

**Friends of Iowa
Women Prisoners**

FRIENDS OF IOWA WOMEN PRISONERS
PO Box 71272, Clive, IA 50325
email: fiwp2011@gmail.com
website: friendsofiowawomenprisoners.org

MEETING TIME AND LOCATION

Tuesday, September 15, 2015

12:00-1:00 p.m.

Wesley United Methodist Church

800 E. 12th Street

Des Moines, IA 50316-4304

Brown bag lunch

MISSION STATEMENT

To bring together and inform individuals and groups concerned about women in the Iowa correctional system and to act on their behalf.

INTRODUCTIONS and ANNOUNCEMENTS

Mark your calendars for the Right Next Door Conference, October 16 & 17, sponsored by Women at the Well and Prison Congregations of America.

REPORTS

ICIW Report – Warden Patti Wachtendorf

Fresh Start – Peggy Urtz

Treasurer – Rosemary Jungmann

PROGRAM/FOCUS

We welcome to our September meeting Marisa Mickunas, Jail Diversion Service Coordinator. Marisa is employed by Eyerly Ball in their community mental health division. She received her Masters Degree from Drake in Rehabilitation Counseling.

Marisa has worked in substance abuse, youthful offenders, prison reentry, assisting individuals with employment/education needs and most recently with seriously mentally ill individuals in jail and those recently released.

She works at the Polk County Jail and in the community helping those individuals with the transition. This includes assisting them in obtaining the many resources they need upon release, such as housing, mental health and other medical needs, reinstating Medicaid, food stamps, SSI benefits and all other safety net programs. She works directly with probation and parole officers. The goal of the program is to decrease recidivism and improve quality of life.

RECAP OF AUGUST 2015 MEETING

We welcomed to our August meeting *Voices to be Heard* leader Peggy Agular. Misty Hanson-Conner founded Voices in 2008 when the father of her children committed a crime that left them afraid and embarrassed. The co-founder was Melissa Gradishnig, Child and Family Policy

Center's lead outreach coordinator specializing in early-childhood care, health and education and family-strengthening initiatives. The group for the first several years met at Union Park UMC and now meets at Wesley UMC, every first and third Tuesday evening in the same space we occupy earlier in the day.

Their vision is: Every family's voice of suffering, grief, shame and abandonment from dealing with an incarcerated loved one will be heard and dealt with in a healthy way. Their mission is: To support one another in such a way that helps prepare families through sentencing, incarceration anticipated release, parole and probation.

Peggy works with Melissa Gradishnig who serves as lead outreach coordinator for the Child and Family Policy Center. She coaches the life skills/education component of *Voices to be Heard*. Peggy has over 30 years of experience working with those housed at Fort Des Moines Correction Facility, Project Iowa participants and residents of Central Iowa Shelter and Services. The work has included teaching, coaching and case management for those desiring employment. Peggy also has led workshops including Asset Mapping, Conducting an Effective meeting, resident leadership and facilitation with the faith and non-profit communities in Des Moines, Atlanta, Chicago and Hartford. Peggy works with very diverse populations in terms of socio-economic status, race, ethnicity, faith and sexual orientation.

Voices started as a support group, it is now also working in schools providing support groups for kids. In prisons, ICIW, Fort Dodge and others, doing life skills classes teaching how the parents can still have a positive experience with their children. They provide camps: Camp Hope for younger children and the 4-H Camp for the 13-14 year olds. They get a special rate of \$20. Money is raised through a fundraiser dinner and silent auction, and donations from individuals and Blue Cross. They also provide scholarships for sports equipment. Their summer program for teens teaches life skills: punctuality, getting along with co-workers, attendance, how to dress.

UPCOMING PROGRAM

We will welcome Comfort Dondo-Dewey from the *Coalition Against Domestic Violence* to our October meeting. Comfort was born and raised in Harare Zimbabwe, she now makes her home in Wauke. Besides her work against Domestic Violence here in Des Moines, she represents the people of Zimbabwe at the United Nations and works closely with UN Women and the United Nations Foundation.

FIWP LEADERSHIP TEAM

Jean Baser	jabwab@msn.com	277-6296
Betty Christensen	bettychris@mchsi.com	
Vi Darsee	vddarsee@q.com	225-8349
Dianne Fagner:		277-5406
Kirk Nessel:	knesset@meccaia.com	
Rosemary Jungmann:	jungmannr@gmail.com	229-5421
Deb Theeler:	Deb4tc@yahoo.com	402-6909
John Zeitler:	carmenandjohn@aol.com	710-7785