

APWA Column 9: Real Vida TV Visits the Boyd Unit

By: Joey Dauben/The Ellis County Observer

Real Vida TV (RealVidaTV.com) is the most popular prison ministry on our Securus tablets, and it's not solely because Jeremy, Eve, Chris, Carl, Andy and Sam and Ada! do shout-outs to men and women and various units' ministry teams on air.

They're literally our voice on the outside who just happen to broadcast to us inside through the Pando religious app that is available on all the SecurusTech.net tablets and reaching - as of this column in April 2024 - 49 states.

Real Vida TV is part-crusade, part-concert but fully a cultural movement within the units they visit (not just in Texas, where they are based, but soon, Florida and other states) because there are bona-fide statistical (and visual) examples of the power of the Gospel and social media changing the behaviors of men and women inside.

Jeremy, Eve, Chris and Sam, as well as special Christian artists the Band Reeves, visited the Boyd Unit on Saturday, April 13, 2024, with rumors that they will make another trip to Teague, Texas later this year and possibly keep the Boyd Unit as a permanent stop. The more visits the merrier, because after 300-plus in our gymnasium, men had to be turned away (fire codes and such.)

Video of the event should be online by the time this column hits the information superhighway, but photos can be found at Real Vida TV's Facebook page.

It's a lot harder to write and describe than it is to watch the video or be there in person, but this cultural moment doesn't cost a dime for taxpayers. If anything, Real Vida TV and the wardens and staff that welcome them should be thanked for doing what taxpayers have been paying for hundreds of years to do: turn knuckleheads into productive, taxpaying members of society.

And if readers haven't experienced a Band Reeves show, or at least listened to their two massive hits (prison hits, at least, because all of their songs are really, really good) called "Come Rest" and "Man on Monday," y'all are missing out.

Not to be outdone, but the Boyd Unit has a ministry team (I call it an apparatus) of 80 dedicated, skilled and talented men who set up the sound, the chairs, the hospitality areas, the evangelism outreach efforts (of which yours truly is a proud member of!) and countless other departments that go in making sure we have successful events and services.

While Real Vida TV packed the crowds on April 13, my biggest joy was seeing the musicians and dancers that I annoy constantly doing their talent on live TV.

It reminds me of what I used to do in the free world when I wasn't raising holy hell against state and local government officials: covering local bands, shows, putting on shows, promoting shows, interviewing musicians, attending shows with press credentials and basically just being an awestruck fan. I haven't changed, as anyone in our Choir, Praise Band and Choreography troupe can attest. We also have a solid core rap team that puts the Christian (Biblical, really) message in verse-rhyme-beat form.

To be able to showcase our unit's talent to 49 other states is pretty unreal. Real Vida TV has ignited a cultural force that will only keep getting better unit-by-unit when real evidence of real changed lives keep getting filmed and documented.

Just to be an observer on the wall of this unfolding prophetic event is pretty amazing.

Now if we can only get air conditioning...