



**FIRST PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH OF CHAMPAIGN**



**The Heart of Mission**

June 22, 2021

This week I begin teaching a Life skills class at one of our local mission partners until the end of August. Please keep the men at the Canaan Men's S.A.F.E. House in your prayers. Pray that they might receive from this class what they need to move ahead in their journey. Out of the files and with some help from Jeannie Snoeyink, I pulled together a history of the S.A.F.E. House for you. You have read parts before from the backs of bulletins at the S.A.F.E. House concerts. I am struck by how important it is not to forget the origins of things. First Presbyterian Church Champaign has a long and strong relationship with this ministry and it began out of a concern for the young people who drugs and violence in our community keep from flourishing. Our work here is not over.

**Canaan S.A.F.E. House History**

In 1992, members of Canaan Baptist Church and First Presbyterian Church formed a Community Relations Task Force to address how the Christian Community could work together in the fight against substance abuse. Plans for a SAFE House (Substance Abuse Free Environment) grew into a community-wide effort embraced by the Champaign and Urbana Police Departments. SAFE House is modeled after the Substance Abuse Ministry implemented by Rev. B. J. Tatum in 1986 at Canaan Baptist Church

On February 7, 1994 the Door of Deliverance opened as a haven for men to overcome their addiction. The Men's Safe House, located at 213 S Central Ave, Urbana, IL attacks the problem of drugs and alcohol abuse through the Word of God, education, prevention and access to rehabilitation.

Throughout its 27 year history, the Program has experienced successful results. To date, the men's Safe House Ministry has served hundreds of men and their families. Also, over 100 men have successfully completed the 12-month residential program. Past graduates are successful community members who contribute to society in a variety of professions.

On October 14, 2012, the 12-month residential Women's Safe House opened its Door of Deliverance at 502 E. Church Street in Champaign, IL to provide hope for women suffering from the ravages of drugs and alcohol. To date, more than fifty women have entered the program and 7 graduates have successfully completed the 12-month residential program.

The SAFE House concept works! Both programs are recognized by the Champaign County Court System as an option for substance abusers.

Past directors of the SAFE house have been Johnny Harris, Rev. Carter. Both of whom had experienced recovery from addiction in the Canaan Baptist ministry. Brother Green had a long leadership even through his wife's battle with cancer. The current director is Brother Raymond McCrary. First Presbyterian Church has had several graduates of SAFE House who have worked on our staff.

On August 27, 2019 Matt Difanis, a supporter of Canaan S.A.F.E.house, wrote on Facebook following their annual Jazz festival in Hessel Park, "The center boasts an incredibly high success rate and such a high level of credibility that the criminal justice system frequently works to place those with addictions there. At the event on Sunday, graduates of the S.A.F.E. house could be heard telling their friends--as they pointed at Judges Ford and Difanis in the crowd--that "he saved my life" by getting them to the S.A.F.E. house. Sometimes the criminal justice system manages to rehabilitate, and in many of those cases, it's because of Canaan S.A.F.E. house."

Pictures and more about this wonderful ministry can be found at <http://canaansafehouse.org/media/>

As Jeannie Snoeyink has said, "God has blessed this program, freed many from drugs and taught them how to lead meaningful lives of service to God and others....We thank God for allowing us to be a part of this program since its inception and the blessings we have received from it."

Peace,

Rev. Rachel Matthews, Mission Coordinator

**We want to keep our mission partners in our prayers, those who are waiting to go back to their place of ministry and those who are able to work where they are. Listen for God's call to you in their ministry.**

**Our PC(USA) Mission CoWorkers:**

Mark Adams and Miriam Maidonado Escobar (Mexico)  
Farsijanna Adeney-Risakotta (Indonesia)  
Jeff and Christi Boyd (Central Africa)  
Bob and Kristi Rice (South Sudan)

**Our regional and global mission partners:**

Kemmerer Village (and Camp Carew)  
Lifeline Pilots  
Marion Medical Mission  
Mission Aviation Fellowship  
Opportunity International  
Friends of Presbyterian Education Board in Pakistan Presbyterian Cuba Partnership  
Special Offerings of the PC(USA)  
Theological Education Fund  
Young Adult Volunteers

**Here in Champaign – Urbana:**

CU at Home  
CANAAN S.A.F.E. HOUSE  
CANTEEN RUN  
COURAGE CONNECTION  
DREAAM  
eEMPTY TOMB, INC  
FAITH IN ACTION  
JESUS IS THE WAY PRISON MINISTRY  
THE REFUGEE CENTER  
RESTORATION URBAN MINISTRY  
SALT & LIGHT

**Here at First Presbyterian Church**

FPCC Amateur Preachers

FPCC Environmental Committee working with Faith in Place  
FPCC Presbyterian Women  
FPCC ESL  
FPCC Children, Youth and Families  
FPCC Mission Possible/Go and Serve  
FPCC Mission Team, World Mission and Community Mission Deacons



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