



When I first came into the prison system back in 2012, I was looking up at an eight year sentence and it was definitely a dark time for me. I felt like there was no hope and that I'd rot for the next seven years. I was gang related, gambling, hustling, fighting, smoking, dipping and drinking. In my mind I knew that I had another three years until I was eligible for parole, so I didn't care about doing the right thing. I'll be completely honest with you, life just had no purpose for me and I was literally at the bottom of the barrel.

However, In November of 2012 a volunteer by the name of Mike Barber came and spoke to the unit I was on. I remember seeing banners on all the walls giving us a schedule of when he'd be speaking. It was considered a 3 day retreat and supposedly there was going to be a live band among other performances. And in prison, events like that are the equivalent of going to Disney Land in the free world, so I decided to go and check it out, but when I went on the first day; it was nothing like I expected.

Mike Barber showed true sincerity gospel to us in such a way as to where a Mike also exemplified the true meaning Christ. Everyone was blown away by life to God. He also brought a special carcerated just like us, along with a say, I initially planned on only at-made such an impact on me that I And by the last day of the retreat, like I was saying goodbye to an

After the retreat was over inspired to take on the rest of my my life and be the man that God gospel and it was time to take it to tempting to transform my life in every huge role in that, because he showed me

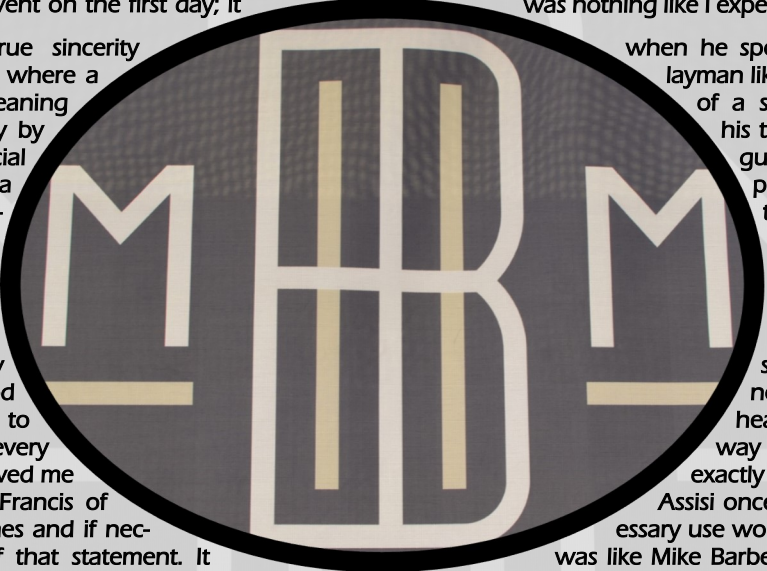
Saint Francis of all times and if nec- me of that statement. It beginning of my journey, because I

However, a few weeks ago when I came home from work. I noticed a banner on the wall under the TV in my dorm, and to my amazement it was for *Mike Barber Ministries*. I immediately started telling everyone about it. After all of these years I was absolutely ecstatic to finally attend another retreat. I thought that it was pretty ironic that I attended Mike's retreat at the beginning of my prison sentence and now I was seeing him again before the beginning of another journey in my life. Needless to say, Mike Barber's testimony and preaching's of the gospel have yet again inspired and motivated me to action. I salute you Mike Barber and continue to be a light to others, because God's using you in major ways and I will continue to take the love of Christ that you showed me and pay it forward to the next brother.

-Michael G. (a.k.a. baby Simba)

when he spoke to us and he delivered the layman like myself was able to understand. of a servant leader and follower of his testimony and how he turned his guest that had previously been in-professional musician. Needless to tending the first day, but Mike went to every one of his services. I found myself sad, because I felt extended family member.

I felt refreshed, motivated and sentence with a drive to change needed me to be. I was told the heart. I spent the next six years at-way I could and Mike Barber played a exactly what it meant to be a Christian. Assisi once stated to "Preach the Gospel at essary use words" and Mike Barber is the epito- was like Mike Barber was sent to see me off on the



PAST JOBS

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My name is Alfredo R. , I am 41 years old and was raised in Laredo, Texas. I have two kids; a beautiful six year old daughter which I named Destiny and an 18 year old son named Alfredo Jr. I was raised by my mother and I have five siblings; two sisters and three brothers. My mother has always instilled good morals and values into us. I started working at a very young age and I am proud to say that I graduated High School. My first job was at a car auto center; Zapata's Auto center in Laredo, TX. I started out as a car detailer and worked my way up to selling cars, which I can say that I have been doing for 15 years. I plan to return to selling cars once I am released. I know that the road will be tough and long, but there is no doubt in my mind that I will succeed in anything that I do. All I need is the will and determination.



Alfredo R. (Strawberry Fanta)

My name is Antonio S. I am 41 years old and I would like to share a story with you, my PEP brothers, a little story with a powerful impact, at least in my life.

Carpentry work has been a part of my life since I can remember. My grandfather, uncles, and other relatives have all been carpenters. Eventually I ended up doing the work that was handed down to me. At first I worked for family and then later I worked for someone that had his own business. I eventually had the opportunity to place my own bids on different jobs talking to customers and putting my own crew together.

Before you knew it I was doing my own work full time. One thing I never stopped to replace was my vocabulary around my workers. So one afternoon as I was preparing for the next day at home. I never realized that my wife was at the back door looking out at my workers. I was getting things ready, when I heard her call my name. I knew just by the tone of her voice that something was wrong. I get to the back door and she tells me to come inside. She says "I have a question to ask you!" She told me that every other word that was coming out of my mouth was a cussword, so her question was, "Is the way you talk around your workers, the same way you talk around your customers, especially when you're placing bids?" I answered her and told her that if I talked like that around my clients they would never hire me. In effect, I started becoming consciously aware of how I talk around people. I have even boosted my vocabulary in the process.

The way we talk means a lot to our loved ones, especially to our children. So if you plan on getting your business started, I encourage you to work on your vocabulary. You should always try talking to others in a proper and respectful manner. This alone will bring you respect from people that we come in contact with on a daily basis.



Antonio S. (Roly Poly)



My PEP Journey

My name is Ronny V. my pep journey begin for me in December of 2016 when I received a letter in the mail. Like most of us I was very skeptical about this program. I had no knowledge of business what so ever. So I discussed the situation with my wife. We both agreed that it will be very beneficial in the future.. So I responded back and next thing you know I'm on my way to a better future. My first thought of PEP was not what I pictured. Going threw men's life and leadership academy was not what I expected. For most of us we have a hard time opening up to complete strangers. But as time passed I became more and more comfortable with my brothers. I learned a lot about myself and the problems that lie within. Then things got real and the second phase introduced us to hard work and lots of long nights of studying and homework. There's been plenty of times when I felt like it was all to much I wanted to walk out but as I explained to my wife she encouraged me to not give up and keep pushing. I have truly learned a lot about myself here not only have I gained a sense of what it takes to run a business but I also gained a sense of being a man. This journey has been tough for me I faced many obstacles during my journey but I want better for my wife and kids. So I chose to push towards success and fight through any thing placed in my way of happiness. I have let so many people down through out my life but now that I have graduated I feel a sense of accomplishment. Many people have doubted us our entire life now is the time to shine on them and prove them all wrong. PEP has helped me out so much and I would like to thank them for everything they do to transform us into successful men. I would also like to thank my wife and kids for helping me through out my whole time they truly are my why in life. This has been an incredible journey for me but as we say this is not the end this is only the beginning.

Ronny V. (a.k.a. Ron Cakes)

"Strength does not come from winning. When you go through hardships and decide not to surrender, that is strength".



Servant-Leader

of the month

Brandon L. AKA “Sherlock”



(Bryan A.) Congratulations on being recognized as our “Servant-Leader of the Month”. You are a dear friend of mine—so I know personally a bit more about you than most here, especially all the talent and hobbies that you possess and have.

What amazes me is that you still find time and the energy to give back to all our PEP brothers! This is your moment, and I would like to ask you a few questions and let our other brothers here (and readers) know a little more about you . . .

Who are you unsung heroes or hero?

(Brandon L) *All of our PEP brothers that have served in our U.S. Armed forces. These men have embodied servant-leader mentality by putting their lives on the line. They have bravely protected freedom, and deserve our deepest respects.*

Now that you are a PEP graduate, what has been your biggest priority?

My greatest priority is a bit divided; I am spending most of my time with Spring ‘18 as they discover their potential and talents. With my free time I am working on a number of art projects to display in my shop gallery. I am also working to complete a book I’m writing this year; it’s a branding and marketing manual for my industry of expertise. It’s also full of funny stories from my career as a professional artist.

You are a great example of how “brotherhood” should be lived and demonstrated, but how do you define “Brotherhood”?

What does “it” mean to you?

Simply put, watching out for the best interests of my peers. Helping them to live to their full potential.

For all of us that know you it is easy to see (too easy!) that you have a wonderful sense of humor—but when was the last time you had a real good laugh and spin—from a bad situation?

A few weeks ago in N-pod, the TVs were cut off for a good while . . . A group of us started a game of charades in the dorm—under the TV. More and more got involved and we all had a great time! My creative brothers had me laughing so hard and loudly from their antics.

Thank you for sharing with us today and we hope you continue to inspire our future brothers who will soon start arriving (Fall ‘18), like you have done for so many of us already. We salute you brother!

Interviewer:
“Leader of the Lollipop Guild”
Bryan Gene A.
(Kings of Spring ‘17)

