



Make a friend and Make a difference!

Nyesha (right) was our very first match – Her mentor, Jean Eden (left) is moving. Nyesha is now waiting for a new match. Right now, MUM has 27 children waiting for mentors through the Mentoring Connections program. Just one hour a week of your time can make a difference in the life of a child.

To learn more about Mentoring Connections, call Shelia Stubbs, Match Support Specialist, at 256-0906 or email shelia@emum.org.



Give Us



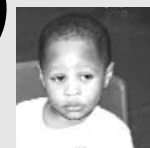
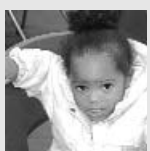
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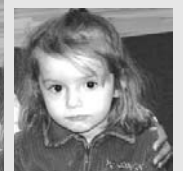
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I could change the future

By Gregory Evenson

Hello. My name is Gregory Evenson, better known to the state of Wisconsin as #500779.

I was asked to write an article about my experiences upon release from Oakhill Correctional on May 6th of 2007. One connection that I made was with the people at Madison-area Urban Ministry. It would be hard to overstate the importance of this contact.

Let me back up a bit. What presents itself to a person released from the care of the state penal system?

The past...

If one chooses to make his past his future, well, his past becomes his future again. For me that would mean a short lived, drunken spree leading inevitably back to prison. I have the disease of Alcoholism. The most important day for me was the first day out. Luckily for me, I made it through that first day and, therefore, had a chance to try again the second day and so on.

In order to function in today's society, one obviously has to have a source of income. Finding a job is no easy task with a record. It has become increasingly easier for employers to check this information through the internet as it is a matter of public

record. Finding a place to live is the same story. With the rate of recidivism running around 80%, who could blame the prospective employer or landlord for not extending a willing hand? But, what is the newly released former inmate to do? There is always another ex-convict to talk to. The problem is that most of them are using or drunk or on their way back to prison.

That's where my connection with Madison Urban Ministry comes into play. Jerome is a man that I could talk to who knew just exactly where I was at. He knows the hurdles facing the recently released inmate. I was able to find help in many forms from these people. Barbara McKinney, Jerome and several other folks were always there to listen, to offer lists of prospective jobs, to help us look for work on line and to encourage me to find a more fulfilling way of life. In many ways, this was the most important thing about my experience at Madison Urban Ministry.

The program of Voices Beyond Bars meets weekly at the offices of Madison Urban Ministry in the Villager Mall near the South Transfer Point. It is my experience that I could NOT make it alone. I needed the support of others who are like me. The people whom I sought to be like had found something. It was, as they say, a faith in a spirit

greater than one's self. The importance of support for me when I was newly released was critical. It may have been as simple as a bus ticket. They were still a dollar and half more than I had at most times in those early days. Barbara and Jerome would help whenever they could as long as they could see I was trying. That's the part I can claim at least a little credit for. I kept trying because I didn't want my past and my disease to control whatever future I had left.

I was given the honor of sharing a few words at the recent service fair held by Madison Urban Ministry. I knew some of the people there to hear the message. I hadn't seen them in years as they were locked up. I can only hope that what I said may have

made a little difference. If not now, maybe down the road. No one gets sober till they're ready to get sober. Jerome and Barbara helped me to make that decision, at least for the last year and a half. I couldn't -WE could.

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"I couldn't change the past, but I COULD change the future"

Gregory Evenson

Selling Your Gold ? Don't Get Taken! by Lucy Gibson

The price of gold is currently at historic highs. As I write this, several websites tracking gold prices indicate it's between \$850 and \$950 per ounce. If you hear advertisers on TV and radio asking you to sell them your gold jewelry, be careful! Most of those operators will buy your gold at anywhere between 30% and 50% of its actual value.

That's what I'm told by a long-time Madison store owner. An interview with him indicates that the place you're most likely to get a good price for gold is – surprise! from a long-time local store owner.

If that sounds a bit self-serving, listen to the rest of this man's advice, because it makes sense:

1. Get your jewelry valued before you have a financial emergency, so you don't end up looking for any buyer that you can find quickly. Take it to a local

jeweler or other buyer, find out how much it weighs and how many karats it is, and how much the buyer would offer for it. Then set it aside and don't sell it until you really need the money. Keep track of how much gold it contains by weight.

2. The daily price of gold can be found in the business section of the Wisconsin State Journal. It's under "Precious Metals" in a one-inch square box. Yes, it's in small print, so you have to look for it. Or you can go on the internet and google "price of gold" to get an idea of what it's selling for on any day.

3. Look for a buyer who will give you at least 80% or 90% of your gold's value, based on its weight and the number of karats. A buyer should have a table that will show you the weight of gold in a weight of jewelry of a certain karat value.

4. Don't sell gold to someone who advertises on the radio, "Send me your

gold jewelry in a bag and I'll send you money!" My interviewee experimented by sending a little jewelry to a company that advertises this way. They said they would send a "gold kit" to the seller. The kit turned out to be nothing more than a plastic bag – no little scale or tables to give an idea of what his gold was worth. He sent his gold in without a contract, and got some money in return – less than 50% of the gold's value.

5. Don't sell gold at the mall to buyers who will leave town in a few days. It's common for those buyers to give only 30-50% of the gold's value.

6. After checking out the value of gold and getting yours valued, only sell it to a local store that gives you a higher rate of return for its value.

So in brief, this is how to deal with selling your gold jewelry: Follow the gold price, use a little bit of thinking ahead and initiative, and you can pre-

vent getting low-balled on the value of your gold. You can save yourself a lot of money.

Don't wait until you're feeling desperate to get a little money; find out ahead of time what you can get for what you have. And maybe you will be able to hang onto those heirloom pieces, the ones that remind you of your grandparents or great-aunts or uncles, and still get enough from the newer pieces that don't have so much sentimental importance.

My interviewee thinks these three local stores are most likely to pay well for your gold jewelry: University Coin on University Avenue, Rick's Old Gold on Willy St, and Capital Coin on Monona Drive.

But you don't need to take his word for it! Get several estimates, as he advises above.