my prayers always consisted of me asking to have an easy birth, a healthy child, and that my partner would stop his wild behaviour and be a good father. I

didn't want to have to make the decision of separating from him, but I didn't want our child to grow up with a parent always going in and out of prison.

About a week before my son was due I was feeling down. I contacted an old worker I had kept in touch with over the years, to see if he would contact my mum to see if she wanted to talk to



me. Later that day my mum rang. I didn't expect her to, but when she did the inner child came out in me and I was so happy thinking my mum would love me now. We talked for ages and she asked if I wanted to come home and stay for a couple of days. Of course I jumped at the chance! My mum and her partner drove from Melbourne to Ballarat to pick me up. Later that night at her house I went into labour resulting in my son being born. I was a proud mum and my mum was a proud grandma. My stay with Mum turned out to last for 3 months not just a couple of days.

I returned home to Ballarat the day before my partner was due to come home from prison. For the next 2 ½ months I believed God had answered my prayers as my partner had become the doting dad, had stopped being wild i.e. no crime, no pot, nothing. We were this loving family that I had yearned for since being a kid, but slowly things went down hill and my partner ran into people he had spent time with in prison. He started taking drugs and not coming home for days on end.

I won't forget the night he came home so intoxicated he was unbearable. We had an argument about his drinking and he ended up making his bed on the couch in the lounge room. I had made plans with my mum that night to come and spend a few days with her, hoping my partner would realise what he was jeopardising because of his behaviour. The next morning I woke up early, got my son and myself ready and packed to go to my mum's house. I went into the lounge to leave a note and grab the house keys and noticed my partner didn't look right. I checked him and discovered the worst...he had died overnight. For me that was the beginning of a 10 year nightmare.

Two years after my partner died I had a nervous breakdown and started taking heroin to numb me and take away my problems, which I now know it doesn't. Drugs only suppress them until they

continued...

resurface more problematic than before. At this stage I asked my mum to take care of my son and said I would be back when I was ready. Well over the last 10 years I used drugs and was in and out of prison and psychiatric hospitals.

This time in prison my life feels like it's turning around for the better. I believe God makes everything happen for a reason and I believe I was meant to come back. After not being here for 3 years, my mum was able to find me and tell me I needed to reconnect with my son. I hadn't seen him in ten years and I was very nervous about telling him I was his mother for fear of being rejected. That was the reason I'd stayed away for so many years, but me reuniting with him and my family has given me an inner peace and a new direction.

Having Chelsea from PNM has made the transition so much easier as she has been my sounding board. She has listened to me when I've needed someone to vent to and has given sound advice. After listening to her, things make more sense and make me see it in a better way. Chelsea is also someone I can gladly call a friend and she has been there to answer my questions about God. I've been reuniting myself with God now that I've stopped being angry at Him. I don't believe I would have been able to cope or go through this transition with my son and family without having support. My life has and will turn around for the better and this time I will trust God no matter what happens. I am eternally grateful to God, Prison Network and to my son and family.

Kristina

THERE'S NO TIME LIKE CHRISTMAS!



I will never forget a number of Christmas' ago, doing a 6 hour round trip to Gippsland to pick up 3 children whose mum was in prison. It was the annual Children's Christmas Party at the prison which is a huge event. The children I picked up were pleasant company and chatted away happily for most

of the trip....except the 9 year old girl. I barely got a word out of her. On arrival at the prison I thought that she might relax and spark up when she saw her mum, but she remained quiet and subdued. Half way through the visit with her mum I asked her what she wanted for Christmas. She put her arm around her mum's waist and dropped her head saying, "nothing." "Nothing at all?" I asked. She shook her head and snuggled into her mother.

Later that day, her mum pressed her some more about what she would like....not that she could do anything about it, no matter what was on her wish list. She eventually replied with tears in her eyes "If I can't have you, I don't want anything."

Christmas is difficult for so many of those we know, particularly the children.

This year "Melanie" will be released home on the 24th of December. Her 3 children are over the moon about having her home for Christmas.

With little more than a weeks pension due to her, she is daunted by the fact of not being able to provide presents for her boys, and on being released the day before Christmas! Furthermore, busy shopping centres are very difficult to cope with when you've been isolated in prison for many months. Knowing her situation, PNM will assist her and her children to have a happy Christmas, and make sure the days leading up to her release hold as little angst as possible.

There's no time like Christmas....for demand on our resources. Several thousand dollars go towards payment for children's camps, assistance with presents, contributions to both prison's Christmas parties, an enormous amount of child transport throughout December and January and various other assistance to bring "good cheer" to the many we know. It's very costly.

Christmas is often our most opportune time of the year to show people we care. If you would like to help out by giving to our Christmas Appeal we would be very grateful! All donations over \$2 are tax deductible.

Laurel Gore

REGULAR PROGRAMS

Tuesday: Christian Discussion group, sports/craft programs, visits.

Thursday: Sports program and visits

Friday (three weekly): Tarra craft program

Saturday (4-6 weekly): Sports event 'game on day'

1st & 3rd Sunday of the month: Fun with Mum

4th Sunday of the month: Church Service

CURRENT NEEDS

Does anyone have a cage trailer in the eastern suburbs?

Do you have accounting skills and can assist us as Treasurer?

If you have said "yes" to either of these needs, we would love to hear from you.

2009 PRISON NETWORK CAMP

I had a wonderful time at the PNM camp. It was the first time I'd been anywhere by myself (i.e. without children) for 17 years, so the anticipation of just getting away to meet some new people and focus on God was huge. I certainly was not disappointed! My first challenge was getting there using a GPS and fortunately it didn't let me down...unlike the trip home, but more about that later.

Laurel was the first person to share on the Saturday morning, and the challenge she left me (and no doubt all of us), regarding William Booth's vision still resonates with me. I often find myself thinking about it and praying more spontaneously for people, that God would interrupt their thoughts and circumstances and make Himself known to them. It's amazing how we can spend so much of our time being caught up in the busyness of life. Almost like there's nothing more important than getting through the schedule for that particular day, but that vision keeps me mindful that there are infinitely (and eternally) more important things than what we have to do right now.

Even though I haven't had the privilege of meeting any of the women in prison yet, I was struck by the hearts of the PNM volunteers for these women – the care and love they expressed toward them was so obvious and I look forward to being able to meet some of them soon.

Katharine's session on ministering to broken people was also very informative, and it reinforced what a difference we can make in others' lives by providing a listening ear and accepting people for who they are.

Now back to my GPS. I faithfully keyed in my address and commenced the trip home. It had, in its wisdom, decided to take me on an alternative route to the one I took on Friday. No freeway this time, but a rather convoluted trek through Frankston. I obeyed it unquestioningly, trusting that it was all knowing and wouldn't take me anywhere I didn't need to go... that is until I eventually arrived at a T- intersection and it wanted me to turn left heading towards Portsea. I soon realised it was taking me to the ferry! As I couldn't reason with it I had to turn the opposite way to which I was being told, and thankfully it eventually got me home, albeit almost an hour later than expected.

It made me thankful for the fact that we have a God who is infinitely wise and in whom we can entrust our lives to. As we obey Him, we can rest assured that He knows exactly which route we are to take in life and will never lead us along any path which isn't for our ultimate best.

Wendy Warren

The Annual Investment Opportunity

"After Jesus had finished instructing his twelve disciples he went on from there to teach and to preach..... (Matt 11:1)"

Jesus often spent time with his disciples investing in their lives through teaching and fellowship, and it helped them to focus, or re-focus, on the mission of God that He and they were called to be a part of.

This is what the PNM camp embodies for me. A time of re-focusing on the mission of God that we are a part of, through fellowship and teaching, deliberately setting apart time and creating distance from our everyday lives.

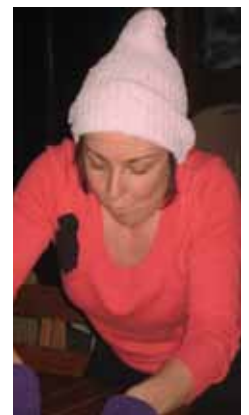
I have on both occasions come away with a greater sense of commitment to the unique mission of PNM

as well as a little wiser from the times of teaching. But by far the most rewarding part for me is the strengthening of relationships with my fellow workers, from all aspects of the ministry, and a re-ignition of the excitement of being in a team with "like hearted" people.

It's a time of investment. PNM invests in us by providing this opportunity, we invest in the ministry by gaining greater understanding of the task and the people to whom we minister, and we invest in each other by coming together in this distinct way.

By the way if this all sounds too serious let me assure you that it's all interspersed with some serious FUN! Hope we'll see you there in 2010.

Sharon White





A NOTE FROM THE CEO

We have much to be thankful for! In our busy, self-centred world, we need to remember those who have made a difference in our lives, and when they come to mind, pray for them and find a way to say "thank you."

Throughout the year, we have received gifts both large and small for which we are very thankful. When we think of giving we usually think of it in monetary terms, but our 'giving' can take many different forms.

Some weeks ago when I was feeling particularly heavy hearted about a woman returning to prison who had been given a lot of support, a friend of mine sent me an excerpt from a book.

The part I would like to share with you is this... "There is too much concern about giving something to someone who might misuse what is given. That didn't stop God. We are not

responsible for what another person does with what we've given them.

As we approach Christmas - the season of giving and receiving, it is only when we give joyfully, without hesitation or thought of gain, that we can truly know what love means.

Thanks again for your support and prayers throughout the year, and on behalf of PNM, I pray that you and your family have a wonderful Christmas.

**Blessings,
Deb Redford**



BOARD MEMBER PROFILE - Helen Walker

Hi I'm Helen. I am married to Martin and we have two children - Jordan who is 16 years old and

Joanne who is 14. I work full time for a building company in the role of accounts/administration.

My involvement with PNM has spanned many years and I returned as a Board member in 2009 after an 8 year break.

What's in your CD player at the moment?

Michael W. Smith

Most embarrassing moment?

I can't share the most embarrassing, but the second

most embarrassing was when my son, who was 2 at the time, bit another child. It was terrible.

Last Movie you saw?

"17 Again". I watched it with my daughter and thought it was really good.

Most adventurous thing you have ever done?

Walking the streets of St Kilda with an organisation called Teen Challenge, every Friday night from about 8 pm until 2 in the morning.

Name 5 people you would invite to a dinner party...

Mother Theresa, Hugh Jackman, Mum, My best friend and Kim Clysters

What are some of your interests or hobbies?

Tennis, reading and walking

Favorite holiday destination?

Torquay

Favorite bible verse or character ?

2 Corinthians 5:17 - "Therefore, if any one is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold, the new has come."

Why did you join the Board?

Because I believe the ministry of PNM is very important, worthwhile and valuable.

What is your hope for PNM?

To see women changed. That they will feel loved and know the love of God

2009 Annual Report is available and if you would like a copy of it... please contact Deb

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