

# ATLAS of Osceola Co.

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*This issue is dedicated to friends of ATLAS currently serving prison sentences. They matter to Jesus and they matter to us—no matter where. . . no matter what. We thank those willing to share their letters here.*

Vol. #802  
2018



## From the Director's Desk...



**T**wo jail cells—a husband in one and his wife in the other. His cell was on the first floor. Her cell was directly above his. Despite

the closeness, they were not allowed to communicate. That was the part really tearing them up. Shawn and Erin had been down this road before but this time around was a tough pill to swallow. “Never-again” had been their mantra. But letting down their guard, using meth again once—then twice, got the downward-spiral going. The pattern was predictable yet they ignored the slippery slope. They were arrested, charged and jailed. They would remain in jail until the next-leg of the journey: prison.

From his jail cell, Shawn reached out to the ATLAS office via letter asking if I would come to see him there. It was during our first meeting that he asked if someone could meet with his wife. Tricia, one of our staff mentors, began meeting Erin in jail as well. Trust was established quickly and relationships began to form. During one of their meetings, Tricia gave Erin a copy of Jesus

Calling, encouraging her to read a page from the daily devotional each morning. Erin soon fell in love with the devotional and wanted to somehow share it with Shawn. If only they could communicate. But where there's a will. . . there's often a way.

Their jail cells shared an air vent. Despite the no-communication rule, Erin began whispering the words of the daily devotional through the air vent each morning. In his cell below, Shawn would position himself directly under the vent so he could hear her. He and Erin eagerly looked forward to this “shared” time—husband and wife, starting the day with whispered words of hope, promise and encouragement.

When the time came, they rode the same bus to prison—Shawn to Clarinda and Erin to Iowa Correctional Institution for Women in Mitchellville. Here in the ATLAS office we didn't forget about them. We kept in touch with them as they served their sentences and cheered them on as they reentered society. Tricia and I recently met them for supper in Sheldon where they again shared their Jesus Calling story. Both of them are sober, working full-time and thankful for this new chapter in their lives. They're counting their blessings and

**“What is ATLAS?”**  
**“A place to come when you don't know where to turn.”**  
To put it simply, we are here to help those experiencing distress. Emotional, spiritual, physical or relational issues can turn one's world upside-down. ATLAS offers a safe, confidential place to let it all out and then talk it through. We will listen, encourage and pray with you. It's our mission and privilege to love each person, guide them in the right direction and walk with them on their journey.  
If you are struggling with life—  
anxiety, addictions, depression, relationships, **anything**—come talk to us.  
We're ready to listen.

they have oodles!

Tricia and I are blessed to be a part of their lives; we consider it a privilege. We'll continue to pray for them and walk with them on their journey for as long as they'd like. And yes, Shawn and Erin still read Jesus Calling. But now this husband and wife read it together, in the same room and. . . they don't have to whisper.

Clark



## Mike—Stillwater, MN Prison

Clark,

I'd really like to take you on a road-trip when I get out and take you to the spot I used to go just to be able to think straight. Actually there were two spots. They both overlooked the same river but were in two different states; the river divided the states. When my life was spinning so fast and I needed a minute to think and to get my grip, I'd go there. I'd go there when the sh\*\* I was doing was just bad—when my life was in an out-of-control spiral and past the point of doing anything about it. I'd like to take you there. Those two places made everything else seem not so bad—knowing not everything in this world is ugly.

Love you, Brother.



## Ethan—Rockwell City Prison

Dear Murt,

I can't believe I let myself go down this road again. I pushed ATLAS, church and my family away. I stayed with fake friends who stole from me and used me. I know that now and regret a lot of the bull\*\*\*\* I did. But I feel I needed to go down that road to see how bad that lifestyle really is instead of how fun it is. I know life is more than getting high. When I get out this time I will have been locked-up off and on for 7 years since 2004. What a waste of my life. I'm so sick of being a loser. I want to be a winner and a somebody. I love the mail I get from you and everybody at ATLAS. It helps me. ATLAS has always been there for me and still is even when I'm locked-up. I miss all of you. Ethan

*This correspondence was mailed from an institution operated by Corrections. The contents are uncensored.*

## Scotty – Mt. Pleasant Prison

Geri and Carol,

It's crazy how doing this time helps me reflect on my life and sort through the crap in my head to see what bothers me and why. I never knew what I meant to people like Mom, Dad and significant others. I never figured my absence really mattered to anyone. Now I see how I've touched so many lives and I want them to see God's light through me when I'm released. God hasn't always been an easy subject for me because I didn't know how to pray or how anything worked. Clark helped me figure out how to pray. He told me, "God understands, just freaking talk to Him." I thought I had to pray so proper and go by the book but Clark really helped me through all that.

Now I do pray. And I believe in Jesus and all he has done for me. He's here with me, he's caught every one of my tears and has carried me this far. I don't believe he will ever be far—but always waiting on me. And because of my relationship with Jesus, I plan to rise from these ashes!

Thank-you always for the cards and letters. I told Clark I can see Jesus through his office ladies and that you're AMAZING. I'm so grateful for your letters. They make me feel so humble and happy and grateful all at once. You show love through them. Your friend, Scotty

**NOTICE: This correspondence was mailed from an institution of the Iowa Department of Corrections.**



## Gary – Newton Prison

Hey Clark,

Your letters are sitting here. You know how to bring a smile and tears to someone's eyes. I let everyone in my life down again. My relapse got the best of me. I was off of everything and then look—taking one "hit" did it to me. This shows me the devil can bring a man down when he's not looking. I felt like I had no friends. Felt like I was walking all alone. I really needed to reach out to someone and couldn't. I hope you understand. I should have come back to you for help when I relapsed but I was ashamed. Just shows you I can't make it without help. I need God and ATLAS in my life. But you are helping. Getting mail is like heaven here. Thank-you for everything. Please have everyone pray for me. Never, never, never give up! Gary

## Quotes from the "Inside"

*This correspondence was mailed from an institution operated by Corrections. The contents are uncensored.*

"I didn't know how important I was until I walked in the ATLAS door. And no one turned me away for the bad things I did in my life."

"First time I did heroin was in prison. Anything outside's available inside"

"It's crazy how much a 15 min. phone call can mean. I look forward to calling you like a kid looks forward to summer vacation."

"I read my letters from ATLAS over and over and over."

"All I can think about lately is food—food, food, food that tastes like FOOD!!"

"I know you accept me for what I am; there are no secrets with you and me. I don't have to guard my thoughts with you. I think you pretty much know them anyway."

"I'm glad you had a good vacation. I'm not really enjoying mine!"

"You guys at ATLAS make this 'time' so much easier for people like me. I'll keep leaning into Jesus."

"I'm OCD about cleaning; I sweep the floor of my cell with toilet paper every single day."

"Thanks for always being there and helping me through life's bullsh\*\* and always being a friend. Remember: you're changing lives out there!"

**Director:**  
Clark Haken



**Client Advocates:**  
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Kathleen Osterman  
Doug Noonkester  
Bill Boer  
Karen Glade



## "Jude's Jottings"

### A Bird's-Eye-View

Jude here.

My Sweety and I are locked-up too. We live in a cage. Just sayin'.....

The ATLAS Warden ordered me to share our **ATLAS Wish List**.

So here it is:

- Postage Stamps
- Bottled water
- Single serve chips
- "Jesus TODAY" by Sarah Young
- Canon Ink #240 & 241
- Teen girl journals

Ever read, "I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings?"

Joyfully,

Jude



## 2018 Budget

2018 — \$102,000

12 % Receipts to date