

# Ceremony honors graduates of Pathways for Change

## Ceremony marks end of addicts' recovery program

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Two years ago, if Max Hartman had been told he would kick his prescription drug addiction, he would not have believed it.

But on Saturday, he became a proud graduate of Pathways for Change, a faith-based, court-ordered addiction recovery program.

"I'm ecstatic," said Hartman, who became addicted to prescription pills when he was 13 years old. "I never thought I would have made it, to be honest. I'm still in a state of shock."

On Saturday, about 25 young men moved a step closer to completing the program. And having completed a year of treatment, Hartman and two others graduated.

A graduation ceremony was held at My Father's Vineyard Church.

The ceremony included a speech by Mark Whitacre, whom Matt Damon portrayed in the film "The Informant!"

In the early 1990s, Whitacre was an executive at Archer Daniels Midland, an Illinois-based agribusiness conglomerate. He told the FBI that ADM executives were involved in a price-fixing conspiracy, and he was recruited to be an informant.

While Whitacre was informing for the FBI for more than three years, he also was embezzling \$9.5 million from ADM. He was convicted of tax evasion and fraud and served eight years and eight months in prison.

His family followed him to Pensacola when he was sent to the federal prison camp at Saufley Field. After his release, he and his wife, Ginger, stayed in Pensacola.

Whitacre told the Pathways clients he was proud of them for making a huge step forward in their lives.

"They made the decision to be better instead of bitter," he said. "I urge the audience to give these ex-offenders a second chance, just like I have been given."

After certificates were awarded to clients who moved up a "phase," the three graduates gave testimonials.

"Pathways for Change saved me," 27-year-old graduate Eddie Stabler said, fighting tears. "This was the hardest and most fun and interesting thing I've done in my life."

Terrill Crenshaw, 18, said he did not want to be in the program at first because he was not addicted to drugs or alcohol.

"I was addicted to robbing," he said. "But I'm finishing up my GED and about to start college. Today, I have all I need — my family and my life back."