

THE GOOD SAMARITAN BULLETIN

October 2016



XXI Annual Regional addiction-prevention Days in the Pedroches Valley.

We held our 21st Pedroches Valley Addiction-Prevention Days the 4th and 5th of October, under the title, "Live Together without Addiction or Violence." The days of talks, as is our tradition, were held at the Pozoblanco Fair Grounds.



21ª Jornadas de Prevención de Adicciones en el Valle de Los Pedroches 4 Y 5 de octubre 2016 - 20:00 h.



The mayor of Pozoblanco, Emiliano Pozuelo, participated in the opening ceremony and Modesto Sánchez, Councilor for Social Affairs, closed the event.

The dynamics of drug abuse were discussed from three different perspectives: clinical, psychological and legal. We enjoyed the participation of Dr. Samuel Cerezo, a doctor and volunteer with the *Apoal* Association (which helps alcoholics), Josué Sánchez, a clinical psychologist and president of the Spring of Life Evangelical Association in Jerez de la Frontera (Cádiz) and Rafael Gallardo, Commanding Sergeant of the Civil Guard of Pozoblanco.

The first day we dealt with the root connections that lead to addictions, and the ways in which these roots lead to various kinds of violence. The second day we dealt with alternatives and solutions. Both the local radio station and the TV station attended and covered the event.

That same day we held two one-hour sessions in the Salesian School. At different levels, we explained the dynamics of addiction, and two men gave their testimonies: Juan and Francisco, both rehabilitated and members of our evangelical church in Pozoblanco. They told the students how they had gotten involved with drugs, and had experienced the consequences in their own lives, including violence that led to them being incarcerated



European Volunteer Service



We thank God for the arrival of two volunteers from Germany, Joshua and Micha, both committed believers with a desire to serve with us for nine months. They were sent by the German Evangelical Mission, DMG, with which we have cooperation agreements in different countries in Europe. These volunteers are financed by the Erasmus-EVS program of the European Union, a program through which our Association has been receiving and sending volunteers for more than a decade.

Most of their service is focused on the program at the Rehabilitation Center, working with the residents. They also have a weekly English-teaching activity with the children of families who benefit from the Dorcas Program (most of them of Arab origin.) They also attend the church's youth meetings and activities. Please pray for them and for their adaptation to the various programs and activities.

Leisure Time

As happens each year, the Añora town government has provided free access to its swimming pool for one day a week during the summer for residents and technical staff of the Good Samaritan Center. We have been enjoying this blessing for seven years now!



Testimony.

Francisco Beviar Ríos was born in Cieza (Murcia) on October 4th of 1968.

An addict being treated with methadone, Francisco came to our center sent by The Potter's House, because of a disciplinary penalty imposed for rebellious behavior. We accepted the challenge of having him "for discipline" for several months, so that he might later return to finish his program. Francisco said that after a few days with us, he prayed very seriously to the Lord: "Lord, if you exist and your word is true, help me and tell me if I have some chance of living." He added, "At that very moment a peace and joy came into my heart, confirming that God was giving me an affirmative answer." From that moment on, Francisco confirms that everything was different!

He finished his period of "discipline," and told us: "When I finish my program at the Potter's House, I plan to return and be a volunteer here, if that's okay with you." And so it was! Now he has been here at the Good Samaritan for two months and has become a member of the church in Pozoblanco. His story is as follows:

He had two brothers and a sister (she is the only one who has never had problems with drugs or been in jail). When Francisco was seven years old, his mother had to support the whole family herself, because her husband had left her for another woman. Her working so many hours outside the home led to serious emotional needs in the children, who lacked supervision and care.

At age 12, Francisco started using tobacco, marijuana and alcohol. He went on to commit petty thefts—the first one was a bicycle—and the officer who first arrested him said, as a premonition, “Someday this guy will end up robbing banks.” Sadly, that phrase soon became reality. Francisco rushed headlong into the world of crime: holdups, drug trafficking (heroin), and hard drug use (at 14 he was already using heroin.) His second arrest was for holding up a night club. Francisco only spent a year in confinement, being a minor of age, but at age 16, he started serving a longer sentence.

Francisco has been sent to prison some 15 times—he doesn’t remember exactly how many. Because of bad behavior behind bars and committing more crimes when free, he was in over a dozen different prisons. Because of his rebellion against the prison system, he was kept in “punishment cells” on many occasions. Living in high-security prisons and surrounded by the worst of criminals, he kept descending further into hellish conditions. “In prison, the only law is that you have to be the worst of all to be respected,” Francisco explains. His way of resolving conflicts was violence.

His brother, also a prisoner and a drug addict, requested to be transferred to the same prison and the same cell, which was granted. One night the two brothers argued because he had started using drugs again, and Francisco remembers with great sadness, “That was the last time I talked to my brother.” During the night the brother had a stroke, and at daylight there was only a cadaver in the next bunk. What a gut-punch to wake up and find your brother dead! In this whirlwind of pain, frustration and remorse, Francisco’s heart hardened to the point that life meant nothing to him. Violence and hatred were the expression of all that was in his heart.

On one occasion, when he was 26, returning from a party with a friend, they held up a gas station, and after an “inadequate” response from the employee, they gave him a tremendous beating and stole all the money. As they left, they tried to pull the telephone cord loose, but didn’t quite manage to, and Civil Guard units were soon in pursuit. They accelerated when the police tried to stop them, and although nail strips placed in the road destroyed the car’s tires, they kept going right through a police barrier. About a hundred yards later, the vehicle crashed and was totaled. Then they fled through the woods, under fire from the police. Francisco’s friend later informed on him, but he remained a fugitive from justice for several years. He finally decided to turn himself in, and when he saw the pictures of the vehicle during his trial, in addition to its being severely damaged, it had eight bullet holes! Francisco was sentenced to five years for violent robbery and for assault on the Civil Guard.

Today Francisco recognizes that that time was one of many when God protected him. In total Francisco has spent 22 of his 48 years behind bars.