

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	Judy Lucas
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AHH STAFF

Kathleen DeRouen, co-director
Brian DeRouen, co-director

FLIGHT INFORMATION



Raleigh County Memorial

Beckley, WV
www.flybeckley.com

Greenbrier Valley

Lewisburg, WV
www.gvairport.com

AMTRAK INFORMATION



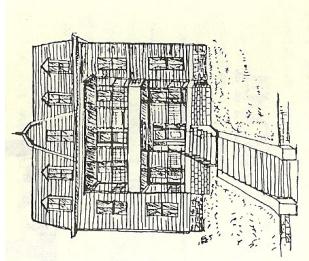
www.amtrak.com

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!

ALDERSON HOSPITALITY HOUSE
203 High Street
PO Box 579
Alderson, WV 24910
304.445.2980



www.aldersonhospitalityhouse.org
aldersonhospitalityhouse@gmail.com



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House Notes

By KATHLEEN

Well, it has been strange around here since the prison shut its doors to visitors halfway through a Friday visitation in mid-March. That weekend, it felt like the world turned upside down and it hasn't righted itself, yet, 8 months later. We had a great group of volunteers in from Virginia Tech and were scheduled to have the House packed with guests. The weekend started off looking promising. I was eager to get a bunch of stuff accomplished with the volunteers and I was excited for them to meet our guests, many of whom had stayed here before and I knew would be great at engaging with the volunteers. Then came Friday afternoon. First, I got a message from the school that my kids would be sent home with work for the next couple weeks, and they would not be going back to school until further notice. The VT students got a similar message about their



school. They were going to be taking classes virtually. And then at about 3 pm, guests started pulling up (3 hours before expected) saying that visitation had been canceled at the camp. The visitors were told they had 15 minutes to say goodbye, and then, they had to leave. Everyone was on edge that evening. I remember simultaneously wanting everyone to leave and appreciating the fact that I had others around for support. No one knew what to expect, and it was good to have friends to keep me busy and share concerns with.

At first, we all hoped that after putting in some safety protocols, the prison would allow people to come back the next day, but by evening, after hearing of all the closures "until further notice", we realized that would not happen. By Saturday afternoon, the guests were gone; by Sunday afternoon, the volunteers followed; and the House, our country and the world haven't been the same since.

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DRIVING HOSPITALITY

By BRIAN

As our name, Alderson Hospitality House suggests, hospitality is what we do. We provide comfortable lodgings, tasty food, warm beds and clean bathrooms. The big old house at 203 High Street in Alderson has been providing these things to all who come for over 40 years. This year, though, has been different. Since March the seats at our dinner tables have been empty as have most of our guest rooms. However, the definition of hospitality is broader for us as the staff of the Alderson Hospitality House, and it is not limited to when we are able to welcome guests through our doors.

We have spent countless hours on the phone this year. Talking with guests that have become family and answering questions from women we have never met as they try to figure out how to get to Alderson. While the pandemic has made things more complicated than normal, traveling away from one's loved ones to serve a prison sentence is difficult under any circumstances. It is for this reason that much of our most important work is done in Archie, the AHH minivan generously purchased for us by the Archdiocese of Cincinnati Mission's Office.

Sometimes trips in Archie are quite short as we are picking up women from the Amtrack station at the end of our street. However, when we meet women, they are



usually months or even years into a difficult journey involving arrest or an unexpected knock on the front door by federal agents. By the time they get to us they have dealt with lawyers, prosecutors, plea deals, trial, sentencing and all the difficulties unknown by those fortunate enough to have avoided the criminal justice system. When we meet a

woman getting off of the Amtrack, her guilt or innocence does not matter. What matters to us is that she is tired, hungry, scared, angry, frustrated, lonely and that we have from a few hours to a few days to give her our love, support and information.

While that van ride often lasts only about a minute from the Amtrack station or an hour from the closest Greyhound bus stop in Beckley, sometimes they are much longer. When a woman is sentenced to FPC Alderson she will often have the option to surrender herself to the camp. If she is able to afford it, this is usually a much better option than the alternative, but sometimes it can get a little crazy. Broken down cars, canceled flights and often procrastination have gotten many women into a bind, and it is Archie that comes to the rescue. We have driven to airports in Washington DC, Roanoke, VA, Charlotte, NC, Dayton, OH, Pittsburgh, PA and a random freeway exit in rural Kentucky to pick up women. Usually these are drives through the night as broken travel itineraries rarely come at convenient times, and there can be consequences for a woman who misses her assigned hour to surrender. Happily, though, we live in a world of coffee and 5-hour energy drinks, so the late hours are not a big problem and these drives provide an amazing opportunity for hospitality. At 2am on a dark freeway, with a federal prison as the destination, some women sit quietly or

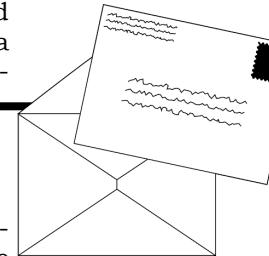
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AN ALDERSON HOSPITALITY HOUSE PUBLICATION

DRIVING CONTINUED

fall asleep knowing that the travel crisis is over and they are going to make it to the camp, but many more start talking. They tell us about their lives and children, their work, their case, their fears and their hopes. They are open and courageous in their honesty and vulnerability. They are receptive to the love and support which we have to offer, and rather than answering "Fine thanks" when we ask how they are doing; they tell us the truth. They tell us stories, some happy and others sad and let us into their life, grief, regret and dreams. We get to experience more real life with a real person in one 5 hour drive from DC to Alderson than we often will in weeks of the "normal" world... and then we arrive at FPC Alderson, the truck comes out to take her in, and she is gone from our lives.

The story rarely ends there, however, as in the coming weeks, months and years we will often get to know and love the people we first heard about in the stories shared. We will celebrate her daughter's birthday with cake and ice cream for 7 years in a row, we will cheer with her dad as "their" team wins a super bowl, we will be



OPEN PALS

All of us have felt isolated during 2020. The gatherings that we look forward to have been cancelled, the restaurants we enjoy have been closed and sporting events are happening inside of empty stadiums. The many places that we gather, connect and enjoy each other's company have been off limits, and that has been hard for many of us. Those living inside of American prisons and jails do not have many options or social outlets, and thus, visits from friends and family take on an even greater importance during incarceration. With visitation either suspend-

come a part of her family and life even though our entire interaction with her consisted of one late night drive from the airport.

During most of 2020 those birthday celebrations have been us singing (very off key) through a telephone rather than eating cake and ice cream with a houseful of guests. We most likely won't be able to watch the college football national championships in our living room with families cheering passionately for opposing teams while talking crazy amounts of trash to each other knowing that just down the road, their incarcerated loved ones are likely doing the exact same thing. While we all have to be separate these days, the best thing about the Alderson Hospitality House is that it helps so many of us to know that we are not alone. The last thing we say to each woman as she is surrendering to the camp is that there will be days that are harder than others. There will be days when it feels like she is all alone and that every person who cares about her is hundreds of miles away...but that isn't true because the Alderson Hospitality House is just down the road. We are loving her, thinking about her, cheering for her and supporting her, I think this message is more powerful than ever during these strange days. ☺

ed or limited and much programming also on hold, the need for pen pals willing to correspond with men and women in jails and prisons is greater than ever.

Our friends at Abolition Apostles have developed a great pen pal program or you can do your own research and find a prison pen pal program (there are many on Facebook). Don't feel like you need to be particularly interesting or fabulous at letter writing to become a pen pal with a person in prison. All it takes is a few minutes, and more importantly, the willingness to connect with another person in the hopes of enriching both of your lives.

<https://www.abolitionapostles.com/> ☺

'Tis the Season

It's Huntin' season once again
 In this prison paradise
 The season matters not to me
 For the bucks it ain't so nice

These guards can never find a church
 When it comes to deer they pray
 To slay the biggest rack in town
 Eating venison filet

While the guards claim vacation days
 To kill father of Bambi
 We stay locked down with too few staff
 And wait for Christmas candy

This verse is in no way a gripe
 I want to make that quite clear
 A hunter's life not one I seek
 Nor to be a white-tailed deer.

By William Jonas

FCI—Gilmer, Glenville, WV

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! ☺

House Notes Contin-

We do still have guests. FPC Alderson has released many women to home confinement, helping to lower the inmate population and lessen the challenges of containing this virus if it were to get into the prison. As a result, we've said goodbye to a lot of long-time guests over these last few months. And after several months of no one reporting to prison, we have had some women and their families stay the night before turning themselves in. We are being very careful with COVID 19. We are limiting the number of guests per group and are only allowing one group per restroom available. As per guidelines from the Health Department, we ask the guests to stick to their rooms as much as possible, and for the moment, the kitchen, living room, and family room are closed. After each group leaves, the bedroom and bathrooms are cleaned and sanitized fully.

We, and when I say we I mean mostly Brian, have spent a LOT more time on the phone the last few months as well, mostly talking to concerned family members who are missing their loved ones. In addition, he has been checking in with the prison frequently to try to keep updated on their protocols and keeping tabs on when and how they will reopen visitation.

They did open visitation on October 9 on a very limited basis. Visits are restricted to 1 hour, 2 people max, behind plexiglass, no food or drink, no restroom breaks, and you can not visit consecutive days. The incarcerated woman who you are visiting must make an appointment for the time you will visit. We are not sure yet what this will mean for us here at the Hospitality House, but for now, we plan to take it one week at a time. Helping families to be together is our passion; and we wish that visitation could be back to normal;



but even more than that, we want women to get through their sentence safely and in good health. So as frustrating as the new visitation set up is for everyone, we believe that it should remain in place until very significant progress is made in controlling, if not ending, this COVID 19 pandemic.

We continue to work on the building and property in anticipation of when we will have a full house again. Having secured grant funding, we will begin renovating some of the bedrooms to make them more comfortable for guests. There is always some repair or cleaning that needs to be done in our 100+ year old house. And Brian has been working with some of our neighbors and board members to collect firewood for this and future winters. Since mid-September, a group of women from the Mormon community has joined us once a week to help with yard work and putting up wood. Their support has been greatly appreciated.

We all must support each other during this time, and we want you to know that we appreciate the support of all of our community, including you. Your thoughts, prayers, concerns, and encouragement mean a lot to us as we continue to navigate these trying times. ☺

RECIPES FROM THE KITCHEN

Brownies

This is one of maybe three desserts I make from scratch, so I thought I'd share it here. Everyone needs some chocolate right now.

1 Cup Melted Butter
3 Cups White Sugar
1 Tablespoon Vanilla
4 Eggs

1 ½ Cups All-Purpose Flour
1 Cup Cocoa Powder
1 Teaspoon Salt
1 Cup Chocolate Chips

1. Preheat Oven to 350. Grease a 9x13" pan.
2. In a large bowl, beat together Butter, Sugar, Vanilla, and Eggs
3. In a separate bowl, combine Flour, Cocoa Powder, and Salt.
4. Gradually beat dry ingredients into wet. Then, stir in Chocolate Chips.
5. Place batter into greased 9x13" pan. Bake 30-40 Minutes ☀️



Raise money for AHH while you shop online. Go to smile.amazon.com, and search for Alderson Hospitality House as your charity. You get all the Amazon options, and they send us a portion of what you spend with no added cost to you.



Raise money for AHH while buying your groceries. Go to krogercommunityrewards.com and register your Kroger Plus card to automatically give a percentage of every sale to AHH. Our number is 85722. Use it when you sign up today!



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



Raise money for AHH without spending a dime. Every time you search the internet using goodsearch, you can raise money for the Hospitality House. Go to goodsearch.com to find out more.

**THE ANNUAL FUND**

How fitting that we chose a leafless tree as our Annual Fund "thermometer" this year. It certainly has felt like winter this whole year in many ways. In winter, everything slows down, you tuck yourself into your home, you gain a few pounds...the trees lose their leaves, they hibernate, and they wait until conditions are better to push out their leaves and blossoms.

And just as the tree sheds its leaves, AHH, also, has shed as many of our expenses as we can. Unfortunately, we still have bills to pay. The pandemic has been devastating for small nonprofits like ours with many being forced to close permanently. At this point we are hanging on, but our future is not yet secure.

WISH LIST

Coffee (Not decaf)
Postage Stamps
Dish Soap
Dryer Sheets
Toilet Paper
Paper Towels
Hand Soap Refills
Fresh Produce
Pasta
Pasta Sauce (Not Meat Flavored)
Lemonade/Iced Tea Mix
Kroger Gift Cards

OCTOBER

\$30,209

FEBRUARY

\$9,647

Each Fall we look to you, our friends from around the country, to keep us and our guests warm through the winter. This year it is not only about warmth but the survival of the Alderson Hospitality House which we are seeking to ensure and we hope that you will help us to make it a reality. ☽

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

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT!

