

UU Congregation of the Catskills Publishes Guide for Returning Ex-Prisoners

Ulster County has joined several other counties in New York State in being able to offer a booklet to help ex-prisoners make a successful reentry into the community. *Coming Back to Ulster County*, A Guide and Resource List for those Returning from Prison or Jail, is being distributed free to released prisoners, agencies, libraries, community groups, and the faith community.

The Restorative Justice Group of the UU Congregation of the Catskills (Kingston NY) undertook preparation of the book after they hosted a conference dealing with problems of reentry. Former prisoners in attendance said that a resource list would have been a vital help to them when they returned home. Reverend Linda Anderson applied for a grant from the New York State Convention of Universalists. It was approved and has covered the cost of the first printing.

The Ulster booklet is the fifth such publication in the state. Others have been published in New York City (by The New York Public Library), Albany (the Center for Law and Justice), Westchester (Westchester Council on Crime and Delinquency) and Rochester/Monroe County (Monroe County Library System). There are also booklets available in the state on special subjects, such as the NYS Department of Labor publication for job-seeking ex-prisoners and pamphlets on legal questions by the Legal Action Center.

The NYS Department of Correctional Services is making the Ulster publication available in prison pre-release programs and prison libraries to help inmates plan their reentry while still incarcerated. It is available online at two sites: the Congregation's website at <http://www.uucckingston.org/comingback.html>. and the website <http://www.reentry.net> (click New York/Search for Providers), a nationwide site for reentry information.