

## **Partners in Hope Receives “Go Grant” to Reduce Recidivism**

Partners in Hope of Northwest Ohio is a non-profit organization that is focused on tearing down barriers that are stopping people who are trying to re-enter society as productive, tax-paying citizens. When someone has either been in jail or have been incarcerated in prison they have paid their debt to society, but often they find the towns and homes that they return to are still prejudiced against them, not wanting them to be able to live, work, and pay taxes in the places that they had previously called “home”. Statistically speaking, 1 in every 25 individuals in Putnam County have been impacted by incarceration...these are “our people” folks who have lived next door to us, or down the hall. People who have made a bad decision and now want nothing more than to get on with their lives, reunite with family members, have a place to live, a vehicle to get them to work and to make a living.

Partners in Hope is in partnership with both these returning citizens and places like Putnam County Job and Family Services (PCRC), the United Way of Putnam County, Pathways Counseling Center, the Veterans Administration of Putnam County, the Labor Union, The Parole Office and the Sheriff’s Office of Putnam County and Pandora and Gilboa United Methodist Churches, through our Sister Coalition, Putnam County Reentry Coalition.

In 2024 the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections (ODRC) and the West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church sponsored grants to six counties in a second-tier effort to provide reentry coalitions in all 88 counties, recognizing a need to provide hands-on supports in local communities to address these barriers and give a hand up (not a hand out) to people in an effort to reduce recidivism (returning to incarceration). Of the 50 people that PCRC worked with under this grant, 49 remain working, productive citizens! In an area that had averaged 50% or more people who, because they were overwhelmed with the

odds against them would previously have returned to incarceration, as they couldn't provide either shelter or employment for themselves, we saw being productive citizens!

The initial grant expired by the end of 2025, causing a search for funding to make these vital services sustainable into the future. We are under the financial sponsorship of the Pandora United Methodist Church while we pursue an independent Non-Profit status continuing our identification as a faith-based initiative.

In September of 2025 we applied for a "Go Grant" through the West Ohio Conference of the United Methodist Church and we are pleased to announce that we received our first substantial grant of \$8,500 under the category "Beyond Barriers". This grant will allow us to assist people with downpayments on apartments, or first month's rent, getting clothing for jobs (steel-toed boots), helping set up payment plans for court-involved fees and fines that prohibit people from getting their driver's licenses; car repairs, first month's payments on car insurance, the things that stand in the way of people living independently.

With our partnerships we are able to work together with people in counseling, teach people where food is available through Food Banks, help with clothing and baby supplies through the county resources. Provide track phones and an initial card so that people can communicate with their Parole Officers and perspective employers. When a person comes out of incarceration they are released with often no more than the clothes on their backs and \$74 in their pockets...their needs are many, especially if they do not have a family to return to.

As we continue to educate our communities about the needs and our who Partners in Hope is, we invite people to contact us for additional information or to see how they can partner with us. Kathy Kaufman ([kathybeutler1962@gmail.com](mailto:kathybeutler1962@gmail.com)) and Rev Ruth Carter-Crist ([pastorruthcarter@gmail.com](mailto:pastorruthcarter@gmail.com)) are the co-directors of

Partners in Hope and they look forward to hearing from you, for support.