



PENNSYLVANIA
PRISON SOCIETY

PEOPLE POWERED

2022 ANNUAL REPORT

[PRISONSOCIETY.ORG](https://prisonsociety.org)

We Are the
Go-to for People
in Prison & Their
Families



3,894

Helpline Calls
Answered

3,048

Letters
Sent

1,234

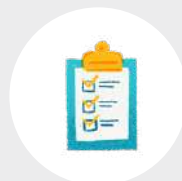
Prison Visit Reports
Filed By Volunteers

300

Volunteer Prison
Monitors

WHO WE ARE

We work to protect the health, safety, and dignity of incarcerated people in Pennsylvania.



WE MONITOR & MEDIATE

We are the sole organization in the Commonwealth with legal authority to visit any prison or jail.



WE CONNECT

In a prison system that causes isolation by design, we believe in a better way.



WE MAKE IT HUMAN

Because it is.

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

POWER OF THE PEOPLE

In 1787, three months before the start of the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia, our nation's founders established the Prison Society. They did so out of a belief that all citizens, including those who were incarcerated, were entitled to lives of "virtue and happiness."

In 1829, the Pennsylvania legislature granted the Prison Society the authority to enter any prison in the commonwealth. It gave the Society this access out of a belief that, without citizens checking in on their incarcerated neighbors "the lowest common denominator of prison conditions would prevail."

At its core, the Prison Society embodies the principles of neighbors helping neighbors, citizens holding the government to account, and the entitlement of all Americans to pursue happiness.

In 2022, more than ever, Prison Society staff and volunteers are on the ground working to protect the health, safety, and dignity of the 62,000 Pennsylvanians living in confinement. Not a day goes by that we are not in a facility helping someone directly, calming a family member, or providing policymakers the vital information they need to make Pennsylvania's prisons safer and more humane.

Over the course of the pandemic, our volunteer and supporter base has grown. As you will read in these pages, the Pennsylvanians who volunteer with and support the Prison Society make a profound difference in individual lives. Every day, the Society manifests the vision our founders articulated of a Pennsylvania in which we extend benevolence to all, including people in prison.

The Power of Family and Friends

While the Prison Society's founders focused on the power of citizens, the power of family and friends is essential. A recent Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) report on the subject found that people who received frequent visits from loved ones while in prison were significantly less likely to return to jail than those who did not receive visits. In fact, getting frequent visits was more predictive of successful community reentry than educational level or participation in therapeutic prison programming.

Nevertheless, the Department of Corrections continues to maintain pandemic-era restrictions that seriously limit family visits, and some county facilities have eliminated them altogether.

It is in moments like this one, when correctional institutions pursue policies counter to public safety and community well-being, that the Prison Society is needed most. It is for us, Prison Society supporters and volunteers, to bring attention to these policies, and to work to end them.

We thank you for joining us in this critical work.

Onward,



Claire Shubik-Richards

CLAIRE SHUBIK-RICHARDS
Executive Director

We are in all 62 county facilities and 23 state correctional institutions in Pennsylvania

HOW HAS THE PRISON SOCIETY HELPED YOU?

- 01

"I don't think you guys understand how much you mean to me. I have no family, no friends, no acquaintances on the outer side. Besides you guys, every time I get a letter from you, I release a sigh of relief, that I am not alone in this world."

-SCI Houtzdale
- 02

"I am so grateful for Prison Society volunteers. Prison advocacy is so important as this is a significantly overlooked, judged, and mistreated population, so I am deeply grateful for your organization and your work."

-SCI Camp Hill
- 03

"Thank you for your help. I seriously thought I was alone in this...I'm trying to take care of everything and it's so stressful."

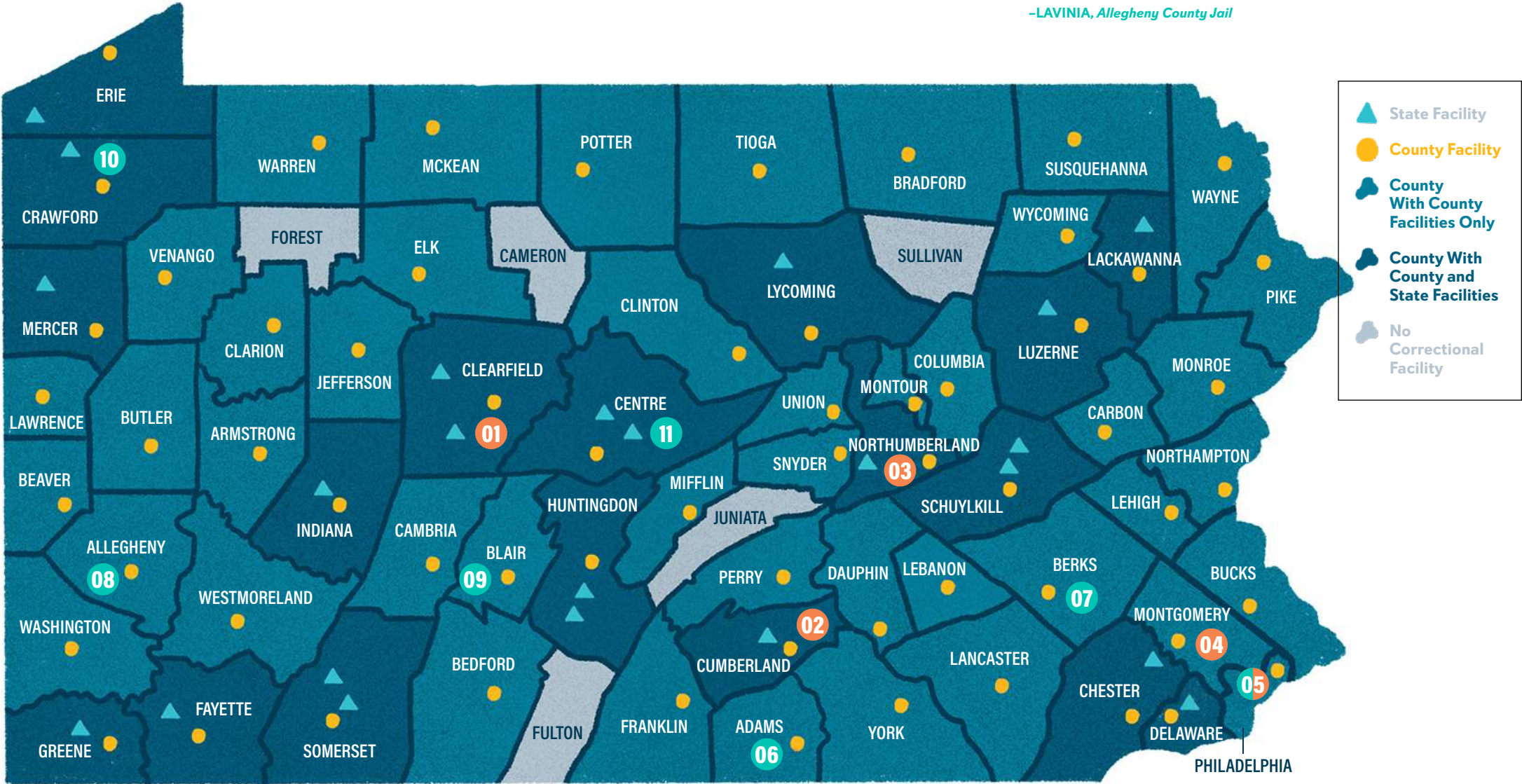
-SCI Coal Township
- 04

"Thank you for listening to me and showing me kindness."

-SCI Phoenix
- 05

"Words can't even express what you all mean to my son and me and countless others and their families as well."

-Philadelphia County Jail



WHAT DO YOU ENJOY MOST ABOUT BEING A VOLUNTEER?

- 05

"Knowing that I can be an empathetic listener and reporter for individuals who have no power otherwise and hope accumulated reports will have a larger impact over time in holding the prison system accountable and pushing it toward more humane practices."

-LAURA, Philadelphia County Jails
- 06

"Doing relatively simple (often, not always), concrete things that help an incarcerated person know they matter and sometimes really helps them out of a jam."

-HARRIET, Adams County Jail
- 07

"Being available to comfort families and persons in need and stress."

-JOHN, Berks County Jail
- 08

"Making people feel as if they matter and providing assistance to those who feel voiceless."

-LAVINIA, Allegheny County Jail
- 09

"Helping to better the conditions and treatment in our county jail."

-JACK, Blair County Jail
- 10

"Being able to ease the minds of incarcerated individuals by getting answers that they can't access."

-ESTHER, SCI Cambridge Springs Jail (Crawford County)
- 11

"The ability to help people who need to be heard."

-FLAVIA, Centre County Jail

Stories of Us

LARRY ▼ Dawn's Story



KEN ▼ Ken's Story

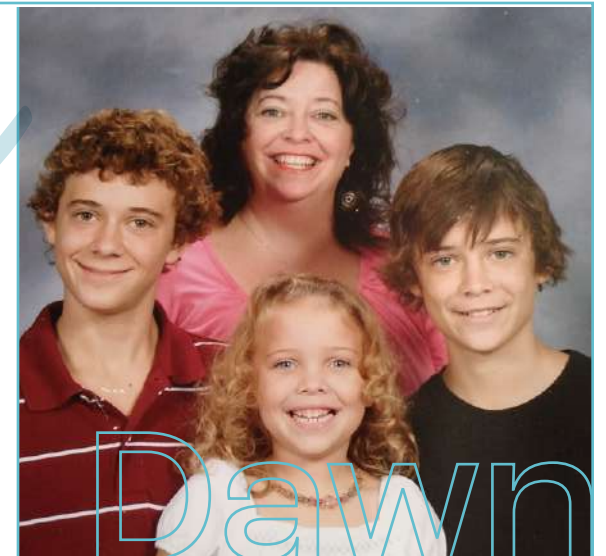


JOE (PRISON SOCIETY MENTORING ASSOCIATE) + MALIK ▼ Malik's Story



Dawn

My Larry suffers from a mental illness, a learning disability, and a speech disorder and is currently imprisoned at SCI Benner. Parents who have children like I do, we have to advocate for them. But I can't do much of anything on the outside for my son.



As a kid, Larry was a real talker. He was very sweet and social and the kids in the neighborhood just loved him. But on the very first day of high school, he was offered drugs. After his substance abuse started, Larry declined quickly. He began committing crimes to feed his addictions and eventually ended up in prison. It all happened so fast.

A couple of times, he has said to me, "Mom, what happened? Why am I in here?" He just doesn't understand how he ended up in prison. Larry became very withdrawn and stopped really speaking to anyone, even me. He stopped speaking in complete sentences and would only say "yes," "no," "yes." It was all so terrorizing and scary for him.

Visits helped, but it's a two-and-a-half hour drive one way. I can't make it there more than once a month. Meanwhile, Larry didn't know who he could trust and who to turn to for help. He was terribly anxious and just kept ending up in solitary confinement. There are so many ways you can get in trouble in prison, and for people with mental illness, it's hard to figure it all out. I felt so helpless and alone and didn't know who to turn to. Eventually, I found the Prison Society.

Once I became connected with the Prison Society, things started falling into place. I so appreciate that the staff took the time to listen to what we were going through. It felt as if I had a friend. From there, they determined my son could benefit from a volunteer visit.

Nancy was just amazing and so warm. She contacted me before visiting Larry to better understand what was going on. Once she got in there, I just saw huge improvement. Somehow she was able to break through the hurt, distrust, and hopelessness. Larry really gravitated toward her professionalism and her expertise. She could explain things to him that I couldn't, and help him organize an approach to his day-to-day life. I saw so much hope come back to my son. He began asking me questions like, "How are you, mom? How was your work week?" and I hadn't heard that in years.

Before Nancy, Larry didn't say one positive thing in five years. With her help, he has stayed out of solitary confinement and in the general population. For me, it speaks volumes to Nancy's love for what she does. We are so very grateful for her willingness to give up her own personal time to visit with incarcerated people. At this point, Nancy has more of an influence on my son's well being than anyone. And I mean that 100 percent, not only because of the trust she's established with Larry, but also with prison staff who respect her and the Prison Society tremendously. I believe Larry is going to be able to give his own testimony one day about the Prison Society, and it's going to be beautiful.

We both have hope.

Behind the Scenes

A CLOSER LOOK AT THE WORK YOU MAKE POSSIBLE.

MAKING THE NEWS

Stories of understaffed, overcrowded, unsafe prisons still dominate the headlines in the wake of the pandemic.



HELPING PEOPLE ON A DAILY BASIS



On any given day, we receive dozens of phone calls and letters. With your support, we've increased our helpline staff and reduced response time from several weeks to several days.

The Prison Monitoring team dispatches our statewide network of volunteers to visit people in prison experiencing problems.

This year, we hired our first regional manager. With Anais on the ground in Pittsburgh, we've doubled the number of people seen in western Pennsylvania prisons in the first 10 months.



Anais with community organizers in Eerie.

ADVOCATING FOR MORE HUMANE PRISONS



We make regular visits to Harrisburg to talk with elected leaders and policy makers to shed light on what's happening in the Pennsylvania prisons they're responsible for. This past year, we met with more than 36 elected officials across the Commonwealth.

"Our education and advocacy goal is simple, it's shining a light to spark empathy, and to allow for informed decision making about the most invisible Pennsylvanians, people living behind bars."

— ANTON ANDREW, EDUCATION & ADVOCACY FELLOW

Each week, the Prison Society staff (pictured above) puts our unique access to good use providing original reporting on what's happening behind bars in Pennsylvania in our weekly Supporter Updates.

Through your generosity, we can provide critical context and trusted analysis you can't find anywhere else.

SCAN HERE TO EXPLORE OUR WORK AND SIGN UP FOR WEEKLY UPDATES:



Annual Award Winners

Meet our annual award winners. This year's award winners exemplify the best of our community and are living proof to the impact of our mission.



Heather Lavelle*

Incarcerated Person of the Year, SCI Muncy

Tutor, legal aid, certified peer support specialist—these are just some of the many roles Heather Lavelle has taken on since coming to SCI Muncy with a life sentence in 2006 while assisting in her fellow residents and commitment to sentencing reform.

“My work is always grounded in the knowledge of what I’ve done and hope that I can always do better. Not in spite of but because of the depths to which I sank.”

**Unfortunately, we’re unable to show Heather’s face due to a dehumanizing Pennsylvania rule that we are fighting to change.*



James Archer

Correctional Employee of the Year, SCI Chester

As a reentry parole agent at SCI Chester, James Archer connects incarcerated people with the support they need to transition to life back home.

“A lot of people say that I go above and beyond, but honestly it’s just doing what’s necessary, and what’s required...”



Phyllis Taylor

Volunteer of the Year, SCI Phoenix

Phyllis Taylor has long served as a persistent advocate for incarcerated people in Pennsylvania. She refuses to give up in the face of adversity.

“I know of no other group (Prison Society) that provides the kind of consistent outreach to those who really often feel abandoned.”

HEAR FROM OUR AWARD WINNERS! SCAN HERE:



FEATURED SUPPORTERS

Your Support Makes Our Work Possible

Southwestern Pennsylvania and the Prison Society

Through the generous support of the **Howard Heinz Endowment**, **Mary Hillman Jennings Foundation**, and **the Pittsburgh Foundation**, we have seen tremendous engagement in the West. Thanks to the work of our new Western Pennsylvania Prison Monitoring Manager Anais Hussain, we have gone from five to 15 volunteer prison monitors in the Pittsburgh region; and we have increased the number of people we assist in Western Pennsylvania overall from 178 in 2021 to 266 in the first 10 months of 2022. The increased presence and impact of the Prison Society in the Southwest region is most profoundly felt in the Allegheny County Jail (ACJ), where prison monitors can be found one to two times a week.

We offer tremendous thanks to all the funders that helped further our critical work:

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Pennsylvania State Senate
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Vera Institute



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13th Street Cocktail Catering and South Philly Barbacoa

The Prison Society was honored to partner with 13th Street Cocktail Catering and South Philly Barbacoa for our Spring Social, graciously hosted by David and Rebecca Thornburgh. Cocktail master Aaron Gordon of 13th Street Cocktails was the conduit for this unique partnership, which brought together the Prison Society and The People’s Kitchen, a nonprofit run by South Philly Barbacoa restaurateurs Benjamin Miller and Cristina Martinez, who deliciously catered the evening. It was a beautiful night to gather with some of our most dedicated supporters and friends, and we were pleased to see one another safely in person.

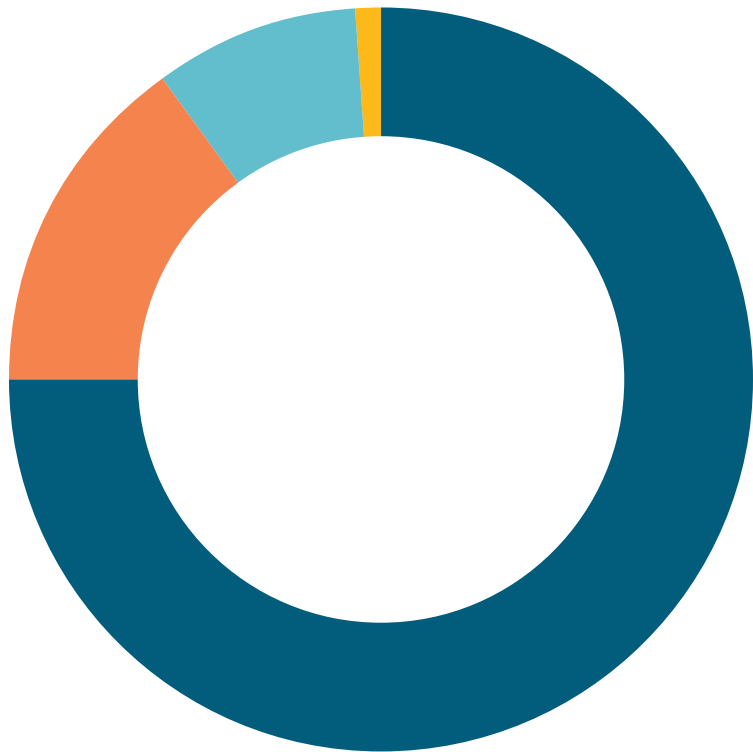
Financial Report

Thanks to the generosity of so many, 2022 was our most impactful year yet. We raised more money, reached more people, and changed more lives than ever before.

“As the new Development Director, it has been an honor to begin building relationships with our many supporters, and I look forward to making more connections in the coming year. We are deeply grateful to the philanthropic individuals, corporations, foundations, and the State of Pennsylvania for investing in our work to ensure that incarcerated people across the state are treated with dignity and care. I’m struck by the kindness and generosity of this community, and by their strong commitment to doing more and doing better.”

— EMILY CHERAMIE WALZ, DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

REVENUE



GRANTS	75%	ENDOWMENT DISTRIBUTION	1%
INDIVIDUAL DONATIONS	15%	OTHER	0%
PROGRAM REVENUE	9%		

TOTAL REVENUE **\$1,380,000**

EXPENDITURES



PROGRAM	77%
ADMINISTRATION	16%
FUNDRAISING	7%

Thank You!

We’re constantly inspired by our community of passionate supporters. They’re the reason we can make a difference. In 2022, YOU grew stronger than ever.

DONOR FEATURE

Michael P. Buckley

TWO-DECADE DONOR TO THE PENNSYLVANIA PRISON SOCIETY



“I would like to share my thoughts on my long time support in donating to the Pennsylvania Prison Society. Since its founding back in 1787, the Pennsylvania Prison Society has been serving incarcerated persons and their families with dignity, concern, and support. I was attracted to the mission of the Prison Society because it is a true “dirty jobs” charity and non-profit organization that treat all persons, irrespective of the crimes that they have committed and the harm that their actions have caused, as fellow human beings with respect while serving their sentences behind bars and providing an important bridge to reentry back into public life. The Society recognizes that the vast majority of incarcerated individuals serve

their time and then go back into public life with their families and their neighborhoods. The Society provides prisoners and their families with educational resources and tools and acts as a core message board on prison reform and criminal justice issues and legislation. The Society has been a terrific advocate for prison reform. This monitoring and reporting on the care of incarcerated individuals, has been a vital service during the COVID pandemic and beyond. The Society’s reports and articles on prison conditions, criminal justice regulations, and legislation are important sources of facts and information. I applaud the ongoing work and advocacy of the Society’s Prison Monitor volunteers, who meet directly with incarcerated individuals in all 85 of the State’s prisons and County jails, gather information on prison conditions, and tirelessly advocate for the fair treatment of all persons behind bars.

I value the contributions made by the Pennsylvania Prison Society and wish it continued success in carrying out its mission and advocacy.”

Donors

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Evan Urbana and Matthew Ray are the founders of Philadelphia's fastest growing digital media company Chatterblast Media (CBM). The

Prison Society has been a pro bono client of CBM since 2019. With the support of their team of experts managing our social media, we've built a strong digital voice, grown following across all our socials, and increased support from individual donors who make our work possible.

INTERNS

Each semester, we are overwhelmed by the ability and dedication of our interns. Interested in learning more about the program? Scan the QR code. →



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VOLUNTEERS

We stand on the shoulders of a passionate group of volunteers who make our work across the state possible.

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[Our Community Advisory Council of formerly incarcerated people and family members plays an invaluable role in helping us continuously improve our services and outreach.](#)

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WHAT'S AHEAD

SAVE THE DATE!

June 2023 Block Party TRIBECA, NY

This New York-based Block Party silent auction will give guests the chance to bid on a selection of pieces by some of the biggest names in art. More details will be announced in the new year.

SAVE THE DATE!

Spring 2023 Pittsburgh Spring Social PITTSBURGH, PA

Details for this Western Pennsylvania gathering of friends, new and old, will be announced soon!

Every action counts and we're counting on you.

TOGETHER WE CAN DO SO MUCH MORE.



DONATE and take a stand for human rights and just criminal laws. Your contribution helps us tell the truth boldly, hold power to account, and care for our fellow citizens.



VOLUNTEER and join our work inside and outside of prisons. We offer a range of opportunities to fit your interests and availability.



PARTNER with us. Join our team of corporate partners to make an impact that is mutually beneficial to your company and the Prison Society.

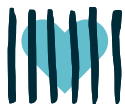


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PENNSYLVANIA PRISON SOCIETY

230 S. Broad Street, Suite 605
Philadelphia, PA 19102

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