

# Remaking our Resources

## THE CHANCELLOR A. KEESLING CENTER FOR RE-ENTRY & RECYCLING

### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST:

- WorkForce, Inc. gets a new name.
- Deconstruction Force
- Employees of the Month

### Love Means Believing in Dreams

By James Smith

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Just like the book *Tales of Two Cities*, “It was the worst of times and it was the best of times.” During this economic depressed year we have seen companies go and so many people leave us. In this land we call America we set the tone for surviving. Out of death comes life, and that pertains to companies as well as people. This year one of our bright stars has fallen and not MJ, Cronkite, F. Faucet or Ed McMahon, but a star that shined then, now and for all time, Chancellor A. Keesling.

Army Spec. Chancellor A. Keesling, a 25 year old soldier from Indiana, died in Iraq. He has since been laid to rest physically, but spiritually he is accomplishing more in death than many of us in a lifetime. *Love means believing in dreams.* It also requires living through nightmares. For the Keeslings, that implies more than just surviving. Gregg Keesling is the President of Workforce Inc./

RecycleForce. As he loves his son, this business has thrived on that same kind of love. There have been some nightmarish moments when we did not know whether the company would make payroll, but love means believing in dreams. Workforce has served more than 200 employees who without that love would have no hope, no future, no dreams. Rebuilding lives – the life of strangers in need – has been the Keesling’s life since their Jamaica days. Workforce, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that helps ex-offenders transition into the community through job training and important practical support, such as housing and legal assistance. Workforce implements its *Work, Responsibility and Reward* program through the electronic waste recycling company, RecycleForce, as a viable business venture with a social purpose. RecycleForce creates transitional jobs for at-risk workers, with an emphasis on formerly incarcerated fathers. *Love means*

*believing in dreams* and in keeping with that we rename our recycling facility the **Chancellor Keesling Center for Re-Entry and Recycling**. As in life, the hopes and dreams of one young man will serve the hopes and dreams of many through his death. Chancellor Keesling’s death was not in vain, but a reminder that loves means believing in dreams.

We continue to look for your support and donations in keeping Indianapolis and the environment free of all electronic, cardboard and plastic waste. We miss you Chancellor, and you will never be forgotten. *Love means believing in dreams.*

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# September 2009

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30			

*For more details or locations of events please feel free to contact the office. 317.532.1367*

## SCHEDULE OF EVENTS

- September 26— Glendale Mall Recycling Event— 9AM—2PM Glendale Mall—6101 N. Rural street
- October 3 –Binford Farmer's Market
- October 3—Abundant Harvest United Church at 79th & Ditch Road from 9—1
- October 7—Rush Hour Recycling begins again
- October 17—Earlham College

## GREGG'S CORNER

Continued from last issue



**Gregg Keesling**  
President

### **The Solution** *Make Work Pay!*

Social policy needs to reward work, not to create a disincentive for it. We need to assist every person who wants to work to be able to do so, at wages that will allow them to realize a benefit over unemployment, welfare, crisis intervention and crime.

One side will say, improve education and training, reform labor laws, lower the rate of immigration, and mandate a living wage. The other side will say, increase immigration, let free markets and free enterprise determine the wages for labor, kick out social supports, force people to work, and increase the penalties for those who don't play by the rules. If we are honest, we must admit that neither side has all the answers.

## MORE NEEDS TO BE DONE

By Thomas Gray

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It is often remarked that the United States makes up 5% of the world's population but it disproportionately consumes 25% of the world's resources. Among those concerned with the environment and sustainability, this ratio portrays a system out of balance. Greed, gluttony, and mindless consumption are adjectives used to underscore this portrayal.

Similarly, the United States has 20% of the world's prison inmates while only making up 5% of the world's population. Again, this ratio reveals a system that is seriously out of balance.

Both of these ratios would seem to point to a need to re-think how we are using our resources. Resources in the traditional sense: do we need to consume so much oil, do we need to buy so many plastic toys? Then we also need think of the human resources we are wasting by incarcerating over 2 million individuals.

When systems are dramatically out of balance, stresses develop which often lead to catastrophic failures – witness the systemic failure of the mortgage markets. Workforce is doing its small part to address the above two issues. More needs to be done.

### Thank you letter from the company president, Gregg Keesling

Dear Friends,

The Keesling family has learned so much from our beloved son, Chancellor. In his life he has brought us joy and understanding. In his passing, he has inspired an outpouring of love and support from our community that we could not have imagined.

Yet, the hustle and bustle of the services and the million attendant details eventually spit you out on a distant, lonely shore.

So you go back to work, pick up the pieces ... now with an additional burden, and that one is the wrestling portion of the program. There's work to be done in his name.

Most importantly, though, Chance would want those who loved him to fight to experience joy. Strive to remember him positively. Try not to be swamped with sadness at his loss, and to feel happy about the time you had with him.

All these clichés exist because they're true. Stay busy. Give in when you have to and have a good blub, and then get on with it.

As we go forward honoring Chance and all the ways he has touched our lives, we do so knowing we are surrounded by the goodness and grace of our caring community. Thank you all for being so much a part of our lives with Chance and our journey forward.

God Bless you,

*The Keeslings*



# Deconstruction Force

*Tearing down houses, Building up lives!*



WFI is in midst of designing a customized training program that includes inviting WFI employees who perform at an agreed upon level of competence and qualifications (eligibility) to be funneled from their six months of transitional employment with Recycle-Force into the customized training for construction.

During customized training, candidates will learn about construction while earning wages from deconstructing houses. Materials from the deconstructed houses will then be sold for reuse purposes. The goals of this project will be to increase labor force necessary to meet the demands of the labor market in the recognized growth industry of construction; increase employment opportunities for ex-offenders; and to increase certifications and transferable skills of this untapped labor force.

WFI has invited leaders from the fields of community and economic development, the construction industry, labor industry, the local workforce investment board, and the area training community to come together in developing this sustainable model. The first pilot phase of the project was completed in August, 2009.



# Earnest Simmons: Right & Wrong

By Angela Parker

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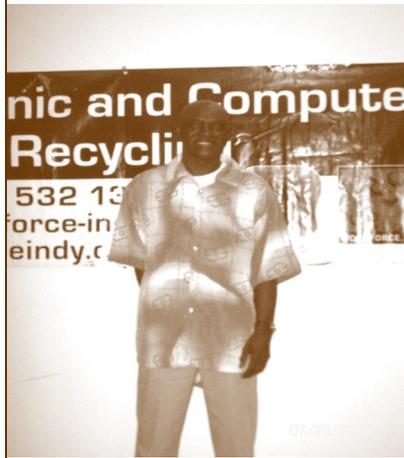
As with many of our participants Earnest Simmons is yet another that likes to stop in every now and then just to say ‘Hi’. Having left WFI in 2008, Simmons is now a full time cook at St. Vincent’s women’s hospital.

“I never would have gotten this far if it hadn’t been for the 3 men I admire the most.” says Simmons. “Mr. Gregg Keesling, Mr. James Smith, and last, but not least, Mr. Michael Cross. I owe them so much.”

Simmons says that much of his success he owes to WFI.

“When I first came to WorkForce, Inc. I was very hostile, I didn’t follow orders properly, I was angry all the time, at everyone. I didn’t trust anyone. WFI helped me with my transition in more ways than they know. They taught me to pursue the things I wanted out of life. To not let my felony stop me from reaching my dreams. Since coming to WFI I have gained tolerance, work ethics, and my trust in people has been restored.”

One of Simmons’ favorite pastimes while he was employed at WFI was journeying with



*“It’s easier to do the wrong thing, but more fulfilling to do what is right.”*

Mr. Cross to several correctional facilities where he would speak with correctional officers about ‘The other side of the fence’.

“How can people hope to help us if they don’t know what it’s like?” Simmons says. “I wanted them to be more aware to what life is like before and after the felony.”

Another way that Simmons likes to reach out is to mentor those that may try to follow in his footsteps.

“Somebody needs to help them,” says Simmons, “Why not someone that has been there. I think it’s easier for those that may offend to hear what it’s actually like from someone that has lived it, has served his time, has paid the fees. As I always say, ‘It’s easier to do the wrong thing, but more fulfilling to do what is right’. If I can help just one person, keep just one child from repeating my mistakes, then it’s worth it. Not everybody has somebody there for them. I was lucky enough to have the love and support of my family. Without them I don’t think I would have been able to make it.”

## Employees of the month



Rob Anderson      Kentrell Settles



Corey Edwards      Mike Henley



Emanuel Alexander      Dajuan Morris



Mike Raisley      Anthony Kamp



Pamela Lee      Angela Parker



Andrew Quassy      Corey Scrim



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**Work,  
Responsibility,  
Reward**

Many employers have, at one time, been faced with the same issue; staff shortage. The solution is simpler than most think; Hire felons.

Should more companies work with federally and locally funded rehabilitation programs to hire recently released felons they would not only resolve their staffing problems, but help to reintegrate ex-offenders back into society as well as help to reduce the rate of recidivism.

Many overlook ex-felons when filling positions in their company, even the federal government, which prides itself on reaching out to disadvantaged segments of society: veterans, people with disabilities, and more recently, retirees. So why not felons?

With their debt to society paid why should felons be overlooked? When asked why an inmate re-offended his answer was, 'I needed money to pay my probation and no-one would hire me. I had no choice. I could steal what I needed, or just not pay, either way I was going back.'

When filling your next position consider this; by hiring an ex-offender you are doing more than giving a man a job, you are giving him a second chance at life.

**BE A PART OF THE SOLUTION**

By [Angela Parker](#)

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For many of us, we see the problem and choose to do nothing about it. Instead we think the problem will either go away on its own, someone else will take care of it, or that, as many have said, 'I'm just one person'. Often we feel that we simply don't have the time, or effort, or money to be 'a part of the solution'.

Most don't realize how something as simple as recycling could really make a difference. By something as simple as recycling electronics, instead of letting trash collect them, you are diverting potentially dangerous, toxic, materials from our landfills. Materials, like the toxic metals, (such as lead, mercury, cadmium, and hexavalent chromium) contained in electronics devices that when improperly disposed of can be released into the environment. Most also don't realize that exposure to such materials can occur through inhalation, ingestion of soil and food, and chromium can also be absorbed through the skin.

In order to mitigate these health risks and to enhance economic sustainability, Indiana has passed legislation that mandates electronic recycling.

**What you can do to help:**

- Try to buy electronic products from companies that have pledged to eliminate toxic chemicals from their products and take responsibility for properly reusing and recycling them.
- When you have finished using them, return products to the manufacturer.
- Recycle your E-waste through the Indianapolis Tox Drops program.

For more information about electronic recycling log on to [www.recycleindy.com](http://www.recycleindy.com) or [www.work-force-inc.com](http://www.work-force-inc.com) or call the Mayors Action Center at (317) 327-4622.

If you would like tips on recycling sign up for a free newsletter from [www.greenpieceindy.com](http://www.greenpieceindy.com).