

Making Spirits Bright....From Prison

By

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What is the first thing that comes to mind when you hear about a men's medium security prison? Probably not the most happiest of thoughts. Moreover, what if I were to tell you about a group of over 130 offenders that held a candy donation, among themselves, in order to help the local community at Christmas? It may not capture the top of the news hour as some of their crimes did, however, the story shows that humanity and the desire to assist others does not eclipse when the cell door closes the incarcerated from the rest of society.

The Moberly Correctional Center (MCC) located in Moberly, Missouri, houses roughly 1700 men serving sentences for a variety of offenses. Inside of the fifteen-foot razor wire fences is Housing Unit Four, which consists of two wings, A Wing and C Wing, which holds sixty-six men per each wing. The Therapeutic Community (TC), located in A Wing, was created in 2012. It is a structured wing that allows offenders a path for growth, personal development, and an environment free from the typical prison distractions. The men in the TC unit must take classes, volunteer to clean their living environment, and maintain a monthly tracking sheet to show their therapeutic gain. With their Mission Statement that begins, "*Through positive thinking, inspiration, accountability, and dedication, we are transforming individuals...*", the Therapeutic Community exemplifies positivity and rehabilitation in the correctional setting.

The Veterans Program, in C Wing, with its signature flagpole displaying the U.S. flag in the front, houses military veterans from all the branches of service. Founded in 2017, the wing offers veterans specific resources to assist in their transition back into the community. From

mental health services, to the local Veterans Administration Hospital involvement, the Veterans Wing promotes a structured living environment that revives a sense of duty from their prior military service. In their Mission Statement that reads, "*To reduce recidivism in the Veterans Community by restoring our Honor and means to succeed*", the men are always in search of humanitarian and restorative justice projects. The Veterans Wing at MCC is the pilot program for the entire Missouri Department of Corrections.

The Community Kitchen, in Moberly, is funded solely by donations and is run by volunteers. They serve healthy home cooked meals to approximately 125 guests twice a week that are having a hard time making ends meet. With the headline news showing the economic impact of COVID, inflation, and merchandise shortages at stores, the men yearned to do something different this year. They wanted the kind of venture that would positively impact someone's life. The majority of the men come from low socioeconomic backgrounds that include being raised in group homes, the Division of Youth Services, and living on government assistance. They know hardships first hand. However, nobody ever forgets their childhood memories of the sweet bliss in possessing a bag of assorted candies. Thus, the proposal to the prison's administration for a candy drive was submitted and approved.

On December 20, 2021, two large boxes of candy that was solely donated by the men of Housing Unit Four, weighing a total of thirty-four lbs, was picked up by a volunteer from the Community Kitchen. Inside of America's prisons, sadness, homesickness, and depression resonate through the cell walls. In many cases, the incarcerated do not have the opportunity to participate in altruistic projects. The Christmas of 2021, men from Housing Unit Four's Therapeutic Community and Veterans Program, came together and made a difference not only in the local community, but also in their own lives.

FOUR HOUSE



Operation Candy For Kids



We are collecting bags of candy for local children who's families are having a hard time making ends meet this Christmas.

All donations will go to the Community Kitchen in Moberly.

Please turn in all items by December 20th.

Let's show the local community what we are capable of!