

Can I join you? - This is how it started

"Can you do a service for us in prison?" - an unusual request, which was directed at the Christian youth organization 'Entschiedenenes Christentum' (Christian Endeavour) in Scheideweg. The request came from a youth prison in nearby Siegburg, which held about 900 young prisoners - a totally unknown world for the young Christians from rural Bergisches Land. One service led to another, and the continued interest of the prisoners led to the formation of regular contact groups. "You told me about God's love, and I'll soon be out of prison. Can I join you?" The young Christians accepted the challenge, and a number of families started to take in the first ex-prisoners. Soon, in 1975, the Crossroads Prison and Rehabilitation Ministry was founded as a registered charity. Three years later a house was bought and the first residential community was set up.

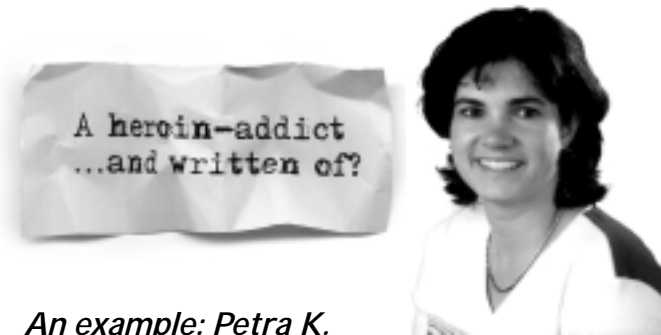
In 1985 the charity purchased an industrial building where it set up a residential community and Kreckersweg House for the purpose of seminars. Other communities were soon added, as well as families who took in individuals who needed help.

In 1990 a project was set up, called Hope For Many, as a combination of shared residential accommodation and work. Young people were prepared for jobs and for vocational training at the Crossroads Plant Park, in horticultural work and in landscape gardening or in other officially recognized careers.

In 1987 a report on the work of Crossroads was broadcast by the German television channel ZDF. This led to contacts with Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania in what was then communist East Germany and visits to various prisons during the times of political change that subsequently took place. In 1991 a non-profit-making private limited production company was set up, entitled Gefährdetenhilfe Waren gGmbH. In May 1994 a former manor house, Schloss Wendorf, was purchased in the Müritz district, accommodating two residential care communities, rooms for youth activities and a training centre as well as holiday flats and guest rooms.

In the 90s several associated charities were founded in Mongolia and in the Russian Republic of Buryatia. The charity is now regularly involved in (Eastern) Europe, Africa and Asia.

June 2000 saw the opening of Gewerbehalle Scheideweg (Crossroads Trading Hall), accommodating GFH Scheideweg Metallbau GmbH (a private limited mechanical engineering company set up by Crossroads in 1997), the charity's own publishing company BSDG-Fachbuchverlag, a tree nursery and another residential community.



An example: Petra K.

At the age of 13 I was one of the best horse riders in Southern Germany, but I didn't find horse-riding very fulfilling. Continuous arguments between my parents and their bourgeois lifestyle did not give me any aims in life. So I tried to find security and love through relationships with men. When I was 18, I came to the conclusion that a normal life was pointless and had no purpose, so I decided to opt out and started using drugs. I started with cannabis and alcohol and later heroin. At first I thought drugs were great and fascinating, but I gradually understood that I was just suppressing my problems and questions. While I was sober, I realized my hopeless situation and my lack of relationships and became depressive.

This was the time when a pastor started to come to our favourite pub from time to time. He would sit down and talk to us, and he wanted to help us. He told us about God and that it was possible to start a new life with Jesus. So I thought: "My down-and-out boyfriend has been a druggie for so many years. He can only be changed by God, but I don't need God." Shortly afterwards my life was in a complete mess.

One evening I prayed to God for the first time. I didn't know much about being a Christian at the time, but after my prayer I was filled with fresh hope. The pastor accepted me into his family, and I soon moved in with one of the Crossroads residential communities. I understood that I could hand over my past to God, because Jesus had forgiven me my sins and was opening up new doors for me. This gave me the peace and joy which I'd always longed for. It was a chance for a new beginning. My relationship with God means that I can live in the here-and-now and learn to cope with the problems of life. God has kept me from returning to my old life. And so I travel regularly to the women's prison in Cologne to share with others about the change that Jesus can give to each person.



Crossroads Prison and Rehabilitation Ministry Registered Charity

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Crime, drug abuse, alcoholism and isolation are growing problems in our time.

More and more people are drifting to the edge of society. Is there a way back?

Prison Ministry

Prison is usually the result but rarely the end of a career in crime. We seek to make contact with prisoners through services, concerts and by talking to them. Fifteen prisons have regular contact groups involving voluntary workers. We help prisoners think about the meaning of life, offer them future prospects and give practical help - also across the borders in other European countries as well as in Asia and Africa.

Residential communities

This is where young people can find a home after they have failed. There are 14 care communities where they live with a Christian couple and other committed young Christians in a family environment. Wide-ranging leisure facilities are available, including a coffee bar, music, organized trips, sports, etc. There are productive work places - for instance at our Plant Park or GFH Metallbau mechanical engineering facility - where we provide eight hours of training per day, preparing young people for life as a trainee or employee. In a number of cases we can offer state-approved training places ourselves: in metal processing, horticulture, landscape gardening, commercial work and in home economics.

Pastoral training

Many want to help, but don't know how to. We therefore run two training centres, Kreckersweg House in North Rhine-Westphalia and Schloss Wendorf in Mecklenburg-Western Pomerania, with courses in pastoral care, welfare and social work, work among fringe groups and youth work.

Preventative care

The downward social spiral can be prevented. We provide information to the general public, help with teaching and assemblies at schools and organize services and group discussions. Our coffee bars are ports of call for young people from all sections of society.

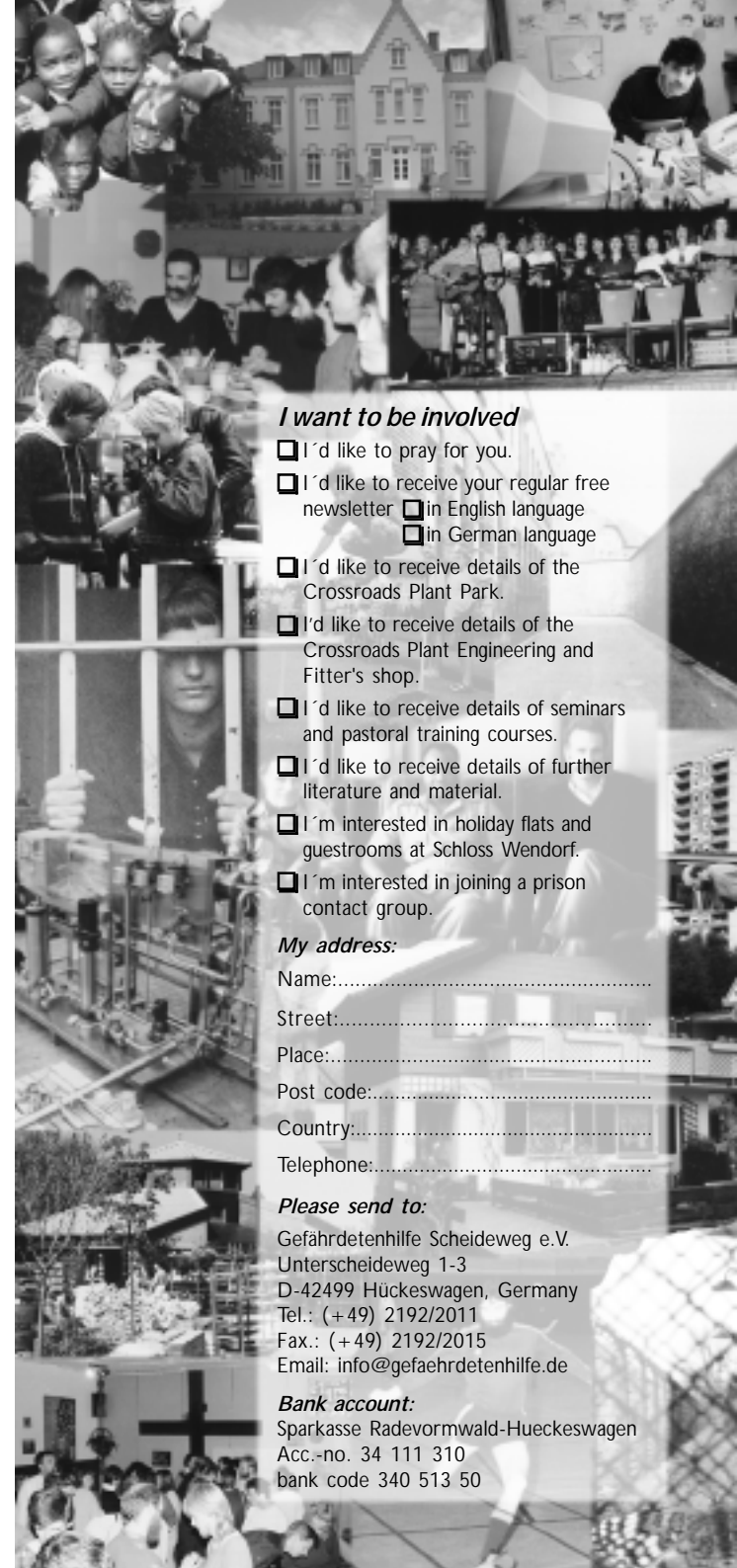
Our „manor“: Schloss Wendorf

Disappointed with ideologies and "new" freedom, more and more people in former communist East Germany are opting for a life of crime and addiction. Schloss Wendorf in the Müritz district provides such young people with an opportunity for a new beginning. To provide them with work, Schloss Wendorf also serves as a venue for seminars and as a guesthouse.

The Crossroads Prison and Rehabilitation Ministry is a pastoral-care community of Christians from a variety of Christian denomination and movements who participate on an unpaid voluntary basis, prompted by their own personal experience of God's love.



I have set you an example
that you should do
as I have done for you.
(John 13:15 NIV)



I want to be involved

- I'd like to pray for you.
- I'd like to receive your regular free newsletter in English language in German language
- I'd like to receive details of the Crossroads Plant Park.
- I'd like to receive details of the Crossroads Plant Engineering and Fitter's shop.
- I'd like to receive details of seminars and pastoral training courses.
- I'd like to receive details of further literature and material.
- I'm interested in holiday flats and guestrooms at Schloss Wendorf.
- I'm interested in joining a prison contact group.

My address:

Name:.....
Street:.....
Place:.....
Post code:.....
Country:.....
Telephone:.....

Please send to:

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