

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

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Brian DeRouen, co-director

FLIGHT INFORMATION



Raleigh County Memorial

Beckley, WV
www.flybeckley.com
Greenbrier Valley
Lewisburg, WV
www.gvairport.com

AMTRAK INFORMATION

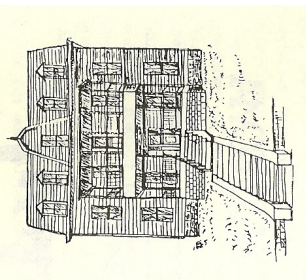


www.amtrak.com
Amtrak stops in Alderson, WV
ONLY Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays
From Chicago, eastbound: Train #50
From New York, westbound: Train #51

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

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

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ALDERSON HOSPITALITY HOUSE



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PVS VOLUNTEERS

By GLORIA MARTIN

It was a sunny and warm spring Sunday as I entered the Visitor's Center at the Alderson Federal Prison Camp. It took a few minutes to sign in as a PVS (Prison Visitation Service) volunteer and for the guard to summon the first inmate I would visit that day. I found an empty chair in the busy Visitors' room and sat down to wait for 'Mary' to come for a visit. Nearby, two small girls, about age 5 or 6, were eyeing each other. One was dressed like a princess, all pink, frills and curly hair; the other was more modestly dressed with curt pigtails but, like the first, had one eye on the door thru which the inmates come into the Visitor's Center. The 'frilly' girl walked up to the other and said, 'Are you waiting for your mom?' The second nodded a shy 'yes'. The first girl reached over and took the hand of the second little girl - and hand and hand, they stood there, waiting for the moment when a mom would come through the door. Two little girls, holding hands in a way that they cannot hold hands with even their best friends on the 'outside'; two little girls waiting for hugs and kisses from mothers they see only infrequently; two little girls



who probably don't fully understand what brings them to this place.

As a PVS volunteer, I often witness similar scenes - family members and friends visiting an inmate - hugs, laughter, tears - a whole range of emotions, much like we might experience in an airport or college campus or at a family reunion. The only difference, of

<http://www.prisonervisitation.org/>

course, is that one of the parties is an incarcerated woman. By prison standards, Alderson FPC might be considered a fairly OK place to serve out a sentence. However, the Camp is chronically overcrowded and when sentenced to a prison term, no matter the facility, the inmate loses many freedoms and privileges. Separation from friends and family, particularly children, is one of those lost privileges.

I first became interested in the women incarcerated at Alderson FPC when I worked at the Family Refuge Center, the local domestic violence and sexual assault program, in Lewisburg, WV. Early on, we were invited by the prison to come once or twice a year to present programs on the subjects of family violence and sexual abuse. Our presentations were well attended, and,

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Visiting the
Forgotten

PVS CONTINUED

to no one's surprise, many of the inmates that attended were survivors of abuse, either as children or adults. Many still suffered the effects and scars of living in abusive situations. After we left the prison, returning to our everyday work, we didn't have time to talk much about the women we met at Alderson. And no one in the broader community was much interested in their situations. After all, they had committed crimes and were serving sentences for those reasons. But I always left the Camp with a feeling that the inmates certainly had lots in common with the woman-on-the-street –



they had families, most had children, some were well educated, many had been employed. Some fretted about elderly parents and about children being raised by strangers. Almost all worried if they could ever return to a 'normal' life. Some told me that they had not seen family members for months, even years. Because Alderson FPC is a federal facility, women incarcerated there can come from all over the country. Many families cannot travel long distances to visit. Some families refuse to come and visit. It always nagged at me a bit that being in prison for several years and having no visitors surely was leaving yet another scar.

I was aware that there was a group that could visit at the prison but being super-busy when I worked, I never pursued it. As retirement approached I had a conversation with my friend, Willa Izzo, who was (and still is) a PVS volunteer. It didn't

(Continued on page 3)

MID-WEEK ALDERSON

By BRIAN

One of the questions we are often asked by guests is "What do you guys do in the middle of the week?" The answer to that is that we stay busy! We have ladies who are self surrendering and their families staying with us as well as families picking up their loved ones, but we also like to get out into the community of Alderson representing the Hospitality House. I run the Alderson Food Pantry and the Benevolence Project (helping people pay power bills, rent, water, etc.) for the Alderson Ministerial Association. I am also a part of the Alderson Green Team, which this past year started a recycling program here in town. Kathleen is on the



Alderson Planning Commission, and is a co-founder of the Alderson Community Garden. We both love our Alderson Philosophy/Theology Club, which meets at the House and the Alderson Bike Gang, which can be seen all over town having fun and getting exercise. Between these things and chasing Micah Henri around, there is rarely a dull moment! 🚲

HOUSE NOTES CONTINUED

and a wonderful meal shared with the extended family around our tables here at the house.

Christmas was another memorable holiday, when we were blessed with a lot of help. The girls from the Greenbrier Academy for Girls in Pence Springs helped decorate the house, which



is quite an undertaking. They did a great job! Then, on the same day, the women from Ascension Episcopal Church in Hinton showed up with almost 100 dozen cookies for our guests to enjoy during the holidays. January 14th marks the day I put out the last dozen cookies. Thanks ladies for all of your help!

On Christmas weekend the house was full of people. Many of the guests chopped vegetables, did dishes, stirred, and mixed to help out with Christmas Eve dinner. We had 55 people scattered throughout the living room, playroom, and kitchen enjoying their food and the company of everyone around them. It was great to see so many people together, sharing a meal and the spirit of the holidays. Although I'm sure they would

have rather been with their mom, wife, sister, daughter who is incarcerated at the camp; there certainly was the feeling of family around our tables.

With the help of The Greenbrier Resort and Loaves and Fishes Thrift Store in Hinton, Santa was able to provide the kids in the house with some great gifts on Christmas morning. (Thank you to Santa's helpers for wrapping the gifts.) We were also able to replace many of the broken toys in the playroom with some of their great donations. Now all the kids get to enjoy some new toys whether they were here for Christmas or not.

Brian and I love working here at the Hospitality House. We find joy on even the most challenging days. As I look back on the holidays and these last few months, I realize

we wouldn't be able to do all that we do without the help of so many people. Our friends, our board members, the local churches and community members, and the guests who stay here on the weekend really make this place special.

Soon we will be adding members to our home. We have recently hired a wonderful woman named Chrissy to join the life and work at this special house. She will be starting March 1st and will certainly be gracing the pages of future newsletters. About a month after Chrissy's arrival, we will be welcoming a second new community member. Brian, Micah, and I are happy to announce that, come April, there will be another baby in the house. Any guesses if it will be a boy or a girl? We like surprises, so we will be held in suspense with the rest of you. The next newsletter should bring lots of great news from the Hospitality House! 🎉



Stars Shine on Some

Is it true that I got to suffer to make it real?
That I got to try to be tougher because "time will heal"?
Maybe I got to kneel by the bed and ask the lord for help.
But is there any use trying to be somebody else?
I'm here by myself, always has been this way for me.
While the stars shine on some, others they Just don't see.

And as I try to believe that somehow life will get better.
The rain keeps falling and the ground keeps getting wetter.
The purpose of life disappears. The scars get bolder.
The hurts burn the tears from my eyes, my heart gets colder.
As my shoulders feel heavier. I'm finding it hard to be.
While the stars shine on some, others they Just don't see.

So the ache keeps getting older and the stakes get higher.
I try to change my life—the ground doesn't get any drier.
The trials get harder and the dreams grow farther away.
The doubts get smarter and life slowly fades to grey.
But hey, maybe that's the way life is supposed to be fore me.
While the stars shine on some, others they just don't see.

Note left for AHH Staff

Thank you for offering a home to those who are visiting loved ones and those who are soon to be residing at the Federal Camp. Mostly, thank you for making me feel like a person and not an unworthy person who wears a label of inmate. Your kindness will go with me while I am spending my time at Alderson. Like many others before me, your kindness has made this part of my life's journey a little easier to bear.

Lance P. Wickner
Oak Park Heights
Facility

Water

Calming Everlasting
Escaping into meditation
Mother nature's speaking tongue
Unpredictable

Melonie Haas
FPC Alderson

Books

Stories read within.
Away from this prison world.
Imagination!

POETRY
CORNER

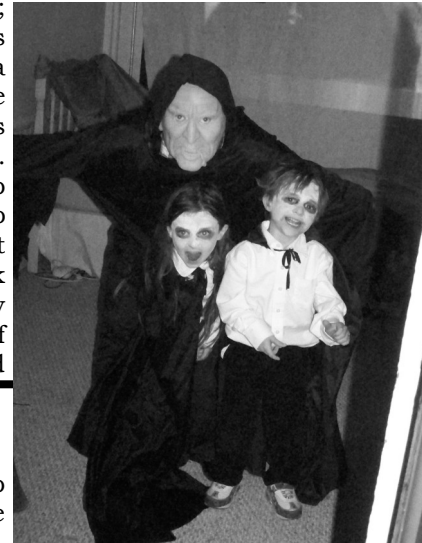
House Notes

By KATHLEEN



The last three months of the year are always among the busiest here at the Hospitality House; all of the holidays keep us moving at a rapid pace. The Haunted House was a great success. Thank you to everyone who participated in that event. The guests helped out the week before by carving pumpkins donated by some local farmers. On the nights of haunting, many of our friends, both old

and new, joined us in the house to spook the residents of Alderson and beyond. The weather wasn't great, but that didn't stop the zombies in the ballroom, cannibals in the kitchen, or vampires in the hallway from performing at their best. Our youngest participant this year was a three year old



vampire! I think he scared quite a few people as they weren't expecting to be scared from below.

Thanksgiving brought with it an extra day of visitation at the camp for families
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PVS CONTINUED

take much for her to convince me to pursue becoming a PVS volunteer. She put me in contact with PVS, I applied, went thru a vetting process that took a little while and was soon approved to visit. After some orientation, I was set to go. So for about 3 years, I have visited a number of inmates at Alderson, usually two inmates on a monthly basis. There are, of course, routines and rules for entering and visiting at the Visitor's Center, but it is not too complicated and generally goes smoothly. For about an hour each, I visit with an inmate who has indicated a desire to have a PVS visitor. The visits go by quickly and we talk about ordinary things – the news, sports, cooking, families, jobs, education, travel – the things that you might share with any friend if you had about an hour or so to pass the time. For an inmate who has not had a visitor the benefits are obvious – something to look forward to, someone who will share some time and interests with you and a little break in the monotony of prison

life. And surely, there are benefits for me – big hugs and smiles, lots of 'thank-yous', but most of all, the feeling of sharing a little friendship with someone who may be in real need at this time in her life.

PVS volunteers give of their time all over the country, both in federal and state prisons, visiting male and female inmates. The number of volunteers versus the need is a challenge. Like many efforts, it suffers from lack of money and those willing to volunteer, but it also experiences praise from current and former inmates and the prison systems. So I will continue to go each month and spend some time with a few women incarcerated at Alderson FPC – it's a little thing; it takes a little time; it makes a little difference.

NOTE: Gloria Martin is the former Director of the Family Refuge Center in Lewisburg, WV. She serves on the Board of Directors of AHH. She resides in Lewisburg, WV with her husband.

RECIPES FROM THE KITCHEN

PULL-APART FLUFFY

WHITE DINNER ROLLS

2 ¼ cups flour (divided)
 2 tablespoons sugar (divided)
 1 teaspoon salt
 2 tablespoons corn starch
 2 ¼ teaspoons yeast
 1 cup warm water (divided)
 2 tablespoons melted margarine or butter
 2 tablespoons applesauce

1. Combine yeast, ¼ c. water, and 1 teaspoon sugar in a bowl. Allow to rest for 5-10 minutes.
2. Add 1 ¼ c. flour, remaining sugar, salt, and corn starch. Mix briefly.
3. Add remaining water, melted butter, and applesauce. Mix until smooth.
4. Slowly add the remaining flour (1c).
5. Cover and let rest for 30 minutes.
6. Make 12 balls and place them in a greased pie pan or square casserole pan (glass preferred). The dough will be sticky—use extra flour to minimize sticking to your hands.
7. Cover and let rest 30 more minutes.
8. Bake at 400° for 15-18 minutes. 🍞



with meals during their stay.

The Alderson Hospitality House is committed to helping families in every way possible to be with their loved ones incarcerated at the prison camp. With your help, we can do it again.

We need to do better this year for the women and their families, so please help us to raise the dough in 2012. Send a donation or donate on-line to our annual fund. We're going to try again to reach \$85,000 by the end of the year. 🍞

Last year, we fell short of our Annual Goal by \$5,000. Despite that, we housed 2,443 (1613 adults, 830 children) guests, who stayed 4,568 nights and each of our guest were provided

HELP THE "DOUGH" TO RISE

Baking fresh bread is one of my favorite things to do for the guests. Homemade bread brings comfort to a meal that not many other dishes can provide. Baking bread from scratch is a simple process, yet it takes patience, time, and the right combination of ingredients for the dough to rise and the bread to turn out correctly.

The same can be said about fund raising for a nonprofit our size. It takes patience, time, and the right combination of caring people, such as yourself, to reach our goal by the end of the year.

In these tough economic times, we have had to work hard to both raise funds and keep our costs low. For the past few years, we have not been able to do any renovations. This year, we have repairs that cannot be put off any longer. This old house, built in the 1890s, needs some work done. We need to renovate the third floor bathroom, install a new fire alarm system, and update the staff quarters. We'll need to reach our annual goal and more in order to accomplish all of that.

HELP US RAISE THE DOUGH - THE ANNUAL FUND

By KATHLEEN

WISH LIST

Everyday Items

Postage Stamps
 Large (39+ gallon) Trash Bags
 Laundry Detergent (for HE)
 Toilet Paper
 Seeds for the Vegetable Garden
 Light Bulbs
 Fresh Produce
 Dry Beans
 Lemonade/Iced Tea Mix
 5 Gallon Buckets
 Mason Jars
 Kroger/IGA/Kmart Gift Cards

Willing to spend a bit more?

Horse Shoe Set
 Landscaping shrubs
 Standard size pillows
 Quality wash cloths
 Firewood

For the big spenders out there:

Windows for the Little House
 Riding Lawn Mower
 Dyson Vacuum (DC14 Telescope)
 Carpet Cleaner
 Power Washer
 Economy Car



Please make
 all checks payable to
Alderson Hospitality House
 or donate online at
www.aldersonhospitalityhouse.org

THANK YOU FOR your SUPPORT!

