

County of Centre



CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

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Nominee: CentrePeace, Inc.
Board Members: Chuck Gambone, President; Peter Shaw, Treasurer; Bonnie Millmore, Secretary; Huey Jones, Irene Jones, Al Matyasovsky, Tom F. Songer II, PE, Christopher Weaver

CentrePeace started entering the Rockview State Correctional Institution in 1975, offering support and programming to special needs inmates there. CentrePeace's resolve to help people has never wavered and they continue their work within that institution (and others) today. In 1994, CentrePeace established a working relationship with the Centre County Correctional Facility with the purpose of providing a healthy work environment outside of the Facility for Centre County inmates. In 2014, 94 inmates had the privilege of working with CentrePeace while incarcerated. CentrePeace provides programming within the facility as well by offering Non-Violent Conflict Resolution Training and A Framework Breaking Barriers (behavior modification), along with recruiting outside volunteers to conduct various religious services.

CentrePeace operates the largest used furniture recycling effort in PA. Centre County inmates repair and restore electronics and furniture as well as participate in programming to improve their life skills and increase their chances of successfully reentering society. The CentrePeace mission is to promote restorative justice and decrease victimization in our communities by offering training and avenues to peace, healing, responsibility, and accountability for offenders. The goals of CentrePeace are as follows:

- Improve attitudes and capabilities through productive work, job training, and social skills
- Provide offenders with the tools and skills to take responsibility for their lives, resolve problems nonviolently, and treat themselves and others with dignity and respect.
- Instill the knowledge that habits, attitudes, and beliefs can be changed for the better.

CentrePeace understands the difficulties that lie ahead for incarcerated individuals returning to the community. Simply keeping people in prison does little to stop the cycle of crime and violence. By offering inmates a way to be a contributing member of a working community and by offering programs, CentrePeace gives these individuals a chance to succeed, to believe there is hope for a better tomorrow, and provide the support needed to make a positive change. While working at CentrePeace, inmates are able to participate in the following programs:

- **Project Restore-** This program teaches the offenders valuable job, time management, and socialization skills by working at the Used Household Goods and Furniture Outlet.
- **Non-Violent Conflict Resolution Training and Breaking Barriers-** These programs teach offenders to appreciate others' points of view, assume responsibility for mistakes, and identify and replace destructive patterns of behavior with positive ones.
- **Christmas Card Program-** This program, reaching over 25,000 inmates statewide, gives inmates an opportunity to be reminded of the love and hope symbolized by the Christmas season. Often, the Christmas card, hand written and illustrated by a community volunteer, is the only piece of mail an inmate receives during the entire year.
- **PrayerMate Program-** This program is a spiritual "pen pal" system in which inmates using only their first names communicate through a CentrePeace coordinator with a matched community volunteer.

CentrePeace has long been a valuable resource for the residents of Centre County and when a Centre County Re-Entry Coalition was created in 2014, CentrePeace quickly became a trusted member. The Coalition's mission is to improve lives, reduce recidivism, and enhance public safety, which falls in line with the mission and goals of CentrePeace.

Reentering society is often a difficult and lonely road. Caring organizations like CentrePeace are invaluable to an individual's success and an integral piece of the overall puzzle of providing services, programming, and support to inmates. Their willingness to work alongside the Centre County Correctional Facility toward a common goal makes Centre County a better place to live and to work and to truly be part of a caring community.