

1. VOLUNTEERING IN LOCAL PRISONS

Belmarsh Prison, Western Way, Thamesmead, SE28 0EB

Volunteering for the Tea Bar, Information and Court Projects in prisoners' cells is dealt with by PACT*. Volunteers are also needed to help in the chaplaincy department (Telephone Trevor Jacquet on 020 8331 4400). The prison is setting up supporters' groups for the visits centre at Belmarsh and need volunteers for the committee (Contact PACT).

Brixton Prison, Jebb Avenue, SW2 5XT

Volunteers are needed for the children's play area and administration roles. This is dealt with by PACT* (ask for Laura Beard). To help with chaplaincy work, telephone 020 8588 6000 and ask for The Revd Phil Chadders.

* PACT (Prison Advice and Care Trust) deals with volunteering in Belmarsh and Brixton Prisons. Please contact them on 020 7735 9535.

Wandsworth Prison, Heathfield Road, SW18 3HS

Volunteers are needed in the Family Support Area to help checking in visitors, answering telephones and catering in the prison. Telephone 020 8874 4377 or 0208 588 4351 and ask for Angus who is in charge of the Family Support Area.

There are two prisons in Guildford Diocese which are only 100 metres from the border with Southwark Diocese:-

Downview Women's Prison, Sutton Lane, Sutton, SM2 5PD

There is a Mothers' Union branch in the prison run by Rosemary Whipp. She runs a craft session once a month on a Sunday afternoon. Up to 50 women turn up and at least 4 helpers are needed each session. If you are interested in helping, telephone Rosemary on 01737 359764 and she will chat to you and accompany you on a visit.

High Down Prison, Sutton Lane, Sutton, SM2 5PD

Volunteers are needed for administration work or serving refreshments in the Visitors' Centre and also for serving refreshments in the tea bar or helping in the children's play area, both of which are in the Inmates' Visits Centre inside the prison. Telephone 0207 147 6360 (Gloria Ross) or 0207 147 6322 (Graham Naylor).

IF YOU APPLY FOR ANY RÔLE IN A PRISON YOU WILL BE SECURITY CHECKED. Volunteers at Belmarsh have a rigorous security and terrorism check as it houses the highest security and terrorist prisoners so prepare to be patient.

2. OTHER HELP NEEDED

At High Down Prison

Donations of toys, sweets and toiletries at Christmas time which are given to prisoners' partners and children by 'Father Christmas'; Easter eggs for prisoners to 'give' to their children; unwanted toys and books for the play area in the Visits Centre; knitted matinee jackets and booties which are given to prisoners' partners on the birth of a new baby. Contact Gloria Ross on 0207 147 6360.

Writing to Prisoners

'Christmas Letters to Prisoners', established since 1880, despatches 10,000 handwritten letters each year to prisoners who receive no mail at all. All that is required of a volunteer is to carefully and accurately copy prepared scripts. Contact The Secretary, Christmas Letters to Prisoners, 52a, Whitehall Lane, South Norwood, London SE25 6RE.

Flowers

Each week Mothers' Union members put fresh flowers in the chapel at Tinsley House (Immigration Removal Centre) near Gatwick.

Christmas Cards for Prisoners

Many prisoners will be alone at Christmas far away from family and friends. Why not write a message in a Christmas card and it will be given to a serving prisoner before Christmas Day. NB: Do not include personal contact details; just brief messages of goodwill, e.g. 'Thinking of you this Christmas time'. Why not get your Mothers' Union branch members to sign it. Send your card or cards to:- Christmas Card for a Prisoner Appeal, Freepost RSGS-GRJY-ERXG, Prison Advice and Care Trust, Unit 1, Park Place, 10-12 Lawn Lane, London SW8 1UD

Dear Lord

We pray for all those who work in prisons — those who carry the responsibility for security and for care of prisoners.

We pray for all those who are prisoners because they have committed crimes. Please help them know that they are precious in your sight — that you lived and died that they might know you and receive forgiveness and a new beginning.

We pray for all those who are prisoners even though they have committed no crime — for those who have been wrongly imprisoned and for those who are prisoners of conscience, who have lost their freedom because they disagree with their country's regime. Please give them hope and courage.

We pray for the many Mothers' Union members who regularly visit prisoners and we give you thanks for their loving commitment and perseverance.

We pray for all families who have someone dear to them in prison. Please help them cope with the strains and stresses of long separation and all the practical difficulties of loss of income and support.

We pray especially for the children of prisoners; for those who are visiting, those in crèches and on parenting courses. Help us give care for the present and hope for the future.

In Jesus' Name, Amen

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More copies of this leaflet can be obtained from:

The Mothers' Union Office, Trinity House, 4, Chapel Court, Borough High Street, London SE1 1HW 020 7939 9459 or email: mu@southwark.anglican.org



Southwark Mothers' Union



How to Help with Prison Work

Mothers' Union members have always been active in helping in prisons.

Having a close friend or member of the family in prison can be a very stressful experience. Volunteers are usually the first point of call for people visiting a prisoner and, by treating everyone with respect and dignity in a sympathetic and non-judgmental way, volunteers can go some way to help reduce that stress.

As a result of imprisonment, a significant proportion of children lose contact with their imprisoned mother or father, and many parents separate during imprisonment. As well as normal visiting, some prisons have Family and Baby Days so prisoners can bond with their children.

The rôle is not to convert to Christianity.