



BECAUSE *we are* CATHOLIC

Program director of Christopher Place credits forgiveness as inspiration to serve

In 1988, Darryl Green's younger brother was stabbed to death over a pair of tennis shoes. Twenty-five years later, the program director at Christopher Place Employment Academy testified to get the murderer's life sentence reduced and now the two work together in hopes of making a difference.

"Three weeks after I testified he was on the steps of Our Daily Bread with his mother and aunt," Green said. "We prayed and cried on those steps and there has been a relationship ever since. My friends can't believe I forgave him but I told them it is not me, it is God. It has taken more than 20 years for me to be free. I came to realize this kid was 15 years old and couldn't even clean his own room but he made a huge decision that would affect the rest of his life. I talk to him all the time and he told me it took three seconds of rage that changed the course of his life. Forgiveness is not really about the other person, it is about you. This whole forgiveness piece has been a heck of a journey."

The journey took Green to Christopher Place two years ago. Housed on the upper floors of Our Daily Bread Employment Center, a facility in downtown Baltimore built with money out of the state capital fund, Christopher Place opened in 1983 as a day shelter for men that provided showers, clothing and other basic services. It has evolved into a Residential Employment Academy focusing on employment training, job placement and support for homeless men 19 and older.

"Structure is something a lot of these guys were lacking so our job is to provide it," said Green, who graduated from Cardinal Gibbons High School in 1984. "They get up at 6 o'clock each morning. We provide classes all day long and run a tight ship. Ultimately our job is to get them back into the work world and



(Left to right: Regan Vaughan, director of social concerns and parish social ministry at Catholic Charities of Baltimore, Darryl Green, program director at Christopher Place Employment Academy, and Lisa Klingenmaier, associate director of social concerns at Catholic Charities of Baltimore.)

help them take their rightful place in society, being better husbands, better fathers, better sons, more productive members of society. We are producing a product that employers flock to when we have a graduation because there are 10 or 15 guys who get it when they leave our program."

Green was the featured speaker at a happy hour event at the Maryland Catholic Conference last week where he made an impact on every person in attendance after hearing his story of compassion.

"Somebody saw something in me that I didn't see in myself and breathed life into me so now I am giving back," added Green. "I always talk about my brother's story every time I have an opportunity because it led me into human services. I am now working with the same young man who took his life so we can go save some lives together. We sat on a panel, talking to young kids about choices and consequences. The audience didn't know who we were. He sat on one end, I was on the other. He talked about taking someone's life and was asked about how it affected his family and the victim's family. That is when I spoke up and told the crowd the life that he took was my younger brother. It was like an atomic bomb blew up in the room."

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH IN MARYLAND SERVES AND ADVOCATES FOR THE POOR, VULNERABLE AND THOSE IN NEED NOT BECAUSE THEY ARE CATHOLIC, BUT BECAUSE WE ARE CATHOLIC.

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