



May 5, 2023

Hello, KARM friend!

You may have seen the recent TV news coverage about KARM's efforts to purchase property in New Market (Jefferson County), TN, to house the long-term men's residential restoration program we are planning. If I were you, this news would have raised a few questions about **WHY** we are pursuing property and **WHAT** we plan to do there. So, I want to provide you with answers to those questions.

WHY is KARM looking to purchase property for a long-term men's residential restoration program?

First, THE PROBLEM: At KARM, we believe addiction is the new pandemic. Recently, I was speaking to a group of more than 100 men and women, and I asked them to raise their hand if they or someone they know has been impacted by addiction. Every person in the room raised a hand!

In Knox County alone, 42 men and women died of an overdose last month (April). In 2021, the Tennessee Department of Health reported that East Tennessee had 42% of all overdose deaths in our state! ("*2021 Tennessee Drug Overdose Deaths*") And, every day, KARM's Outreach, Frontline and Security teams bear witness to this crisis when they are asked to administer Narcan to men and women who have overdosed.

At KARM, we believe our God-given mission is to "restore lives in Jesus' name." We believe we cannot sit on the sidelines while addiction is killing so many men and women...and destroying so many families. As our leadership team and Board of Directors have prayed about and developed a vision for KARM's next 10 years, we believe God is leading us to attack the addiction crisis head-on.

A REAL SOLUTION: As you know, for women wanting to break free from addiction, domestic violence and homelessness, KARM offers its long-term, residential Serenity Ministries program at a separate campus in East Knoxville. Over its 38-year history, God has used Serenity Ministries to help restore the lives of thousands of women. Its neighbors say Serenity is a welcomed part of the community, and they "stand ready to continue [their] relationship and support [Serenity] for the benefit of East Knoxville."

Sadly, we've not been able to offer men anything comparable to Serenity. Of course, we've tried to offer them programs at our 418 North Broadway campus. But, because almost any illegal drug is available within a block or two of this campus, it is not a desirable location. (One tenet of recovery is, "*Change your playground; change your playmates.*")

We need to offer men a place away from immediate temptations of the city—where they can breathe, heal, confront past traumas and the "whys" of their addiction, and take

steps toward healing and restoration. As part of our planning, we have visited a number of successful, faith-based programs for men that are located in rural settings.

WHY is KARM pursuing the property in New Market?

After looking at several sites, we learned about River Glen (the New Market property). It checked all our boxes, and God seemed to open one door after another as we prayed over each step.

Then, a few weeks ago, New Market community members began expressing concerns. So, on April 18, Todd Gilbert, KARM's Chief Operating Officer, and I traveled to Nance's Grove Baptist Church, where we presented our potential plans and held an almost 4-hour question-and-answer session for about 75 community members.

On Tuesday, April 25, we were to appear before the Jefferson County Planning Commission about our plans. However, late that afternoon, Jefferson County's attorney requested we delay our presentation until Tuesday, May 23. We agreed to his request.

WHAT does KARM plan to accomplish in its men's residential restoration program?

Bottom line, we plan for it to be used by God to help men break the chains of addiction and to help them heal and be restored. Here is a bit more about our vision:

- *It will provide men willing to commit to a 12-to-18-month work-learn-serve program with a strong support system designed to restore them back to God, family, themselves, and their community.*
- *It will be structured like our successful women's program, Serenity Ministries.*
- *It will be staffed 24/7/365 with trained, experienced KARM employees.*
- *It will offer time-proven programming, curriculum and classes that have been successfully used in faith-based programs around the country.*
- *All men entering the program must complete a rigorous application process that includes: multiple interviews; mental and emotional assessments; and thorough background screenings.*
- *No sex offenders will be accepted into this program.*
- ***It is important to understand that this program will NOT be a clinically-based social or medical detox program for active drug addicts. Individuals who need such services will be referred to other agencies.***

If you have additional questions, please send them to info@karm.org and we will be happy to answer them. On behalf of KARM's entire team, I ask you to pray for God's guidance, protection and will as we pursue His calling.

Gratefully,



Danita McCartney
President & Chief Executive Officer