

## 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

Gloria Martin	Amy McClure
Nancy Burris	Doris Kasley
Judy Lucas	Jim Frerrote
Jandy Hanna	Herb Montgomery

## AHH STAFF

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

## FLIGHT INFORMATION

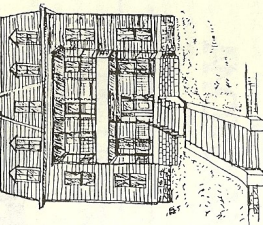


**Raleigh County Memorial**  
Beckley, WV  
www.flybeckley.com  
**Greenbrier Valley**  
Lewisburg, WV  
www.gvairport.com

## 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**



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

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

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## ALDERSON HOSPITALITY HOUSE



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## DOGE AND THE BUREAU OF PRISONS

By BRIAN

It seems that not an hour goes by without the Trump administration's DOGE (Department of Government Efficiency) being featured in the news. We have friends in the National Park service that have lost their jobs, fire fighter friends that have lost their jobs and friends in academia and the sciences that have lost their jobs. While the Alderson Hospitality House does not receive any federal funding, the federal Bureau of Prisons has been caught directly in the cross hairs of DOGE with very problematic results.

Prior to the beginning of DOGE the BOP was already struggling to make ends meet. Back in 2021 almost half of federal corrections officer jobs in the United States were vacant. The 2020 BOP budget had funding for 20,446 full time positions but only 13,762 officers were employed. The shortfall in staffing made the jobs more stressful, more dangerous and also cost more money. The BOP used "Augmentation,"

having staff do jobs that they are not trained for and paying large amounts of overtime to overworked employees to meet the minimum needs faced by institutions to remain operational. All of the issues, which make the BOP staffing shortage unsafe for staff, are even more troublesome and dangerous for the approximately 155,000 Americans incarcerated in federal prisons.



Safety is not the only thing sacrificed when prisons are understaffed; programs have to be cut, even those mandated by congress simply cannot function. For example, the bipartisan First Step Act signed into law by president Trump in 2018 has fallen far behind in implementation much to the frustration of incarcerated men, women and their families. As the president of Families Against Mandatory Minimums, Kevin Ring, stated, "You can't do programing, you can't have safety,

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## HOUSE NOTES

By KATHLEEN

Greetings from West Virginia!! This winter has been a crazy time for us DeRouens. I, Kathleen, had knee surgery in November, which left Brian to run the House on his own (with the help of our boys and many great volunteers, of course). A special thank you to all the wonderful people who cooked meals for the House and for our family! And a super shout out to Sarah

Elkins and family for spending a day during their Christmas break to help us clean the House. My surgery went well, and after 6 weeks of no weight bearing, I'm up and moving and cooking dinners again. We also added to our West Virginia family this winter. Usually when someone says this, it means they had a child, but not this time. We brought the older generation to us! Brian's parents moved from the San Francisco Bay area to a house just down the street from the Hospitality House. We are thrilled to be sharing our lives with them. Guests will be blessed with their friendly presence at meals and throughout the evening, as they love to come up, share a meal with us, and meet new people.

The prison offered a couple special visitation days this winter that helped to fill the House. The latest was a Christmas celebration, where children of the women incarcerated at FPC Alderson got to spend an extra special time with mom, playing games, opening gifts, and meeting Santa. It was a joyous



occasion. And now as we enter March and the weather is warming up, we are getting more and more calls from people excited to come visit their loved ones after a snowy winter that kept people from wanting to drive anywhere.

Early in the winter, we were contacted by the Family Reconciliation Center. They are a house in Nashville, TN offering lodging to friends and families of people incarcerated at three state facilities around the Nashville area. It was so great to get to talk to someone else who is doing similar work to us. Their goal is to connect all the houses around the country with a similar ministry. Sometimes doing the work that we do can feel isolating. There are only 13 other houses in the entire country, and in fact, there are no other houses connected to a federal facility. All the houses have been started in different ways by different people. Some are connected to a church, some are not. We've never really had contact with these other ministries, and it is refreshing to share the challenges and joys of the work we love with others offering similar services. If you are interested in learning more about these other houses, here is a list for you to investigate:

- ◆ The Agape House in Vandalia, MN
- ◆ Central Texas Hospitality House in Gatesville, TX
- ◆ East Texas Hospitality House in Tennessee Colony, TX
- ◆ El Refugio in Limpkin, GA
- ◆ Eunice Chambliss Hospitality House in Abeline, TX

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## HOUSE NOTES CONTINUED

- ◆ Family Reconciliation Center in Nashville, TN
- ◆ Friends Outside in Stockton, CA
- ◆ Haven of Hope in New Boston, TX
- ◆ Hope Welcome Center in Amarillo, TX
- ◆ Hospitality House in Huntsville, TX
- ◆ Matthew 25 Center in Burgaw, NC
- ◆ New Hope House in Griffin, GA

It is wonderful for us to get to share our experiences with other houses of hospitality. We want to say a special thank you to the board of directors at the Hospitality House in Chester, IL. That ministry opened in 1986 and served families visiting their incarcerated loved ones until November of last year. We truly understand the highs and lows of their work and appreciate their financial contribution to us which will help to keep our doors open.

## A CALL FOR HELP

In a small non-profit like ours, we work with a tight budget. It's hard to plan ahead for the things that might break or fall apart. Oftentimes vehicles don't give you a warning when they are about to die, but our sweet little blue car, Bonnie Betty Bloop, who was donated to us by the long term flood recovery committee in 2017, is nearing the end of her life. She has over 300,000 miles on her, and her transmission is struggling. She still gets us around at this point, but we know that her remaining time with us is short. Instead of scrambling when she does eventually take her last drive, we decided to be proactive. After the great response we got from you all when seeking help getting a new wood burning stove, we thought it worth starting here



Helping women and men who are incarcerated stay connected to their loved ones is a vital and rewarding service. Getting even one visit by one loved one during incarceration

will drastically reduce the chances that an individual will return to prison. Alderson is a small and beautiful river town but it is not easy to get to. Anything we can offer to make it just a little bit easier to get friends and families here is important to us. We love the work that we do at the Alderson Hospitality House, and 48 years after guests stayed for the first time, a warm bed and yummy meal are here for all who arrive.

in our newsletter as we begin to fundraise and seek a new (to us) car.

If you have a good working car sitting around or if you are buying a new vehicle and want to donate your old, we would love to be on the receiving end of such a generous gift. Because the chances

of someone just having a car lying around are not great, we are starting a Vehicle Fund, [givebutter.com/vehiclefund](http://givebutter.com/vehiclefund). If we do receive a donation of a vehicle or if the amount we raise exceeds the amount we spend, any extra money will go toward the care and maintenance of all of our vehicles.

Thank you as always for your generosity. It is because of all of you that the House has continued to thrive for since 1976.





POETRY  
CORNER

Gopher Watching

You solitary beast  
I see out my window  
Enjoys a private feast

On cool bright afternoons  
Departs the dark hillside  
To explore fresh mowed grass  
Searching for tasty bites

A father or mother?  
Part of a family?  
His home within the hills  
A thing I've never seen

Yet as summer closes  
For just a few short weeks  
Just outside my window  
Is where my gopher eats

Lacking in defenses  
He seems to live in fear  
Standing tall on hind legs  
To see if danger's near

Gophers are not mentioned  
In West Virginia lore  
Never a team mascot  
Why are they so ignored?

There are Golden Gophers  
Of Minnesota fame  
With all that snow and ice  
They need something to claim

But where my gopher lives  
Invisible almost  
Perhaps my window view  
Is just a gopher ghost

Take care lonely gopher  
I pray you're not alone  
I will see you next year  
If this is still our home

By: William James Jonas III

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!

DOGE CONTINUED

you can't have a lot of things that make prisons work without proper staffing."

In an attempt to address the shortfall in BOP staffing, congress granted retention bonuses to the BOP in 2021. Those bonuses did not lead to an increase in hiring by the BOP, but it did serve to slow the massive exodus of federal corrections officers. Today the BOP faces a 40% shortage nationwide, and at the end of February, DOGE ended the retention bonuses without warning. In 2023, the average salary for an employee in the Bureau of prisons was \$67,000 which is 6.6% lower than the average for government employees and 13.1% lower than other federal agencies. As of last week, due to the actions by DOGE, those numbers will get even worse. Jon Zumkehr, President of AFGE Local 4070

commented, "This is not strategic cost-saving. This is blind slashing of essential funding that will cost taxpayers more in the long run. The overtime costs alone to cover vacant positions, combined with increased recruitment expenses, will far exceed any savings."

Nobody wants to pay higher taxes, that is a given; but if our society chooses to incarcerate a greater percentage of its citizens than all but 5 other nations on the planet and at a massively higher rate than any other industrialized nation, we also bear the responsibility of paying the bill for that choice.



ART CLASS IN THE PLAYROOM

By KATHLEEN



My art adventure started in art journals; then I experimented

and process my experiences. In the class, my hope was to offer this tool to others. We played with paint, stencils, and silhouettes as I taught them techniques to express themselves through shape and color.

with murals on the bedroom walls at the AHH. Now my art has hung in 4 different galleries, and I've become a permanent artist at the Alderson Artisan's Gallery. Most recently, a group of people gathered in the AHH playroom for a two day class on art journaling with me.



Art Journaling is how I got into painting, and it is still how I view every piece of art I continue to make. In art journaling, just as when you create a written journal, you don't have to share with anyone. It has been a wonderful way for me to express my emotions

The students that gathered ranged from age 10 to age 80. Most of the students came in with no idea what we were doing and not much painting experience, but by the end, everyone left with multiple pieces of art that they could be proud of. These two days were such a perfect representation that art is for everyone. You can never be too young or too old to be creative.



RECIPES FROM THE KITCHEN

Mushroom Miso Soup

This is a family favorite. When Vitale was younger, he hated soup. I knew he would love this meal as long as no one called it soup, so we all had to call it just Mushroom Miso for years. He still does not eat much soup, but Mushroom Miso is one of his most requested meals.

- 8 ounces of Orzo Pasta (White Rice will work, too, for a gluten-free option)
- 1 Teaspoon Toasted Sesame Oil
- 7 Cups Vegetable Broth
- 8 Ounces fresh Shiitake Mushrooms with stems removed and caps thinly sliced
- 1 Tablespoon peeled and minced Fresh Ginger
- 1 Tablespoon peeled and minced Fresh Garlic
- 4 Scallions, minced
- 2 Tablespoons of Soy Sauce
- 1 Box Firm or Extra Firm Tofu, cut into cubes (optional)
- 1 Tablespoon Mellow White Miso Paste
- Cilantro, roughly cut, as garnish

1. Cook pasta in vegetable broth. Drain (saving the broth for the soup). In a large bowl, toss the pasta with sesame oil. Set aside.
2. In a large pot, combine broth, mushrooms, ginger, garlic, scallions, soy sauce, and tofu. Bring to a boil. Turn down the heat, remove a cup of the hot broth and blend the miso into it; then return it to the pot. Simmer for 5-10 minutes.
3. Add the pasta and serve. Garnish with Cilantro.

\*You can do step 1-2 and keep the soup in a Crockpot on low until ready to serve. Wait until the last 10-20 minutes to put the pasta into the Crockpot.



You can now donate through PayPal or Venmo! Search for us under the give tab or follow these QR codes.



Raise money for AHH while buying your groceries. Go to [krogercommunityrewards.com](http://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.

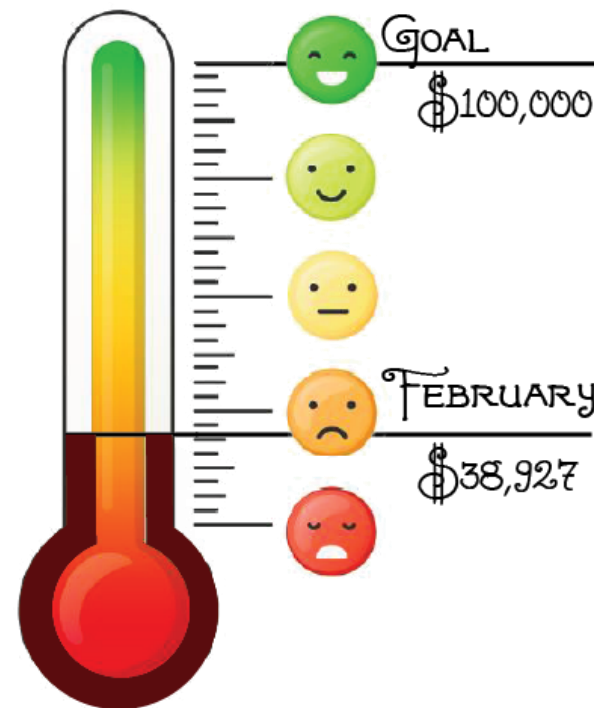
THE ANNUAL FUND

Emojis represent the AHH well because the entire spectrum of emotions are expressed here each weekend. From sadness and frustration to joy and laughter, everyone is allowed to be honest with how they are feeling, and with the incarceration of a loved one, the feelings are complex. In our living room a husband can say that he is angry at his wife and know that we know he still loves her. A mom can express disappointment in her daughter and know that we know that she is still incredibly proud to be her mom.

Your financial support provides this space for people from all over the country to

come together, build friendships and be real with each other during a very difficult time. Spaces to be totally honest and real with yourself and others are few and far between in our society. We are here for exactly that, to meet people where they are; and your financial support makes it possible.

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

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



Willing to spend a bit more?

- Small Working Lamps
- New Twin Beds
- Small Recliners
- Propane Grill
- Fire Wood



Feeling extra generous?

A New Car

