



Prison Outreach Ministry and the Welcome Home Reentry Program live the Gospel Mandate to serve men and women returning to their communities after incarceration. We seek to reduce recidivism, educate the community, and develop strong systems of support by matching returning individuals with compassionate volunteer mentors from communities of faith and civic organizations.

2008 Annual Report

Mending the Body of Christ

The Welcome Home Reentry Program is a healing ministry that requires hard work from both the mentor and mentee. The program's positive impact on society continues to multiply with every pairing of a trained mentor with a person in need! Here are just a few examples of the fruits of our labors:

- A young mentee thought no one outside of his cultural environment would ever take him seriously and walk beside him as an advocate and friend. Within a week of his release to a half-way house, his mentor made a call on his behalf to the local hospital where he soon found employment.
- Faced with the prospects of spending many nights in a shelter, one mentee was determined to find a viable place of her own. Her mentor helped raise her spirits and encouraged her house hunting search so she did not give up hope. With the support of her mentor and through much of her own hard work, she succeeded in finding stable housing in a safe and easily-accessible community.
- After being released to a shelter, a mentee attended class at the D.C. Central Kitchen to become a licensed chef. When he graduated from the program, he found a part-time job. He saved his money and moved into an apartment. His mentor, a Workforce Development Manager, helped him and his friends find employment. Recently, he shopped with his mentor who helped him make wise decisions about his apartment furnishings.

Developing Community Support

Throughout 2008, Fr. Michael Bryant, founder of Prison Outreach Ministry, Inc., spoke about the Welcome Home Reentry Program at 26 parishes in the Archdiocese. Father Bryant encouraged parishioners to give of their time, talent, and treasure by volunteering as a mentor or becoming a donor. The local community responded generously to the message; new mentors joined the team and donor membership increased from 600 to 3,000 members. Besides fueling rapid growth, the outpouring of community support conveyed a welcome message of affirmation to those who were once removed from society.

Appreciating Volunteer Mentors

The first Blessing of Mentors was held in November 2008. Trained mentors, mentees, volunteers, and supporters came together for a special Mass and ceremony celebrated by Bishop Holley at St. Matthew's Cathedral. The Bishop praised mentoring as a unique church ministry and blessed the volunteers as they began or renewed their commitment to mend the Body of Christ. Several mentees shared inspiring personal testimonies that moved many to tears, and reminding us all that the mentor-mentee relationship was based on profound respect and humility. The Blessing of Mentors was so successful that Prison Outreach Ministry plans to host the event annually to help nurture and grow the ministry.

Assembling Reentry Kits

In early December 2008, a team of volunteers prepared and distributed 1,000 reentry kits. Often, when someone has been released from prison, they leave with only the clothes with which they entered or a sweat suit given to them by the prison. Prison Outreach Ministry welcomes those newly released from prison with a reentry kit that contains a metrorail farecard, hygiene products, spiritual reading materials, a resource guide for emergency food, shelter and clothing, and more. The reentry kit represents a new beginning, so that no one begins their new life empty-handed. In 2009, we hope to double the number of reentry kits assembled to meet the growing numbers of men and women we are serving after incarceration.

Expanding Our Operations

In Washington DC: The ability to access services – like mandatory health assessments, follow-up health care, mental health screening, housing assistance, job training, and mentoring – oftentimes determines whether or not an individual will successfully reintegrate back into society. A partnership among Prison Outreach Ministry, Unity HealthCare, Inc., and Our Lady of Perpetual Help met this need by establishing a single point of contact for all of these services.

In Montgomery County: The National Association of Counties (NACo) recognized the Welcome Home Reentry Program housed at Montgomery County's Pre-Release Center as a national model of a successful collaboration between a faith-based organization and a correctional department. In 2008, more than 50 volunteer mentors were paired with 63 program residents at the Montgomery County Pre Release Center.

In Prince George's County: A partnership among Prince George's Department of Health, other county agencies, and Prison Outreach Ministry launched Adam's House, a center focused on the health and social service needs of individuals returning after incarceration. Mentoring relationships begin while men and women are still in custody at the Upper Marlboro Detention Center and continue after release through the services now available at Adam's House.

Financial Partnerships

Prison Outreach Ministry, Inc. enjoys a public-private partnership in each jurisdiction it serves. In Maryland,

we receive financial support from both Montgomery and Prince George's Counties. The Justice Administration Grant funds our work in the District of Columbia. These partnerships not only strengthen operations, but also give witness to the importance of our mission and the positive impact of our labor on the community at large.

Becoming a Part of Our Mission

For every mentor-mentee match, there is a story of struggle, but also one of support, faith, and hope. Thank you for enjoying a sampling of the success stories that are being written every day by our mentors and mentees. We invite you to become a part of our legacy! Please consider the gift of your time, talent, and/or treasure by becoming a mentor or a committee volunteer. Training and support is provided. The time you give is guaranteed to bring you the joy of knowing that you played an important role in someone else's life.

For more information on ways you can help our ministry, please call Dr. Patricia N. Marks, Executive Director at 301-448-7026.

An overview of Prison Outreach Ministry, Inc.'s 2008 financial statement



Copies of Prison Outreach Ministry, Inc.'s 2008 financial statements (IRS Form 990 and an independent auditor's report) are available by calling 301-448-7026.

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