

Take a Risk!

A monthly publication from Risk Takers *for Christ*

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RTC Basketball Team Ministers at South Bay CF

by Rev. Dale Glading, President

On Saturday, February 7th, my alarm went off at 4:30 a.m. and by 5:15 a.m., my son Chris and I were on our way to meet the rest of our Risk Takers for Christ basketball team at a local truck stop. Unfortunately, three of our players weren't able to make the trip due to family and work obligations and a fourth player overslept, so our 15-passenger van had lots of empty seats. Thankfully, two of our nonplaying volunteers - John Kebbel and Steve Schwartz - were able to join us and they shared their personal testimonies during our halftime gospel presentations. (more on that later).



After a 90-minute drive through sugar cane fields, we arrived at the South Bay Correctional Facility, which is owned and operated by the GEO Group under contract with the Florida Department of Corrections. Chaplain Peter Lopez met us as we were being processed and escorted us to the prison chapel, where we waited for the count to clear.

Earlier that week, there had been a stabbing incident involving members of two different gangs and as a result, the entire facility had been placed in "lockdown." Fortunately, our visit wasn't cancelled but instead of the gen-

eral population being allowed to attend our games, only the inmate players, referees, scorekeepers, and a handful of others were permitted outside.

South Bay houses 1,950 men and so, we knew that our competition would be fierce... and we weren't disappointed. To our players' credit, they fought hard against overwhelming odds, especially considering that, at age 66, I was our fifth player and we had no subs. Meanwhile, the inmates had 22 fresh young bodies to choose from for the two games.

Led by Marty Gradijan's 27 points and Chris Glading's 13, we kept the score close in Game One - and actually led midway through the second half - until the inmate refs decided to intervene by making a series of very questionable calls. But the true highlight was the halftime gospel presentation where John Kebbel gave a powerful testimony, and I was privileged to preach.

After an hour's intermission during which we were served sandwiches and soft drinks, it was time for Game Two. This time, Marty poured in 48 points and Chris added 18, but it wasn't quite enough as our exhausted team ran out of gas at the end. However, once again, our halftime program was the highlight as Steve Schwartz shared his poignant life story and I offered the Good News of Jesus Christ.

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Candid.



Have You Met My Brother, Darryl?

by Rev. Dale Glading, President

“Against the justified man no sin remains; the great transaction of the cross has eternally removed his transgressions from him” - C.H. Spurgeon

Darryl Strawberry has had quite an up and down life. Selected with the #1 overall pick in the 1980 Major League Baseball Draft by the New York Mets, Darryl was named National League Rookie of the Year in 1983. Over the next seven seasons, he smashed 252 homers for the Mets and helped them win the 1986 World Series.

Strawberry also had one productive season with the Dodgers and was part of two championship teams with the Yankees, but injuries and repeated suspensions for violating baseball’s anti-drug rules negatively impacted what looked sure to be a Hall of Fame career. And then there were his legal woes...

1994 - Indicted on one count of income tax conspiracy and two counts of tax evasion. Pled guilty to one count of tax evasion the following year and was sentenced to six months of home confinement and two years of probation.

1995 - Charged with failure to pay child support.

1998 - Sued for failure to pay \$100,000 in legal fees.

1999 - Arrested for soliciting sex from a policewoman posing as a prostitute and for possessing a small amount of cocaine. Pled no contest and was sentenced to 21 months’ probation and community service.

2002 - Jailed for violating several non-drug rules at the drug treatment center where he was on probation and ordered to serve the 22-month suspended prison sentence from 1999 (released after 11 months).

2005 - Charged with filing a false police report.

On top of all that, Darryl has experienced two failed marriages... battled depression, drug and sex addictions... and survived both colon cancer and a 2024 heart attack.

But guess what? Today, Darryl Strawberry is a born-again Christian, an ordained minister, and an itinerant evangelist who shares his faith wherever he goes. He has also been forgiven by two very important people: President Donald Trump, who issued him a full pardon for his tax evasion conviction in 2025; and the Lord Jesus Christ, who nailed Darryl’s sins to Calvary’s cross and then covered them with His own shed blood, to be remembered - and held against him - no more.

“As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us.” Psalm 103:12 (BSB)

Grandparents Day

In February, Dale was the guest speaker for Grandparents Day at Masters Academy.



RTC Basketball Team Ministers at South Bay CF

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Altogether, four men made professions of faith at South Bay that day and quite a few others who were already Christians were encouraged in their faith. Still others indicated that they weren't ready to commit their lives to Christ but wanted more information.

Please pray for the men at South Bay - both the believers and those still seeking the truth - as well as for Chaplain Lopez, who was a great encouragement (see his thank you note elsewhere in the newsletter). Also, please remember two men in particular whom I spoke to at length during lunch: Jeremiah and Lorenzo.

Jeremiah is a young Caucasian man whose boyish face and glasses make him look like a bookkeeper or an accountant. He was incredibly polite and well-mannered,

and it was hard to imagine what crime he might have committed in order to be incarcerated at South Bay, where he is separated from his wife and three kids. Jeremiah is scheduled to be released in 2027, so please pray that he keeps following Jesus when he gets out and that things go well when he is reunited with his family.

As for Lorenzo, a large Black man with gold teeth, the desire of his heart is to minister to young people when he is released, urging them to learn from his mistakes and to choose a better path in life. Unfortunately, it will take a miracle for Lorenzo to get that chance because he is currently serving three life sentences plus seven years. In fact, Lorenzo was one of eight men who attended our games who are serving life sentences.

Our next prison trip is scheduled for Saturday, May 2nd to Putnam Correctional Institution in East Palatka and as always, your prayers are greatly appreciated.

2026 Treasure Coast Senior Symposium

"Finishing Well: Spiritually, Physically, and Financially"

March 5-7, 2026

Genesis Church

3660 16th Street, Vero Beach

Featuring the Spiritual "Space Cowboys"

Rev. Tom Cox, Rev. Dave McMurray, and Dr. Bill Waltz

Art Argenio, D.C. and Matt Parris, D.C.

Licensed financial advisors: Chris Glading and Steve Salis

Special music provided by Kenny Munds, Academy of Country Music award-winning musician

- ▷ Thursday, March 5 - 6:30 to 9 p.m. (light refreshments)
- ▷ Friday, March 6 - 6:30 to 9 p.m. (light refreshments)
- ▷ Saturday, March 7 - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. (inc. a catered lunch)

(Thursday & Friday sessions are FREE. Saturday's session is \$20 pp or \$35 per couple.)

To register, visit www.risktakersforchrist.org or email info@risktakersforchrist.org

Sponsored by Risk Takers for Christ, Grandparents for a Godly America, and Genesis Church of Vero Beach



Thank You Note from South Bay CF

Dear Pastor Glading,

It was indeed a privilege having you and your team here to minister to the participants through the game and personal ministry. Thanks to you, for reaching out to us, giving us the opportunity to be hosts. The participants were happy for the opportunity to get out and enjoy themselves. You and your team have been a blessing to this community. Kindly share with them my personal thanks for their individual and collective ministry to prison facilities they visit.

Thanks for the basketballs, nets, whistles, and air pump donated while you were here. That was a great gesture; we are grateful and appreciative of your kindness.

Your fellow laborer in Christ,

Peter Lopez, Senior Chaplain
South Bay Correctional Facility

Living H2O Photos



9:30 a.m. - Coffee & donuts
10 a.m. - Worship service
1950 S US Hwy 1, Vero Beach FL

Shop and Give

Do you buy Christian books, Bibles, or gifts online? If so, Christian Book Distributors (www.cbd.com) is the absolute best place to shop. Even better, Christianbook will give back 4% of your purchase price to Midway Bible Fellowship, the church that Risk Takers for Christ planted in 2022.

Simply type in our GiveBack ID: MGVVPU or use the following QR code:



RTC Prison Ministry Basketball Team Schedule



- ▶ May 2, 2026 - Putnam CI, East Palatka FL
- ▶ August 1, 2026 - Sumter CI, Bushnell FL
- ▶ November 7, 2026 - Avon Park CI, Avon Park FL & DeSoto CI, Arcadia FL

You can donate to our basketball team by visiting:
<https://www.risktakersforchrist.org/partner--donate/>

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