A real eye-opener: Returning Prisoner Simulation

“I’ve heard that it’s difficult for former prisoners to re-establish themselves in the community, but I had no idea until I tried. It was a real eye-opener for me.”

… WI Circuit Court Judge

Learning by Doing

Simulations enable learning-by-doing — a fast and effective way to learn. Participants connect to this experience as if they were living it. Unlike reading a book or attending a lecture, the simulation creates a real experience.

MUM’s Returning Prisoner Simulation prepares service agencies, congregations, students, professionals and the community to understand and deal with the challenges of prisoner re-entry.

Steps in the Simulation

See documentary video
See brief video about one man’s transition from prison back to community
Participate in 1-hour workshop
Try to accomplish a list of tasks that newly released prisoners must do during re-entry
“Walk in the shoes of a just-released prisoner”
De-brief the Simulation experience
Participants discuss their reactions to the simulation workshop
Panel of formerly incarcerated share their stories of “re-entry” to community

Restorative Justice Programs of Madison-area Urban Ministry

Circles of Support (Volunteers work with formerly incarcerated); Mentoring Connections (Adult mentors for children of incarcerated parents); Family & Reading Connections (take children to visit their incarcerated mothers & books-on-video from incarcerated parent to child); Re-Entry Simulation (take a walk in the shoes of a just-released prisoner); The Journey Home and Re-Entry Service Fairs (Link returnees to housing, jobs & services); The Phoenix Initiative (MUM support/leadership development groups for returnees); Breaking Barriers (recovery groups for substance-free lifestyle) Just Bakery (Career training program)
Understand the Real Challenges of Prisoner Re-Entry

MUM invites you to a Returning Prisoner Simulation

“You taught me something I didn’t even know I had to learn — This made me understand in the deepest recesses of my heart how important we all are to each other no matter what our circumstances…”… University professor who joined a Circle of Support in his congregation to journey with a newly released parolee.

Participants take on new roles during the simulation.

Above Participants feel what it's like to apply for housing when you don’t read well, have bad credit, have no rental history, and the security deposit will leave you without bus fare!

Right A person who is a survivor of crime in real life speaks to a “parolee” who owes restitution.

Left A “just-released parolee” gets a mock “electronic monitoring bracelet” at the simulation “Parole Office” — and learns that she has to pay for it. Community members who are unfamiliar with corrections often are surprised to learn that released prisoners may be obligated to pay monthly fees to community corrections.

Right & below Participants discuss the simulated re-entry experiences

Left A de-briefing session concludes the simulation workshop.

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