



# INSIDE OUT REENTRY COMMUNITY

WINTER 21/22 NEWSLETTER

## A LOOK BACK AT 2021

Our mission: to support people involved in the criminal legal system in changing from the inside out, and to educate the public, in order to promote healing, restore relationships and achieve success in the community.

### Inreach to incarcerated individuals



**2045** total messages & letters sent & received

**167** different individuals corresponded with

### Resource Center Visits



**413** total visits

**124** number of individuals

### Meetings

**89** individuals at Community Meetings



**27** individuals at Hope House Meetings

**12** individuals at Coffee and Connections

### Community Outreach by Phone or Email



**2504** total outreach

**239** number of individuals

### Backpack and Bus Pass Distribution



**35** newly released individuals received a backpack with hygiene products



**48** individuals received 31-day and/or 10-ride bus passes

Inside Out Reentry is proud of what we've accomplished in 2021 and we couldn't do it without all of the amazing support we receive. Even though we all faced challenges this past year, we continue to increase and strengthen our connections with those impacted by the criminal legal system. Our meetings are growing in size and our volunteer mentor program is the largest it's ever been. We are looking forward to helping support even more people in 2022, as well as developing new and exciting projects. Keep updated through our events, social media, and website.

## YEAR-END FUNDRAISING SUCCESS

Inside Out Reentry Community thanks all who donated to support our mission to help people involved in the criminal legal system in 2021 - but we especially want to thank our year-end givers who helped us surpass our goal of \$10000 - with a final tally of **\$12,205.31** during this giving season!

To those giving by check, credit card, or with cash, to our online and monthly givers and Facebook donors, thank you! We look forward to continuing to expand our 2022 reentry services to support those involved in the criminal legal system and to educate the public in order to reduce recidivism, restore relationships, and promote healing!

## THE IMPORTANCE OF CONNECTION THROUGH LETTER WRITING



At Inside Out, we know that reaching out to incarcerated members through letter writing can make a profound impact on their lives while incarcerated and once they are released back into the community. This past year, Inside Out has sent out and received 2045 letters and emails to 167 people in jail, state prison, and federal prison. See what two of our volunteers have to say about their correspondence with those behind bars:

- I was scared that I might mess up the computer in the office, so I began writing letters to incarcerated members in long hand! They really like that I am actually writing and not using a computer. I guess it feels more personal to them. One guy told me he tore up his room looking for my letter that he had lost. I learned that some of the guys just need someone to talk to even via letter writing. Probably the most memorable statement I have gotten in a letter was "I get more from Inside Out than from any therapist." I can't remember one letter that I have received that did not thank me for writing.
- Writing letters to those who are incarcerated gives me a chance to show that I, personally, and on behalf of Inside Out, care about them. I enjoy asking about their interests and encouraging them to set goals while inside as they look forward to reentry. Some replies have led to discussions about books, music, hobbies, and goals about work and education. The reply letters always start with a thank you for writing and compliments for the support of the Inside Out Community. Responding to those letters is an easy task because I enjoy keeping a positive connection.

***Want to support our correspondence to those who are incarcerated? Consider donating USPS stamps to Inside Out.***

### MESSAGES FROM INCARCERATED MEMBERS:

**"I passed your letter around last night to show these guys who (get it) that there is someone who cares out there and are willing to assist with reentry."**

**"I just want to thank everyone at Inside Out for their thoughts, and their time. It was very nice getting something in the mail. I hope everyone there has a good holiday season, and a good start to the new year."**

**"Greatly appreciate the time staff and the volunteers commit to our transition for success! Thank you all!"**

## THANK YOU TO OUR COMMUNITY SUPPORTERS!

We are thankful for our ardent supporters who have helped those impacted by incarceration. Thank you **CHOMP, Backpocket Brewery, Short's Burgers Eastside, and The Vue** for our recent restaurant share the profits (and all those who participated)!

Our faith community is an especially strong supporter of Inside Out! Thank you to the **Consultation of Religious Communities (CRC)** and **Full Circle Faith Community** for their donations this past quarter.

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Thank you **One Ancient Hope** for bringing the holiday spirit to Inside Out families by supplying Christmas gifts to three families in 2021! This is the third year they have purchased gifts for families in need. We are grateful for your generosity!



Thank you to **Esther Smith, Thrivent, and New Song Episcopal Church** for supplying new backpacks to Inside Out. Our gratitude to volunteer Esther Smith for applying for a Thrivent Grant to purchase backpacks (and all the hygiene products to go inside) as well as coordinating an event with New Song Episcopal Church to pack the backpacks! Thank you also to **One Ancient Hope** for their donation of new backpacks. These backpacks are a helpful start for individuals upon their release from incarceration!

Thank you to **First United Methodist Church of North Liberty** for the household items. Starting over after incarceration can be challenging, but thanks to UMCNL, we can provide household items to individuals as they move into housing. Thank you again for this wonderful support!



**THANK YOU**

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## MEET INSIDE OUT'S INTERNS: CLAIR KAJI AND TAYLOR BROOKS



Clair Kaji is a second year MSW student completing her advanced practicum with Inside Out Reentry Community. She's interning with Inside Out because she has a strong interest in the criminal legal system; seeing the collateral consequences of incarceration and the deficiency of resources available for returning citizens. With Inside Out, she has learned not just the importance of resource connection but also the vital component of community and human connection. While providing direct services, she hopes to explore the complex macro issues and policies which influence this lack of support for those returning to our communities.

Taylor Brooks is a University of Iowa School of Social Work graduate student. She has previous experience with the Sixth Judicial District working with individuals in a work release facility as well as volunteering at the Shelter House. She's passionate about helping people who are reentering the community after incarceration to overcome obstacles and gain the skills needed to successfully function in society. She strives to encourage individuals to achieve their personal goals during their transition by providing the support and resources they need. She looks forward to learning and growing during her time at Inside Out!



### I SUPPORT FAIR CHANCES TOTE BAG



Shop Today! Inside Out's new tote bags are perfect for gardening, a trip to the grocery store, and a way to share how you support fair chances in the criminal legal system. Want to purchase one? Shop online at [www.insideoutreentry.com/shop](http://www.insideoutreentry.com/shop)

### IO REGULAR MEETINGS

**Coffee and Connections** Tuesday evening 5:30 - 7 pm, *Peer recovery group for individuals in all stages of recovery*

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

### SAVE THE DATE!

- **February 28 CHOMP** partnership- 1\$ for every order will go to Inside Out
- **March 8 The Night of 1000 Dinners hosted by Johnson Country United Nations Association** - 1/4 of proceeds will go to Inside Out
- **May 21 Spring Fundraiser Concert** featuring Two Bit Maniac, the Oakdale Community Choir, and Spoken Word poet Caleb Rainey

*If you would like to host a restaurant partnership, we would love to hear from you!*

Email: [hello@insideoutreentry.com](mailto:hello@insideoutreentry.com)  
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