

An In-Depth Look at

Damascus Way Reentry Center

A SUPPORTIVE CHRIST-CENTERED REENTRY PROGRAM FOR MEN

THE INFORMATION IN THIS REPORT WAS
COMPILED BY THE EDITORIAL STAFF AT



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Damascus Way Reentry Center

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Damascus Way is a Christ-centered residential reentry program for adult men transitioning from incarceration back into the community. Founded in 1974, Damascus Way seeks to assist men in discovering the love of God through a life-changing relationship with Christ.

Mission Statement

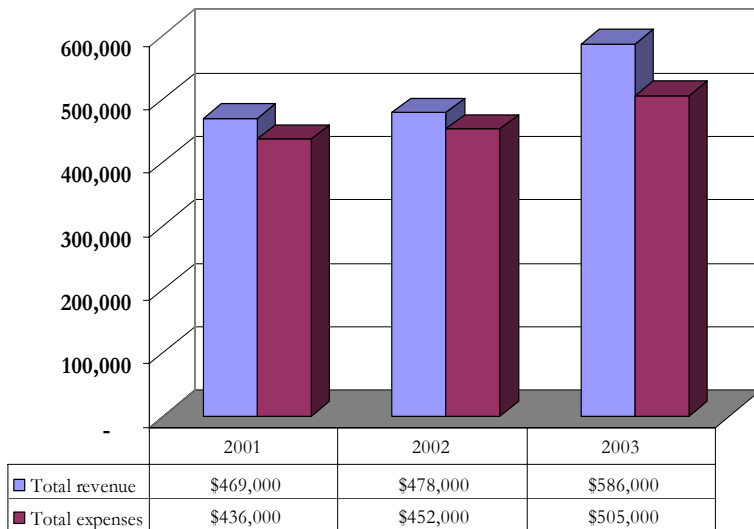
Damascus Way is a structured residential program in which adult male offenders are taught, admonished, and nurtured according to Biblical Truth so that they may live new lives of freedom, responsibility, and maturity in their communities.

A Word from Executive Director Richard Harden

“I am burdened with two things today, and I come to you for help. First, the program is full and has been for some time—that’s a good thing! But a full program with diminishing gifts and offerings means we have to stretch. Right now we’re about as stretched as we can get! This year has been difficult financially for many ministries, and Damascus Way is certainly not an exception. In fact, the Department of Corrections has cut down the number of men they usually send us—and we’re still full! So my burden is that God’s people will respond to our growing financial crisis with sufficient gifts and offerings so we can keep providing care.

“My second burden is spiritual. Each time the front door opens to admit a new resident, Damascus Way has the privilege and responsibility to share God’s love with him. We don’t want to fail these men! Will you faithfully pray for our staff and the men God sends us?

“Your financial support is needed and greatly appreciated. But please remember, also, that your prayers are even more coveted! Each man who comes through Damascus Way benefits from the faithful, *faithful* prayers of ‘our’ saints! Thank you for remembering us, dear friend!”

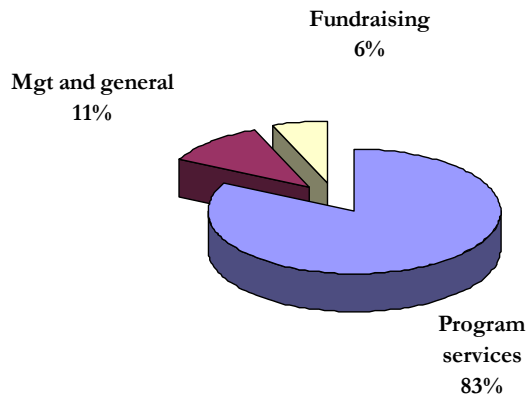
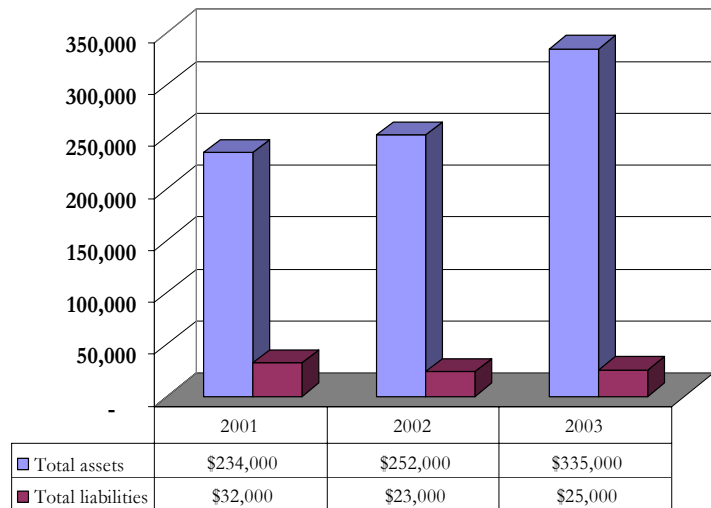


Revenue & Expenses

Total revenue received by Damascus Way in 2003 was \$586,000. Damascus Way's largest expenditures are wages and benefits (57% of total expenditure), equipment rental and maintenance (7%), and occupancy (7%).

Assets & Liabilities

Damascus Way has about \$335,000 in assets and approximately \$25,000 in liabilities.



Use of Funds

Damascus Way spent 83% of its total revenue on its programs and services.

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WHAT IT DOES

General Description

Damascus Way is a Christ-centered residential reentry program for adult men transitioning from incarceration back into the community. Founded in 1974, Damascus Way seeks to assist men in discovering the love of God through a life-changing relationship with Christ.

Many ex-offenders are required to go through a halfway house upon release as part of their parole plan, while other offenders are court-ordered to halfway houses in lieu of jail or prison time. In addition, some prison inmates who qualify are granted work release, which allows them to serve part of their prison sentence in a halfway house while working and getting a head start on their reentry. Damascus Way serves as a Christian-oriented alternative for men in need of such arrangements. Since its founding in 1974, Damascus Way has been able to adapt its program to meet the changing needs of Minnesota's correctional system.

Mission Statement

Damascus Way is a structured residential program in which adult male offenders are taught, admonished, and nurtured according to Biblical Truth so that they may live new lives of freedom, responsibility, and maturity in their communities. The three-pronged mission is

- To assist ex-offenders in becoming responsible, contributing members of the community
- To provide the community a safe, low-risk, well-monitored vehicle for re-integrating ex-offenders into their midst
- To provide the state and county correctional systems a well-structured, cost-effective, high-quality reentry program with effective monitoring and reporting systems.

The goal of the program is to enable ex-offenders to

- Mature in spiritual awareness
- Assume personal responsibility for their actions
- Address their personal issues, learning to cope in more productive ways
- Become established in a network of support and accountability (family, church, AA, etc.)
- Become contributing members of the community by developing stable work habits, furthering their educational/vocational skills, and learning to budget and save.

To achieve these objectives, the program consists of accountability groups, Bible study, daily devotions, chapel, individual counseling, and individual case-management, all within a high level of structure and accountability. Church attendance is encouraged as a means to aid in spiritual growth and to develop a positive social network. The above goals are reflected in the criteria the men must meet to graduate from the program, which include the following

1. A minimum of 60 days residence, full-time employment or schooling

2. Involvement in church and AA or other outside support groups or programming
3. Satisfactory progress on a self-developed "Service Plan" consisting of personal goals and action steps to accomplish them
4. Abstinence from drugs and alcohol
5. A positive, realistic Release Plan, including housing and money saved for all related necessities.

The organization's formal name is Damascus Way Reentry Center, Inc. Throughout this report the name Damascus Way is used, the shorthand reference by which the organization is commonly known.

Damascus Way's parent organization, GMAE Ministries, is headquartered in Richfield, Minnesota. Its web address is www.gmaeministries.org.

Damascus Way was organized in 1974 as a Section 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation under the Internal Revenue Code and under the laws of the State of Minnesota.

Guiding Principles

Damascus Way believes the gospel of Jesus Christ is the underlying power that can bring freedom and fulfillment to the men in its program who desire to remain crime and chemically free. Its Statement of Faith is stated below:

- The Word of God: We believe the Bible to be the inspired, the only infallible, authoritative Word of God.
- The Trinity: We believe that there is one God, eternally existent in three persons, Father, Son and Holy Ghost.
- Jesus Christ: We believe in the deity of our Lord Jesus Christ, in His virgin birth, in His sinless life, in His miracles, in His vicarious and atoning death through His shed blood, in His bodily resurrection, in His ascension to the right hand of the Father, and in His personal return in power and glory.
- Redemption: We believe that for the salvation of lost and sinful man, regeneration by the Holy Spirit is absolutely essential.
- Holy Spirit: We believe in the present ministry of the Holy Spirit by whose indwelling the Christian is enabled to live a godly life.
- Resurrection: We believe in the resurrection of both the saved and the lost; they that are saved unto the resurrection of life and they that are lost unto the resurrection of damnation.
- Spiritual unity: We believe in the spiritual unity of believers in our Lord Jesus Christ.

Programs & Services

Damascus Way's programs and services include providing a quality Christian halfway house program, a highly-structured environment, case management services, and spiritual programming and guidance.

The following are explanations of how Damascus Way implements each of its programs.

CHRISTIAN HALFWAY HOUSE PROGRAM

Damascus Way exists primarily as a Christian halfway house. It offers a 60-day to 8-month residential reentry program for adult men who are leaving prison or who are on work release. The program is licensed by the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) and can house up to 18 men. In addition, Damascus Way provides an aftercare program that houses up to four graduates of the main residential program who need or desire transitional housing.

Damascus Way welcomes all men who are willing to follow the structure and policies of the program and willing to learn to live according to biblical principles such as the following:

- Recognizing the need to change
- Accepting personal responsibility for making changes
- Displaying openness to receive correction and guidance
- Displaying accountability
- Displaying personal discipline.

Acceptance into the program is determined after reviewing any legal or institutional files and documents, consultation with legal authorities or institution personnel, and a personal interview.

In order to successfully complete the program, each resident must, among other criteria

- Complete mandated time as directed by the DOC, usually 60 days
- Have maintained full-time employment or full-time school attendance
- Have achieved satisfactory progress on goals
- Have established a support network
- Be chemically free
- Have had no major program violations in the last 14 days of the program
- Have an acceptable release plan, including housing.

HIGHLY STRUCTURED ENVIRONMENT AND 24-HOUR SURVEILLANCE

Damascus Way offers the state and local corrections systems and interested clients a well-supervised program allowing offenders to begin their reentry into the community in the safest possible manner. No resident may be away from the facility without staff authorization, and residents must follow strict procedures for signing in and out of the facility. All residents must call in to the facility according to their various supervision guidelines and are required to account for all their time away from the facility, whether at work, on job-search, at various groups, or on free time. In addition, all residents are expected to be employed or in school full-time, and a full schedule of evening programming is also required. Weekday and weekend curfews are enforced, and the facility is staffed on a 24-hour basis. Drug and alcohol testing is conducted randomly to ensure a chemical-free environment.

SPIRITUAL PROGRAMMING AND GUIDANCE

Damascus Way is a Christ-centered program. Central to its goal of helping men advance in personal growth and maturity, Damascus Way seeks to assist all program members in discovering the love of God through a life-changing relationship with Christ. Damascus Way seeks to show men how the life and teachings of Christ offer a source of strength and inspiration for living lives free from habits and patterns that have held each in destructive lifestyles.

As a means of promoting spiritual growth and maturity, Damascus Way offers a weekly Bible study, weekly chapels, evening devotional times, discipleship groups, weekend retreats, and spiritual counseling and guidance. The organization also encourages weekly church attendance.

SUPERVISION AND MONITORING

Supervision of residents includes monitoring the leaving and returning to the facility by specified sign-out protocol and monitoring resident's movements in the community using specified call-in protocol verified by caller-id and the Voice-Track Biometric Voice Tracking System. Other modes of supervision include enforcing daily curfews, conducting facility rounds and room checks, and using overnight security via bed checks, a facility alarm system, and VidGuard digital video system. Resident's employment hours are monitored by verified, regular call-ins and review of pay stubs. Residents' drug/alcohol usage is tested by random urinalysis and breathalyzer.

HOLIDAY MEALS AND GIFTS

For Christmas each year, Damascus Way provides the men in its program and a few of their dependents with holiday meals and gifts.

CASE MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Upon admission, each resident is assigned a case manager who works with him to develop an Individual Service Plan. Together they formulate goals to achieve while in the program and the strategies required to reach those goals. Case managers assist in referring residents to outside programs and services such as mental-health providers, medical services, financial or legal services, and support groups. Case managers also assist residents in seeking and maintaining employment or enrolling in GED, college, or vocational training. Case managers meet at least once a week with each resident to review progress, discuss goals, address personal needs and issues, and to pray. Toward the end of their stay in the program, the men receive assistance in putting together a release plan that includes appropriate, affordable housing and a sober support network.

Geographic Scope

Damascus Way offers services to men of all prison and jail backgrounds. Also, men who are working to overcome alcohol and drug problems are welcomed to the transitional program. The majority of Damascus Way's residents come from Minnesota prisons. Its main residential facility is located in Golden Valley, Minnesota, and its aftercare facility is located in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

DEMOGRAPHICS

Damascus Way exists primarily as a Christian halfway house for men 18 years of age and older who have been released from prison on Supervised Release and Work Release and men on various other forms of conditional release, court order, or furlough from jails or county workhouses.

Damascus Way's clients come from many backgrounds and situations, but most have significant drug and criminal backgrounds, and many have not completed high school and have little or no work history. A high percentage also has some mental-health issues.

Outcome Measurements

While not all of Damascus Way's success can be quantified numerically, the statistical criteria by which it measures its success include determining results from the following questions:

- How well do staff supervise and monitor the residents?
- How well is Damascus Way assisting the reentry of clients (employment, financial responsibility, sobriety, housing)?
- Are Damascus Way program graduates remaining crime- and drug-free and maintaining employment?
- Is Damascus Way receiving referrals from various correctional programs and officers?
- Does the program adequately promote and assist spiritual growth?
- Is Damascus Way staff able to adequately cope in high-stress work environments?

The DOC annually reviews Damascus Way's performance and renews its licenses, consistently giving its program a high rating. The program completion rate for men mandated on Supervised Release (96 percent over the last year) has been significantly higher than the 50 percent average for all programs combined. Referrals from prison caseworkers and community corrections agents are consistently above what Damascus Way can accommodate, and the organization routinely has a considerable waiting list.

Results of the five-year survey of parole/probation officers on how well they felt Damascus Way served clients revealed that, on a scale of 1-5 (5=outstanding), it scored the following:

Objective	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	Combined
Carrying out parole/probations agent's requirements	4.3	4.8	4.3	4.5	4.2	4.4
Enforcing parole/probation agreement	4.0	4.8	4.2	4.5	4.2	4.3
Monitoring client's whereabouts	4.3	4.6	4.5	4.4	4.1	4.4
Keeping agent informed of client's progress	4.7	4.6	4.4	4.3	4.1	4.4
Reporting any incidents to agent	3.7	4.6	4.3	4.4	3.9	4.2
Referring client to community resources	3.7	4.0	4.0	4.6	4.1	4.1
Educating client on Independent Living Skills	4.0	4.2	3.9	4.1	4.0	4.0
Monitoring drug and alcohol use via drug testing	3.7	4.2	4.2	4.7	4.0	4.2
Teaching client to be accountable for his actions	3.7	4.2	4.2	4.7	4.0	4.2
Helping client to be a responsible citizen	3.7	4.0	4.0	4.4	4.0	4.0
Instilling hope in the client	4.3	4.4	4.2	4.4	4.0	4.3

SUCCESS STORIES

Scott's Story

In one tragic accident, the result of drinking on the job, Scott became a felon. And an innocent, young woman lost her life. Scott lost his business, his truck, a home in the suburbs, his family, and most of his worldly possessions. He also served four years in prison.

Scott, a Damascus Way graduate, is now 44 years old. He knew about God from childhood, when his mother took him to a Christian camp. But Scott didn't truly know God personally. His father died when Scott was 12 years old; within a year his mother remarried. Scott's stepfather set impossibly high standards for Scott and his siblings. Using drugs, Scott withdrew from the family while he nurtured a growing drug habit.

Scott was 17 when his mother died. Having no structure left at home, Scott moved out to live on his own, selling drugs for money and to support his drug habit. He was soon arrested and found himself before a judge. "Go to vocational school," the judge said. "Make something of yourself." So Scott did. In 1976, he finished school and got a job as a painter.

Drugs and alcohol had a strong grip on Scott but time and again he entered treatment and found he could remain sober for a while. Once he stayed sober for eight years. By 1995, he was a lieutenant with the fire department, had a suburban home, a wife, children, and even a nice new truck. He felt, he says now, that he had the world by the tail. He deceived himself into thinking he could be a moderate, social drinker.

Taking that first social drink was a fateful decision. Scott's life tilted, then skidded quickly out of control. Within a few weeks he was arrested for drinking while intoxicated which cost him his job with the fire department. He fought back and managed to avoid alcohol for six months, but then took a drink. This time he lost his business. A contractor gave him a job but had to fire him for drinking. He got another job and was fired again.

Three weeks into yet another job, Scott was angered by a young supervisor, giving him his next excuse to drink. Drinking there, on the job, led to a run-in with his boss and the threat of another job failure. When he slid behind the wheel of his vehicle and started home from work that day, Scott's mind was consumed with what he would tell his wife if he got fired again. He blew through a four-way stop, slamming broadside into a car.

When the screeching ended, one high school girl was dead and two were injured.

During his four years in prison, Scott met an 80-year-old man who came each week to the prison to conduct Bible Study. Gradually, being exposed to truth from Scripture, even memorizing a few Bible verses, Scott opened up. He understood for the first time that he could give his life to Christ and be saved. A

Recent Accomplishments

Here are some of Damascus Way's most notable recent accomplishments:

- The respect from and relationship with the DOC, specifically prison caseworkers, parole officers, licensing inspectors, and Intensified Supervised Release agents has improved greatly in the past two years. Referrals to and requests for Damascus Way's service are beyond what the organization can provide. **If Damascus Way had 15 more beds, these too would be constantly full.** Statements from DOC officials have indicated that Damascus Way surpasses, in many cases, the quality of service they expect from a reentry center.
- Occupancy has gone from less than 70 percent capacity to 87 percent.
- Damascus Way has been developing a long-range plan for the ministry and has implemented several parts of the plan into its operation, which have accounted for better use of staff and services to the clients.
- Damascus Way has hired well-educated, experienced, dedicated, quality staff, who are mission-minded and have advanced college degrees, which adds professionalism to the ministry.
- Damascus Way has developed a program of weekend spiritual retreats three times a year for the participation of interested men (current and past residents as well as men from other similar programs).
- Damascus Way has built a volunteer pool of over 30 men and women from the community who have been involved with programming such as chapels, Bible studies, and retreats.

flame of hope flickered in his heart. He learned more and more. Slowly, he found that he could turn all of his sorrow and fear over to Christ. "It felt like a veil was being lifted from my eyes, when I read passages like 1 Corinthians 2," Scott says of those days. After prison, he came to Damascus Way where he found encouragement, friends, and help getting re-established. Damascus Way became a refuge in the evenings after work. He has a church home that he loves, and he attends Alcoholics Anonymous weekly.

"Even after all I've been through and all I've lost," Scott shares, "I believe I am a better person than I ever was, a much more whole person with Jesus in my life."

Calvin's Story

Calvin, who is currently living at Damascus Way, is a 49-year-old man, who comes from a large family of 16 children. He was born and raised in Little Rock, Arkansas. His family worked a farm where, even as a young boy, Calvin learned to work hard. When he returned home from school, his mom would strap a bag on him, and along with his siblings, he would spend the afternoon picking cotton.

Calvin loved school and said that if he had ever skipped school he would be in serious trouble with his parents. Calvin always had a strong work ethic and worked a verity of jobs. After farming, he worked in a piano factory and later learned auto mechanics and even managed a gas station for 13 years.

Calvin married very young and had a family right away. He said he was not a very good husband, but he tried hard to be a good father to his children. His use of drugs was a major source of contention in his marriage. In 1988, Calvin left his wife in Missouri and moved with his young son to Minneapolis to live with his brother.



In Minneapolis he worked in restaurants at first and then as a mechanic. Calvin worked on cars belonging to drug dealers and gang members, proving to be a mistake for a man with a drug problem. He had a few altercations with the law because of drugs and his associations with known criminals. As a result of court appearances, he was placed in treatment and served eight months in the Hennepin County Work House and four months in Faribault State Prison.

Calvin knew about Jesus and church from his upbringing, but he had never committed his life to Christ. He said that while in an apartment in Minneapolis when he was using drugs he was having a discussion with God as he looked at a picture of Jesus. He wondered why he had never met or seen this Jesus that everyone talked about. His knowledge of Jesus was only what he had heard from others. So at that moment, even in his drug-influenced state of mind, he said he looked in a mirror and looked right into the face of Jesus. That experience shocked him into starting to seek to know Jesus. He said people think he is nuts, but he believes he was confronted by Jesus Himself.

Since then, he accepted Jesus as his savior, reads his Bible, has become involved in a Christian church and has a mentor from church that he meets with each week. Pray for Calvin as he seeks to live his life as a committed Christian. It is also his desire to reunite with his wife after his legal issues are finished in Minnesota. His wife told him recently that when he is ready to come home, he is welcome there.

THE ORGANIZATION

Board

Damascus Way is governed by a five-member board of directors, which meets bimonthly. Meetings usually last about one to four hours.

Board members serve as long as needed and are selected by the board as a whole. Each board member offers varied opinions and views leading to well-thought-out plans and directions for Damascus Way.

Some suggestions under consideration by the board include adding a human resource development department, recruiting additional qualified staff, and adding two new board members.

Following is a detailed list of Damascus Way's board members:

- Jim Bzoskie, *Chair*
- Lois Hendricks, *Secretary*
- Bob knight, *Treasurer*
- Ron Ratliff, *Member*
- Palmer Yngsdahl, *Member.*

CEO

Richard Harden is Damascus Way's executive director and has served in this capacity since 1979.

Following is a list of Richard's major accomplishments:

- 1965 - 68 Studied at Bethany School of Missions.
- 1968 Served as intern at Teen Challenge in New York City, New York.
- 1969 - 72 Worked at Teen Challenge in Brooklyn, New York and in New Jersey.
- 1972 - 79 Worked as rehab director at Midwest Challenge in Minneapolis, Minnesota.
- 1979 Hired as director of Damascus Way.

Staff

Damascus Way has a total of ten paid workers. Four of them are full-time and six are part-time. Calculating for hours worked by part-time people, this translates to seven full-time equivalent workers.

SENIOR STAFF

- RICHARD HARDEN, *Executive Director*, is responsible for upper-level administration. He reports to the Damascus Way Board of Directors and Palmer Yngsdahl, GMAE Ministries president.

- CRAIG FRUEN, *Program Director*, is responsible for managing all program-related issues. He reports to Richard Harden.
- TIM DANIELS and DAN SEPEDA, *Case Managers*, are responsible for direct client care and case management. They report to Craig Fruen.

Damascus Way has four categories of paid workers, listed below with a percentage showing each category's share of total work hours:

- Administration and support (29%)
- Program director (14%)
- Supervision manager (14%)
- Case managers (29%)
- Other (14%).

Administration and support includes the executive director, secretary, and part-time accountant. The executive director supervises the program director and all non-program staff such as secretary, maintenance, cook, and accountant. He is responsible for upper-level administration such as fundraising, newsletter/communications, licensing/renewal, and all other non-program related issues. The secretary is responsible for answering phone calls, correspondence, filing, billing, board-meeting preparations, staff-meeting minutes, and other various clerical projects.

The program director manages the main residential program and aftercare programs. He oversees the supervision manager, case managers, evening/weekend supervisors, support staff, and volunteers. He recruits and trains new staff and is responsible for both program evaluation and development.

Case managers provide case management services to clients. Services include development and ongoing assistance on client Individual Service Plans, one-to-one counseling, job/employment counseling, progress and monthly reports to parole/probation agents, group facilitation, resident file management, referrals to outside services, and discharge planning.

Other part-time workers include evening/weekend supervisors, house managers, cook, and maintenance worker. Evening/weekend supervisors are responsible for the supervision of all program residents including monitoring/verifying whereabouts of residents away from the facility and enforcing program rules and policies (i.e. drug testing). House managers are responsible for overnight security, house supplies, appearance, and cleanliness of facility.

Workers are assigned to two areas, listed here with the percentage showing each area's share of total work hours:

- Main residential facility in Golden Valley, Minnesota (70%)
- Administrative office in Richfield, Minnesota (30%).

VOLUNTEERS

In addition to paid staff, Damascus Way has volunteer workers who contribute approximately two to three hours per week. They conduct chapel services and Bible studies at the main facility.

WAGES AND BENEFITS

In fiscal year 2002, Damascus Way paid approximately \$262,000 in wages and benefits. Wages and benefits consume about 55% of the organization's total income.

Benefits offered to full-time workers include vacation and sick leave, a group health plan with dental insurance, and a retirement plan.

Some needed changes to Damascus Way's wage and salary policy include increasing wages to more competitive rates in order to better recruit and retain staff.

RECRUITMENT AND TRAINING

Workers are recruited within the local ministry network of related ministries from local churches, Bible schools, referrals, and word-of-mouth.

Qualifications for direct program staff (program director, supervision manager, and case manager) are listed as follows:

- Personal commitment to Christ and to a church body
- Four-year degree or equivalent in related experience
- A heart for men who have serious-offense histories and chemical issues and a good knowledge of the various issues these men face
- Good skills in organizing, communicating, writing reports, and informal counseling.

Initial staff training is required for new employees. The program director, supervision manager, case managers, shift supervisors, and house managers attend ongoing in-services, seminars, classes, and a minimum of 18 hours per year of Continuing Education Units.

Affiliations

Damascus Way is a service project of Greater Minnesota Association of Evangelicals (GMAE Ministries). Although Damascus Way is fully responsible for its own funding, GMAE Ministries provides accounting, administrative offices, and public awareness of Damascus Way's ministry.

GMAE Ministries began in the 1960s and is owned by member churches. It was started to facilitate certain ministries which individual churches could not handle on their own, such as prison chaplaincy, retreat centers, crisis pregnancy/adoption services, refugee resettlement, halfway house programs, and Christian counseling services.

Following is a list of Damascus Way's different affiliates.

MEMBERSHIPS	COOPERATING GROUPS	REFERENCES
<p>Damascus Way is a member of the following organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Christian Management Association (CMA) • Evangelical Council for Financial Accountability (ECFA) • Minnesota Community Corrections Association (MCCA) 	<p>Damascus Way is licensed by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Minnesota Department of Corrections as an Adult Correctional Facility, holding state contracts to supervise Work Release and Supervised Release clients • The City of Golden Valley and Hennepin County as a Level II Board and Lodge facility. <p>Damascus Way also works closely with (but is not a member of or formally connected to) the following organizations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prison Fellowship • Midwest Challenge. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GIRLIE BOYER 1707 Upton Ave. N Minneapolis, MN 55411 612-529-2016 • TOM DROBAC 1450 Energy Park Dr., Ste. 200 St. Paul, MN 55108 651-642-0350 • CRAIG FRUEN 2102 Chicago Ave. S Minneapolis, MN 55407 612-872-6951 • JEFF GAIR 317 2nd Ave. S, Ste. 200 Minneapolis, MN 55401 612-596-6951 • CHERI REGNER 525 Portland Ave. S Minneapolis, MN 55415 612-348-4103 • GARY LUNDEEN 8433 Yucca Lane N Maple Grove, MN 55369 952-494-3494 • DEAN MOONEY 7800 Golden Valley Rd. Golden Valley, MN 55427 763-924-2618 • WES NEIDERMEIER 2033 North Park Dr., Apt. 6 St. Paul, MN 55119 651-730-0653 • JOHN NEUMANN 525 Portland Ave. S Minneapolis, MN 55415 612-774-9084

History

The original vision of Damascus Way came from the ministry of the Greater Minnesota Association of Evangelicals Chaplain, Jim Roberts. In 1974, he saw a need for a transitional program to help ex-felons after their release from incarceration. Roberts saw men coming to Christ in prison, being released, and falling apart due to the lack of support and help with their reentry issues.

Along with Quint Alfors and the GMAE board, Roberts founded Damascus Way to help newly released men grow in Christ and get on their feet in society. Harvey Engamn became the volunteer director. Emmaus Lutheran Church gave the use of a home, and with the help of Mike Anderson, Jim Carlson, and Ron Sanford, who served as part-time counselors, the ministry began. This first facility had the capacity to serve three to four men at a time. Peter and Elaine Jenson became full-time, live-in house parents.

Following is a list of some of Damascus Way's key events.

YEAR	EVENT
1974	Incorporated as nonprofit organization.
1975	Moved into first facility – a Bloomington parsonage.
1978	Received \$50,000 gift toward purchase of Olson Hwy. facility in Golden Valley for main residential program building.
1979	Moved into Olson Hwy. facility.
1979	Hired Dick Harden as full-time director.
1980	Opened Work Program, a furniture refinishing business, to provide jobs.
1981	Purchased building at 905 W. Broadway in Minneapolis.
1988	First duplex donated at 810 30th Ave. N. in Minneapolis for staff housing.
1989	Work Program closed.
1989	First contract with the State of Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) for Work Releasees.
1990	Received contract with the State of Minnesota DOC for Supervised Releasees.
1992	Aftercare duplex opened on 2626 Dupont Ave. N. in Minneapolis.
1998	Mortgage on Olson Hwy. facility paid off.
1998	905 W. Broadway building sold in July.
1999	Upgraded main facility from 16- to 18-bed capacity.

Similar Organizations

Organizations with similar strategies and methods include the following:

- **Midwest Challenge**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, is a Christian halfway house program for men. It is similar in size and programming, but it is not licensed by the DOC to supervise parolees and work releasees.
- **180 Degrees Inc**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, is a DOC licensed program, but it is larger than Damascus and not Christian-oriented.
- **Reentry Services Inc.**, St. Paul, Minnesota, is a DOC licensed program, but it is larger than Damascus Way and not Christian-oriented.
- **Teen Challenge**, Minneapolis, Minnesota, runs a Christian program for teens with addictions. The organization is not licensed by DOC, and its men's program is longer-termed than Damascus Way.

Uniqueness

Damascus Way's program is unique in that it is

- The only Christian-oriented halfway house program in Minnesota – and possibly the whole Midwest – that is licensed by the Department of Corrections for men on Supervised Release and Work Release.
- Relatively small in size, allowing for a smaller staff-to-client ratio and a more personal atmosphere.
- Ideally located in a nonresidential, suburban area offering more safety to the men in the program who are trying to break free from inner-city “street life.”
- Flexible to work with clients from a number of backgrounds and situations, both legally mandated and voluntary; able to adapt the program to meet individual needs as well as various legal conditions or requirements.

Offices and Facilities

Damascus Way operates out of the following three physical facilities:

- **ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE.** Rented space located at 1515 E 66th St. in Richfield, Minnesota. Used by executive director and the administrative secretary for executive functions of Damascus Way and keeping accounting/bookkeeping records.
- **MAIN RESIDENTIAL FACILITY.** 4,000 square feet of owned space located at 5730 Olson Memorial Hwy in Golden Valley, Minnesota. Consists of an 18-bed residential facility for men exiting correctional facilities (prison, jail, workhouse). Used for Christian programming to assist in the reentry to society.
- **AFTERCARE FACILITY – MINNEAPOLIS, MN.** 3,300 square feet of owned space located at 2626-28 Dupont Ave. N. in Minneapolis, Minnesota. Consists of six rental rooms with shared kitchen and living areas for graduates of the main residential program who need or desire transitional housing.

Communications

Damascus Way's web address is www.damascusway.com.

An online version of this report is available in Damascus Way's Information Center at www.damascusway.net. This site complements Damascus Way's web site and is designed specifically to meet the needs of a donor audience.

FINANCES

Operating Statement

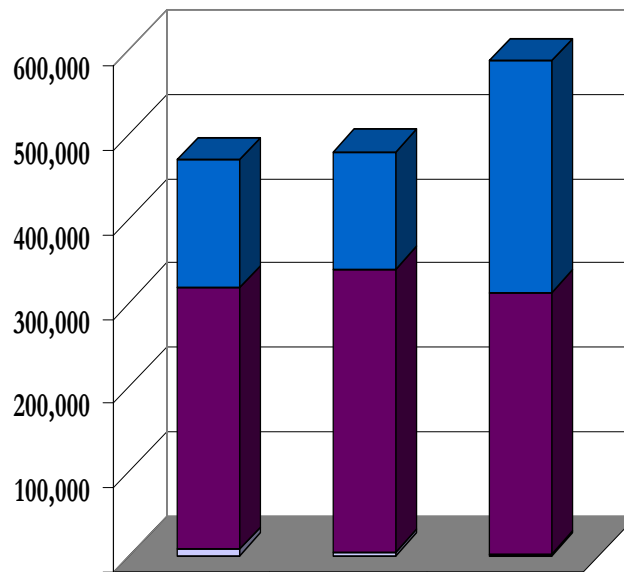
Total revenue received by Damascus Way in 2003 was \$586,000. Approximately \$274,000 was received as contributions from donors, and the balance was received from fees for services. Damascus Way's largest expenditures are wages and benefits (57% of total expenditure), equipment rental and maintenance (7%), and occupancy (7%).

TOTAL REVENUE

As reported on
Federal 990 tax
returns

2003 is last year provided
to SF Foundation

Rounded to nearest
thousand dollars



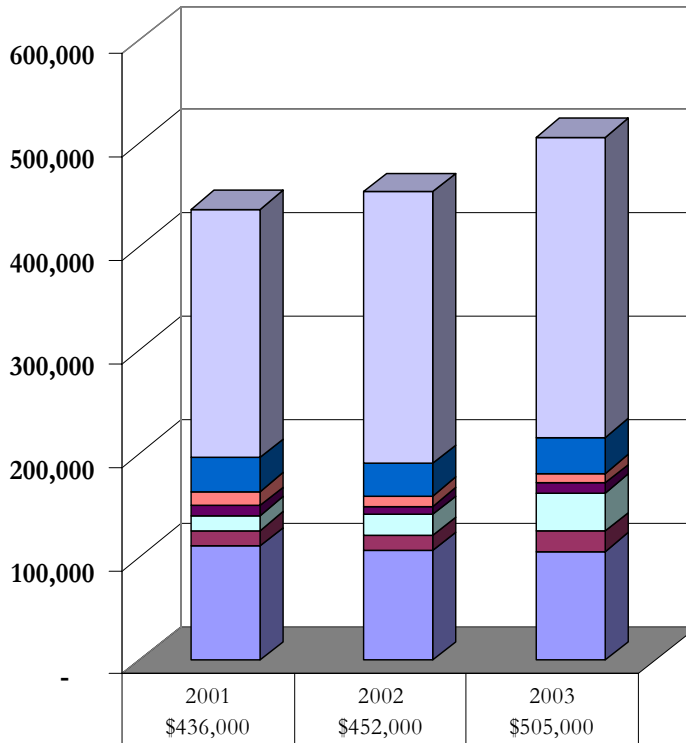
	2001	2002	2003
	\$469,000	\$478,000	\$586,000
■ Contributions	151,000	139,000	274,000
■ [No government grants]	-	-	-
■ Fees for services	310,000	335,000	310,000
■ [No special event income]	-	-	-
■ [No membership fees]	-	-	-
■ [No investment income]	-	-	-
■ [No inventory/assets sold]	-	-	-
■ Other revenue	8,000	4,000	2,000

TOTAL EXPENSES

As reported on Federal 990 tax returns

2003 is last year provided to SF Foundation

Rounded to nearest thousand dollars

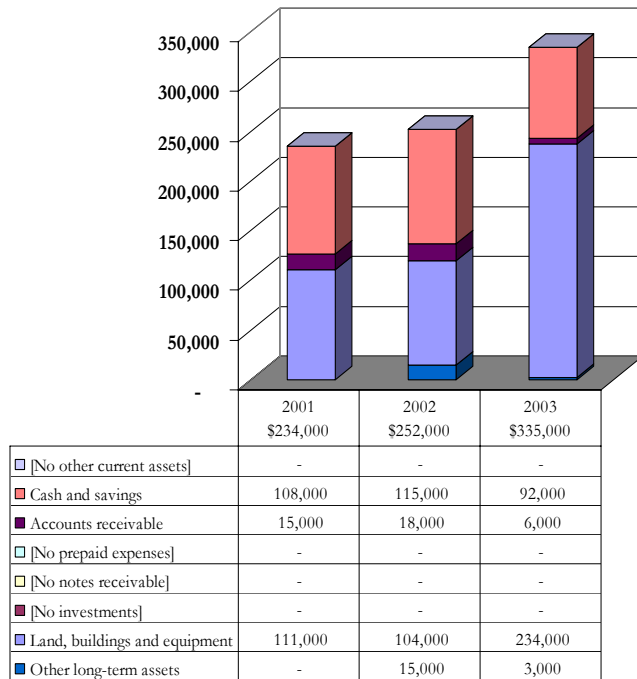


	2001	2002	2003
Wages and benefits	240,000	262,000	290,000
Occupancy	33,000	31,000	35,000
Printing, postage and shipping	14,000	10,000	10,000
Travel, conf and meetings	9,000	8,000	9,000
Equip rental and maint	15,000	20,000	37,000
[No interest expense]	-	-	-
Depreciation	15,000	15,000	19,000
All other expenses	110,000	106,000	105,000
[No grants given]	-	-	-

All figures in this section were extracted by SF Foundation from an analysis of federal Form 990 tax returns filed with the IRS by Damascus Way to certify its tax-exempt status.

Balance Sheet

Damascus Way has about \$335,000 in assets and approximately \$25,000 in liabilities.



TOTAL ASSETS

As reported on Federal 990 tax returns

2003 is last year provided to SF Foundation

Rounded to nearest thousand dollars

TOTAL LIABILITIES

As with the Operating Statement, all figures in this section were extracted by SF Foundation from an analysis of federal Form 990 tax returns filed with the IRS by Damascus Way to certify its tax-exempt status.



Operating Ratios

All basic operating ratios are a reflection of Damascus Way's current financial state. They are useful for trend comparisons with other time periods and other organizations.

RATIO	2003	DESCRIPTION
PROGRAM SERVICES RATIO	83%	Expenditures on programs as a percentage of total expenses, a measure of how much goes directly to fund the mission of the organization (the balance is overhead).
UNRESTRICTED ASSETS RATIO	96%	Percentage of net assets that have not been restricted by donor designation for a particular use or project, a measure of flexibility.
EARNED INCOME RATIO	53%	Percentage of revenue derived from investments, fees, and sales of goods and services, a measure of dependence on donors.
CURRENT RATIO	3.93	Current assets divided by current liabilities, expressed as a ratio, a measure of ability to weather short-term stress.
DEBT RATIO	0%	Long-term debt (excludes current liabilities) as a percentage of long-term assets (excludes current assets), a measure of ability to weather long-term stress.

The above ratios were calculated from the organization's 2003 form 990.

Funding Methods

Damascus Way raises funds in the following ways, with percentages indicating approximate proportion of total funds raised:

- Program fees and room and board charges (64%)
- Monthly newsletter and mailing (20%)
- Personal calls and visits ()
- Annual banquet ().

Donors

In fiscal year 2003, Damascus Way received approximately \$274,000 in donor income. Donor income excludes sale of goods and services, investment income, and sale of assets. Donor income accounts for 47% of total income. Remaining funds are gained through room and board fees (subsidized by state and county housing allowances) and programming fees.

Donor income was received from a donor base consisting of the following:

- Individuals donated a total of \$110,616 (80% of donated income)
- Churches donated a total of \$15,746 (11% of donated income)
- Foundations, trusts, corporations, governments and other sources donated a total of \$12,638 (9% of donated income).

THE FUTURE

SWOT Analysis

Here is a detailed explanation of Damascus Way's SWOT Analysis.

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>CHRIST-CENTERED. Damascus Way offers a spiritual alternative for men from Christian backgrounds or men seeking to discover God. The program offers a caring atmosphere to encourage change in the lives of clients.</p> <p>FAITHFUL DONORS. Damascus Way has a stable donor base, many of whom have been faithfully contributing to the ministry for 25 years.</p> <p>LEADERSHIP STRENGTH. Damascus Way's executive director and program director are well-educated, with several years of ministry/management experience.</p>	<p>CHURCH INVOLVEMENT. Evangelical churches and leaders typically unwilling to invest considerable time, energy, and money. <i>ACTION:</i> Develop plan to increase the number of churches and organizations committed to Damascus Way's needs.</p> <p>STAFF TURNOVER. Historically, staff turnover has been a problem due to a high level of work-related stress and noncompetitive pay scales. <i>ACTION:</i> Seek to increase wages to a competitive rate. Improve staff morale through better training around issues like burnout and stress.</p>	<p>DEMAND FOR BEDS. Damascus Way's program consistently operates at maximum capacity with a waiting list. This high demand creates the need for additional beds and expansion of the facility.</p> <p>NEW CLIENT STREAMS. Damascus Way's program is becoming known to more people within the correctional system in the metro area and statewide, resulting in increased referrals from new sources other than the DOC. Damascus Way is currently negotiating a relationship with Hennepin County's Extended Jurisdiction Juvenile (EJJ) program. <i>ACTION:</i> Cultivate new referral sources; strategize for where the need will be for future programming.</p>	<p>NEW STATE FACILITIES. Due to current lack of halfway house beds, the state of Minnesota is considering building its own transitional facilities. This could reduce or eliminate the need for programs such as Damascus Way for DOC use. <i>ACTION:</i> Follow these developments closely and have a contingency plan in place including the possibility of phasing out of DOC clients as non-DOC sources are recruited.</p>

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES	OPPORTUNITIES	THREATS
<p>COMMITTED STAFF. Current front-line staff has degrees in clinical social work, chemical dependency counseling, and pastoral training.</p> <p>LOCATION. Main residential program is ideally located in a nonresidential, suburban area, offering clients distance and refuge from the inner-city dynamics that could pull them back into old patterns.</p>	<p>RELATIONSHIP WITH GMAE MINISTRIES. Overall identity of Damascus Way is often convoluted by a lack of full understanding of Damascus Way’s relationship with its umbrella organization. <i>ACTION:</i> Create a stronger sense of alliance and ownership between the parts and the whole.</p> <p>DEVELOPMENT BASE. Damascus Way has some surplus capital with virtually no endowment base. <i>ACTION:</i> Generate specific development plans. Develop marketing plan for transferring ownership of vision to younger generation.</p>	<p>NEW FACILITY. A large corporation neighboring Damascus Way’s current facility is interested in a deal in which they could obtain Damascus Way’s land in exchange for a nearby lot and a foundation grant of several hundred thousand dollars to build a new facility. <i>ACTION:</i> Damascus Way is in ongoing negotiations regarding this plan.</p>	<p>COMMUNITY ATTITUDES. Damascus Way envisions that its surrounding community will be against expansion of its facility. This factor could result in public relational issues and negative exposure. <i>ACTION:</i> Plan a strategy for addressing concerns of community members, including “open house” gatherings to answer program questions.</p> <p>CHRISTIAN ORIENTATION. Attitudes toward faith-based programs may change, losing Damascus Way referrals, contracts or licenses. There may be pressure to lessen the Christian emphasis of the program. <i>ACTION:</i> Continue to cultivate good relationships with the state counties; develop contingency plan and alternate client streams.</p>

Vision for the Future

Damascus Way is built on the need for a Christian-oriented alternative in the community corrections arena. The organization's short-term vision includes the following:

- Defining and distinguishing the role of staffing positions, especially between case managers and shift supervisors. Role clarification of staff will result in more specialized focus and greater efficiency of workers.
- Developing and improving staff training through increased in-service training and scholarships for continuing education.
- Recruiting more volunteers and interns.
- Developing a fundraising program and receiving additional financial support from more foundations and corporations.

Damascus Way's long-term vision for the future includes development of a comprehensive aftercare program and quality transitional housing for graduates of the program.

Top Priorities

Top priorities for Damascus Way include reaching the next generation of donors, planning for future leadership, training staff, and improving recruitment efforts.

Following is a detailed list of Damascus Way's top priorities:

1. **NEXT GENERATION OF DONORS** – Current donors are at retirement age.
ACTION: Develop a plan to reach the next generation of donors.
2. **FUTURE LEADERSHIP** – Plan for future leadership to next generation.
ACTION: Recruit proactive board of managers and a director sensitive to people, change, and growth.
3. **STAFF TRAINING** – Training for new staff and ongoing staff development.
ACTION: Develop and improve initial and ongoing staff training methods.
4. **EFFECTIVE RECRUITING** – More effective staff and intern recruiting and training system.
ACTION: Develop an effective staff/intern/volunteer recruiting system. Develop a policy and procedures manual with clear personnel guidelines, written job descriptions, pay scales, working hours, and benefits.
5. **FACILITY UPGRADE** – Expand and upgrade current facility or build/purchase another facility to increase bed, office, and programming space and to create a more efficient and therapeutic environment for clients and staff.
ACTION: Continue consultation with architects and realtors regarding options; continue negotiations with Tennant Corp. regarding foundation money; begin fundraising campaign.
6. **DEVELOP PLANNED GIVING** – Develop a comprehensive planned giving program to broaden support base.
ACTION: Begin talks with development person.

- 7. PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT** – Develop and improve the programming and services offered to clients.
ACTION: Develop improved employment assistance and job pool; develop a discipleship program and spiritual retreats; offer in-house spiritual 12-step group.
- 8. ENDOWMENT FUND** – Establish endowment fund to support management operations.
ACTION: Continue consultations with financiers.
- 9. CHURCH INVOLVEMENT** – Increase involvement of local churches by means of finances, volunteers, prayer, etc.
ACTION: Develop a plan to raise Damascus Way’s visibility within the evangelical community and offer tangible avenues of involvement.
- 10. NEW REFERRALS** – Continue to cultivate and pursue new referral sources for clients to ensure stable client population in spite of possible changes in current client streams.
ACTION: Meet with Expanded Jurisdiction.

SPECIAL NEEDS

Projects in Need of Funding

EXPANSION PLAN

Within the next two years, Damascus Way plans to double bed capacity either by building a new facility, adding on to the current facility, or acquiring an existing facility.

COST: \$1,000,000

PROJECT STATUS: 10 percent complete. Currently developing plans for a capital campaign. Realtors are looking for alternative sites to buy or build.

THOROUGH PROGRAM EVALUATION

Within the next year, Damascus Way will design and implement a program evaluation study to assess program effectiveness, strengths, and weaknesses.

COST: N/A

PROJECT STATUS: 25 percent complete. In the early planning stages.

BOARD EXPANSION

The organization aims to increase the number of people on the board and recruit those with a variety of needed skills.

COST: N/A

PROJECT STATUS: 5 percent complete. In process.

FIVE-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

Within the next year, Damascus Way plans to develop a five-year, strategic plan that encompasses setting long- and short-term goals and objectives in the following areas: plant development/expansion, personnel development, program development, program evaluation, and fundraising.

COST: N/A

PROJECT STATUS: 50 percent complete. Held two planning retreats where staff began the first steps of strategic planning.

BROADEN FUNDING AND CLIENT STREAMS

Damascus Way is pursuing a contract with Hennepin County for their Extended Jurisdiction Juvenile (EJJ) clients.

COST: N/A

PROJECT STATUS: 50 percent complete. A meeting with the Hennepin County EJJ team was held and negotiations are being conducted. Awaiting final application process.

How to Give

To give to DAMASCUS WAY, send checks to

Damascus Way Reentry Center Inc.,
1515 East 66th Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55423.

About this report . . .

This report is a printed copy of the information found in Damascus Way's Information Center. It was written and published by SF Foundation's team of writers and editors.

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