

# What's Inside!

## **Monthly Spotlight** **2**

*New Life Dream Center (Bethel Island, CA).*

## **Q+A** **5**

*Nicole Linder, CEO, Marjaree Mason Center.*

## **Testimonial** **14**

*Jeremy Stewart update (TUMI Graduate), and God Behind Bars*

## **President's Corner** **18**

*President Greg Bruce shares gratitude for Serving USA's associates and community of partners.*

## **Get In Contact** **20**

*Find our partners' social media links for updates on their community impact.*

## **Partner Events** **21**

*Find our partners' upcoming event information.*



## Monthly Spotlight: **NEW LIFE DREAM CENTER**

Known as “The Heart of the California Delta,” Bethel Island is a unique, small community in the delta of the San Joaquin River. 20 miles from Stockton, CA, and accessible by bridge or boat, its natural beauty and rural location lend to the island’s popularity as a destination for those desiring tranquility and rest.

Since 2012, New Life Dream Center (NLDC) has been a beacon of hope in this community, providing restoration to people seeking safety and freedom from addiction in the Bay Area and beyond. The faith-based nonprofit focuses on rehabilitation and personal transformation through a year-long residential discipleship program where participants live on-site under structured supervision.

*New Life Dream Center’s mission is to empower these individuals struggling with substance abuse and addiction by providing spiritual guidance, practical skills and support.*

The program incorporates daily counseling, scripture memorization, participation in 12-step recovery meetings, and work therapy, particularly through the operation of the marina which gives participants real-world job training and work experience.

The business and ministry hybrid model were originally operated by Delta Family Bible Church, and with previous director Pastor Jonathan Gee’s guidance, later became a collaborative effort between Francis Chan’s Crazy Love Ministries, Los Angeles Dream Center, and the pre-existing New Life Center.



## Monthly Spotlight: **NEW LIFE DREAM CENTER**

It is a part of the Dream Center's family of ministries and serves largely in the unhoused community and in the areas of re-entry.

Recidivism is extremely rare in graduates and the success rate of graduates is currently at 64%. Residents receive counseling and help with job placement, and can transition into a drug-free housing environment after completing the program.

*Clients become like family and are prepared for healthy functioning and relationships in the outside world. At NLDC, people find themselves in God's story of hope and redemption.*

NLDC emphasizes the importance of treating clients with dignity while helping them reintegrate into society as productive, connected individuals. NLDC staff, volunteers and alumni walk in the spirit of love. They believe that receiving God's love first is paramount to understanding His plan and purpose. "God loved you first" is a motto they embody and meditate upon.



Providing Grace and Redemption through Christ for Prisoners, Women in Recovery, and Military Veterans



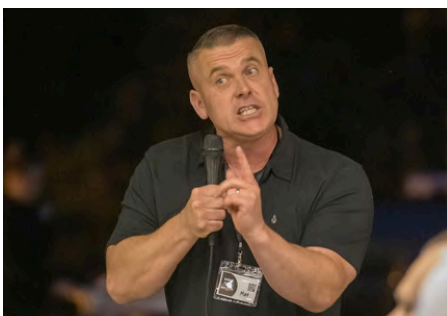
## Monthly Spotlight: **NEW LIFE DREAM CENTER**

Hurting people come to know God's purpose for their lives through reliance upon Him and His word, embrace a life of discipleship, and turn from hurt and failures stemming out of trauma and addiction to healthy, abundant and productive lives.

Additionally, New Life Dream Center offers outreach services, such as community feeding initiatives and access to further education at EPIC Bible College to encourage graduates to become leaders in their communities.

This program is recognized and recommended by the Contra Costa County Court system, adding credibility to its impact on individuals' recovery and reintegration into society.

For more information, please visit: <https://newlifedreamcenter.com>



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Questions

**Q & A**

Answers



**NICOLE LINDER**  
CEO/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
THE MARJAREE MASON CENTER

Nicole Linder is the CEO/Executive Director of the Marjaree Mason Center (MMC) in Fresno, California. She has been instrumental in leading the organization, which focuses on supporting survivors of domestic violence through shelters, education, and advocacy programs. Linder has also emphasized the importance of breaking generational cycles of abuse and offering preventive education to young people about healthy relationships. Before joining MMC, Nicole held various leadership roles, including as Senior Development Officer at Valley Children's Healthcare Foundation and in fund development positions at Fresno Pacific University for over a decade.

In addition to managing MMC's day-to-day operations, she works on legislative advocacy to further protections for victims of domestic violence and human trafficking. Her efforts have earned her and Marjaree Mason Center several recognitions. Recently she received the 2024 Distinguished 'Top Dog' Alumni Award from Fresno State University, as well as the 2024 Nonprofit of the Year award and Woman of the Year award for California's 8th Assembly District. Nicole's leadership continues to drive growth for MMC, both operationally and in community impact.



Questions

**Q & A**

Answers



**NICOLE LINDER**  
CEO/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
THE MARJAREE MASON CENTER

**1**

**(Q) Marjaree Mason's murder at the hands of her ex-boyfriend, a local Sheriff Deputy, illuminated, often privately, domestic abusers and victims exist among us in all demographics. In our own communities, as neighbors, businesses, and churches, what are recommended steps to being better supporters and advocates for survivors and their families? How can organizations collaborate with MMC? Please share an example of how financial support can be impactful.**

**(A)** Domestic violence will only end when each of us can look in the mirror and reflect on our own actions. Additionally, it takes each of us being brave to address our own mistakes and hold people, even family members, accountable for harmful behaviors. Power and control have no place in loving relationships.

Domestic violence does not discriminate. It effects all individuals of all ages, genders, sexual orientations, ethnicities, religions and socio-economic ability. The Central Valley has some of the highest reported rates of domestic violence in the State of California and only 12% of those involved in domestic violence cases with law enforcement are reportedly married. The way we have been viewing it, primarily as affecting older, married couples, is all wrong.

Providing Grace and Redemption through Christ for Prisoners, Women in Recovery, and Military Veterans

Questions

**Q & A**

Answers



**NICOLE LINDER**  
CEO/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
THE MARJAREE MASON CENTER

The approach to addressing and preventing it needs to be targeted towards teens and younger adults in dating relationships.

Long before the Marjaree Mason Center and Fresno County law enforcement launched into a more comprehensive data collection project, resulting in a dashboard located on the MMC website, the Center started plans for a new and improved resource center. For decades, we have honor of carrying on the legacy of the Marjaree Mason, by providing emergency shelter and critical supports to individuals (all genders now but exclusively women until 2016) and their children. However, in addition to the limited capacity and funding for safe housing for survivors of domestic violence, the Center saw a growing need for individuals who needed assistance with services other than shelter: assistance with restraining orders, individual and group therapy, life skills, job search, housing placement and more.

*In order to truly break generational cycles of abuse, our community and nation needs to increase our investment in children who had been exposed to violence and abuse in the home. We need to invest in critical interventions that will stop abuse from escalating and provide supports to address long-term recovery.*

Providing Grace and Redemption through Christ for Prisoners, Women in Recovery, and Military Veterans

Questions

**Q & A**

Answers



**NICOLE LINDER**

CEO/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
THE MARJAREE MASON CENTER

In December of this year, the Marjaree Mason Center will complete construction of the remodel of a new facility, The Isnardi Foundation Building, which will double our capacity to provide this community support. With a dedicated 24/7 crisis drop in center, children's service, mental health rooms, group therapy rooms, a clinic, and large 100+ seat training space, the Marjaree Mason Center is fulfilling a life-long dream to enhance our capacity to serve, improve the physical and emotional safety of our facilities and increase accessibility by providing a true one-stop shop. This move is an intentional investment in prevention and early intervention.

From November 16 - December 1, the Isnardi Foundation, for which the new building will be named, has committed to matching up to \$1 million donated to help us fully fund this transition.

*Domestic violence will only rise to a level that a community is willing to accept, and it is projects like these are a testament to what a community will stand for.*

When this is over, Fresno County will have a \$21 million facility solely focused on serving people affected by domestic violence and those who were a part of this project can say, "Wow! We did that – both for survivors today and for future generations." Disrupting generational cycles of abuse will have positive ripple effects on families and communities.



Providing Grace and Redemption through Christ for Prisoners, Women in Recovery, and Military Veterans

Questions

**Q & A**

Answers



**NICOLE LINDER**  
CEO/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
THE MARJAREE MASON CENTER

**2**

**(Q) Domestic violence affects 10 MILLION people in the United States each year. These are shocking and attention-grabbing numbers. There is a manner of thinking that using statistics in fundraising appeals is not advisable, but rather leading with emotional, testimonial appeals is more successful. Do you agree? What other important point(s) or statistic(s) related to DV or IPV, perhaps understated or overlooked by the general media, should we be aware of and talking about?**

**(A)** Domestic violence is a complex topic. Every relationship, every person's own lived experiences, everyone's own controlling behaviors (whether over something innocent or potentially dangerous) – are different. Because of this, domestic violence can be difficult to understand. Although the dynamics of power and control are a constant in domestic violence relationships, how it manifests in our communities evolves. Though most domestic violence goes unreported, greater awareness creates greater access to support, thus shifting the understanding of who domestic violence affects and how. In order to prevent and end domestic violence, communities need to stay ahead of trends about what triggers lead up to a violent incident, what is taking place during an act of violence and what happens following an act of violence to all involved.

Questions

**Q & A**

Answers

**NICOLE LINDER**CEO/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
THE MARJAREE MASON CENTER

What we know as Intimate Partner Violence is not new. Domestic violence is rooted in all religions and cultures where women were considered subservient to men. Past demeaning terms such as “Battered Women” or “Battered Wives”, which inadvertently OR sometimes intentionally puts the identity and blame on the victim or survivor, instead of an intentional effort to hold the aggressor accountable for committing a crime, have long identified the problem as a CIS gender, heterosexual issue where a married man physically assaults his wife. Often times this was attributed to the husband's alcoholism, financial stress or that he was just a "mean/tough husband". In other cases, abuse was deemed a result of the wife's inability to serve, respect or obey the desires or expectations of the husband.

However today, marriage rates have decreased. According to data reported by local law enforcement, from January 2023-June 2024, only 12% of the survivors who engaged with law enforcement said that they were married (25% were unknown) and 45% identified as either dating or formerly dating. Twenty-three percent of survivors (not perpetrators) identified as male. The most terrifying statistic: 13% of survivors are between the ages of 13 - 25. I personally believe that number is low because I don't believe most teens feel like they should reach out to law enforcement for relationship issues. Why is this important? As a community, with the highest reported rates of domestic violence BY FAR, it is imperative that we identify what intimate partner violence looks like and tackle it before the situation turns severe, such as homicide or long-term legal, social service, and mental and physical health dependence.

Questions

**Q & A**

Answers



**NICOLE LINDER**  
CEO/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
THE MARJAREE MASON CENTER

As it relates to testimonials, one of the challenges with raising funds within survivor services is that our priority from start to finish is to protect the emotional and physical safety of the survivor and respect their rights to confidentiality.

As survivors of extreme effects of a loved one exerting unhealthy levels of power and control over them, our goal is to assist the survivor in taking back control of their lives. While stakeholders want to hear and see stories of transformation, it takes months, years, and even decades for someone to be willing to share their story with others. Also, we have to be aware that they are not just sharing their own story but that of extended family.

*We respect each individual and want them to wait to publicly share their story until they are confident that it is the right thing to do for THEM. Our services cannot and will not be conditional on the survivor sharing their story. We would each want the same respect if we were in their shoes.*

Providing Grace and Redemption through Christ for Prisoners, Women in Recovery, and Military Veterans

Questions

**Q & A**

Answers



**NICOLE LINDER**  
CEO/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
THE MARJAREE MASON CENTER

**3**

**(Q) As the CEO your wide range of responsibilities include overseeing 100+ employees. Looking after their physical and mental health, you have been a forerunner and advocate for implementing the holistic approach for staffers in high-stress roles, including promoting self-care, counseling and secondary trauma trainings for your team. How has this approach impacted your staff and overall performance outcomes?**

**(A)** The Marjaree Mason Center is committed to a trauma-informed approach not only with our clients, but with our staff, who are working with survivors through some very difficult situations. Over 50% of our staff has lived experience with domestic violence, so when an employee has a particularly difficult day with a survivor, we want to make sure we have equipped them with the tools to support their mental and emotional recovery. By doing this, we have fostered a supportive environment where employees feel valued and understood. This includes but is not limited to regular reminders about employee sponsored mental health supports and staff recognitions and celebrations.

Providing Grace and Redemption through Christ for Prisoners, Women in Recovery, and Military Veterans

Questions

Q & A

Answers



**NICOLE LINDER**

CEO/EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF  
THE MARJAREE MASON CENTER

By addressing secondary trauma and promoting open discussions about mental health, we've cultivated a culture of empathy and support – strengthening team dynamics and leading to better communication and collaboration.

At our new community resource center, we have two dedicated rooms for employee rest and recovery. These quiet spaces are designed to allow staff the appropriate space to decompress from especially difficult and emotionally taxing encounters.

*A strong emphasis on well-being has made our organization more attractive to top talent and I think employees appreciate the commitment to their health, which has improved retention rates and reduced turnover costs.*



# Testimonial Spotlight

## GOD BEHIND BARS & JEREMY STEWART

### God Behind Bars

God Behind Bars recently began providing The Urban Ministry Institute (TUMI) seminary-style Bible courses, and already has nearly 200 inmates in seven different prisons enrolled in Biblical Studies certificate classes. Incarcerated students complete a year's worth of curriculum, totaling 600 hours of being in the Bible.

Their first graduating class, living in a maximum-security prison in Florida, celebrated 18 graduates. 13 of these students will be going on to complete a 2-year certificate course on Christian Leadership.

*A highlight from this class was one student in his sixties, who had never graduated from anything before, finished his certificate and gave his 92-year-old mother her first-ever photo of her son as a graduate! Eight of these TUMI graduates even went on to be baptized! These students' lives are truly being changed.*

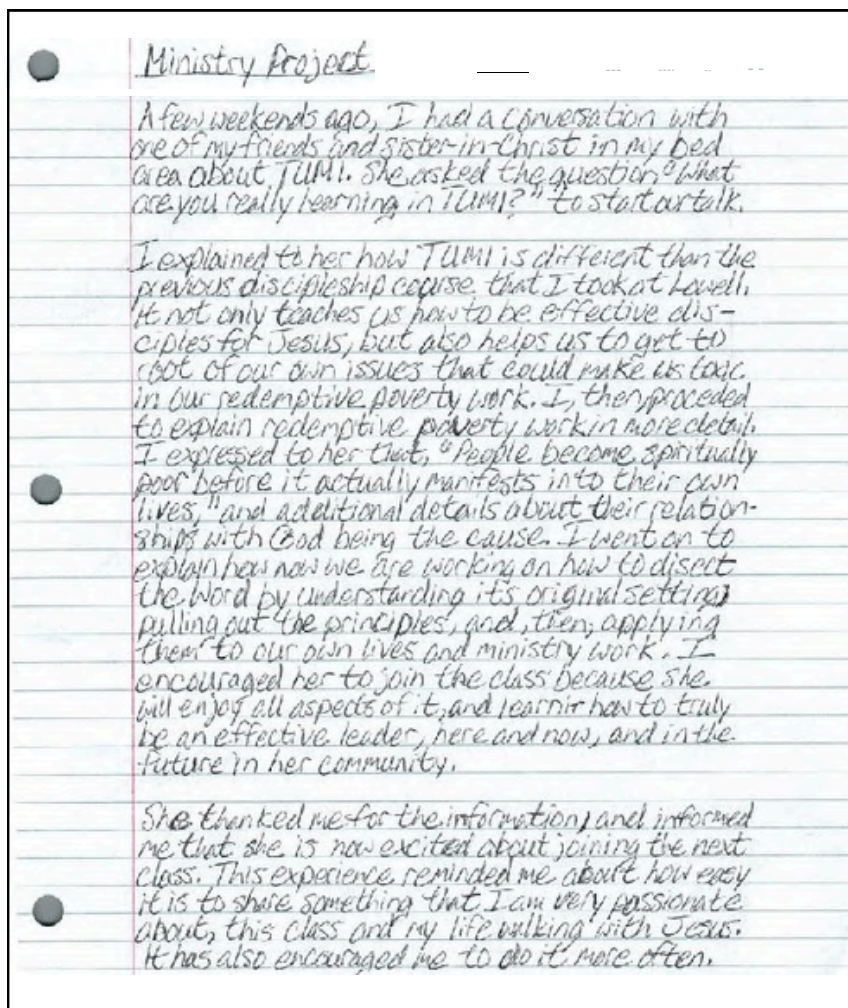


(See video here: [https://youtube.com/shorts/4MmdxJ\\_woyQ?si=bGOjbwJNvyrg3YnH](https://youtube.com/shorts/4MmdxJ_woyQ?si=bGOjbwJNvyrg3YnH))

## Testimonial Spotlight

# GOD BEHIND BARS & JEREMY STEWART

In Quincy, Florida's Gadsden Correctional Facility for Women, a TUMI class is currently underway. As part of her ministry project, one student shared how she is applying her TUMI education in daily life and her conversations with other inmates.



Your generosity makes TUMI possible. Donate to help launch hundreds more of these programs. Your support helps offset the cost of books, tv's, paper, pencils, computers and more.

**Visit: <https://www.godbehindbars.com/donate>**

# Testimonial Spotlight

## **GOD BEHIND BARS & JEREMY STEWART**

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*Checking in with Jeremy Stewart, M.Div, TUMI Graduate and Pastor:*

God has been busy in my life lately. Since I was featured in January's newsletter, God has grown our church, Breakthrough Church San Diego. In fact, we outgrew two buildings and are now in a place that can handle considerable growth!

I also became a high school teacher at Foothills Christian High School. I teach 10th grade Biblical Worldview and 11th grade Biblical Doctrine.

God is so good. I have performed 3 weddings and 7 baptisms also since January. I am excited to see what is ahead. The great thing about serving Christ is that you never know what He will do next!

## Testimonial Spotlight

# GOD BEHIND BARS & JEREMY STEWART

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*It is exciting to walk with Jesus. This also means that the enemy has his crosshairs on me even more. I have certainly felt the attacks, but I am still pressing forward by the grace of God.*

Serving our Lord is a marathon. It requires constant attention to the fact that my old self is dead, and the new self is Christ in me. I figure I am about half-way done with my marathon, God-willing, and my goal is to hear those beautiful words, "Well done my good and faithful servant."

**Learn more about Jeremy Stewart and Breakthrough Church San Diego:**  
<https://www.breakthroughchurchsd.com>



## President's Corner



Greg Bruce  
President, Serving USA

American culture is talking about TRAUMA more than ever before. Those searching for significance on social media in today's world, find identifying as 'traumatized' is now interchangeable with lesser serious verbs like disturbed, worried and scared. There is need for caution in how trauma is being downplayed socially. Appropriate use of mental health clinical terms emphasizes the importance and urgency of caring for those suffering from truly traumatic experiences. Serving USA reporting finds trauma is legitimate as an underlying commonality affecting the livelihood of those within our three main pillars of support: Prisoners, Veterans and Women in Recovery.

For example: As many as two-thirds of adults with substance use disorders (SUD) and addictive behaviors experienced some form of trauma during their childhood. Frequently addictions exist as coping mechanisms for those with mental health issues. Women in recovery homes document up to 95% experienced their first trauma in childhood.

Single incident traumas, such as Post Traumatic Stress (PTS) occur from a person witnessing or experiencing a stressful or terrifying event and is very common (with more than 13 million cases per year). Often linked to military combat, natural disasters and serious accidents, PTS symptoms may vary in intensity and duration.



## President's Corner



Greg Bruce  
President, Serving USA

Domestic violence, childhood abuse and community violence can all contribute to COMPLEX traumas, such as C-PTS (Complex-Post Traumatic Stress), which are repetitive and cumulative traumas. In prison, 37% of inmates have a history of mental health problems directly related to complex trauma, which likely led them to become incarcerated in the first place. Furthering the problem, time spent incarcerated can exacerbate complex trauma and underlying mental health issues. While cliché, the term: 'hurt people, hurt people,' represents cycles of abuse and self-harm will continue without proper intervention.

Understanding these commonalities, Serving USA and our partners including **Nicole Linder of Marjaree Mason Center** and **New Life Dream Center**, place emphasis on trauma education and prevention, as well as professional mental and medical health care. In addition, with our faith in Christ we know Jesus is the only one who can truly make us well and satisfy the human longing for significance and worth people are desperately searching for. Research shows support from family and friends, and faith are important parts of recovery from trauma. Please join us in reaching those most hurting help break cycles of addiction, generational abuse, suicidality and violence. Learn more about our network and follow along with our partner updates on FB at: <https://www.facebook.com/Servingusaa>

Thank you,  
-Dr. Greg Bruce

Providing Grace and Redemption through Christ for Prisoners, Women in Recovery, and Military Veterans

## Get In Contact



### Marjaree Mason Center

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### New Life Dream Center

1200 Taylor Road Bethel Island, CA 94511

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### God Behind Bars

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### Jeremy Stewart, MDiv., TUMI Graduate and Pastor Breakthrough Church San Diego

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## Questions?

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS, COMMENTS, OR CONCERNS REGARDING INFORMATION WITHIN THIS NEWSLETTER,

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# Partner Events



*November 8th and 15th*

**Firm Foundations Ministries**

**Imprisoned to Empowered, Story Night & Fundraiser Events.**

**Two Dates, Two Locations! Kansas City!**

**November 8th at 7PM, Foundry Church, 8835 Lackman Rd., Lenexa, KS 66216 Wichita!**

**Nov. 15th at 7PM, Calvary Chapel Fellowship, 190 S. Rock Rd., Wichita, KS 67207**

Join us for an evening filled with amazing stories of transformation, a raffle, desserts, and opportunities to learn more about partnering with us to create positive change in our community



*November 28th*

**Orange County Rescue Mission**

**Turkey Trot OC 5K, November 28th at 8AM PST, Village of Hope, Tustin, CA 92782**

You're invited to join us for our 11th annual Turkey Trot OC 5K at 8am on Thanksgiving morning (November 28). Each registration includes the 2024 T-shirt, 2024 participant medal, and more!



Providing Grace and Redemption through Christ for Prisoners, Women in Recovery, and Military Veterans

# Partner Events



*December 7th and 8th*

## Wings of Refuge

**It's that time of year again! Join us for the 6th Annual Tour of Homes for Wings of Refuge...**

**December 7th and 8th, Iowa Arboretum & Gardens, 1875 Peach Ave., Madrid, IA 50156**

And don't forget to come to the Arboretum to see the new treehouse exhibit and A FESTIVAL OF TREES. See you there! Tickets for sale in stores starting November 1st or online



*December 31st*

## New Beginnings

**December 31st, In Bed by Ten New Year's Event Mother Lode Lion's Club, 4701 Missouri Flat Road Diamond Springs, CA 95619**

Come join us for a night of fun and celebration at the Mother Lode Lion's Club. Get ready to mingle, and ring in the new year with friends old and new. This in-person event promises to be the highlight of your holiday season, so mark your calendars and start planning your outfit now! We can't wait to see you there as we countdown to 2025 and welcome in the new year together.

