



BEYOND THE WALLS



Cabastian Jenkins

For Cabastian Jenkins, life took a radical turn in 2006 while working with Industrial Metal Finishing in Richmond County, Ga. During this time, he associated himself with what he describes as the “the wrong types of people,” which brought negativity into his life. That negativity grew into a pattern, which ultimately led to his incarceration at Wheeler Correctional Facility from 2011 to earlier this year.

“I allowed influences to dictate my growth,” said Jenkins, “which kept me in a mindset so I could not observe my priorities, nor my responsibilities.”

Jenkins elaborated that the decisions he made, leading to his incarceration and created patterns of negative change created a lifestyle not conducive to positive mindfulness. Once in prison, Jenkins found himself desiring more out of life—and out of himself. He made the decision to sign up for a faith-based program.

“My prison education was up to me making a concrete decision to be mindful of what I wanted better for my life, my family and others around me,” he said.

The faith-based program that Jenkins entered in 2011 was called Basic Life Principles. Even though the course may have ended—for Jenkins, it is on-going.

The program for me did not really end,” he said, “because I still use what I learned there and through other classes that I have taken, along with prayer, meditation, Bible study, self-examinations and of others around me.”

The skills that Jenkins learned in Basic Life Principles, like honing his eye to detail, he still uses daily in his current position with GCI. Jenkins is the Warehouse Supervisor for Georgia Correctional Industries (GCI) in Decatur, Ga. He was hired on March of this year; however, he had a work detail assignment at that very location, which began in December 2015.

“Through GDC’s programs I learned how to upgrade my skills with landscaping,” he said. “I gained a better eye for detail in keeping areas neat and well-kept; I also gained experience in building maintenance, laying tiles and roofing, which has in turn helped me to remain assertive, patient, productive and most of all, responsible.”

The Basic Life Principles course and other GDC programs greatly impacted his life after being released from the prison system on January 30, 2017.

“It gave me a boost of motivation,” elaborated Jenkins. “When I think about where I came from and where I am today, and what help that I could give to continue patterns of positive change in my life and that of others.”

For offenders currently debating whether to participate in programs offered by GDC, Jenkins has a few words of advice.

“Always stay focused,” he said, “and realize that your perception dictates your reality; the more you combine your time with fresh, positive energy and knowledge, it denies a large amount of time that would have been otherwise wasted or non-beneficial to overall growth.”