

## Who is AHH?

The mission of the Alderson Hospitality House is to provide support for those incarcerated at the Alderson Federal Prison Camp, their families and friends by providing temporary lodging, meals, transportation, emotional support and education.

## 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	Bobbi Loos

## AHH STAFF

Kathleen DeRouen, co-director  
 Brian DeRouen, co-director  
 Marissa Minnick, 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

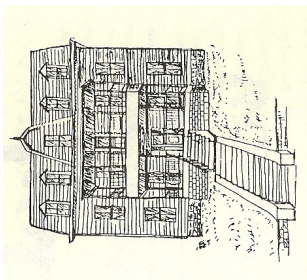


[www.amtrak.com](http://www.amtrak.com)  
 Amtrak stops in Alderson, WV  
**ONLY** Sundays, Wednesdays, and Fridays  
**From Chicago, eastbound: Train #50**  
**From New York, westbound: Train #51**

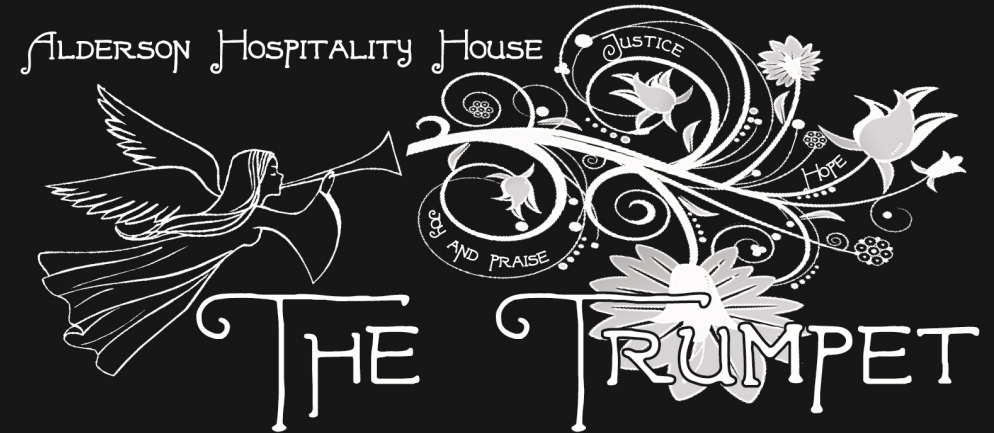
Non-Profit Org.  
 Permit No. 579  
 Alderson, WV  
 24910

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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## I ♥ APPALACHIA By Marissa Minnick

When I was in college, I knew that I wanted to do some sort of volunteer service after graduation. I was a student at Santa Clara University in Northern California, and many of my friends were going to volunteer in cities all over the U.S. I had a desire to serve, but I also felt pulled to something different than my friends. As I was looking at a map of the United States, the state of West Virginia popped out at me. I had never been there before, it was really weirdly shaped, and the only thing I knew about it was that people on television and in movies seemed to make fun of the people a lot. Despite my limited knowledge of the state, I felt that it was calling me to something wonderful, new and different. At around the same time, I was reading a catalogue for post-graduate volunteer opportunities and found Bethlehem Farm, an intentional community that hosts weeks for high school and college volunteers to do low income home repair in Summers County, West Virginia. I

sent in an application, spent a week at the farm for an interview, and two weeks after graduating from college, I was flying out to West Virginia to live and work far away from my home state of California.

I fell in love with Appalachia almost immediately. The mountains and trees reminded me of the Santa Cruz Mountains back in California, and the neighbors that I got to know were some of kindest folks I had ever met. There is a sense of neighborliness and trust in West Virginia that I had never experienced, especially growing up in the suburbs of Southern California. I loved living on a farm as well; there was a certain freedom in being able to go hang out with donkeys and chickens, or just hike around the property. Overall, I loved the state, and even though my first real winter was terrible (I didn't realize that it can be perfectly sunny outside while simultaneously just 10 degrees), West Virginia and Appalachia had found its way into my heart.

When it was time to leave Bethlehem Farm after this summer, there was some-

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## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

By BRIAN

One of the universal complaints we hear from guests at our house is that politicians don't care about inmates and that there will never be any improvements to the broken system. We understand the frustration and do agree that politicians can do more, but we also believe that we the people are equally responsible for making change happen. One way that we can do so is to be aware of and engaged with the legislative process so that when relevant bills are introduced we are prepared to call our congress men and women asking them to support those bills.

There are currently three bills concerning sentencing reform before congress. They are the Safe Justice Act (H.R.2944), the Smarter Sentencing Act (H.R. 920 /S. 502) and the Justice Safety Valve Act (H.R.706 /S.353). Each of these bills has been introduced this year and are in committee, which would make now the perfect time to place a few phone calls or send a few letters encouraging lawmakers to move towards making them law.

Lobbying a congressperson can be a daunting thing at first, but it is our responsibility as Americans. We cannot complain that politicians don't listen to us when the problem is that we aren't actually saying anything. It doesn't matter if you are an inmate serving a life sentence or a fortune 500 CEO, you can get a piece of paper, an envelope, and a stamp to write a letter to a congressperson. So here is a little information on each of the three bills which we hope you will put to good use!



The SAFE Justice Act is a bi-partisan bill sponsored by Rep. Jim Sensenbrenner (R-WI) and Bobby Scott (D-VA). Were the bill to pass it would not result in the reduction of sentences across the board but rather would ensure that federal mandatory minimum sentences in drug cases would be applied only to the highest-level offenders. Many of the families that stay with us are visiting loved ones that were involved with the sale of drugs at the lowest levels, and while those higher up are able to provide information resulting in plea deals, low level offenders receive draconian sentences due to mandatory minimums being applied. This bill would limit mandatory minimums to cases where the offender is an organizer, manager, leader or supervisor of drug related criminal activity involving at least 5 people. This portion of the bill would be retroactive, meaning that currently incarcerated men and women could see their sentences reduced to more appropriate lengths than those originally handed down.

Another provision of the SAFE Justice Act would create a new "Safety Valve" which would allow for new criteria to be considered when determining if mandatory minimums must be enforced. Some of those new criteria would include factors such as mental illness, addiction, trauma suffered during military service, history of victimization from emotional, sexual, psychological abuse or domestic violence.

The Smarter Sentencing Act is a bi-

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## HOUSE NOTES CONTINUED

but the doors do not work properly; and the battery dies frequently in the winter. It is a great relief not to worry whether the van will start or if the door will fall off as a guest is trying to get in the back seat. Once the Archdiocese agreed to help us purchase a van, Brian began calling dealerships looking for a new or gently used Dodge Caravan. Ramey Automotive out of Tazewell, VA took the time to listen to our story, read about our organization on the website, and worked within the boundaries of our grant to help us get a reliable van to transport our guest in style. Thank you so much to the Missions Office and to Ramey Automotive

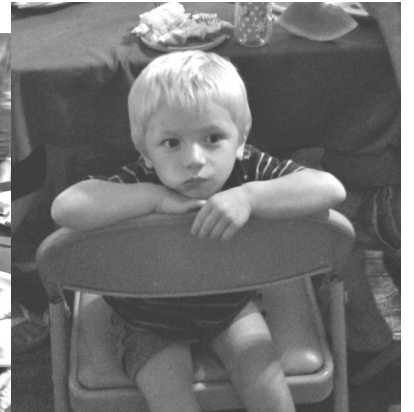
## UPDATE CONTINUED

partisan bill sponsored by Senators Richard Durbin (D-IL) and Mike Lee (R-UT) and Representatives Raul Labrador (R-ID) and Bobby Scott (D-VA). This bill reduces mandatory minimum drug sentences rather than repealing them. Where it would apply, the bill would reduce some 20, 10, and 5 year mandatory minimum sentences to 10, 5, and 2 years. It would also reduce the mandatory minimum life without parole sentence for a third offense to 25 years in the Senate bill or 20 years in the house version. In addition to reuniting families and eliminating prison overcrowding, the bill would save approximately \$24 billion dollars over the next 20 years according to the Justice Department!

We have mentioned the Justice Safety Valve Act in an earlier newsletter. It is a bipartisan bill sponsored by Rand Paul (R-KY) and Patrick Leahy (D-VT) in the Senate and Thomas Massie (R-KY) and Bobby Scott (D-VA) in the House. Whereas the previous bills concern drug charges, this bill would allow judges to sentence federal offenders to sentences below the mandatory minimum when appropriate. This bill recognizes that by tying the hands of judges and forcing

for bringing "Archie" into our lives.

Our thanks would not be complete if I did not extend them once more to the incredible Julia Means. She was adored by our guests and even more so by our little boys Vitale and Micah. She left us at the beginning of August after more than a year of service to the house. She was a beautiful addition to our staff as well as to our family. We wish her well and hope she will always consider AHH home. 🌟



them to hand down lengthy sentences that they themselves believe to be unjust, politicians have overstepped with devastating results for tax payers, the overburdened prison system and families such as those that stay with us every weekend.

The Hospitality House proudly supports Families Against Mandatory Minimums (FAMM) and rely on their website for legislative updates and calls to action. Please visit [www.famm.org](http://www.famm.org) and join this important organization. We also ask you to notice that Representative Bobby Scott (D-VA) is a sponsor of each of these bills. There are few politicians taking action on these issues and few that recognize our Hospitality House guests as important constituents; and thus, politicians like Bobby Scott need to hear our gratitude and support. They also need us to contact our elected officials asking them to join as co-sponsors of these important pieces of legislation. 🌟



POETRY  
CORNER

## Grey Weather

by Marissa Minnick

Today the weather was grey.  
That's the only way to describe it.  
There was something that was just not right.  
Not right.

I hate seeing sad people.  
I hate seeing people gathered together, crying.  
But that is what happens on grey days.  
People gather and cry.

They cry for the ones they love.  
They hold their friends close in their arms.  
Because now they know that their friends are  
here today,  
if not tomorrow.

Today the weather was grey.

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! 🌱

## APPALACHIA CONTINUED

thing telling me it was time to move onto the next thing. Originally, I had planned on moving back to Southern California in September. I missed my family and college friends, and so California seemed like the next logical step. As I was mentally preparing to leave, though, Brian and Kathleen began telling me about what it would be like to work at the Hospitality House. I was friends with their previous volunteer staffer, Julia as well, and she told me all about how awesome her job was. Not only do you get to have the best bosses ever, but you get to do work that is truly meaningful and helping other people. Despite my previous plan to move back to California in September, I realized that West Virginia was not ready to give me up, and I was not quite ready to leave. I

moved into the Hospitality House at the end of August, and have fallen in love with the work that we do here.

I have enjoyed my time so far, and besides hosting guests and keeping up the house, I have been able to work on my novel and get to know my Alderson neighbors. I have been working as a Standardized Patient at the West Virginia School of Osteopathic Medicine in Lewisburg. I am getting ready for fall, especially beautiful hikes when the trees change colors and reading while wearing a scarf and slippers. I want to continue serving the families that come through our doors at the Hospitality House and make them feel as at home as I do here now. 🌱

## HOUSE NOTES BY KATHLEEN

Home maintenance and improvement are never ending tasks for any homeowner, but in this 135-year-old home, it can seem insurmountable. Plumbing freezes in the winter, pipes burst, doors need to be replaced, and retaining walls fall. We're keeping an eye on the cracks in the ceiling and the supports in the basement. There is always something that could be done, fixed or replaced.

Recently, we've begun painting again, one room at a time. Kayla painted Jean Gump and Rosa Parks. Volunteers from New Jersey painted Dorothy Day, and Karen, a volunteer, painted the kitchen.

Karen joined us in the month of July. She has spent this last year touring the United States in her camper and volunteering where ever she found a need. Hearing about us from friends who used to work at the Hospitality House, she called to see if she could help us when her travels brought her to West Virginia. She was a great addition to our AHH family.

We are thankful for everyone who gives us his or her time, support, and donations. Since the last



newsletter went out, we have been blessed with two very significant donations. Alan and Lisa Zuccari donated the money

needed to rebuild the retaining wall that fell during the Spring, and Dreamscapes Landscaping did a great job at building it.

We will be forever grateful to the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Missions Office who granted us \$20,000 to purchase a new minivan. The old van has been struggling since a large tree fell on it during a massive storm several years ago. It runs OK in the summer;

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## RECIPES FROM THE KITCHEN

## White Bean &amp; Ham Soup

- |                                     |                                      |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 2 cups dried Great Northern Beans   | 2 red onions, diced                  |
| 1 yellow onion, roughly chopped     | 3 garlic cloves, minced              |
| 1 head of garlic, smashed           | 1 butternut squash, peeled and diced |
| 1/4 cup chili powder                | Peas (optional)                      |
| 1 ham bone (with some meat left on) | Salt and pepper to taste             |

1. Soak the beans overnight (or at least 4 hours)
2. Drain the beans. Then put them into a fresh pot of water. This is going to be the start of your broth. Add the yellow onion, garlic, and chili powder. Bring to a boil; then simmer for 1.5-2 hours (until the beans are soft). Remove the beans. (I like to use a pasta pot for this. You can put the onion and garlic in the pot and the beans can go in the strainer.) Then you can pull out just the beans when they are cooked.
3. Put the hambone into the pot. (Do not put the ham in while the beans are cooking or the beans will not get soft! Adding salt to the water dramatically slows the cooking process of the beans, and ham usually has a lot of salt in it.) Allow to simmer for at least 30 minutes, but the longer it simmers the more flavorful the broth will be and the easier the ham will be to remove from the bone. Sometimes I leave it for hours.
4. Strain and reserve the liquid. Cut the ham into pieces.
5. Sauté the onions, garlic, and butternut squash.
6. Put everything (broth, ham, and veggies) into a pot or slow cooker and simmer until the squash is soft.

## TAP-X

The Truth About Prison - Network (TAP-X) website is a comprehensive source of information, resources, and services related to the federal and state prison systems in the United States. Here you will find information on family support groups, references, job resources, entrepreneurial training, links, and contact information for every federal and state prison in the United States. They are there for the entire journey, from the first day in until the last day out.

The TAP-X staff and their contributing writers provide clear, relevant, and compelling reports of the issues, events, and programs affecting inmates, ex-inmates, and their families. Through their free electronic newsletter, they reveal what news organizations do not, from their unique insider position. The TAP-X FREE Electronic Newslet-

ters are distributed to nearly every federal prison in the United States, plus concerned individuals in the free world. Inmates and their loved ones look to the newsletters for the latest prison-related news, sentencing updates, as well as helpful information regarding reentry, job preparation, entrepreneurial resources, inspirational quotes, and much more.

## Newsletter Sign up for Federal Inmates:

If you have a friend/family member currently incarcerated in a Federal Prison and they would like to receive our FREE TAP-X Prison Newsletter via Trulincs, please email them the below information:

\*First Name: LLC \*Last Name: TAP-X \*Relationship: Business \*Email: [info@tap-x.com](mailto:info@tap-x.com) \*Zip: 75711 \*Street: PO Box \*Number: 6778

## Newsletter sign up for friends and family:

[www.tap-x.com](http://www.tap-x.com)



## CLIMBING THE STAIRS - THE ANNUAL FUND

The first reaction many guests have when encountering our stairs for the first time is that they never end! You think you have made it to the top but then you go around a corner and find more. The same is true for fundraising at the House. Thanks to two generous donations we now have a beautiful new van and a new retaining wall out back...these two items required \$25,000 which were not in the budget for this year and yet we have them! However, we are still a long way behind

our projected operating budget income. We count on strong 4th quarter donations to erase our deficit each year, and we hope that you will make that possible once again in 2015. Please help us and our guests get up this last flight!

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  
Dryer Sheets  
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?

Extra Long Table Clothes  
Bath Towels to match the rooms  
Rain Barrel

## For the big spenders out there:

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

