



INSIDE OUT REENTRY COMMUNITY

WINTER 2020/21 NEWSLETTER

ENTREPRENEURSHIP WORKSHOP

In January, **Inside Out and University of Iowa Liberal Arts Beyond Bars** hosted a free, two-day virtual entrepreneurship workshop for formerly incarcerated individuals or those with legal system involvement. The workshop focused on building an entrepreneurial mindset and was facilitated by Serrieh Hijazi. All who registered for the workshop received an action plan packet with information on how to start their business, as well as a free book. The event was sponsored by the City of Iowa City Human Rights Commission.

Thanks to a community donor, one workshop attendee received a free iPad. Congratulations to those who completed the workshop, there were so many great business ideas! The workshop was well received and attendees felt inspired.

"I'm very pleased with the whole concept of starting a business. This is a very strong and promising way to help [returning citizens] become more self sufficient. I'm grateful. Thank you so much." - Workshop Attendee

YEAR-END FUNDRAISING SUCCESS

Inside Out Reentry Community thanks everyone who supported our mission to help people involved in the criminal legal system in 2020 with a donation - but especially want to thank our year-end givers who helped us far surpass our goal of \$8000 - with a final tally of **\$19,164.27** during this giving season!

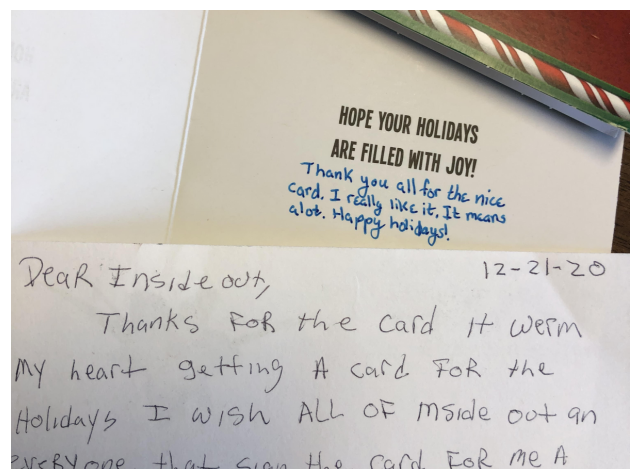
To our online and monthly givers, check writers, and Facebook donors large and small, thank you. We look forward to expanding our 2021 reentry services to support those involved in the criminal legal system and to educate the public in order to promote healing, restore relationships, and reduce recidivism!

SPREADING HOLIDAY WISHES TO INCARCERATED INDIVIDUALS

Being incarcerated and separated from family and loved ones during the holidays is challenging. For the third year, Inside Out mailed out holiday cards to individuals incarcerated in jails and prisons across the state to share cheer and give support. This year we sent out almost 50, and we continue to receive warm wishes in response.

"I would like to thank everyone from Inside Out for the Christmas card I received from you all, it was nice and lifted my spirit up as well as made my day."

"I got that card you sent, thanks! Tell everyone I said thank you and Merry Christmas. I saw all the signatures, that totally made my day!"



Thank you to our donors that gifted us stamps to aid in mailing.

Want to get involved? Donate USPS stamps, or volunteer to become a mentor.

SUPPORTING FAMILY CONNECTIONS WITH DISTRIBUTION OF GAMES

Reentry supports are not only about supporting the person reentering, but also about helping them reconnect with family as well. With funding from Theisen's More for Your Community grant, we provided board games and craft activities that families can utilize, regardless of their resources or access to technology. These activities increase opportunities to build positive relationships with one another and provide opportunities to have fun. Ten families received age-appropriate games.

"This was truly a blessing from my Inside Out Reentry group family; my grandkids and I loved them."
-Inside Out Member



INSIDE OUT SPOTLIGHT: JEN FISH



Inside Out would like to spotlight long-term volunteer **Jen Fish** for her dedicated work as a mentor to incarcerated and formerly incarcerated individuals. Jen has corresponded with numerous incarcerated individuals as well as supporting individuals as they reenter the community, providing companionship, and support. A little more about Jen: "I'm happily married with three children and our newest addition, a rescued beagle/basset. I enjoy coffee, PBS documentaries, non-fiction reading, shopping consignment, and uplifting music." Thank you Jen for your compassionate commitment to those reentering the community!

If you would like to get involved as a volunteer mentor, please contact us!

Email: insideoutreentry@gmail.com
www.insideoutreentry.com

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ioreentry>

Instagram: [@insideoutreentrycommunity](https://www.instagram.com/insideoutreentrycommunity)

COMMUNITY MEETINGS: BUILDING COMMUNITY EACH WEEK

Every Thursday evening from 6:30 - 8 pm Inside Out members get together to give and receive support in their reentry. With COVID precautions we've transitioned the meetings to virtual, however, the community spirit cannot be stopped. In 2020, 68 individuals attended community meetings throughout the year. Although meeting virtually can be a challenge for those with limited technology, we continue to hold powerful and uplifting community meetings each week.

On New Year's Eve we held a special community meeting where we played games and gave away prizes. It was a wonderful way to celebrate our successes of the year and share what we're looking forward to in 2021. Thanks to HyVee North Dodge and Pop's BBQ for donating gift cards for the event.



Community Meetings Thursday evenings
6:30 - 8 pm, *Weekly group mentoring*