

# Project RETURN NEWSLETTER



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*Spring, 2002 Edition*

This edition of the Project RETURN Newsletter is dedicated to all those individuals who have dedicated countless hours volunteering time and energy to assure that our many programs run smoothly. Some of these programs that our volunteers make available are the Library Project, the socials, the Bread of Healing Food Empowerment Program, escorting incarcerated individuals to and from job interviews, mentoring and tutoring individuals in need, and securing Project RETURN as "Mission of the Month" in several supporting congregations. For the things listed as well as the countless other activities our volunteers help us with, we say thank you.

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## Good-bye Winter, Hello Summer

by: Wendel Hruska

Well, the snow is melting, birds are returning to the area and the weather is getting steadily warmer. That could only mean one thing. It is time to start preparing for the Project RETURN Summer Youth Program.

This year the Summer Youth Program will last from June 17 to July 26. It will again be held in the mornings, from 8:30 to noon. Last year 44 kids enrolled in the program, this year we are upping the capacity to 60 kids to better serve the neighborhood.

If you are interested in enrolling a child between the grades of kindergarten and sixth grade, we are currently enrolling kids now. The program costs \$25 for the entire six week program. The kids are going to be taught such subjects as math, English, art, as well as other subjects. The kids will be taught at Project RETURN's offices located in Cross Lutheran Church four days a week. On the fifth day, the kids are taken on a field trip to an attraction here in Milwaukee. The kids are always under the supervision of the four teachers and three student leaders.



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## A Message From Our President

The September 11th attack and subsequent events have taught us the power of a united response to tragedy. After sending our checks, donating blood and praying, many of us wondered what else we could do to make our world a better place to live.

I'd like to suggest that we direct our efforts into combating another tragedy that is all around us. I'm referring to the recidivism rate within the criminal justice system. Statistics reveal that 99% of the people convicted will eventually be released and 75% of those will return to prison for some period of time. What can be done to curb this alarming situation?

The first and foremost thing you can do is pray. After that you can take the risk to become involved in our ministry. Volunteers are needed to attend socials, tutor, and escort inmates to job interviews and the library. One of the new ministries under consideration is a post-release mentoring program. Besides these individual endeavors, we need the sponsorship of entire congregations. If your church doesn't currently have prison ministry as a specific outreach effort on their human concern's agenda, contact us. We would be happy to explain the power of this ministry to your church community.

Project RETURN has been making an impact on the lives of offenders and their families for over 20 years. In the past year alone, we were able to assist over 130 individuals find gainful employment. We owe our success to a dedicated staff, caring volunteers and several churches that publicly support our ministry. We have demonstrated that a united effort can achieve success in combating the tragedy of recidivism.

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