

**Dear Friends,**

We hope you all are staying warm and dry as winter eventually comes to a close. PVS is staying busy despite the continuing challenges presented by the pandemic. In addition to welcoming Jessyca Saavedra, our new Visitor Coordinator who has hit the ground running, this newsletter will update you on several other initiatives we are working on.

We are very sad to report on the passing of Teresa Batto, long-time Visitor and Coordinator at FCC Terre Haute. Teresa's death is a great loss for her family and friends, PVS, and the many organizations that supported throughout her life. "It is hard to imagine PVS without Teresa," one Visitor told us. She made her mark on PVS and we are a better organization because of her. There is more information on Teresa and her husband Bernie below.

It appears that we are getting closer to the day when prisons will re-open for visiting! We are working to recruit more volunteers to replace those who have had to step down, and to kick our training into high gear to make sure that everyone is ready to provide the fellowship, support and listening that our visitors are known for.

Thanks for all you do to support PVS, and please stay safe and healthy.

*Molly*

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### *Remembering Teresa Batto*

It is with heavy hearts that we share the passing of Teresa Batto. Teresa passed away January 31st, 2022. She was a PVS visitor at FCC Terre Haute in Terre Haute, Indiana for 31 years. Terre Haute is where people incarcerated on federal death row are housed. Over the years, Teresa visited with many men on death row, bringing them light and kindness in a dark place.



*Teresa and Bernie Batto, 2017*

We would like to take this time to share some tributes from Teresa's friends:

"Teresa Batto was the kind of person that gives you hope for the human race. Her life was filled with activities and commitments that were important; yet she never struck you as seeing herself as significant. She was kind, helpful, warm, trustworthy, and totally competent.

In the 20 years I knew her as our Terre Haute coordinator for PVS, she never missed getting the proper arrangements made with the prison staff. If I had an issue with my visiting (and I had several), I counted on her to understand, empathize, and offer excellent advice. She regularly hosted her motley gang of visitors in her home where she and Bernie provided a hearty welcome, constructive discussions, and excellent food.

Her annual Christmas letter gave us an inkling of some of her other interests as well as updates on her children who were making their contributions around the globe.

And if we wanted someone to show us how to deal with serious illness, she was it. She fought cancer ten years ago, without fanfare or complaint, needing no sympathy. And she beat it. Sad was the day when we heard it had returned. And sad we are now to know she's gone.

We will no longer hear her slight Texas drawl as she cheers us on to continue bringing some humanity and caring to the incarcerated. God bless her! God knows a good woman when he sees her."

*-- Judy Stoffel  
Terre Haute FCI Visitor  
and Teresa's friend*

"I want you to know that I have only five people in this world that I call 'friend,' and you are one of them. Teresa, you entered my life at the lowest point and you befriended me. Thank you for being my friend. Thank you for visiting me, laughing with me, singing with me, talking with me, and listening to me. Thank

you for encouraging me, and worrying about me, and so many other things from celebrating the big and small things in this life, to mourning the loss of loved ones. Thank you for including me in your life. I love you, my friend."

*-- Meier  
A person Teresa visited,  
and her friend.*



*Teresa Batto*

"Giving and forgiving are the first words that come to mind when I think of Teresa Batto. Each prisoner that PVS assigned to Teresa would soon understand that he now had a dependable, compassionate visitor. One of her many gifts was being able to see the goodness and potential in every person. Teresa's ability to bring out the best in people was remarkable. Her energy and positive attitude were contagious. She taught by example and I'm sure she inspired others whose lives she touched.

Prisoners and staff alike looked forward to the annual Christmas plays she and Bernie produced at the State prison. With incredibly limited resources and a lot of help from Bernie, Teresa supervised the building of props, organized rehearsals and greatly encouraged the men as they practiced.

The result was always an inspiring program which included audience participation, lots of singing, and plenty of laughter.

With her family at home, in her garden, or through her volunteer work, I saw Teresa always busy, working to make things better. One could not want for a better friend. She will be greatly missed!"

*-- Cookie Holmes  
Terre Haute USP Visitor  
and Teresa's Friend*

"[Teresa] is a wonderful lady. You've both improved the lives of the inmates you've visited. You made my time easier. I will never forget you and often think of both of you. You've touched my life for the better."

*-- James  
A person Teresa and Bernie visited,  
and their friend.*



***We will always remember Teresa.  
May she continue to shine her light on us.***

## *PVS Sends Letter to A.G. Garland RE: Appointment of New BOP Director*

After the resignation of the former Director of the U.S. Bureau of Prisons at the end of last year, PVS Board and staff sent a letter to the U.S. Attorney General asking him to consider hiring a director with a “demonstrated commitment to the concepts of redemption and rehabilitation; to the mental and physical health of people incarcerated; and to the provision of opportunities that allow the formerly incarcerated to meaningfully participate in their communities upon release.”

You can see the full text of the letter, copies of which were also sent to the Chairs of the Judiciary Committees in the Senate and House of Representatives, [here](#).

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## *Join us in Celebrating Eileen!*



After 30 years with PVS (10 of those on staff,) Eileen Gilkenson retired as our Visitor Coordinator this past December. In her honor, we invite everyone to submit photos, emails, video messages, cards, or anything else you want to share with or about Eileen to [pvs@prisonervisitation.org](mailto:pvs@prisonervisitation.org). We will be compiling these into a slideshow to share at the tea party, so please submit them by **March 7th**.

If you would like to mail a card or photos to be added to the presentation, please send them to: **Prisoner Visitation and Support, 1501 Cherry Street,**

Philadelphia, PA 19102.

We look forward to seeing everyone there -  
do not forget to [register!](#)

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### *Former PVS Director Publishes Book on PVS Visitors!*

"Reaching Beyond Prison Walls: Stories of Volunteer Visitors and the Prisoners They See," is a book recently published by former PVS Executive Director Eric Corson and now available for sale at Barnes & Noble, Amazon and other retailers. Eric was Executive Director of PVS from 1978-2017, overseeing its growth to hundreds of volunteers visiting in more than 100 prisons across the country.

The book tells the stories of PVS, our volunteers and the people they visit through the more than 100 interviews that Eric completed over the course of two years. It is a wonderful testament to the humanity and compassion that people bring to their work with PVS, and a great resource for anyone who is contemplating becoming a prison visitor.

You can find and buy the book at Barnes and Noble locally or [online](#). To purchase the book through Amazon [here](#). *(And remember, PVS is a participating AmazonSmile charity - log in through [smile.amazon.com](https://smile.amazon.com) to have a portion of your purchases donated back to PVS.)*

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### *Statement on Ukraine*

Recently, we have seen the images and read the stories about the one million people fleeing the Ukraine. We all have different feelings about what is taking place, and some may wonder how we can help. For those of you exploring how to help Ukrainian refugees, we are sharing a list of local and national organization helping people on the ground in Ukraine. *(Click on the organization to visit their website.)*

#### [United Ukranian American Relief Committee, Inc.](#)

*In Philadelphia*

#### [Global Giving](#)

*Started a Ukraine Crisis Relief Fund for water, shelter, and food for Ukrainian refugees.*

#### [International Rescue Committee](#)

*Helps refugees and assists with resettlement.*

#### [Doctors Without Borders](#)

*Provides medical care during crisis situations, casualty kits, and emergency medicine.*

### [Air BnB](#)

*Will provide housing to up to 100,000 refugees fleeing the Ukraine.*

### [People in Need](#)

*Is supporting over 200,000 people in the Ukraine with cash assistance, food aid, and hygiene items.*

### [Ukrainian National Women's League of America](#)

### [United Help Ukraine](#)

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