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Working with Inmates

Work with the inmates by providing religious services in the form of Bible Studies, sometimes planned lessons, or crafts taught by the Chaplain and volunteers. Religious holidays of Christians, Jews, Muslims and other faiths are recognized by inmates or their religious contacts. One on one meeting to discuss spiritual growth, for prayer and general information regarding religious issues and questions is also provided. There is a noticeable difference in the attitude of many of the inmates to alter their lifestyles away from a career in crime. The real tests of effectiveness will be in how many inmates break the recidivism cycle and stay out of jail.

Working with the Community

Working with Pastors, Priests, Rabbi, Imams who may have members of their community in the jail is vital. It is the Chaplain's responsibility to verify and work with clergy whenever a request is made for a visit to an inmate. Churches in and outside the Greater Portland area and other organizations, are always willing to volunteer help in donating Rosaries and Crosses, Bibles or other religious materials for the staff and the inmates. The Maine Council of Churches and churches in general, continue to express interest in providing volunteers or how they can help. The Salvation Army in Portland come in every Christmas and provides socks for the inmates, other groups send Christmas cards and reading material.

Working with the Staff

The Chaplain relationship with the staff meets the needs of employees who are in need of spiritual counsel or just someone to talk to at stressful times. The relationship of Chaplain to staff is like that of a Pastor in that those officers who don't have a Pastor have a place to go for questions regarding personal and spiritual matters. The Chaplain also works in the community to express the work that Cumberland County Sheriff's Office staff do on a day to day basis. Churches are encouraged to pray for and support those in law enforcement, especially those in corrections who are not often seen in the public eye.

Working with Volunteers

Working with Volunteers offers many opportunities such as teaching a Bible study course to some basic work with arts and crafts. The volunteers vary due to the Ecumenical outreach of the Religious program at the jail. Training classes are required for all volunteers before they are allowed to work with inmates. This training offers an excellent road map for dealing with the challenges faced while working with inmates.

