



## MEET JOYCE BRAY

### FAITHFUL GILGAL VOLUNTEER (2009)



My name is Joyce Bray and I am a retired teacher, a career where I served for 35 years. After retirement, I joined Campus Crusade for Christ (Cru) and later started the Atlanta chapter of “Here’s Life Inner City” (HLIC), one of eight chapters and cities in operation at the time. This ministry provided pastors of inner-city churches with food called “Boxes of Love,” Easter baskets, book bags, blankets, and other items for the poor. HLIC-Atlanta would regularly host packing parties with the help of volunteers from the churches and send out these items along with a gospel tract to spread the Word of God to the needy.

My church, Berean Bible Baptist Church of Atlanta, at one time had a ministry to women in local prisons. We tried for some time to revive it, but we were unable to convince prison officials to let us do so. I love to evangelize, so I pursued restarting an outreach ministry for women. In 2009, the Lord put Val and I together through a friend’s daughter who told me about Gilgal. I began volunteering and served for several years on the Gilgal Board of Directors. After serving with Gilgal for a little while, I began discussing with Val the needs of the ministry. This is when I formed a weekly bible study for the residents to help them understand the basic principles of the Christian faith and their new life in Christ. Our church team is there week after week sharing the Word of God. Almost 30 Berean women faithfully serve by teaching, encouraging, praying for, and loving on the clients of Gilgal.

It was not long before our outreach to Gilgal exploded at Berean and other women from the church wanted to serve. One such group that focuses on hospitality brings a Thanksgiving meal to the residents along with additional meals about five times per year. One of our pastors on staff, Pastor Pat Perkins, comes weekly to lead a bible study on Friday mornings with the residents. Our church gives monetary support to Gilgal through our local missions’ efforts and one of our members collects toiletries to send over to the residents at holidays. In addition, another member provides gifts to the residents at graduation and when someone new comes to Berean, we invite them to get involved with Gilgal. I love to spread the Word of God, and I feel it is just as important to spread the Word outside the church as well as inside. It is amazing to see how many of us at Berean faithfully serve the women of Gilgal. The truth is, once they visit and see Gilgal, they are hooked.

Many of the Gilgal women come from such darkness, but we minister to them with love and respect. At the foot of the cross, we are all on level ground. Our goal is to show them the love of Christ and how to walk in His light and the truth that has and will continue to set them free.

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Thank you Ms. Joyce for being an integral part of the Gilgal story! You are living proof that one spark of faithful passion can ignite a lasting flame. Thank you for following 2 Timothy 1:6 and “fanning into flame the gift of God, which is in you.” **Change Happens at Gilgal** because you have been a faithful part of it!