

@Boulevard



*A joint publication from the Boulevard church of Christ
and Eagle Recovery Center*



A Monthly Newsletter

Issue No 5 — March 2013

Jots from Jeff



I would like to begin by praising the Lord for our many partners and friends. You continue to bless us with your prayers, presence and presents.

Since our last newsletter, one of our elders, **Jim McWhirter**, was invited to speak briefly to the **Alameda church of Christ** as they geared up for Missions Sunday. He was blessed by the occasion. **Susie** and I, along with **Lora Williams**, were blessed to attend the Missions Sunday at the **Del City church of Christ** and teach one of the Bible classes, sharing a report on what God is doing @Boulevard. **Beth Gentry** came to Boulevard and shared her powerful testimony of how God has transformed her from a drug-dealing meth addict into a blessed and grateful disciple of Jesus Christ. All of these events have been an amazing encouragement to us.

We redesigned and launched our church website, hoping to make it a better tool for the cause (boulevardchurch.org). We added a blog which we hope will serve as a tool of encouragement (boulevardchurch.org/Blog.html or go to boulevardchurch.blogspot.com). This newsletter can now be downloaded from boulevardchurch.org/Communicate.html. Soon, we hope to add recordings of some of the lessons @Boulevard.

God continues to bless His work @Boulevard and Eagle, and we are so thankful for your partnership.

—Jeff Gardner, evangelist @Boulevard



In the Spotlight



This month we would like to introduce you to Lisa McWhirter, PhD, Counselor/Therapist with Present Hope Counseling. Dr. McWhirter provides counseling services at no charge to our residents at Eagle Recovery Center. She and her husband, Jim, are the founders and main benefactors of Eagle Recovery Center. Planting a church @Boulevard for people in recovery was also their vision.

@Boulevard: Please share with our readers the vision for Eagle you and Jim had when you began this ministry in 2008.

Dr. McWhirter: When Jim and I first began considering Eagle, our family had been on an eight year journey learning about addiction. We had learned that addiction is a disease that, while at first glance may appear to impact an individual family member, in actuality, it involves the entire family. We felt as if we had struggled to find our way through all of the stages of grief involved from denial, to anger, to bargaining, to depression and finally to acceptance and learning how to deal with the disease. What we discovered is that, like any trial a family faces, it will either bring you closer together or tear the family apart. We also discovered that, as parents, knowing that your child is safe and in a Christian atmosphere when they are hurting gives the greatest comfort of all. Surprisingly, we found that having a child with an addiction had, over time, become a blessing. We were suddenly aware of the suffering of those around us, parents groping in the dark,

and families suffering in silence – people we had looked past before. We realized that God had blessed us with a new ministry. Although we didn't understand God's entire plan at the time, we began to walk in faith as He led the way. Facilities became available, leaders emerged, doors began to open, and the lost began to find their way.

@Boulevard: The sober-living home for women ministry began in 2010. What led you and Eagle to move in that direction?

Dr. McWhirter: Eagle started as a men's discipleship recovery program. However, we quickly realized there was more demand for facilities for women. Then, in 2009 I attended a conference on women incarcerated in Oklahoma prisons. I discovered that Oklahoma sends more women to prison than any other state on a per capita basis and of those, one-third are incarcerated for drug related offenses. Once released, it is very difficult for women to become reestablished in the community without resorting to the very relationships that often contributed to their incarceration. We also realized that the incarceration of females disrupts their families, with children often displaced into the system where the cycle is often doomed to repeat itself.

@Boulevard: How significant is it for Eagle residents to be involved with Boulevard as they work on recovery?

Dr. McWhirter: Boulevard is intended to be a safe place for the residents and their families to work on reestablishing themselves as sober individuals, as an integral part of their families, as contributing members of society, and most of all – to establish a relationship with God. A place to be transparent and open,
(continued on the back)

About Us

Boulevard church of Christ is a family of believers in Jesus Christ who want to be the hands and feet of Jesus in reaching people with messed up lives. We believe Jesus is the great Healer physically, spiritually, emotionally and socially. And we all need to be healed of something.

Eagle Recovery Center is a Christ-centered, structured, sober-living group home for the purpose of empowering women to successfully re-enter society and live victoriously over drugs and alcohol or any other destructive habit. All residents are valued members of the Boulevard church family.

a place to learn to give of themselves rather than to demand of others, and a place to find an inner peace from within, rather than from without.

@Boulevard: As a counselor and mentor for Eagle residents, what would you say is key to a sustainable recovery?

Dr. McWhirter: Recovery from addiction is an arduous journey that lasts a lifetime. Education for the family to understand their role in the addiction and for the addict to step out of their denial is a crucial first step. In many ways, like any chronic illness, it must be taken one day at a time, support is essential, and the understanding that strength does not come from will power from within

but instead from the Power that is greater than us all is a vital understanding. It must be understood that the pain underneath the addiction is often an emotional pain as well as a physical pain and both types of pain must be dealt with for healing to occur.

@Boulevard: What would you like to say to our partners in this ministry?

Dr. McWhirter: God does not call us to serve in a fairy land where all is well; He calls us instead to follow Him and to walk where He walked. To reach out to those in sorrow, to hold out a healing hand to those who are wounded, to touch those who seem untouchable, and to love those who are, at times, often unlovable. We are to reach out to

the lost but they are not only the lost in far-away places, but the lost that we pass in the streets each day, yet we do not see. They are the depressed that do not have the strength to lift their eyes to meet ours. They are the heart of the injured child that now lives in an adult's body. They are the abused that hide behind closed doors. They are the lonely that cannot trust. They are those that may not know how to forgive themselves. They are our neighbor – the one that we are to love as ourselves. Please remember that those who need God may only be able to find Him when we allow Him to work through us. Remember that they are just like us. Nothing more. Nothing less. A child of God.

Lisa may be contacted at (405) 659-3143

Yes, I would like to partner with the Boulevard church and Eagle Recovery Center to help bring Christ to and heal those who are struggling to overcome addiction by making a donation of...

\$25 ___ \$50 ___ \$75 ___ \$100 ___ or Other \$ _____ (donation enclosed)

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Email _____

Make checks payable to **Boulevard church of Christ** and send to:

1301 N. Drexel Boulevard • Oklahoma City, OK 73107

Other Ways to Help:

- Female or Husband/Wife teams to help with transportation for a day
- Donate good clothing suitable for work
- Godly women to develop mentoring relationships with an Eagle resident
- Grounds keeping assistance (mowing, limb cutting and removal, painting and repair)
- **NEEDED:** additional sofa, love-seat or sectional for the living room

Please contact Lora or Jeff at one the numbers listed below to volunteer.

www.eaglerecoverycenter.org

www.boulevardchurch.org

Eagle Contact Information



Director — Lora Williams

Phone — (405) 737-5383

Email — lora@eaglerecoverycenter.org

Address — 3701 East Reno

Oklahoma City, OK 73117

Boulevard Contact Information

1301 N. Drexel Boulevard • Oklahoma City, OK 73107

(405) 943-3578

Shepherds

Jim McWhirter
Charles Custer

Evangelists

Jeff Gardner
heal@blvdchurch.com
(405) 550-7658

Assembly Times

Sunday — 9:30 am
Wednesday — 7:00 pm

Latino — Abel Maldonado
abel@blvdchurch.com
(405) 200-3161

Boulevard church of Christ and Eagle Recovery Center®, a DBA of Eagle Christian Ministries, are both 501(c)(3) charitable organizations.