



VOLUNTEER TODAY

JULY 2000

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Celebrating A New Millennium of Volunteerism

Sal Seanez, Assistant Director, Community Corrections and Detention Division

You may recall that the theme for this year's National Volunteer Week was "Celebrate Volunteers." As the Bureau of Prisons (Bureau) "celebrates volunteers" in 2000, we are reminded of the long and distinguished history of volunteerism in the Bureau.

Warden J.W. French, the first Warden at the United States Penitentiary (USP) in Leavenworth, Kansas, in 1896, observed that the literacy rate of inmates was lower than that of the country at large. Only two-thirds of the offenders could read or write. Warden French asked Chaplain F. J. Leavitt to start courses for the inmates. By 1906, Chaplain Leavitt had many volunteers assisting him from Kansas, Iowa, and other surrounding states.

From those who served as pioneers at Leavenworth to the 15,136 volunteers who now serve the Bureau, citizens continue to build a bridge between incarceration and an offender's return to society. No longer exclusive to religious services, volunteers are used in almost every discipline within Bureau institutions and Community Corrections contract facilities.

In reviewing surveys and articles published by the Independent Sector, a coalition of leading nonprofits, foundations and corporations strengthening not-for-profit initiatives, we discover the real reason we "celebrate volunteers." Volunteers were asked a series of questions about their reasons for volunteering. The findings confirm what is already well known: volunteering provides a variety of personal benefits and satisfaction. The reasons cited most frequently, were feeling compassion for those in need, having an interest in the activity or work, and gaining a new perspective on things.

It is for these reasons that the Bureau joins the rest of the country in proudly honoring its citizen volunteers, staff, and inmates who give unselfishly of their time and energies to assist others.

A Time to Celebrate

Alice DavisJohnson, Administrator, Volunteer Management Branch

During the week of April 9 - 15, 2000, we celebrated the 27th annual National Volunteer Week. This is a time to say "thank you" to the 15,136 citizen volunteers, 389 staff volunteers and numerous inmate volunteers. These individuals make outstanding contributions to the Bureau and our communities throughout the year.

One way to measure the impact of volunteers on Bureau operations is to calculate the monetary value of their services. In 2000, the hourly rate for volunteer service is \$14.83. The Independent Sector determines this rate by taking the average non-agricultural wage from the annual "Economic Report of the President" and increasing the rate by 12% for fringe benefits.

At the end of FY 99, there were 12,703 citizen volunteers providing services in Bureau institutions and 2,433 volunteers in contract facilities, for a total of 15,136 volunteers. The citizen volunteers in Bureau facilities contributed 108,307 hours of service in FY 99. Using the Independent Sector's formula, this equates to a value of \$1,606,193 for services which supplemented and complemented programs and operations in Bureau facilities.

As Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said, "Everyone can be great because anyone can serve." Citizen volunteers offer inmates an opportunity to interact with individuals who are totally separate from the prison. These volunteers help "normalize" the prison environment and allow inmates to maintain a sense of belonging to the community. Citizen volunteers have

consistently contributed the best of themselves, their time, talent, and enthusiasm for the benefit of the inmates.

Similarly, staff at many of our institutions, regional offices and the Central Office are active in volunteer efforts in their communities. For example, they maintain and develop partnerships with schools and professional organizations. To date, 26 such partnerships are maintained by Bureau staff. Staff volunteerism efforts also include mentoring; tutoring; clean-up efforts at National Park Service facilities; and blood, clothing, food, and monetary donations.

Staff volunteerism helps the Bureau identify potential employees, acquaints community members with Bureau operations, and enriches the lives of employees. Through their volunteer efforts, Bureau staff help to improve the quality of life in the communities where they live.

Finally, inmates volunteer in various programs such as bicycle repair, seed and harvest, knitting and crocheting, recycling, toy making, envelope stuffing, quilting, and monetary contributions to various relief efforts. These volunteer activities encourage constructive behavior among the inmate population.

Many thanks to each of you who volunteer. We appreciate your outstanding contributions to our institutions and communities.

Remember, "Volunteerism is Everybody's Business."

The Attorney General Volunteer Awards

Each year, the Attorney General selects recipients for the Department of Justice's Citizen Volunteer and Community Service Awards. This year, the Bureau nominated Dr. Gerald and Patricia Muncy from Safford, Arizona for the Citizen Volunteer Award, and the Metropolitan Detention Center (MDC) in Brooklyn, New York, for the Community Service Award.

We are proud to announce that on May 8, 2000, Dr. and Mrs. Muncy were awarded the 2000 Attorney General Citizen Volunteer Award. They have served as volunteers for the Religious Services Department at FCI Safford for 30 years.

Although MDC Brooklyn did not receive the Attorney General's Community Service Award, we commend the MDC's staff for their many efforts to foster positive community relations and supporting community functions.

AROUND THE NATION

Preservation of Bureau History

On January 15, 2000, approximately 25 staff and their families from FCI Dublin, California, volunteered a day's work to perform basic maintenance work inside the main cell house of the former United States Penitentiary (USP) on Alcatraz Island.

In conjunction with the United States Park Service, FCI Dublin is participating in a program to beautify Alcatraz Island, one of the most population destinations in the Golden Gate National Recreation Area. The tour of USP Alcatraz offers visitors the opportunity for a close-up look at a historic piece of Bureau history.

Through continued volunteer efforts, staff from FCI Dublin hope to help completely clean up the cell house and surrounding areas.

Central Office Makes a Giant Effort

The Central Office Volunteer Committee has a partnership in education agreement with River Terrace Elementary School in Northeast Washington, DC. As part of the agreement, Central Office staff participated in the Apples for the Students Program offered through Giant Food Stores, Inc.

The program encourages individuals and groups to collect Giant cash register receipts. The receipts may be redeemed for free computers and other educational equipment for area schools.

Central Office staff collected receipts from early January through late February. Approximately, \$30,000 worth of receipts was collected for the computer lab at River Terrace.

Representatives of the school appreciate the support of Central Office staff.

Chicago Hosts Special Volunteer

On February 24, the Metropolitan Correctional Center in Chicago hosted a special volunteer, Mr. Marvis Frazier, the son of "Smoking Joe Frazier." Mr. Frazier's visit was part of his one-week annual series of visits to correctional facilities. The purpose for these visits is to deliver an inspirational message and personal testimony to offenders.

Mr. Frazier, now a Pentacostal minister in Philadelphia and director of a boy's club, was a

heavy-weight boxing contender. Mr. Frazier is now committed to a new challenge as a member of Prison Fellowship. His Gospel messages and personal testimony have had an impact on many inmates.

Loretto Meets the Challenge

Competition is not always about sports. Staff at FCI Loretto, Pennsylvania, have recently engaged in friendly competition with staff at the State Correctional Institution (SCI) at Cresson, Pennsylvania, over contributions to area blood drives. The ongoing competition between the FCI and the SCI have resulted in a significant increase in blood donations for the local area. The FCI, with the participation of 20% of its employees, was declared the winner of a Red Cross Blood Drive challenge.

A portion of the blood donations was used to support a local teenager who is receiving multiple organ transplants. Local Red Cross officials indicate that the number of pints of blood collected exceeded the established goal.

Talladega Shelters Needy Family

FCI Talladega, Alabama, recently joined with the local chapter of Habitat for Humanity to build a home for a needy family. Approximately 20 minimum-security inmates from the prison's satellite camp, properly supervised by staff, participated in the construction over a period of ten Saturdays.

Staff, inmates, and volunteers from the community worked together to frame the house, install the roof and siding, hang sheetrock, and paint. Skilled laborers, including electricians, plumbers, and heating and air conditioning technicians, also volunteered.

Habitat for Humanity is a non-profit and non-denominational Christian organization. Its mission is to help build homes for economically disadvantaged families. Volunteer labor is used to build the homes.

Volunteering to Support Youth

FCI Safford, Arizona, is heavily involved in staff volunteerism. In January, Dolores Cardenas, Psychology Technician, volunteered at the local Boys and Girls Club as part of the community's "Free Your Mind" workshop for youth. Ms. Cardenas's presentation, "Prejudice - The Monster Within," was well received. Approximately 40 youth attended the event. The program was sponsored by the Graham County Youth Council and funded by a mini-grant from the Governor's Division of Volunteerism.

In February, the institution's training center was the site for an unusual youth program

requested by the fifth graders at Lafe Nelson School. The presentation was about prisons and prison life. Staff involved in this unique program were Manuel Vazquez, Executive Assistant; Keith McKinney, Inmate Systems Supervisor; and Susan Tellez, Case Manager.