

# Carmen Ministries

An Affiliate of Straight Ahead Ministries

Every youthful offender has a path and a desire to develop an intimate relationship with Jesus Christ.

## Carmen Ministries

PO Box 421  
Hackettstown, NJ  
07840

**Tel.: (908) 835-7805**

**Fax: (908) 835-7808**

www.CarmenMinistries.com  
Via email: info@CarmenMinistries.com

Charitable Registration  
# CH2479600

### Carmen Ministries'

#### Board of Directors:

**Executive Director / President:**

Tony Wood

**Chairperson: Daniel R. Miller**

**Operations Director: James C.**

Hoyt

**Treasurer: Lorraine Howard**

**Vice President:**

Robert T. Dell Elba

**Secretary Emeritus:**

Brian Hancock, Esq.

**Editor: Patricia Birchenough**

CarmenMinistries@HunterdonBlz.com

## And They're Off . . . Inaugural "Break into Education" 10K Race



**Tony Wood**  
pleased with the results

**Ross Mistretta, Race Director**, gives instructions to the runners

a runner

**Jim Hoyt,**  
Race Day Captain

The snow on Thanksgiving Day was like manna from heaven!

**Dan Miller**  
rides the course

**Bob Dell Elba**

**Lori Howard,**  
cheers on runners

**Linda and Jim Hoyt** enjoy the race activities

### Our Mission

To provide every youthful offender the opportunity to hear and respond to the Gospel, to grow in his or her relationship with Christ, and to become a responsible, contributing adult.

Newsletter Notes: Names of the incarcerated have been omitted to provide anonymity. Articles, interviews and letters may have been edited and condensed for use in this publication. Every effort has been made to preserve the original intended message.

# “Break into Education” Inaugural 10K Race

It all started with a whisper from God two or three years ago; God was calling me to follow my heart and do a fundraiser race for the work of Carmen Ministries. I had started running again three years ago, and I know now that I was running for more than myself. I was running for the thousands of “teens-at-risk” that need a second chance and an opportunity to follow their dreams for a better life.

Carmen Ministries had a great inaugural 10K Thanksgiving Day “Break into Education” race. The race took place at picturesque Duke Island Park in Bridgewater, N.J.

The funds raised will be used in support of the Carmen Ministries’ programs for those pursuing the dream of obtaining a secondary education and becoming a positive, responsible, contributing adult.

The volunteers made the race GREAT. All the volunteers jumped into the new project with enthusiasm and excitement. A community of people came together and made a difference.

The volunteers showed up at the Park on Thanksgiving morning at 7:30. to setup the registration, goodie bag, and refreshment tables. There was excitement in our hearts as it all started to come together. Banners were being hung and the course was being marked. Then the runners started to show up!

The race offered the runners a flat and fast course. It was a cold morning, but the rain held off — an answer to prayer. The race started on time at 10 a.m., and Dan Miller led the runners on his bike so there would be no confusion on the course. We had volunteers marshalling the course at two water stations and at the finish line. One of the volunteers commented about how excited and happy the runners were crossing the finish line.

One runner was an Elizabeth High School teacher. He came to support our mission because of all the dropouts he encounters. Another runner was a pastor who had previously been involved in prison ministry and wanted to support our mission; his teenage daughter joined him and received a medal for placing second in her age group.

This race raised the public awareness of Carmen Ministries to a new height. We reached the running community and the corporate sponsor community with the Carmen Ministries’ mission.

At the completion of the race, we all gathered together under the Oak Grove Pavilion for the award ceremony. The first award was given to a six-month old girl who completed the race in a stroller with her dad; God put his final touch on the race as it started to snow. It was a magical moment like in the movie, “It’s a Wonderful Life.”

We all cleaned up and headed to our Thanksgiving Day celebrations being blessed and being a blessing.

Thanks to everyone, and we look forward to next year’s race. God’s grace TRULY is sufficient!

*Jim Hoyt*  
Operations Director, Carmen Ministries

DONATE ONLINE AT  
[www.CarmenMinistries.com](http://www.CarmenMinistries.com)

Carmen Ministries, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) organization, and your contribution is fully tax deductible to the extent allowable by law. Thank you and God bless!

## Our Race Sponsors

*Without these sponsors, our 10K race would not have been possible. We thank them and encourage you to personally thank them as well.*

<b>M&amp;T Bank</b>	Management Solutions for Human Resources
Applebee’s	Moneywise Inc.
ASCO Power Technologies	Muheisen’s Deli
Atlanta Bread – Madison	Nanci Kappel Creative Services
Atlanta Bread – Morris Plains	NJ Devils
Distinguished Dog’s Pet Gallery	Piggly’s Deli
DRM Consultants	Road ID
The 11th Hour Church	ShopRite
Full Financial Realty	Skylands Community Bank
Gibson’s Gym	Wakefern Food Corporation
H&S Loss Control Inspections	Warren County Pharmacy
	YB Normal Consignment Shop

*The 10K Race was also featured in the New Jersey Spotlight.*

## Hope Abounds Throughout

This poem was written by an inmate. It shows his darkness and then his forthcoming light.

*My heart has grown colder over time  
I’m in a jail cell getting older, yet my composure is fine.  
I’m just making efforts to resist temptation;  
I consider this an unwanted vacation*

*As the calendar turns, I ponder my purpose.  
But truly it burns to be rendered worthless.  
I just want to return home with a productive change.  
Yet I’m lost within myself  
The path is dark and strange.*

*Sometimes I wonder what lies behind the curtain.  
Life is a windy road with an end not yet certain.  
The darkness repelled me so I’m attracted to light.  
I’ve done wrong and been punished  
So I’m retracted to do right.*

*I’ve moved militant with ruthless intent.  
To be redundant is lying, the truth is repent.  
My yearning for money led to a neglect of self-respect.  
Yet led to a life lesson I’m not soon to forget.*

*That lesson is this...to reach your goal there is diversity to endure  
Even when you feel Satan’s lure and you’re feeling unsure;  
Continue to proceed till you can advance no more.  
Here are the words to consider and inspire.  
A relevant oath;  
Growing pains are necessary to bring forth growth.*



# Excerpts from Letters from Our Young Men

At this time of year, we think about Christmas and its message of love, joy and hope. For the young men who have been touched by life's harshest elements, hope is something desperately needed. Below are a few excerpts from letters sent to Carmen Ministries from some of these children of God that we minister to. Most have known the pain, fear and suffering that life can bring that, but they also persevere with the message of hope and give inspiration to us all.

I look at my own life and see, upon my release, that I have nothing. But through my walk, God has opened my eyes to my sin and today I'm grounded on the rock of Jesus Christ and the Lord WILL open the doors. I regret the paths I took, but the Lord was always there for me and always will be.

\*\*\*

I missed a father figure to teach me things, defend me in situations, etc., so I turned to the streets for that affection. Money became my main concern and led me to the situation I am in right now (incarceration). But at the same time, this was the best thing that happened to me, because on this journey I met my Father... I met the most lovable and sincere people while in jail. I gave my life to Jesus through a brother's testimony.

\*\*\*

I'm 20 years old...and have been in and out of shelters all my life. I made friends with the wrong people and started doing drugs at the age of 17, and I was doing drugs every time I got money in my hands. I would even sell my body at times to get money to get a hotel, because I did not want to sleep on the street in the cold. But today the C.O. was handing out mail; I never get mail so I sat down. But the C.O. came to the door and gave me a Bible. I told him I never read the Bible before and he told me, "It's never too late." I opened up the Bible to the first page and that's where I got your address from. It said, "Jesus loves you no matter what." I was crying because I never felt loved before.

\*\*\*

I just feel like I can't slip up with anything because I got a lot of brothers always looking at me and I feel like I gotta be an example, reflect a Christ-like image. It's not easy but I'm not giving up cause the Word says that; "He who started at the good work in you will also finish what He started," so I'm gonna just trust Him with what He's doing in my life.

\*\*\*

I realize my dad grew up with no father so how would he know how to be one? I suffered for it. But like you always tell us, we're KINGS! So we don't have to live according to another's legacy; a king establishes his own legacy. I don't have to do what my father did. Nor will I!

\*\*\*

I've got nine months left. Thank God this is almost over and God is in the forefront of my life. He should've been there before but the past is the past for a reason and the future is hopeful in God. God has been blessing me although some things happen but I can take them to God, and He handles it and teaches me how to avoid problems. So that's even more reasons to love God!!!

\*\*\*

When I was locked in my cell, I prayed and started thinking: "What am I gonna do? Run away like Jonah?" I already know what would happen if I run away. So I decided to submit, full submission. And the biggest vision the Lord has given me ever since is: "You've got a lot of work to do." I love God a lot, too much to deny His calling.

\*\*\*

I had to lose everything in order to gain everything, having the shackles from my eyelids removed to be given sight. The Lord has placed a calling in my life to minister His Word to those whom are lost without hope. The Lord has blessed my hands with a trade and has placed on my heart to teach those coming out of prison a trade so that a man who only knows the streets will be given a chance to make an honest living...

\*\*\*

I have six months left and the closer the time gets, the more anxious I feel. Sometimes I get scared because I don't want to be the same person I was even though I know I've changed. I think it's just the change that I'm scared of.

\*\*\*

In all of these excerpts, you can see how significant a little gesture can be and how much, even the tiniest glimmer of hope can impact someone who feels lost and afraid. These young men have such enormous strength of character. They need only have these qualities strengthened, rather than diminished. They need faith placed in them, hope surrounding them and love in them.

## Future Newsletters via Email - Your Choice!

Carmen Ministries is reducing the number of printed newsletters by emailing a newsletter delivered personally to your inbox. In order to participate in this cost-saving measure, please send us your email so that we can place you on our electronic distribution list. Once you are added to our electronic distribution list, you will no longer receive a hardcopy of the newsletter.

Please email us at [CarmenMinistries@HunterdonBiz.com](mailto:CarmenMinistries@HunterdonBiz.com) and note in the subject: "Add Me to Your e-Newsletter" and you will be added to the electronic distribution list.

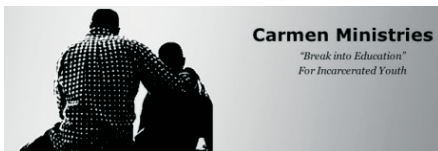
Thank you in advance! We look forward to providing you with our eNewsletter at less cost to the ministry. Thank you in advance!



**Orion Building Services**  
Full Service Building Maintenance  
Landscaping ~ HVAC ~ Masonary  
Roofing ~ Painting ~ Waterproofing  
Carpentry ~ Paving ~ Sealcoating  
Flooring and More

**John Wheeler**  
President

Phone: 908-319-5952  
Fax: 908-689-7266  
[orionbuilding@yahoo.com](mailto:orionbuilding@yahoo.com)



PO Box 421, Hackettstown, NJ 07840-0421

NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATION  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
PORT MURRAY NJ  
PERMIT NO. 5

This is an excerpt from *God's Little Instruction Book for Graduates*.  
"No matter what a man's past may have been, his future is spotless."

John R. Rice



This print was made by a man helped by Carmen Ministries. It is the prayer of Anthony Wood, affectionately referred to as "Dad" by many of the young men assisted by Carmen Ministries.

## Prayer Requests from Our Young Men

*I pray that my mother and girlfriend stay safe and away from danger and live a long life; I pray for all their love and hope, and I pray that they will trust me once again.*

*Pray for me that when I go home, everything will work out for me the way I plan with my life surrounded by miracles and people that care for me and want me to make it (wife, kids and my own house). One day I can pray I understand that miracles and prayers are the truth inside one's self.*

*I pray that my daughter is doing well and that my family is also. I realize that everybody is not perfect in this world, but we've got to make the best of it. So, therefore, my prayer is for my loved ones.*

*Pray that my Grandmother will fight through cancer and that my family will be safe while I'm gone. Also pray that my cousin will find success in his career. I am planning to go to college when I go home.*

*Pray that I will be home before the holiday to spend time with my son and girlfriend and family. Pray that I go home.*

*Pray that my Grandfather feels better and that my little brother does the right thing in school.*

*Please pray that my family can remain financially stable. Pray that God may provide for our needs. Also, please pray for my mother's health. Lastly, please pray that I'll be able to remain on a straight path. Please pray for me to be able to resist the temptations of my past ways.*