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PRESS RELEASE

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New Program at Detention Center Helps Inmates Fight Addiction

Sheriff Carter Weaver announces a new program at the Georgetown County Detention Center that began today. The Damascus House Ministry, founded by the Pawleys Island Community Church, will give affected inmates assistance with their battle with drug and alcohol addiction.

The Damascus House is a non-profit, Gospel-centered, drug and alcohol addiction ministry that addresses the root of the behavior, the traumas and experiences that led to chemical dependence. At the detention center, inmates apply for an intensive, three week program, during which they live in the same cell block and meet six hours a day. Guided by Damascus House Program Leaders Vic Wilson and Dillon Dowler, participants will support each other as they work through past grief and trauma, and take responsibility for their choices.

"There are lessons and counseling each day, and each man keeps a journal in which they take a daily moral inventory," explained Wilson. "They explore how they're doing, how they have treated other program members or their family. We work a lot to change false ideas, especially the idea that addiction is only affecting the addict. There's a focus on taking responsibility, right down to going back and making your bed if you didn't make it, or apologizing if you've been unkind to another program participant."

"We don't focus on chemicals as the problem - our focus is on reintroducing the man to the regenerating power of the Holy Spirit," said Dowler. "Something often associated with addiction is the inability to take responsibility. We slow down and help participants take ownership, and in the midst of that process, God takes over."

Participants also commit to attending the detention center's Alcoholics Anonymous and Celebrate Recovery meetings. Sign up is, of course, optional, but Sheriff Carter Weaver wants to give incarcerated residents suffering from substance use disorder every chance to break free from the cycle.

"I see it as my responsibility as a Sheriff and as a human being to do everything in my power to help those stricken by addiction to break the cycle and live productive lives," said Weaver.

