

Setting Captives Free ... for Good

Cindi Wagner couldn't understand why the women she helped in her church's prison outreach ministry kept returning to jail again and again. Then she discovered that many of those women believed that their difficulty in finding jobs and housing with a felony attached to their names meant they "were falling flat on their faces."

"I found out when these ladies get released, there are not a lot of people to help them navigate into the new world," says Wagner, founder of the North Carolina-based Tabitha Ministry.

Wagner felt burdened to help, so she started Tabitha Ministry to house such women and equip them for success in their personal lives and society.

"We know these ladies have been held captive by the enemy and so horribly lied to about who they are," she says.

Those willing to make a life change upon their release from jail are invited to stay in one of the ministry's two residential homes, where they learn job skills, have the opportunity to work in the ministry's thrift store, receive counseling for addiction and abuse, build their confidence, and restore their dignity. Since 2002, Tabitha Ministry has graduated an average of eight women per year through its intentional program. Eighty percent have remained drug free and have not returned to their previous lifestyles. Some have graduated from college. Along the way, the women are taught their purpose in Christ.

"The foundational thing they need is a relationship with the Creator," Wagner says. "Once they can trust Him and look to Him, He will provide all the rest."