



# Lighthouse News

Issue 9, Volume 69  
September 2018

THE STORIES YOU'RE CREATING  THE LIVES YOU'RE CHANGING

*You* helped  
build his  
confidence



... and YOU brought special guests  
for oohs and awes!

**Simon Aguilar,**  
former graduate and  
current volunteer in the  
FRM Academy.



**Reptile Ron**  
visits RTC



**DON ESKES**  
Chief Executive Officer

## Trusting God's Voice

A still, small encouragement just for YOU

Think back to a time in your life when you were facing something difficult or heartbreaking. Perhaps your teen's personality seemed to change overnight and you no longer felt like you could communicate well. Maybe it was when a loved-one was very ill and you worried that you failed to adequately tell them how much you loved them while they were an active part of your life. Perhaps you were facing your own personal crisis and, at the time, words failed you. As you think of these moments, how did your prayer life feel to you? Did it give you peace or did you wonder if God even heard you?

When I don't know the words to pray, I remember the promise God provides in His Word:

*"The Spirit helps us in our weakness. For we do not know what to pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself intercedes for us with groanings too deep for words."*

*Romans 8:26 (ESV)*

God hears our heart and our call, even before we cry out. He can do more than just set our hearts and minds at peace. When we remember His promise, we can choose peace. This is how I read this particular promise: He can speak directly into the heart of the person I want most to hear my heart. He whispers a voice of love far more powerfully than my words ever could, even when I am just trying to comfort myself.

The stories we are sharing this month are filled with this kind of faith. My hope is that they bring you joy and encouragement. You make these stories possible because God hears your heart for the people we serve, long before you pray or share a portion of His gifts stewarded by you. You change lives because you have His heart to love. So, if you haven't clearly heard God's response in your prayerful heart, let this be His small, still, quiet *thank you* to you, ...

... with His love.



## Reptile Ron Visits RTC

You help children discover new things



Chinchilla...



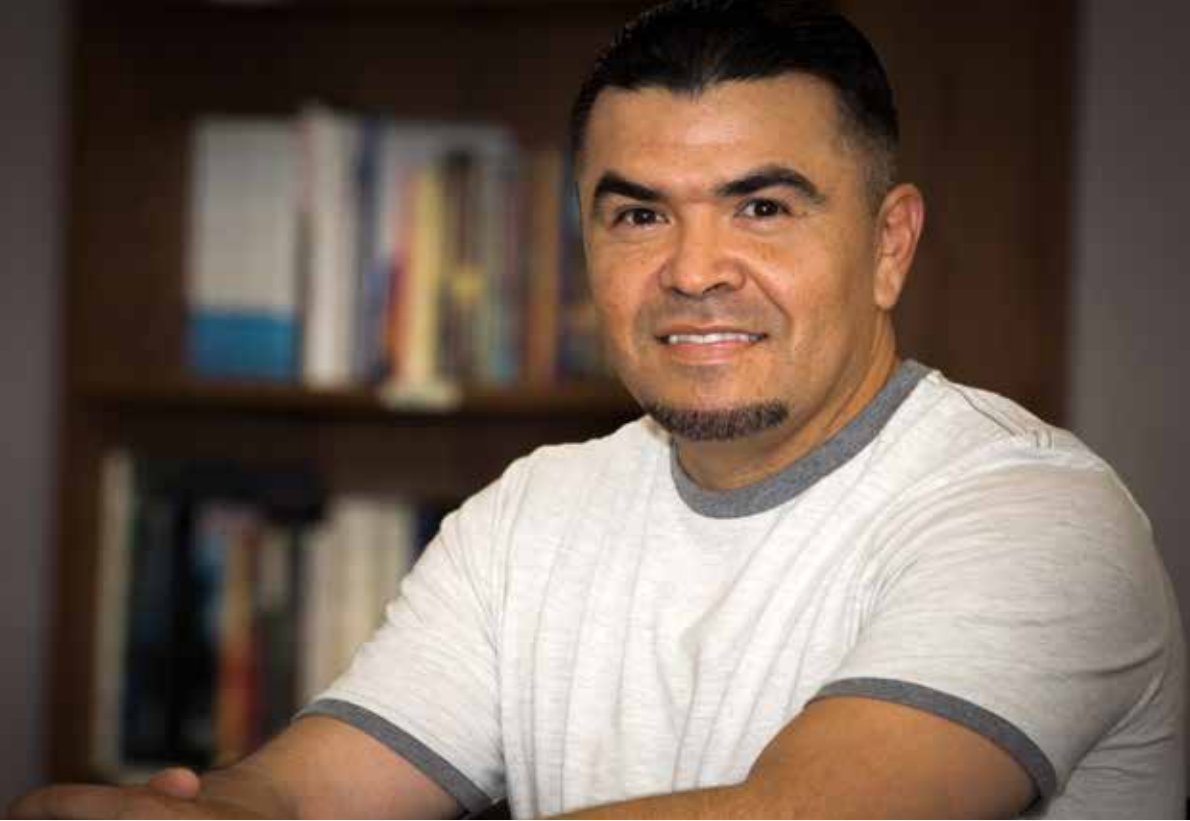
Cockatoo...



Salamander...

Story on page 5





## My Heart Beats For You, God

I entered the FRM Academy in August, 2014. Having been through years of abusive relationships and drug use, I was broken and ready for change, and the staff was ready to help. But within three months I was aching to leave. The enemy used the weaknesses I felt from pain and addiction to wage war on my mind. My family was struggling and I was struggling. Giving up seemed like the right thing to do at the time, that is until someone reminded me that the enemy is a liar. This was something I had heard in a Bible class, but hadn't really understood.

Soon after, things changed - not at home and not with my problems, but in my mind. The experiences I was having matched what I was learning. Because of that I found a reason to stay. I stopped trying to control everything and instead surrendered to God. I never would have learned how to do that without people around me that cared about me. I was surrounded by staff and volunteers, people who strengthened me for the good of my family and my future. Every time the enemy tried to tear me down, they were right there building me up. I thank God for their commitment.

By the time I finished the Academy program, both me and my family had been restored. I found a job and I set out to succeed. At first I was ok, but then old thoughts crept up

***"I was surrounded by staff and volunteers, people who strengthened me for the good of my family and my future."***

and tore me down again. It was only by God's grace and power that I stayed strong and sober. The Lord spoke to my heart and reminded me that I knew how to stay sober while facing difficult situations. He reminded me that I needed to help others. My response was, "I'll do it later." Wow! I still can't believe how selfish I was. It wasn't until I started to feel like I was having health problems that my attitude changed.

*Continued on page 5*

Simon was once targeted and stabbed four times. He was told by his medical team he was "fortunate to be alive." We know that the more accurate explanation is that **God has a plan for his life** and that these are just a few topics from which he can now share his experience with others. He has three beautiful children and a job in construction that keeps him focused and fulfilled. No longer violent, no longer confused, Simon is a man with a clear purpose and godly-vision. We're very proud of this journey he has embraced.

## VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: **JIM LLOYD**, *Academy Mentor*

I've been mentoring most of my adult Christian life. Some might call it "man to man" time, as it was known while with the Navigators Christian Organization or simple "discipleship" as it was called when I transitioned into a church setting. Today we call it mentoring, leading, teaching, training, or modeling what it means to live the type of life Christ calls us to.

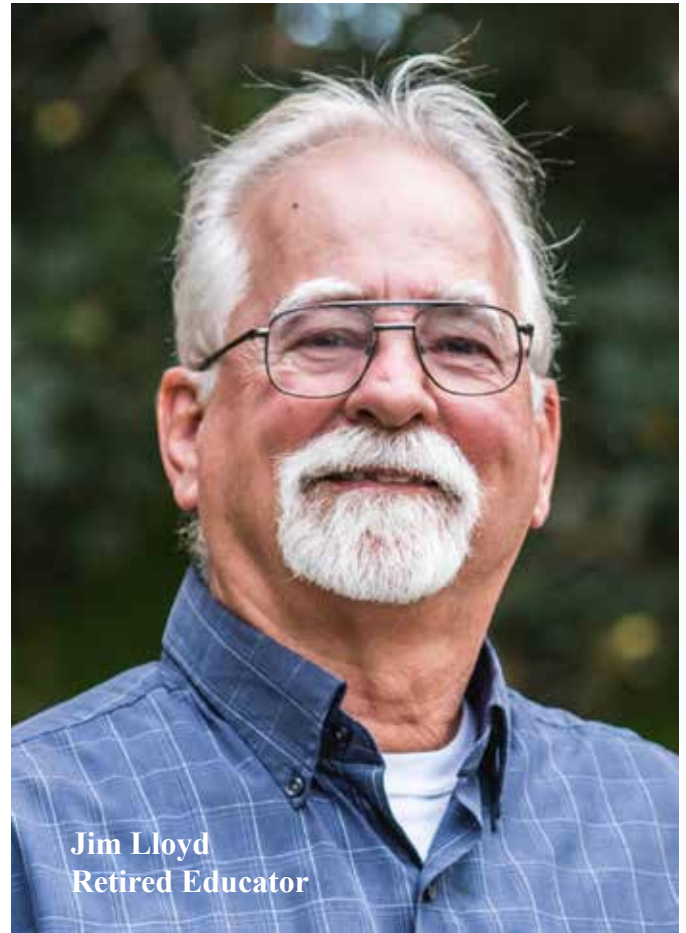
In the Gospel of Matthew 22:36-37, Jesus is asked about the greatest commandment and he replies, "Love God and love your neighbor. There are no other commandments greater than these." How simple is this? I love God, check... but actually loving my neighbor, not so much. I know some of my immediate neighbors by name and my teammates in the senior adult softball league but that's a work in progress. What about an opportunity to mentor at the Fresno Rescue Mission? Could **he** be my neighbor? Yes, that was 3 1/2 years ago.

***"As my official mentoring responsibilities came to an end, it was not the end of our relationship."***

It was December when I first met Raymond. He had entered the Academy Program a few months earlier and was still facing issues pulling him in the wrong direction. I thought this might be the shortest mentoring relationship in the history of the Fresno Rescue Mission. In January he was to be sentenced to prison. We talked and agreed to begin the mentoring process even with his court date set for mid-January.

I accompanied Raymond to his sentencing, where the judge subsequently postponed the sentencing for two months. Looking back I believe God intervened and the judge was agreeable to see how Raymond would progress through his Academy experience. His second hearing was also postponed until July and then postponed again 'til October. During that time Raymond and I met weekly, going through Operation Timothy. He focused on his Academy experience, embracing the structure and discipline, and rose to the position of *House Manager*. All the while he continued to move through the various levels of responsibility and finally graduated from the Academy after 18 months. He took a job with the Rescue Mission following his graduation.

As my official mentoring responsibilities came to an end, it was not the end of our relationship. We continue to meet together for the next year - once a month - to encourage and grow in our relationship with the Lord.



**Jim Lloyd**  
Retired Educator

It appeared that we would experience another happy ending and a successful mentoring relationship. Unfortunately, this is not a Hallmark movie. A series of bad decisions, followed by neglecting his walk with the Lord led to his appearance before a judge one more time. Raymond's life is currently on hold, not sure if he will return to prison, re-enter the Academy program, or face some other future. What is certain is that he has been forgiven, the Lord is center-stage, and I'll continue to be his neighbor, friend, and mentor.

### Is God Calling You?

There are RELATIONAL MINISTRIES built into our programs for men and women who love the Lord and who love people. To learn more, go to our website and click on GET INVOLVED.

We all need healthy, vibrant relationships.





Simon (pictured right) with his new friend, Raul. Simon began his mentorship relationship with Raul about 3 months ago.

## My Heart Beats For You, Lord *Continued*

My heart wasn't beating normally and it felt like it was hurting all the time. I thought about God's call and decided to come back to the Rescue Mission and volunteer my time as a mentor. I needed to share what I had been learning. Commitment to God is more than a feeling. It's a purpose in living that needs to be shared. It's what I learned in the program. Mission staff and volunteers strengthen me in my weakness because of their walk with God. It was the missing piece I needed to remain strong in my faith. It all works together.

Sometimes we may think we have all the time in the world to change, to learn, or to help others, but we really don't. Our time is both precious and limited. So I've gotten busy. I work, I care for my family and friends, and I now commit time to advance God's kingdom. I'll do this for as long as He allows my heart to keep beating.

~Simon Aguilar



Yellow Anaconda...

## Reptile Ron ...

The reptiles were exotic, but how did critters with fur and feathers fit in? First, they were helpful for kids in terms of cuteness. It helps to want to touch them! They also served to help compare with the odd feel of other wild life. Mostly, they helped our children learn about a world that God designed where every living creature effects the cycle of life. Whether as a food source, natural predator, and even as an example of keeping the world healthy and clean for the benefit of all to coexist, there were plenty of little life-lessons packed into the presentation as each amazing creature was introduced. So much fun!

### The story behind this incredible gift:

*"One of our residents has a son who worked for Reptile Ron for years. Mom and her son have been working on their relationship that had been strained by mom's addiction. It was her son that spoke to Reptile Ron about coming to Rescue the Children to do the presentation. How cool is that!?!"*

~ Alicia Varela, RTC Program Support

**Last Chance!**  
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*Isaiah 61:1-2*

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