



Corrections Correspondence

— a special kind
of A.A. Service

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I know how important our Twelfth Step work is and I enjoy writing to men who are locked up. It is one of the tools that I use to keep me sober. I myself found A.A. in prison almost 20 years ago. And it hasn't been necessary for me to return to prison since I was released in 1979. —Outside Correspondent

We are in need of A.A. members on the “outside” to correspond with A.A. members in correctional facilities.

It is suggested that men correspond with men and women with women. Most of the inmates who want an outside correspondent are men, so we are appealing to men on the outside.

If you would like to share your experience, strength and hope with A.A.s who are confined, please mail the tear-off form to G.S.O.'s Corrections Desk. The name of an inmate will be sent to you from your General Service Office and you will make the initial contact through the mail.

Those who have participated in this service have found sharing with inmates a very gratifying form of Twelfth Step work. We are happy to know there are A.A. members like you willing to help make it possible for the A.A. message to be carried to those on the “inside.”

Guidelines for Corrections Correspondence Service

Welcome to one of the most rewarding and rarely mentioned forms of Twelfth Step work.

A.A. General Service Office, Box 459
Grand Central Station, New York, NY 10163

In addition to observing the rules in Correctional Facilities regarding mail and correspondence, the following are suggested guidelines drawn from shared experience to help you when writing to A.A. members on the “inside:” To begin, remember that when writing to an inmate, *you must use your last name on the envelope* or it will not be accepted by most institutions. The G.S.O. does not forward CCS mail.

1. We introduce ourselves by qualifying briefly in our opening letter.
2. We try to let the inmate know that writing, like all forms of sharing, helps us as much as it helps him or her.
3. We let the inmate know that he or she is not alone.
4. Most correspondents use their home address, since we match up correspondents from different regions. Some correspondents *ask permission* of their A.A. group or intergroup/central office to use the office P.O. Box for receiving mail.
5. We share sobriety and sobriety only.
6. We have found it best for all concerned if no emotional or romantic involvements develop.
7. If there is a desire to send a gift for a special occasion, we make it an A.A. book, A.A. literature, or Grapevine material. (Before sending literature, see if the facility will allow it. Many Correctional Facilities will permit inmates to receive only literature sent directly from the publishers.) Also, some facilities do not allow inmates to receive stamps or preaddressed, stamped envelopes.
8. In the spirit of the Twelfth Tradition, we respect the anonymity of our correspondents.
9. We encourage “inside” A.A. group activity and stress that first meeting *the day* the inmate leaves confinement.
10. We encourage “inside” correspondents to notify G.S.O. prior to their release so that G.S.O. can set up a prerelease contact from their home community.

Thank you for your willingness to share in this most important work.



CORRESPONDENCE FORM — for Outside A.A. Members Only

CCS-3

PLEASE PRINT - Return to address below

I am a **MALE** **FEMALE** (please circle one)

Name: _____ How many inmates are you able to write to?: _____

(First and Last)

Address: _____

(P.O. Box or Street Address, City, State or Province, Postal or Zip Code)

Corrections Desk, General Service Office, Box 459, New York, NY 10163

Direct: (212) 870-3085 E-mail: corrections@aa.org Fax: (212) 870-3003 Web site: www.aa.org