

Prisons Committee Report- Cherry Hill November 2024

Purpose

To provide telephone, email, "snail mail," and an in-person resource (as feasible) to the trustees or their designees for the purpose of assisting when a prisoner or institutional staff member is requesting to start an "inside" meeting, or an intergroup and its committee are outreaching to prisons, jails, etc. Also, to compile in the ISO office an unpublished JIP meeting directory as a much-needed resource for federal, state, and local judges, defense attorneys, prosecutors, probation and parole officers, and clinicians.

Update on Shakopee, MN (Lino Lakes) meeting.

Have been receiving updates from Tom S. who is heading up this endeavor. Ran into a lot of bureaucratic molasses as working with any bureau of prisons is wont to do. As of 10/8/2024, A pilot meeting WILL be starting once a month on Wednesday afternoon.

New meeting projects

Currently there are none active except Lino Lakes. One "we need a meeting in this prison" letter was sent from Connecticut, but follow-up contact was not attained following emailing this person the steps that need to happen to accomplish this goal. Questions about details was never replied to.

Outreach Reports

Two requests were received at ISO. One directly from a prisoner (sent info) but not a letter from me due to circumstances not material to report. The other was an outreach request from an AA sponsor on behalf of his sponsee who is serving time in Arizona. Two committee members eagerly stepped up to continue the dialog and follow-up.

Target Marketing Observations

Over the past two years, I have observed certain conditions that maximize chances of success in prisons, with prison meetings specifically.

- ✓ The best chances of success are in LEVEL II prisons. Security restrictions are lenient enough and the prisoners have enough time remaining on their sentence to benefit and have an interest.
- ✓ Meetings cannot be successfully run by prisoners without administrative cooperation. Prison Starter kits sent to anyone OTHER THAN a prison staff member frequently are misdirected or misused for other than their intended purpose.
- ✓ A personal letter as a follow-up to an information request is important, but knowledge of the background of the prisoner helps set boundaries. (a prisoner being paroled for a non-violent crime soon will get a different letter than a prisoner with decades left on their sentence, for example.
- ✓ Network, network, network. The mental health and addiction community is very tight knit and intellectually curious. While primarily used for PR and education, the

resultant contacts made opens a lot of doors in the workings of correctional facilities.

- ✓ Lastly, assess each request individually. London is a huge success because a motivated prisoner kept on the administration and kept advocating. Grafton to a lesser extent that, though meetings continue, they are admin driven. And Lino Lakes will become a success because the driver is a long time GA member who will ensure the request for help will succeed.