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LOCAL RETIREE HELPS INMATES COPE, PROVIDES HOPE

22 Years of Mentoring Keeps Galen Adam's Spiritual Life Energized

FRESNO, Calif.: Galen Adam has spent the past 22 years behind bars. In fact, this local retiree visits the Fresno County Jail each week as a volunteer, helping male inmates turn their lives around for the better.

"When they have no family to turn to, I'm there to listen, encourage and support them," said Adam, a retired maintenance worker from Fresno who has found great reward in inspiring the lives of prisoners.

"When an individual desires to make positive changes in his life, I'm the one who gets the greater blessing."

"Reaching a congregation of inmates takes heart, and Galen's definitely got it," said a close friend of Adam. "He teaches these men to know hope and to have more value in their lives."

Adam has guided hundreds of inmates, since beginning his prison ministry at the Avenal State Prison in Kings County. What started out as volunteer work has evolved into a lifelong mission of inspiring others.

Adam is now an associate chaplain. He visits the county jail twice a week, where he spends six to eight hours talking with the inmates, providing them with new reading materials, studying and praying with them.

"Galen never leaves a housing unit until he spends time with all those who need to talk to him. He's a faithful man who has built such respect among the inmates," said Monte Byrd, an associate chaplain.

Driven by his passion and the results he's witnessed from the mentoring program, Adam recently introduced a new ministry to inmates in the jail's infirmary.

"Galen graciously volunteers his time to listen to inmates in spiritual need and share encouraging words," said Jessica Lopez, Executive Director at San Joaquin Gardens. "He does everything he can to help someone else."

According to Lopez, Galen's dedication is also recognized in the volunteer work he provides for his neighbors at San Joaquin Gardens. "Galen tirelessly works with the community's Endowment committee members to raise funds to cover living expenses and health care costs for seniors who may have run out of resources," said Lopez.

Adam also served on San Joaquin Gardens' building, grounds and safety committees, which oversee maintenance and safety at the community.

According to Adam, he's devoted his life to volunteer ministry, and believes his work keeps his spiritual life energized. In fact, he continues to keep in touch with former inmates he's mentored who have changed their lives for the better. "That's what makes everything worthwhile, when a person finds that there is a better way," said Adam.

Since 1966, San Joaquin Gardens, located at 5555 North Fresno Street, has enriched the lives of older adults through progressive programming, services and activities. For more than 40 years, the community has delivered one of the most engaging lifestyles in the area — one that helps residents attain personal growth through learning and staying connected. In addition to residential living, the community offers residents access to a full continuum of on-site assisted living, memory support and skilled nursing, one of the primary benefits of living at a continuing care retirement community. For more information about San Joaquin Gardens, call (559) 435-1999 or visit www.sanjoaquin Gardens.com.

San Joaquin Gardens in Fresno, California, is owned and managed by ABHOW, a California nonprofit public benefit corporation. ABHOW is a nonsectarian corporation, serving seniors through quality retirement housing since 1949. A licensing application for Phase II has been filed with and approved by the Department of Social Services of the State of California. State of California License #100400544, #040000142. Certificate of Authority #102.

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