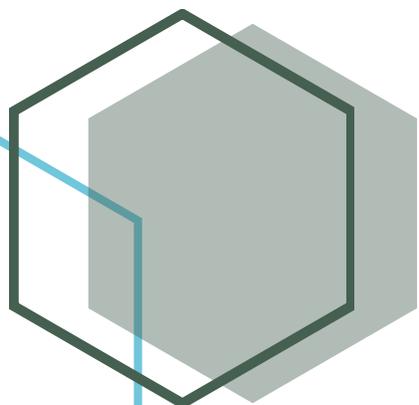




2021 Annual Report

“You guys came in a point of my life where I needed you the most. You look at me as a human and no other way. You made me feel love like I was a son of a mother, and not just another prisoner. You brought happiness, joy, and peace to my soul. I was blessed the day I crossed paths with you.”

Jaime
FCI El Reno





Message from the Executive Director

Thanks to so many of you, Prisoner Visitation and Support (PVS) continued to support people incarcerated in federal and military prisons in 2021 – whether by visiting in person or by writing letters. It wasn't easy – Covid variants kept many prisons from opening to visits at all, while others opened and closed again. PVS visitors were steadfast in their work, however, keeping in touch as best they could.

Here at the national office in Philadelphia, our small staff worked very hard to support our visitors with monthly trainings via Zoom, email newsletters with updates on the Bureau of Prisons and other information, and telephone outreach to visitors to check-in.

We also worked closely with our Board of Directors to prepare a five-year strategic plan to guide our work, a summary of which you can find on our website, www.prisonervisitation.org.

We were also excited to present our first virtual event in October, 2021, "The Power of Visiting," with artist, activist, and podcaster Luis "Suave" Gonzalez. Suave talked about the significant impact visitors can have on people incarcerated, both in improving their daily life behind bars and once they return to their home communities. We hope to continue the series this year – stay tuned!

We hope that 2022 will mean a large-scale return to in-person visiting, and are busily preparing for that day. We plan to welcome many new volunteer visitors this year, and support those who have been waiting so long to return. Our vision – that any person incarcerated in federal prison who wants a visitor will have one – remains our driving force. Thanks for all you do to help us get closer to that goal.

Molly Clifford

Staff



Molly Clifford
Executive Director
mclifford@prisonervisitation.org

Emily Cashell-DeSilva
Administrative Coordinator
ecashell@prisonervisitation.org

Our Mission

Prisoner Visitation and Support (PVS) is a volunteer visitation program for people incarcerated in federal and military prisons throughout the United States.

Our mission is to provide prisoners with regular, face to face contact from the world outside of prison to help them cope with prison life, encourage personal growth, and prepare for successful reentry into society.

Our vision is to provide qualified visitors to fulfill all requests for visits by prisoners in every federal and military prison.

Our priority is to visit those prisoners who: do not ordinarily receive visits from family and friends; are in solitary confinement; are on death row; or are serving long sentences.



Message from the Board Chair

2021 was quite an eventful year for PVS!

Despite ongoing challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the Board and staff had an incredibly productive year.

The Board completed a thorough overhaul of our bylaws. We adopted a comprehensive new strategic plan to guide our efforts into 2026. We welcomed three new talented Board members: Mike Guerra, Liz Leshner, and Brian Lewis.

In addition, at our last meeting of 2021, we voted to welcome two additional Board members to join us in January 2022: Suave Gonzalez and Erika Janifer. Each of these new Board members brings a distinct depth of knowledge, experience and skills vital to PVS.

Zoom was our friend, as the Board met using this platform for seven Board meetings in this year. We also used Zoom for our annual meeting with the BOP Director and his staff. Remaining keenly aware of what is transpiring within the Bureau of Prisons, PVS stays in close touch [with both people and policies] at the national, regional, and local levels.

Appreciating again our devoted staff, we recognized Ellen Gilkenson in her retirement and look forward to the appointment of her successor.

At the end of 2021, I completed six and a half years as Chair of the PVS Board, happily turning over the reins to Tom Slick as the new Board Chair in 2022. I am unfailingly grateful for the generosity of our loyal donors and visitors, who sustain PVS day after day, year after year.

Rachel Osborn
PVS Board Chair 2015-2021

2021 Board of Directors



Michael Guerra
Attorney

Liz Leshner
PVS Visitor – FCI El Reno

Marc Levin
Nonprofit Development
Consultant

Brian Lewis
CPO for exalt

Rachel Osborn
Board Secretary

David Poundstone
PVS Visitor – FCC Florence

Virginia Rinella
Board Vice-Chair
PVS Visitor – USP Marion

Susannah Rose
Communications Consultant

Tom Slick
Board Chair
PVS Visitor – FCI Sheridan

Dan Struble
Board Treasurer
PVS Visitor – FCI Otisville

Welcoming New Board Members

In 2021, we welcomed three new members to the Board of Directors! The volunteer Board of Directors provides leadership and guidance for PVS, helping to set organizational priorities, raise funds, and ensure operations are consistent in meeting our mission and vision.

Michael Guerra

Admitted to the State bars in New York and New Jersey, Mike received the 2018 Jeremy G. Epstein Award for Outstanding Pro Bono Service for his work on behalf of immigrants in New York City. Mike is an associate in commercial litigation at Venable LLP. He is a graduate of the University of Rochester and the Fordham University School of Law and is an unapologetic fan of the Buffalo Bills. "Through the straightforward act of regular human interaction, PVS provides visitors and people in prison the opportunity to enrich themselves and their communities," he says. Mike serves on the Board's Personnel committee and lives with his wife and son in Connecticut.



Liz Leshner

Liz has been a PVS visitor since 2015, visiting at FCI El Reno in Oklahoma, and joined the board in 2021. She also serves on the Board's Personnel committee. As a PVS Board Member, she looks forward to being in a position to support PVS in urgent consultation with the new Bureau of Prisons administration, addressing the heightened level of distress – faced by both prison staff and prisoners – at this 'dark' time of incarceration.



Brian Lewis

Brian is the Chief Program Officer at exalt, an organization that empowers youth 15-19 that have been involved in the criminal justice system; Deputy Director of the New York Community Trust leadership Fellows; Senior DEI consultant with DBI Projects; and has taught courses in Nonprofit Management, Human Services, and the Arts as an Adjunct Professor at NYU Wagner School of Public Service, John Jay College of Criminal Justice, The New School, and Monroe Community College. He is an expert in Critical Pedagogy, Restorative Justice, and making education and justice system more fair and equitable. Brian serves on the Governance and Nominating committee of the Board. He lives with his wife and puppy in Rochester, NY and his work is based out of New York City.





Celebrating the Work of Eileen Gilkenson

On December 31, 2021, Eileen Gilkenson retired after ten years as PVS Visitor Coordinator, though she will continue on as a trusted advisor, Local Coordinator and senior visitor at FDC Philadelphia!

Eileen has helped countless visitors, coordinators, staff and people incarcerated over her three decades with PVS. She has mentored new volunteers, counseled prison staff, served as Interim Director and been the face of PVS that so many of us have come to count on and trust. We are fortunate that she will continue her commitment to PVS and the people we serve in a voluntary role.

We celebrated with Eileen in early 2022 with a virtual Tea Party, at which many Visitors shared their stories, tributes and gratitude to Eileen. Those who couldn't attend sent cards and letters, with messages like these:

"Thanks for being a most inspiring and compassionate PVS team leader! Your deep understanding, intelligence, awareness to assess problematic situations, and your vast and quiet wisdom have guided countless PVS visitors to do the right thing."

Mary, PVS Visitor, FCI El Reno

We are currently searching for a new part-time Visitor Coordinator to work with our Visitors and help us strengthen our outreach, recruitment, and training programs. While that person will have "big shoes to fill," we are committed to finding someone who shares Eileen's dedication and passion for supporting Visitors and those they visit.



*Over 50
Visitors
joined us to
raise a toast
to Eileen!*

Visitor Report



While 2021 found most federal and military facilities closed, either due to Covid numbers or security concerns, that did not stop PVS Visitors from being there to support those behind prison walls. After facilities closed in 2020, PVS was given special permission by the Bureau of Prisons (BOP) to write letters to those we were visiting before Covid hit. In 2021 alone, PVS Visitors wrote over 1,000 letters!

This past year, the Training Committee, with the help of staff (and Zoom!) hosted 9 training sessions for visitors. Topics ranged from understanding the trauma many incarcerated people face, to supporting someone when they are dealing with grief while in prison, to the best way to maintain boundaries while you are visiting. The Training Committee is hard at work on more sessions for this year!

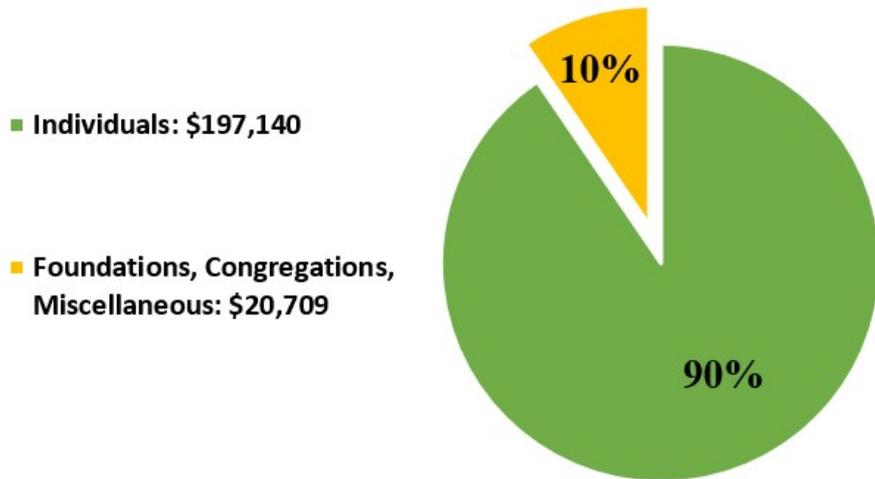
Currently, PVS has 304 visitors across the country. In order to reach our goal of being able to provide a visitor for everyone that requests one, we need help recruiting! Below are the facilities we have the greatest need; if you think you or someone you know would make a good PVS Visitor, contact us!

- FCI Bennettsville – Bennettsville, SC
- FPC Bryan - Bryan, TX
- USP Canaan – Waymart, PA
- FCI Dublin – Dublin, CA
- USP Lee – Pennington Gap, VA
- FCI Jesup – Jesup, GA
- FCI Schuylkill – Minersville, PA
- USP Thomson – Thomson, IL



2021 Financial Report

INCOME



EXPENSES



Poetry from Behind the Walls



Nothing but fences, concrete and steel
No way to describe the way that it feels
Guards all around us, and endless the hours,
And in every corner tall stand the towers.

Have not heard a dog bark or seen one in years,
But seen many grown men shedding the tears,
No many of us will never go home
While others who do, again soon they come;

And many of us have nobody out there,
Nobody to write to, nobody who cares,
But the comes a blessing, sent from up above,
A blessing of kindness, compassion and love.

This is what you guys are, a blessing, no less
For all that you do, I feel very blessed.

"A Blessing"
By Rubi, FCI Pekin



In Memory of Teresa Batto

It is with heavy hearts that we share the passing of longtime Visitor and friend of PVS, Teresa Batto. Teresa passed away on January 31st, 2022, at the age of 80, after a battle with bone cancer. She was a PVS visitor at FCC Terre Haute in Terre Haute, Indiana for 31 years. Over the years, Teresa visited with many men on death row, bringing them light and kindness in a dark place.

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

"Teresa 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.

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
PVS Visitor, FCI Terre Haute

"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 including me in your life. I love you, my friend."

Meier
A person Teresa visited at Terre Haute

Not only did Teresa and her husband Bernie dedicate their time and energy to supporting PVS and those they visited, but they were also generous donors to the organization. We are honored to have been included by her family as a group to support in Teresa's memory.

She will be missed, not only by the Visitors, staff, and board here at PVS but by the countless incarcerated people whose lives she touched every time she visited.

