

**FOCAS IN ACTION**

## The Lord's Gym Never Gave Up

By Erica Monttinen



**R**andal, 35 years old, came into the Lord's Gym last year right after we opened. He weighed 363 pounds and was living in City Gospel Mission's overnight shelter. The first person he met was Ricky Waller who welcomed him. Randal came in believing he was a failure. Ricky told him he was not, re-introduced him to Christ, and prayed with him. He came back daily and quickly realized this was more than a

gym! He regrets not coming into the gym sooner. Randal grew up in Ironton, West Virginia where he excelled at sports. His father was absent and his mother struggled with a growing addiction problem that would lead to homelessness had it not been for his grandfather, whom he adored. Randal, like his mom, was smart, but did not take himself seriously. He learned to weld, only to see his pay evaporate through drugs and careless spending. His lifestyle became more destructive landing him in prison for three years. Since 2013, he's had spotty employment and entered relationships that led to further abandonment. Randal joined the Lord's Gym in August 2015. He has faithfully volunteered almost every day; when not working. In addition, he has lost over 65 pounds. He liked being disciplined, encouraged, prayed for, feeling valued, and being part of a family. Randal says God used the Lord's Gym to save him- literally! He was shown kindness, love and patience with no one forcing him to "believe" anything. He was moved when he saw how Bob Clarke, Rob Dothard, and Ricky did not give up on the guy starting fights (verbally) with people. We did not give up on Randal either. On March 1st Randal moved to Dayton to start a new job with solid benefits and living arrangements.

**VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT**

**Noie Shepperd**



**How long have you been with FOCAS?**  
Off and on, as opportunity allowed, for almost 30 years.

**Which ministries do you serve?**

I served on the Board for 3.5 years, and served in various other ministries. What made you volunteer? FOCAS believes transformation IS possible and has seen lives

escape the entrapments of sin and addiction through Jesus Christ and his church. Favorite part of volunteering? Helping someone take their next steps toward God, seeing a volunteer filled with joy and purpose, and so many more.

**Favorite memory while volunteering?**

Going into the back alley bars in Over the Rhine with Anne Taylor (founder, Dick Taylor's wife) to witness and give tracts along with her famous "Jesus hugs" to the patrons- made an indelible impression.

**GREETINGS FROM THE DIRECTOR**

## No Regrets

**N**o regrets! That is what Dick Taylor, founder of FOCAS, recently said to me upon his reflection of FOCAS' 30 year anniversary. (See article below.) From the very beginning, Dick's goal was to see lives changed by God through a personal relationship with Jesus Christ. My 15 years with FOCAS has taught me that God's "go to" tool is people willing to be used by Him. Quite often, this involves stepping outside of one's comfort zone.

In John 1:33, we see the unfolding of this strategy when Jesus challenges John, Andrew, and eventually Peter. Jesus' presence in their lives and the Holy Spirit's empowerment would transform their lives as they negotiated life's daily challenges and building the church.

In Price Hill, our daily life challenges have included four gun encounters and getting three women off of the streets. Our Northern Kentucky Lord's Gym in Covington became a viable alternative to sending three men back to prison. (This saved Kentucky tax payers over \$30,000 dollars.) In Queensgate, we de-escalated verbal altercations. In Haiti, we met with teachers and students in a community riddled with voodoo symbols. In each of these situations it was the Holy Spirit working through people to trust God outside of their comfort zone. I am with Dick- no regrets!



**Scott Bowers**

**REFLECTIONS FROM FOCAS FOUNDER**

By Erica Monttinen

**T**hirty years ago, after a life changing trip to Haiti, Dick Taylor created FOCAS. He felt God calling him to help those in need. What started out as a child sponsorship program in Haiti has morphed into much more.

A few years later, Taylor's wife, Anne, would lead the non-profit in a new direction. She frequented downtown Cincinnati armed with clothes, food, and her love for God to share with the homeless community. She wanted to help those in her own community.

Seven years after FOCAS launched, the first Lord's Gym opened. The gym provided men a place where they could work out for free in exchange for sitting down for a Bible study. It was an instant success. "It was busy whenever we had the doors open," said Taylor.

The Lord has blessed the non-profit with great success and growth over the years. It now includes three gyms, The Lord's Cafe, and the Family Activity Center.

When asked about his time with FOCAS, Taylor shared one of his favorite memories. He was leading a mission team and crusade into the Petionville Soccer field in Haiti. The crowd erupted into a wonderful worship experience upon listening to the musician they brought. It's a memory he'll never forget. Taylor is amazed at the growth FOCAS has achieved since opening its doors in 1986. Although he is now retired from the non-profit, he hopes God's will continues to be done with the