

## Who is AHH?

The Alderson Hospitality House supports the women of the Federal Prison Camp Alderson and their families and friends. We believe in the importance of visitors during incarceration. Our volunteers and staff, through donations, demonstrate this belief by providing temporary lodging, meals, transportation assistance, information and support.

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Paul Loos	William Strange
Kim Shrewsberry	Richard Lohmeyer
Maria Madariaga	Miles Thomson
Lynda Neff	Sam Kasley
Luther Crouthamel	Adrienne Biesemeyer
Gloria Martin	

## AHH STAFF

Kathleen DeRouen, co-director  
 Brian DeRouen, co-director  
 Julia Means, staff  
 Kayla Wiser, volunteer staff

## FLIGHT INFORMATION



### Raleigh County Memorial

Beckley, WV  
[www.flybeckley.com](http://www.flybeckley.com)  
**Greenbrier Valley**  
 Lewisburg, WV  
[www.gvairport.com](http://www.gvairport.com)

## AMTRAK INFORMATION



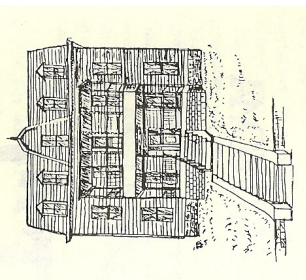
[www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com)

Amtrak stops in Alderson, WV  
**ONLY** Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays  
**From Chicago, eastbound: Train #50**  
**From New York, westbound: Train #51**

Non-Profit Org.  
 Permit No. 579  
 Alderson, WV  
 24910

If you would like to be added or removed, please contact us!

**ALDERSON HOSPITALITY HOUSE**  
 203 High Street  
 PO Box 579  
 Alderson, WV 24910  
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[www.aldersonhospitalityhouse.org](http://www.aldersonhospitalityhouse.org)  
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ALDERSON HOSPITALITY HOUSE



VOLUME 38, ISSUE 1

FEBRUARY 2015

## HOME

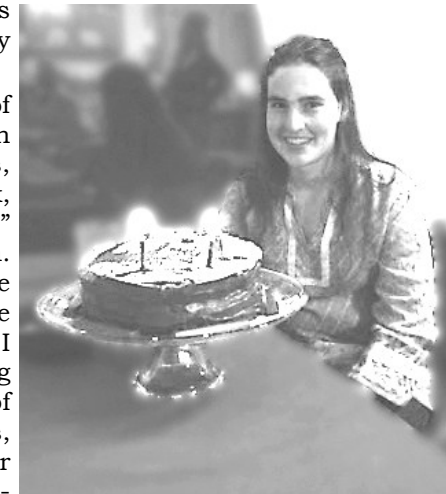
By KAYLA WISER

While making a guest's reservation on the computer, I look over at the calendar. Wow! It's half way through February, and I've been here over 4 months already. I think back to my arrival on October the 8<sup>th</sup>.

After the complete blur of a 15 hour train ride down from New York, there I was, stumbling off the Amtrak, onto the unpaved "platform" of the Alderson train station. I could hear Brian's voice long before I stepped off the train, and the first thing I noticed about my welcoming committee was that two of them appeared to be dogs, running around on their hind legs. I was quickly introduced to my new co-workers, family, and friends: Brian, Kathleen, Julia, Micah, and Vitale. After one evening, I had already experienced the good food, humor, and outgoing nature of all, including the somewhat rough affection of the little boys, who by now had "de-dogged."

Over the next weeks, I started settling in

and learning the ropes, for example, mastering the proper way to make a bed and getting a handle on the recycling system. Obviously, adjusting to any new situations has challenges, and I encountered my first big obstacle within three weeks of my arrival. This



was preparing for and participating in the annual haunted house fundraiser. I'll be honest- I am a wimp when it comes to spooky stuff, and even seeing the props and masks gave me nightmares, so to experience the house transformed into a haunted hospital almost drove me to catch the Amtrak back up North. Well, I survived that, and it was not long before I felt like I had truly found a new home.

Over the next weeks and months, it only became more so. I now have my driver's license, can rock bed making, and know that I won't die if I have to prepare dinner by myself. I'm not sure I've mastered sorting the recycling, but luckily Julia is a patient teacher, willing to explain things to me twenty times over.

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## VISITATION MATTERS

By JULIA

At the Hospitality House, we welcome families at all different points in their journey of incarceration (dropping off, visiting, and picking up), but no matter how many Thanksgiving meals or birthday cakes we share, we are always happy to see people make their last reservation. Release is definitely worth celebrating but can also be an overwhelming experience. Social support and community engagement can help make re-entry successful, and research shows that visits during incarceration help, too. Recidivism, or the likelihood of individuals being re-incarcerated after their release, is very high in the United States. As of June 2014, the National Institute of Justice claims that about two-thirds (68%) of people were rearrested within three years of their release. This can be a daunting and disappointing statistic, but the good news is that recent research confirms that having visits during the time of incarceration can drastically lower chances of re-incarceration.

In a recent presentation at the Prisoner Visitation and Support Conference, Bill Bales, a professor at Florida State University, used his ongoing research to explain that visitation from family and friends can strongly reduce the risk of recidivism. Bales found that inmates that have visits are 31% less likely to be re-incarcerated than those that did not receive a visit, and that this becomes more prominent as the frequency of visits increases. Bales also found that the timing of visits is significant. Bales says that inmates who receive visits closer to their release date are less likely to recidivate than those who have visits only early in their sen-

tence. The overall takeaway from Bales' research is that visits from family and friends help people stay out of prison once they are released.

Much can be done to make inmate visits and the resulting positive connections easier to maintain. Most of the seemingly straightforward ways to make visitation more accessible are also the most systematically challenging: increasing available hours, simplifying the bureaucratic process, or placing people in prisons closer to home. Implementing programs that create better relationships is possibly a more achievable step in the right direction. FPC Alderson, whose visitation policy is already better than most, is now planning a week in March that offers special visitation for children to spend quality and independent time

with their mothers. Individuals, corporations, and government can support inmate visitations by coordinating with and encouraging organizations that also support increased visitation, such as AHH.

We love having a full house on a weekend because we know that means the women at FPC Alderson are getting visitors. Research shows that most incarcerated people will return to prison, but we know that these visits from family and friends are influential and valuable. Besides being able to better stay in touch with husbands, catch up with friends, and be a part of their children's lives, visits help the women secure a foundation for positive re-entry, so that when the time for pick-up arrives, we can send our families off from the Hospitality House with love and a hope of never returning. The many hellos that we have shared over the months and years finally leads to a final visit, and ultimately, a chance at a more positive re-entry. 🌟



<http://www.nij.gov/topics/corrections/recidivism/Pages/welcome.aspx>

## HOUSE NOTES CONTINUED

Christmas day. They were discuss-



ing how many Christmases they had spent with their wives and how hard this Christmas felt with their wives so far away and unreachable. "This is my first Christmas in 35 years without my wife," one older gentleman shared with us as tears welled in his eyes.

The camaraderie that develops among guests of the Hospitality House as a result of their shared struggle is a powerful thing. Recently, a great group of "regulars" has



developed; they text each other throughout the week, share stories and hardships, go out for dinner and drinks together while in Alderson. They all are grateful to AHH for bringing them together.

Though we have not had much snow until this week, this winter has still provided its fair share of struggles. The pipes in

most of the house froze, which led to a leaking pipe under the kitchen sink, and the heat is not working in one of the



bedrooms, so we are using a space heater now. The van is also struggling quite a bit. Since the cherry tree crashed down onto the van a few years ago during the derecho, the sliding doors do not work properly, and this winter

that issue has grown worse. The battery is also failing to hold a charge. Needless to say, we are currently searching for a new (or gently used) minivan.

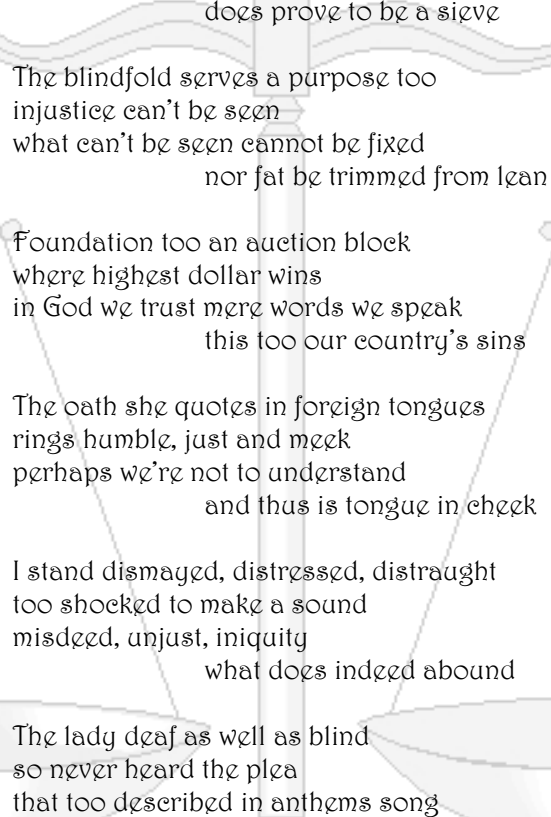
We are also making some improvements to the inside of the house. Julia has spent many hours de-cluttering and cleaning the office, while Kayla has been going bedroom to bedroom patching holes, filling cracks, and painting when necessary.

Kayla, who introduced herself on page one, joined us in October. She has been wonderful to have around. We have also added three new board members: Luther Crothamel, Sam Kasley, and Adrienne Biesemeyer. We are really excited to have such great people working to make this house a better place for everyone. 🌟

# POETRY CORNER

## Patriot Games

by Griffi, a federal inmate



I stand amazed, agast, appalled  
and now afraid to live  
the scale tipped in lady's hand  
does prove to be a sieve

The blindfold serves a purpose too  
injustice can't be seen  
what can't be seen cannot be fixed  
nor fat be trimmed from lean

Foundation too an auction block  
where highest dollar wins  
in God we trust mere words we speak  
this too our country's sins

The oath she quotes in foreign tongues  
rings humble, just and meek  
perhaps we're not to understand  
and thus is tongue in cheek

I stand dismayed, distressed, distraught  
too shocked to make a sound  
misdeed, unjust, iniquity  
what does indeed abound

The lady deaf as well as blind  
so never heard the plea  
that too described in anthems song  
from sea to shining sea

Crushed beneath oppressions reins  
strangled by it's yoke  
the scale held in lady's hand  
that too a shameful joke.

Please share your artwork, thoughts and words of anguish, hope and joy. We'll consider any submissions for future publications, so please send us your stuff! 📧

## HOME CONTINUED

Sports is something I've gotten into since I got here, as relaxing in front of the TV is a perfect way to share an evening, post-cleanup, with our guests. This is really the first year I have ever paid any attention to pro football, but I really enjoyed learning; cheering my team, the Carolina Panthers, a few games into the playoffs; and finally watching the Super Bowl. I don't think I have seen the living room so crowded. It was such fun, that I have almost forgotten that the Patriots won.

What made the biggest impression on me right away, however, was the atmosphere of the house- one of family and camaraderie. Although a stranger myself, I did not feel like one. I especially remember the dinners that first weekend, the conversations with guests from all over, and how folks pitched in with cleanup afterward. It was, and of course still is, thrilling to meet so many new people, and gradually get to know them.

The holiday season was a special experi-



ence for me. Of course, it is typically a time to get together with family, but what our guests are experiencing is far from a comfortable family reunion. It's tough to be missing a loved one during Christmas, and for them, this is the only opportunity to see them; far from home, in the far from homey environment of the camp visitation room. So we did our best to provide a little of home and Christmas cheer to our guests during the holidays. Being far from home and family myself, it was great to have new friends and family, to share Christmas with. There were many lovely moments, creating gingerbread houses, sharing a spectacular Christmas dinner, and ringing in 2015, that I won't forget. So it has been, and continues to be a wonderful experience for me, living,

working, and experiencing life here as a member of the Alderson Hospitality House. 📧



## HOUSE NOTES BY KATHLEEN

The holidays are supposed to be the most wonderful time of the year. They are days set aside for family and friends, for gift giving and eating tasty food. At the Hospitality House, we strive to provide that sense of joy and peace to our guests, but there will always be the sadness of missing a loved one during the holidays.

This year was no different.



with the little ones, and decorated gingerbread houses. I found myself in conversation with a few gentlemen on

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## RECIPES FROM THE KITCHEN

## Sweet Potato Fries

Growing up, I always hated eating sweet potatoes. It wasn't until I moved to West Virginia that my eyes (and taste buds) were opened to how delicious these roots could be. These "fries" were made for me, and it was like a whole new world. Long gone was the pan of mush and gooey marshmallows of my past. These fries are a great combination of sweet and savory. I enjoy sweet potatoes so much now that I grew them in my garden last summer. They tasted even better then.

**2 large sweet potatoes**  
**2+ tablespoons olive oil**  
**2+ tablespoons soy sauce**  
**1 tablespoon chili powder**  
**2 teaspoons rosemary**

1. Preheat the oven to 425°
2. Cut the sweet potatoes into fry-size strips or 1" cubes
3. Mix the equal parts of olive oil and soy sauce
4. Toss the sweet potatoes in the oil/sauce mixture to coat. If there is not enough liquid to cover the potatoes, then add more mixture, always in equal parts. Add chili powder and mix into potatoes. (Fries may be prepared in advance and remain in this "marinating" state for up to a day, provided that they are fully coated in oil/sauce mixture)
5. Pour fries into a casserole dish, no more than 2 layers thick. Bake uncovered for 30 minutes. After 30 minutes, stir the fries and sprinkle rosemary evenly over fries. Bake for another 5-10 minutes or until cooked through.



Raise Money for AHH without spending a dime. Every time you search the internet using goodsearch, you raise can raise money for the Hospitality House. Go to [goodsearch.com](http://goodsearch.com) to find out more.

Will you be going to the PGA tour at the Greenbrier Resort this year? Check out the Badges for Charity when you purchase your badge to watch the tournament. 30% of your ticket can go to the Alderson Hospitality House.



Like Us on Facebook! You can follow us and keep up with what is going on at AHH throughout the year.

## CLIMBING THE STAIRS - THE ANNUAL FUND

If you have ever visited the Hospitality House, you will know that there are a lot of stairs to climb. Every day something is being hauled up those stairs: laundry, luggage, children, and sometimes even grandma and grandpa.

It takes a lot of work to climb those stairs, just as it will take a lot of work to reach our annual goal in 2015. Please help us to get to the top this year by contributing to our Annual Fund.

If everyone on this mailing list gave \$60 a year, we would surpass our goal of \$90,000. Some can give more and some can give less, but if everyone gives what they are able, we will conquer this staircase.

Please make all checks payable to **Alderson Hospitality House** or donate online at [www.aldersonhospitalityhouse.org](http://www.aldersonhospitalityhouse.org)

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

## WISH LIST

## Everyday Items

Coffee  
 Postage Stamps  
 Ink Pens  
 Dish Soap  
 Paper Towels  
 Toilet Paper  
 Laundry Detergent (for HE)  
 Hand Soap Refills  
 Light Bulbs  
 Fresh Produce  
 Pasta  
 Pasta Sauce  
 Lemonade/Iced Tea Mix  
 Kroger/IGA/Kmart Gift Cards

## Willing to spend a bit more?

Office Chairs  
 Extra Long Table Clothes  
 Coffee Table  
 Bath Towels to match the rooms

## For the big spenders out there:

New or gently used living room Chairs  
 Power Washer  
 Economy Car and/or Minivan

GOAL  
 \$90,000



FEBRUARY  
 \$7,056.81