

Vol. 2 | February 2019

The Official Newsletter of **Operation Blue Shield**

THE SHIELD



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SECOND CHANCE AT NEW LIFE

Between the age of 12 thru 35, Jon Ponder had been in and out of jail/prison multiple times. Facing 23 years, he experienced a dramatic change when a prison chaplain gave him two books – a Bible and *Pursuit of His Presence*. While in solitary confinement, Jon Ponder found faith and decided that his life needed to change. He set out on a mission to make a difference in his life and the lives of others who just want a ‘Second Chance’.

Once released, he spoke with a International Church of Las Vegas pastor as well as the Las Vegas Metropolitan Police Department about his vision to help ex-offenders reenter society. In 2009, Jon Ponder’s dream and vision came true. He opened Hope for Prisoners.



Jon Ponder, third from the right side, 2018 Hope for Prisoners Graduation

Hope for Prisoners is a program designed to help men/women successfully reenter the workforce so they become contributing citizens and better family members. His program incorporates an 18-month long volunteer mentorship by government/industry/civic leaders, first responders, educators and the faith-based community. Former inmates attending his program are better prepared to reenter society equipped with the skills and support mechanisms to be productive law-abiding citizens and ambassadors-of-hope in their neighborhoods. The result is a recidivism rate less than 6% versus the national average of 75%-95%.

We salute our **strategic partner** Jon Ponder, CEO and Founder, Hope for Prisoners.



CEO'S CORNER

"We can't help everyone, but everyone can help someone."

Ronald Reagan

40th President of United States

In an increasingly challenged world, it is important to be reminded of the heroes who walk among us every day. At Operation Blue Shield, we are proud to partner with heroes who are willing go the extra mile and extend a helping hand to someone they may not even know. Our military & first responders do this every day. As citizens, we can tackle the issues facing our Nation by working together with our first responders toward a common goal of building cities full of opportunities...for everyone.

'America is a shining city upon a hill whose beacon light guides freedom-loving people everywhere.', Ronald Reagan. Helping another is honorable and compassionate. Making a difference in another person’s life shows that you have lived and LIVED WELL.

Join Operation Blue Shield’s mission to address the hard issues of today and create a stronger America.



BILL'S CORNER

We don't remember days, we recall moments. Great moments, memorable moments, sad and shocking moments. They shape who we are and are instrumental in how we act. At Operation Blue Shield, we recognize there are no ordinary moments. They can be powerful, life-changing or a simple moment of kindness that can change the life of another...forever.

It is up to each of us to create a better world for generations to come through positive actions and life changing moments. We encourage you to step out of your comfort-zone, think big and then think bigger. Join us at OBS and be a part of creating a safer, stronger America.



LOOK PAST ASSUMPTIONS

On 19 November 2018, Rowlett Police Department's Sgt. Greg Baldwin received a family disturbance call. He immediately responded and found the suspect still at the location. Entering the house to effect the arrest, the suspect fled. Baldwin took off on foot, fell and dislocated his hip.



Sgt. Baldwin has been an officer for 22 years, with the last 10 years spent in Rowlett's Police Department.

A neighbor, Elizabeth Olowo-Nyore, saw how badly he was injured. "I don't look at *who* someone is before I help them. I realized Greg was a person like me and needed help."
- Elizabeth Olowo-Nyore

Coming from a family of care givers, Elizabeth knew how to stabilize and calm Baldwin until paramedics arrived. As Baldwin began to heal, he couldn't forget her help. He remembered Elizabeth's blouse had a local business imprinted. As he continued to heal, he wanted to find her and say "thank you". Baldwin arranged for the department to be there when he surprised her at work. The first thing she could say was, "You can walk!"

This week, the Texas Senate and Texas House of Representatives honored Elizabeth's exceptional kindness for helping Sgt. Baldwin. The two have created a special friendship that is bridging a gap between first responders and the citizens they serve.





We thank you for subscribing to our newsletter!

Bottom row (left to right): Bill Hall, Toni Brinker, David Farmer
Top row (left to right): Kelsey Miller, Dwayne Thompson, Kerry Goodwin

Upcoming Events:

- March 11-15:** Otis Birdsong and Michael Ray Richardson Ball Star Basketball Camp
- March 16:** Dallas St. Patrick's Day Parade | Heroes, Cops and Kids
- March 20:** OBS | RISD Children's Eye Clinic | Westwood Jr. High @ 8:00AM
- March 23:** Putting with Heroes | Tenison Golf Course @ 12:00PM
- March 27:** OBS | RISD Children's Eye Clinic | Lake Highlands Jr. High @ 8:00AM
- April 13:** Kids 'N Kites Festival | Lakehill Prep Athletics Fields @ 10:00 AM
- June 29:** OBS Superhero Night Ball Game | Dr. Pepper Ballpark
- July 30 - July 31:** Stop Violence Conference: Hurst Conference Center (Hurst, TX)
- October 26:** San Angelo Trunk and Treat
- TBD Fall:** Run with Heroes North Texas Region and San Angelo

Camp DEFY 2019:

- February 16:** 911 Center @ 10:00 AM
- March 16:** TBD Location @ 10:00 AM
- April 20:** Bonton Farms in South Dallas, TX @ 10:00 AM
- May 18:** TBD Location - Camp DEFY Graduation @ 10:00 AM
- August 4-10:** Camp DEFY