

"Why Do Good?"

"During this thirteen year span of incarceration here, I have never seen so much time wasted! Card games, meaningless relationships, no motivation to work or to take advantage of all the free education provided, are only some of the concerns that should be addressed instead of placing the focus on so many trivial elements. Why such a lack of motivation; and what can be done to change the mind-set of the prison population?"

These questions can produce no simple answers. This is a more complex plight which must be approached strategically... Being that we all have had different life experiences and come from diverse backgrounds, not any one of us reasons in the exact same way as another individual. What drives and inspires me, may not drive or inspire someone else. Hence, the complexity of the plight!

How have they not been able

to compartmentalize this problem, then assemble it together collectively to form a whole, a solution? Punishment for unacceptable behavior is decided quickly, and unjustly at times. Yet, there is still no resolution to what plagues the majority of disinterested offenders.

IS it that they have given up hope? Many have. Many have not. Maybe they see no way out. But maybe... Maybe they do not feel compelled, nor inspired to be productive because they feel that there is no need! Why try?

What is the point when there is no incentive? No one is here to be held. We are not children. There is no prize to be won. But, there is no encouragement from the administration. Why not give people something positive to look forward to for their hard work? The positive always escapes unnoticed, while the negative is constantly overemphasized. If reform

is the goal, how can they not see that this is a problem in itself?

Institutional Programs include, but are not limited to:

- Angel Management
- M.I.L.H.
- Parenting
- Narcotics Anonymous
- Alcoholics Anonymous
- Dog Handler Training (Pen

Patrol)

- Health Living It
- Matrix: Substance Abuse
- Sex Offender Treatment

Program

- Thinking for a Change
- Cognitive Community
- PREPS (Preventing Recidivism by Educating for Parole Success)
- Resources for Successful

Living

- Ready to Work
- Restorative Justice: Handling

Conflict

- Veteran's Support Group

Additional programs will be developed based on interests and needs of the offender population.

While some offenders may actually enjoy these programs and find them helpful, many do not and only attend to meet the requirements of their Case Plan. Many do not consider such programs as an incentive and would not voluntarily participate.

The Anger Management program alone is diverting! Several offenders have completed this same program at least three times! It is apparent that nothing was learned because not only are they still angry, but they end up repeating the program.

To me, the only incentive-based institutional programs are the Parenting and M.I.L.K. Programs. M.I.L.K. is an acronym for Mothers Inside Loving Kids, of which I have been a member since 2008. Not only is the Parenting Program a prerequisite for M.I.L.K., but ameliorating in itself! Though the objective for both

programs is parallel, there is something beneficial to take away from them each.

The M.I.L.K. Program is an excellent way for us to remain connected with our children; and the children with one another who share similar circumstances. This is a healthy way for us mothers to continue strengthening the bond we have with the children who really need us. Speaking from personal experience, I can honestly say that this program has been very beneficial for my children. And for me as well because it has provided me with the opportunity to watch them grow from toddlers into the young men that they are now.

Our program was reinstated only two weeks ago after being cancelled for nearly two years for no inexcusable grounds. For many of us whom do care to attempt to successfully parent our children from the

inside, the cancellation of our sisterhood was devastating! I can only imagine the devastation it caused our poor children! For me, as well as the rest of my M.I.L.K. sisters, our program provides us with the ultimate incentive to continue doing good.

This institution offers nine educational programs. There are college based. Five are vocational courses. The remaining one is the GEO Program. And sadly, one too many offenders have been enrolled in the program for an excessive amount of time.

In speaking to other offenders, I have been informed that they have been on the waiting list for years just to take one vocational course! What seems to be wrong with this picture? Now your eligibility for vocational courses is also based on your release date. Whether you have a short amount of time, or a life sentence, the eagerness to learn

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should be the most important determining factor for eligibility. People become frustrated and give up altogether. Some are released without ever having had the opportunity to receive any type of education!

What administration deems as incentives include the Access Secure Food Packages; the Women's Summits; and Fun Day. Is that all we have to look forward to which is to be the driving force toward a healthy and successful period of incarceration? If that's all, I can understand the reason people ask, "Why Do Good?"

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