



New Leaf New Life, Inc.  
1010 South Walnut Street Suite H  
Bloomington, Indiana 47401



# New Leaf New Life

Quarterly Newsletter

March 2015 - Issue 4

# Hello!

Hi! We hope you all are keeping warm! This is New Leaf New Life's fourth quarterly newsletter. We will be sending this out four times a year to keep you updated on the work we are doing in Monroe County, Indiana, as well as community resources and legislation. Please write us with any suggestions for information you would like to see included in the newsletter.

Always feel free to write Sam (Transition Program Manager), Barney (Employment Counselor), Billy (Assistant Manager) & Dennis (Fundraising Assistant) at New Leaf New Life 1010 S. Walnut Street Suite H, Bloomington, Indiana 47401 with any questions or concerns about the re-entry process. We are happy to establish a written, casework relationship with you. This could include discussions of goal setting, re-entry resources, relapse prevention, resume-building, communication skills, parenting skills, resources accessible while incarcerated, etc.

You are in our thoughts,

Sam

Transition Program Manager

Transition Support Center at New Leaf New Life, Inc.

## New Reentry Court Program Now Accepting Applicants

The Monroe County Reentry Court is a newly launched program that aims to reduce sentence time and help participants transition back into their communities. Some of the participant requirements include weekly contact with the judge, day reporting, random drug screenings, regular case management, and treatment. Participants are required to be in the program for a minimum of a year. Reentry allows the client to return home early and results in no probation/parole upon successful completion. The participant must be a Monroe county resident and be serving a sentence under a Monroe county cause number only. If you have less than three years left of your sentence and are interested in applying, please contact "Re-entry Court Inquiries" at NLNL 1010 South Walnut St, Suite H, Bloomington, IN 47401. Please include any program that you have been involved with pre- or post-sentence, including the name of the program, the duration of your involvement, and how you were involved (including any leadership positions). Also include any housing or employment plans upon release. If you are a current or past resident of the air dorm, please also include this information in your letter (as New Leaf New Life may be able to provide reference letters in some cases).



## Requesting Books

If you want to receive free books, you can request books from the Midwest Pages to Prisoners Project. Since most of their books are used, people in facilities that prohibit used books will have a greatly limited selection. They are able to send 2 or 3 books once every 2 months.

Books can be requested through the mail by sending a letter to:

The Midwest Pages to Prisoners Project  
c/o Boxcar Books and Community Center, Inc.  
408 E. 6th St.  
Bloomington, IN 47408

The letter should include your name, DOC#, facility name, mailing address, any restrictions on books being sent to their facility (for example: no hardcover books, invoice required, etc.), and the kind of books that you would like.

If you have already sent in a request and are waiting for a book, please know that Pages is filling hundreds and hundreds of requests, so there may be some delay.

## Zine Distro

You can also request zines from the Zine Distro, which catalogues over 115 zines on topics including prison reform and abolition, queer and trans issues, radical history, and texts from Indiana prisoners. The Zine Distro is intended to compliment the work already done by Pages by offering literature to those seeking political material.

## MacArthur Foundation Initiative

The MacArthur Foundation, a private foundation that supports non-profit organizations internationally, recently announced a \$75 million initiative toward improving local justice systems. The initiative includes a Safety and Justice Plan, which is described by the foundation in a press release as, “a competition through which the Foundation will fund up to 20 jurisdictions to design and implement plans for creating fairer, more effective local justice systems using innovative, collaborative, and evidence-based solutions.” The initiative aims to bring focus to the issue of overpopulation of jails at the local level, in addition to the increasing focus being given to state and federal institutions.

If you have any programming or initiative thoughts in line with the goals of the Safety and Justice Plan that you would like for us to pursue, please write to us with your thoughts and ideas.

## Access to Science Education Resources

Some IU professors and graduate students are interested in bringing more interactive, science education materials into jails and prisons, but want to talk with folks incarcerated first. See their message below:

*Want to learn about yourself? Want to learn about all life? Want to learn about Biology? Want to learn some math skills? Then learn about evolution! We are looking into the possibility of bringing evolutionary biology into correctional institutions. If you are interested, please let us know by writing to:*

*Aaron*

*c/o Armin Moczek*

*915 East Third Street, Meyers Hall*

*Bloomington, Indiana 47405*

*We want to hear from you! Let us know what you'd like to see happen.*

## Doula Services

If you are incarcerated in the Monroe County Jail and either you or your partner is pregnant, support for your pregnancy and childbirth is available for free through Bloomington Area Birth Services. Contact Tania, New Leaf New Life's Program Director, for more information.

## Updates from the Transition Support Center

### Families Behind Bars

New Leaf New Life is hosting a support group for family members of loved ones who are incarcerated. The group is peer-led and occurs at least monthly at our Transition Support Center. Bus ticket reimbursement, a hot meal, and childcare are provided during the meeting times. Please tell family members in the Bloomington area.

### New Partnerships

New Leaf New Life is developing new partnerships with area organizations. We are working with Bloomington Area Birthing Services to bring free doula services and birthing education classes to pregnant women and spouses of pregnant women in the jail. We are working with Backline to bring pregnancy and parenting support services to those in the jail. We are also working with the Monroe County Public Library's VITAL program to build literacy education services inside the jail.

### Read to Me Program Expanded

The new jail administration has agreed to expand the Read to Me program, run by Rick & Lois Holl, to women who are incarcerated in the Monroe County Jail. The Read to Me program allows men in the Addicts in Recovery (AIR) dorm (and now women) to create voice recordings of them reading a children's book to their kids. A copy of the book, along with a CD recording of the parent reading, is then mailed to the child of the incarcerated adult. The Read to Me program is currently working with the organization FirstBook to write grants for books.

### 2016 Art Show

New Leaf New Life is collecting art for our second annual art and poetry show in December 2016. If you have any work you'd like to submit, please write for more information and for an art release form.

## Impact from the July Criminal Code Changes

Indianapolis newspaper IndyStar recently reported on Indiana's new criminal code under House Enrolled Act 1006. Critics of the code, including Franklin County Sheriff Ken Murphy, fear that the changes will lead to overcrowding in county jails, as "one study estimates that more than 14,000 low-level offenders... will be diverted to county jails and community corrections programs" (Guerra, 2015). According to sheriffs, jail population could increase by an estimated 20%. Another concern voiced by critics of the code is the limited monetary resources of jails and corrections programs to meet the needs of inmates living with mental illness. Marion County mental health attorney Molly Wright is one critic who calls for an increase in jail resources, as medication can cost around \$3,000 for one inmate per month, in addition to inpatient care.

Proponents of the new criminal code believe the changes will result in financial savings for the Indiana Department of Corrections. Indystar writes that Representative Jud McMillin believes the reform "...will solve the problem of prison overcrowding, eliminate the need to build another prison and reduce recidivism through local treatment programs and services for nonviolent and low-risk offenders" (Guerra, 2015). If the reform results in savings for the DOC, up to \$11 million in grant money may be available for county use. While advocates for the reform do not yet know if there will in fact be savings, the DOC is obligated under House Enrolled Act 1006 to report estimated savings by March 1.

Guerra, Kristine. "County Jails Fear Onslaught of Addicts, Mentally Ill from Prisons." *Indianapolis Star*. Gannett, 2 Feb. 2015. Web. 25 Feb. 2015.

## Resources

We've gotten a hold of some new re-entry resources. Let us know if you'd like us to send you a copy of any of the items below:

- A copy of our Monroe County Re-entry Workbook
- A 2015-16 IvyTech course catalogue
- An Ivy Tech admissions application
- A FAFSA paper application

## A NOTE FROM Dennis



We are human,  
We are not perfect,  
We are alive,  
We try new things,  
We make mistakes,  
We stumble,  
We fall,  
We get hurt,  
We rise again,  
We try again,  
We keep learning,  
We keep growing,  
And.....  
We are thankful for this priceless  
opportunity.....  
Called life.....

A couple of months ago I started volunteering at NLNL. Being a former inmate from many years ago and spending half my life in and out of prisons, I was determined to try and help other inmates to try and stay out of prisons through correspondence. NLNL has taught me how to use my free time more productively in a very positive way.

At NLNL, no one is forgotten. Each one is just as important as the other. We don't show favoritism, we give acceptance to anyone who comes to our doors. We extend our hands to the poor, and we stretch out our hands to the needy. We greet them with smiles, and offer them coffee and whatever food we have. Then we tell them to pick whatever clothing they need. And if they don't find what they need, we write it down and try to get it for them.

We don't judge anyone here. But instead we love them as one of our own because they are. They are family to me. A part of me.

*-Dennis O'Shea, NLNL Fundraising Assistant*

Dennis has since been hired on as our Fundraising Assistant through a federal job training program for adults in poverty over age 55 called Experience Works. This organization pays people minimum wage to work 21 hours a week in a nonprofit setting to learn new jobs skills that will help them secure sustainable employment. If you are over the age 55 and interested in becoming a paid Experience Works trainee, contact 812-522-7930 or write Experience Works, 200 E. Association St., Suite 206B Ellettsville, IN 47429 for more information when you are released.