

## **Prison Books Annual Report, 2021-2022**

The Prison Books Program gathers donated books from area public libraries and individual donations, sorts them, and distributes them in bulk to Michigan prisons. We work with prison librarians and they work with the wardens and prison staff. We have more than 30 volunteers available to assist in all areas. The program spent another year in comparative inaction, although there was considerable email traffic from prospective donors and new volunteers. Many people were cleaning out their bookshelves and/or wanting to work to gather and deliver books. All prisons continued to suffer large Covid infection rates and low staffing.

There were 3068 usable books donated by individuals and public libraries. Some donations were too old, in bad condition, or not appropriate and were discarded or recycled. Quincy Northrup and Sara Matthews helped to sort through individual donations.

Diane McCarthy and Phyllis Valentine delivered 1400 books to the Huron Valley Women's prison. Dave Schwab, Mark Sanderson, and Dick Barber delivered 700 books to two Jackson complex prisons; another 500 books were delivered and then retrieved when a Jackson prison was unable to process them.

As Covid wanes and prison staffing hopefully increases, we have some areas to investigate in the coming year: potential collaboration with the UU Church of Greater Lansing, additional delivery areas using volunteers living in those areas, increased referral to an agency that provides books to individual prisoners.

Submitted by Phyllis Valentine and Dave Schwab