



Strafford County Department of Corrections

FAMILY NEWSLETTER

December 2007

Published by Strafford County Jail Industries



Dear Readers,

Together we celebrate two years of the newsletters. To the inmates I thank you for continued support. Without your efforts and articles there would be no newsletters. I am still looking for new ideas. I am very thankful for the Christmas comic strip as well as the special Christmas poem written to an inmate by her father. I can tell you that the recipient was very pleased Dad! It meant a lot to her.

I know for many this is a very difficult time of year. Because I too have lived this as a family member I truly do know what you are going through. I thank God for the support our family received during those tough times and hope the Family Reception Center and the newsletters and information available helps lower your stress to some degree.

I want you all to know that I am so proud of our facility. We are indeed the only facility in the state with a Family Reception Center. Families continue to share how appreciative they are. Many officers help donate items as well as solicit things for the center.

People continue to step forward to become volunteers for without volunteers the Center would not be possible. The warm friendly voices and smiles of the volunteers and officers do indeed make a difference to families.

As I have spoken nationally about the value of Family Reception Centers and the need for good communication between families and Corrections I have learned that many families within corrections have faced incarceration of a loved one as well.

In this Season as we wish one another Happy Holidays may Love, Hope, and Peace fill our hearts that we all play a role in the reality of this wish.

Sincerely,
Marilyn Allen – Family Reception Founder

Christmas Cards Sent to Iraqi Soldiers



Officer Britton had adopted 2 soldiers stationed in Iraq. She sends packages several times a year to these two soldiers. This year with the help of Officer Campbell and Officer Conway, a day was arranged for the female inmates in Unit J to make Holiday cards for the soldiers.

In the words of one female inmate, "While doing this project we felt good inside that we could actually do something for our troops. The cards were beautiful but most important is that they helped a soldier to smile on the Holidays".



Santa Greets Children

Santa took time from his busy schedule on Saturday December 15th to visit children and families at Strafford County Department of Corrections Family Reception Center. Santa passed out presents to the children of those incarcerated at the facility. Family pictures were taken to be given to the family member incarcerated.

The Family Reception Center is a welcoming Center for the families facing the difficult and stressful situation of having a loved one incarcerated. The Center provides snacks, information and assistance from area agencies as needed.

Volunteers are always needed at the Center. For more details please contact Marilyn Allen, Coordinator; at 603-749-3289 or e-mail at mallen@co.strafford.nh.us

Thanks to D.R. in Unit C for submitting this Christmas comic strip! Great job!



Life

by S.B.

You will only know
true happiness
If you've first experienced
true suffering...

Can you really appreciate
a warm sunny day,
if you've never experienced
a dreary, rainy day?

We are in the middle.
We are between
Heaven and Hell.

I know Pain.
I know Pleasure
I know Life

To My Children

by S.B.

If I had one wish
I would go back in time
I would do things differently
I would still be by your side

I would hug you and kiss you
A million times a day
I would tell you "I love you"
In every kind of way

I would show you how much
I really do care
I would never leave you.
I'd always be there.
If I had one wish
I would go back in time
I would always put you first
I would not be so selfish,
I would not make you hurt.

I would smile at you every morning.
I would tuck you in every night
I would make you giggle and laugh.
And when you cry- I'd be there to
hold you tight.

If I had one wish
I would go back in time
but I can't-----
I can only hope the future
will bring me another chance.

The Therapeutic Community

by S.B.

In phase one I dug real deep
To find the secrets my soul did keep
The work was hard, but I trudged on through
The counselors helped me, their direction true
I had some issues that needed repair
They coaxed me forward with strength and care
When they felt this initial step was done
They let me graduate from phase one

In phase two I went deeper still
Climbing up the Rocky Recovery Hill
We broke down resentments that were weighing on me
Looking for ways to set them free
It was not easy I strayed off track
But with some help I found my way back
I regained my focus, my faith-It Grew
And finally I made it out of phase two

In phase three the healing begins
With releasing resentments that I found within
My character defects were brought to light
I am attempting to turn my wrongs to rights
The program works, Its power is real
As days go on I can feel my soul heal
I thank you all and hope you know
That I will greatly miss you when I go

Thank You for helping my recovery begin

This was written for L.G. in Unit J by her Dad



Santa Comes To Visit

Is Santa coming to visit, with Rudolph in the lead?
Flying into J unit,
to see what you girls need.
Maybe he'll bring you presents,
or papers for your release
After all it's Christmas,
a time for joy and peace.

Untitled by S.B.

During the eight months which I have spent here at the Strafford County Jail, I have taken the time to read many self-help and inspirational books. In these books I have found many notable quotes, phrases, and useful information and copied them into my own personal notepads. In the words that follow, I have attempted to compile some of them, which are more pertinent to our situation as inmates, in a manner that might be beneficial to you. I found them to be very enlightening, hopefully you will too!

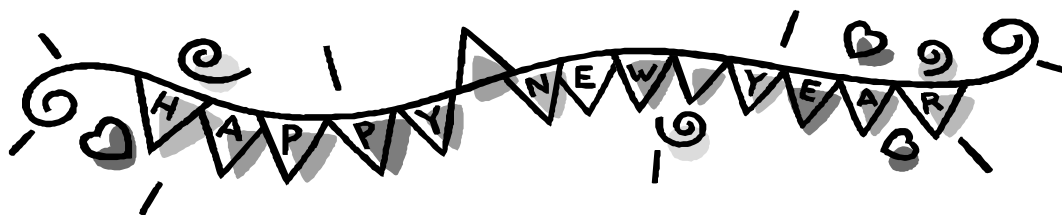
Being incarcerated does not need to be the end of the road for us. Instead, we should view it as the beginning of an interesting and productive life. One of the things that I have learned the hard way is that it doesn't pay to get discouraged, keeping busy and making optimism a way of life can restore your faith in yourself. There is no failure except in no longer trying. There is no defeat except from within. No really insurmountable barrier aside from our own inherent weakness of purpose. Success is just a state of mind. If you want success, start thinking of yourself as a success. Keep in mind however, success is never final, and failure is never fatal. It is your courage that counts. As Confucius put it, "a gem cannot be polished without friction, nor a man perfected without trial".

Trials, temptations, and disappointments- all of these are helps instead of hindrances, if you use them appropriately. They not only test the fiber of one's character, but also strengthen it. Every trial endured and weathered in the right spirit makes a soul nobler and stronger than it was before. The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but during times of challenge and controversy.

Take the first step in faith. You don't need to see the whole staircase, just take the first step. Each and every step up begins with a step from below. The relative degree of success depends upon the motion and character of the person doing the stepping. You can choose to sit in perpetual sadness, immobilized by the gravity of your loss, or you can choose to rise from the pain, and treasure the most precious gift you have- life itself. You can't change the many years of yesterday, but you can do something about your tomorrow. Guilt and shame are not meant to be felt long-term only enough to jump-start change. They not only decrease our negative behaviors, they almost guarantee their repetition.

You have to understand, life is a process of making mistakes, learning from them, and then using this new knowledge to make wiser choices that determine our fate. For every obstacle, there is a solution over, under, around, or through. I believe that life isn't about finding yourself, it is about creating yourself. Abraham Lincoln once said, "people are as happy as they make their minds up to be." Anyone can stumble upon a treasure inside!

Don't wait the time will never be "just right!"



"Every man should be born again on the first day of January. Start with a fresh page. Take up one hole more in the buckle if necessary, or let down one, according to circumstances; but on the first of January let every man gird himself once more, with his face to the front, and take no interest in the things that were and are past." ~Henry Ward Beecher