

**Restorative Justice:
Rebuilding Your Web of Relationships**

A Collection of Reflections for People in Prison

By Barb Toews
Pennsylvania Prison Society

The ^{Pennsylvania} **PRISON SOCIETY**
SOCIAL JUSTICE SINCE 1787

The following workbook is a collection of restorative justice reflections that was used by the Pennsylvania Prison Society's Restorative Justice Program. Thank you to Melissa Crabbe, Danny Malec, Angela Trop, Megan Scott and Paulo Baleinakorodawa for their contributions.

This collection includes an appendix with suggestions of ways to use the individual reflections as group activities. Please see the Pennsylvania Prison Society website, www.prisonersociety.org, for additional materials for educating about restorative justice in prison.

This workbook complements *The Little Book of Restorative Justice for People in Prison* By Barb Toews. (Good Books, 2006)

1. My Personal Web of Relationships

Imagine you sit in a circle of chairs. One-by-one, people whom you consider close sit down with you. Then others who have touched your life but with whom you are not as close join you. People continue to join the circle: family, friends, co-workers, prison staff, members of your faith community. Included in the circle are elements of nature such as plants, animals, air and water. By now, the chairs are full with all the people and elements that have touched your life, past and present. Connect each of these individuals with a single, crisscrossing strand of string to form a web.

Reflection questions:

1. Do your connections make you feel strong? Weak?
2. With whom do you have strong relationships? What makes those relationships strong?
3. With whom do you have weak or broken relationships? What has made those relationships weak or broken?
4. How have your connections shaped who you are today?
5. How have you and your actions influenced your relationships?

2. Experiencing Community

Think about a time in your life when you experienced a sense of “community.”

Reflection questions:

1. What happened that made you feel like you were in a “community?”
2. Who was part of this community experience?
3. What values were important to people in the community?
4. How did this experience shape you as a person?
5. What did you learn about the person you were meant to be from this experience?
6. What does your experience tell you about what makes for a strong community?

3. Restorative Justice Metaphor

The criminal justice system can be likened to a boxing match. In your mind, visualize a boxing match replacing the boxers and the fight with criminal justice players and procedures. Where do you see similarities between boxing and criminal justice? Where are there differences? Now, create an image for restorative justice. How is the picture of restorative justice different than the “boxing match” picture of criminal justice? What does your picture say about what restorative justice means to you?

4. Life Graph

Draw a graph charting your childhood up until today. On the graph show positive moments or high points by a surge upwards of the graph. Show negative, or traumatic events, with a dip in the graph. Label and draw events of significance on the graph. Draw and decorate as much or as little as you would like.

Reflection questions:

1. How did those significant life events touch or shape you?
2. How did the earlier events contribute to later events and your own development?
3. What do you need to do to continue forward on the healing path?

5. A Time I was Hurt

Think about a time when you feel like someone else treated you unfairly. This experience may or may not have been a crime. Think about the event in as much detail as you can remember, including your relationship to the person who hurt you.

Reflection questions:

1. How did you feel about the experience right when it happened, and how do you feel about it now?
2. How did the experience impact your life?
3. How did this experience change your way of looking at the world and at yourself?

Continued on next page

4. How did the experience change the way you act?
5. How did the experience affect your family and friends?
6. How did the experience affect you financially?
7. Do you have any questions about what happened? If so, what are they?
8. Did the person who treated you unfairly do anything to make things right with you? If yes, what did they do? If no, what could they have done to repair the harm?

6. Family Values

Many people talk about the importance of family values. Yet, few say what those values actually are. *Reflection questions:*

1. What is the single most important family value to you?
2. How do your family and friends live out this value?
3. How do you live out this value with your family and friends?

7. Envisioning Accountability

Draw a picture of a person who is accountable for his or her crime. What does your picture say about the meaning of accountability? How can you become, or continue being, this person?

8. Victim/Offender

Imagine that there is a line drawn on the floor of your cell. One end of the line represents the experience of being an offender. The other end represents the experience of being a victim. The middle of the line represents something between the two. Place yourself on the imaginary line based on how you view yourself – victim or offender - in light of your life experiences. Consider why you placed yourself where you did and what you need to do to move toward healing.

9. Rating prison

On a scale of 1 to 10 (with 1 being not restorative and 10 being very restorative), rate your prison experience. How, if at all, has your experience been restorative? What, if anything, can you do to make your experience more restorative?

10. My Place on the Path

Imagine that there is a line drawn on the floor of your cell. One end of the line represents the statement “I agree.” The other end represents the statement “I disagree.” The middle of the line represents something between the two. Read the statements below and place yourself on the imaginary line based on the degree to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

1. I live a meaningful life.
2. I am a healed person.
3. I have the personal power to create the community I want.

Consider why you placed yourself where you did and how you can move toward agreement.

11. Coloring My Relationships

Imagine that you are asked to assign a color to each relationship in your life. Strong relationships are red; ok or so-so relationships are green; and weak are purple. With imaginary yarn in red, purple and green, symbolically tie yourself to each individual with the string that represents the color and strength of that relationship. When done, you will have an image of a multi-colored web.

Reflection questions:

1. To whom would you tie yourself with red string? Purple? Green?
2. How much red is in your web? Purple? Green?
3. What color string would others give you in return for the one you gave them? Would it be the same color?
4. What would need to happen for the purple and green relationships to move toward red?

12. Restorative Justice Ditty

Think about one word that sums up what restorative justice means to you. Come up with a catchy song, rhyme or poem that uses that word and can be used to introduce others to the philosophy.

13. Dreaming of Community

Dream about a just society in which people are connected by a strong web of relationships. Draw a picture of this “restorative community” as you see it in your mind.

Reflection questions:

1. What values do members of your community share?
2. How does your community give life to its members?
3. How does your community do justice?
4. What does it mean to be an active member of this community?
5. What parts of this community do you have now?
6. What can you do to create this community?

14. Times I've Been A Crime Victim

Create a tally sheet on which you put down a check mark for each time you or a loved one has been the victim of crime (for instance, a robbery or murder). Add up all the checks.

Reflection questions:

1. Is the number of checks surprising? Why or why not?
2. What have you done to heal from these experiences?
3. What more can you do to heal?

15. Family Stories

Write a story for yourself or write a letter home to your family about a time when:

1. You felt really close to your family;
2. You felt good knowing that your family was healthy and doing well;
3. Your family helped or supported you;
4. You were able to help or support your family;

5. Your favorite phone call or visit;
6. You celebrated an event or occasion with your family;
7. Your favorite or most memorable time with your family.

What do your stories say about your relationship with your family and what you need from each other?

16. A Time I Hurt Another

Think about a time when you did something that hurt another person in some way. This “hurt” can be criminal or social (eg. a slight against a family member, a lie to a friend, etc.). Think about the event in as much detail as you can remember, including your relationship to the person you hurt.

Reflection questions:

1. What did it feel like to hurt another person?
2. What motivation did you have for what you did?
3. What impact did this event have on your life?
4. How did hurting someone change your way of looking at the world and at yourself?
5. Is there anything you wish you had that you didn't do then?
6. What did you lose through this experience?
7. What did you gain through this experience?
8. Did you immediately take responsibility for your actions? If yes, what made it possible for you to do so? If not, what stopped you from doing it immediately?

17. Do No Harm

You have been asked to create a “do no harm” room in which you can safely take responsibility for your crime and do your own personal healing. Imagine or draw this room, decorating and furnishing it with those things that will make you feel safe to do justice work. Reflect on the values and nature of justice represented in your room. Find ways to symbolically re-create

the features of the “do no harm” room in your cell and other areas of your life.

18. Creating a Mantra

A mantra is a 7-10 syllable phrase that, when repeated, becomes true. It may give the speaker hope, strength, comfort or other positive emotions. Create your own personal mantra to use when faced with difficult situations.

19. Keeping the Positive, Throwing Out the Negative

Place two slips of paper in front of you. On one slip, write down a positive quality, behavior or thought you demonstrated recently. On the other slip, write down a negative quality, behavior or thought of which you would like to let go. Tuck the positive slip in your pocket as a reminder of your strengths. Tear up the negative slip and throw it away.

20. Healing Symbols

Imagine that your life has been a journey during which there have been both rocky roads and smooth routes. You may have been in pain at some places along the way but also moving toward healing and personal growth at other places. Each step along this journey has probably also taught you who you are and who you can become. Think about those times of healing and find something in your life that is symbolic of your times of healing, growth and journey toward becoming the person you are meant to be. This can be anything at all – something you draw or have drawn, a song you sing, a poem you have written or gift someone gave you. Be as creative as you would like to be.

Reflection questions:

1. Why is this symbol significant for you?
2. How does it represent your journey of healing or personal transformation?
3. What does it say about who you are meant to be?

21. Writing Three Relationships

Identify three different people in your life. These three people should include one with whom you have a strong relationship, one with whom you have a weak relationship and one with whom you have an ok or so-so relationship. Write notes on separate pieces of paper to each individual. Possible questions to consider while writing:

1. What do you appreciate about this person?
2. What has made this relationship the way it is?
3. How can the relationship be strengthened?
4. What will you do to strengthen the relationship?

Roll up or fold each individual letter. Send the letters or let them serve as symbolic reminders of the relationship and your commitment to them.

22. Creating Sanctuary

In your mind’s eye, imagine a safe and serene place to which you can retreat when stressed out or simply need a break from prison life. Go to this place in your mind whenever you need to. Recreate parts of it in your life.

23. Supporting Family

Remember a time when a family member or other loved one needed support for a difficult situation they were facing.

Reflection questions:

1. What did you do to show support?
2. What do you see as your strengths in this area?
3. How can you improve?

24. Journal Letters*

Consider the victim(s) of your crime and prepare yourself to write a journal with three letters:

1. An apology letter to your victim;
2. A letter in which you put yourself in your victim’s shoes and write to yourself;
3. A letter to yourself in which you say

what you did, what you were thinking and the impact of your actions.

Keep these journal letters as symbolic reminders of your accountability.

* Cheryl Swanson, University of West Florida

25. Six Degrees of Separation

The premise of the party game “Six Degrees of Separation” is that everyone in the world is connected to each other through, at most, 5-6 other people. For instance, if you want to find your connections to President Bush, it may look like this:

1. I know Danny
2. Danny knows Justin
3. Justin met George Bush

You got to President Bush through only 2 other people and therefore have 3 degrees of separation. You may have up to 6 degrees of separation.

Name a famous person you would like to meet. Play the game with friends, staff, family and anyone else to find out who they know who may know someone else and so on until you find your connection to the person you would like to meet.

26. Traveling on the Healing Path

Take stock of where you currently are the path to personal healing and where you want to be. Brainstorm steps you can take in the timeframes below so that you will arrive at your future place of healing:

- a. 2 weeks
- b. 2 months
- c. 6 months
- d. 1 year

27. Oath

Create a personal oath, or pledge, that names 10 things you commit to do to live a life that

reflects responsibility, healing and strong relationships. Write down the oath and refer to it each morning.

28. Restorative Living

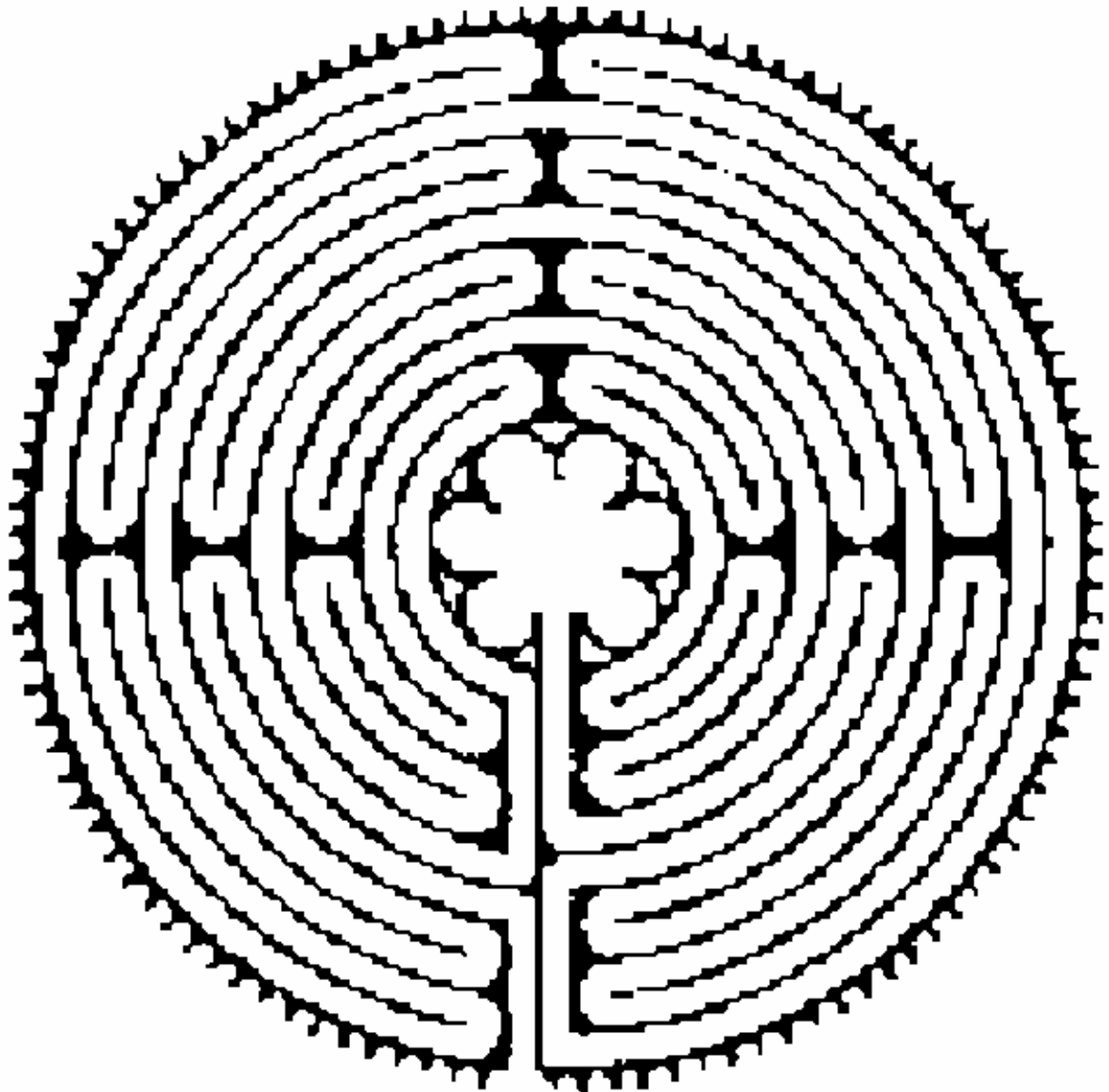
Restorative justice isn't just a way to do criminal justice. It's a way to live life every day. Take the principles, values and practices that you know about and practice them in your own life. There are times when this task may seem easy. You may already live such a life. There are other times when it is challenging to live by restorative principles and values. A lot can get in the way or make it seem that restorative justice isn't possible. If you find a time when you feel that you can't use restorative justice, take some time to think about why that is and try to turn it around.

Continued on next page

29. Labyrinth

A labyrinth, pictured below, is a metaphor for a journey during which one travels to the center of one's deepest self and then returns back to the world with a deeper personal understanding of oneself. It is a symbol of wholeness. Unlike a maze, a labyrinth has just one path and you can't get lost. While in the labyrinth one is simply present with oneself, not worrying about the details of one's journey.

Use your finger or pencil top to slowly trace your way to the center of the labyrinth and back. While on the path, consider your own journey toward accountability and healing. Stay at the center of the labyrinth for as long as you like or need. As you prepare to leave and return along the path, visualize yourself leaving behind those things that you brought with you – concerns, fears, tears – right there in the center. Take one or two deep breaths, turn around and leave the center. Coming to the end of the labyrinth, visualize a “gateway” through which you exit. Pause and reflect on your experience. What did you learn about your personal healing journey?



[www.raywhiting.com/archive/labwalk.html last accessed 8/05]

Appendix: Restorative Justice Group Activities

This appendix takes the individual reflections included in this workbook and offers suggestions for ways to turn the reflections into group activities. Many of these activities have been used successfully in Prison Society's seminars, workshops or other presentations. With debriefing questions and group discussion, all the activities can lead to discussions about restorative values and principles, individual justice needs, the impact of crime and the importance of accountability and healing.

While the activities are organized by core seminar topics, the activities can be used in many ways to introduce a variety of topics. A simple modification or change in debriefing questions can shift the focus of an activity to something new. I hope that the ideas here inspire you to create new activities!

Activities for introducing or defining restorative justice as a philosophy

Coloring My Relationships (exercise 11)

Please see XXX, a collection of resources for educating about restorative justice in prison, for detailed instructions about Prison Society's cornerstone restorative justice activity based on this reflection.

Six Degrees of Separation (exercise 25)

- In the large group, each participant names a famous person he/she would like to meet. A recorder is designated to create a written list. Over a designated period of time (eg. by the next session), participants play the game, finding their connections to as many of the famous people as possible. They report in the next session about how and with whom they found their way to the people.

Do No Harm (exercise 17)

- In small groups or as a large group, participants create a common "do no harm" room and discuss what it says about restorative justice.

Restorative Justice Metaphor (exercise 3)

- With newsprint and markers, participants create their own boxing match/criminal justice image. This can be done in small groups or as a large group.
- Participants physically place themselves within and around a boxing ring on the floor to represent the different players, their positions and values. After discussing the boxing match image, participants physically move themselves around to represent the players, positions and values of restorative justice.
- Participants draw their own individual pictures of restorative justice and then create a small group with others who have similar pictures to discuss the meaning of their pictures. Small groups create a common picture together.

Activities for exploring community issues

Experiencing Community (exercise 2)

- In small groups, participants tell stories of community and create group responses to questions.

Dreaming of Community (exercise 13)

- Participants draw their own individual pictures and then create a small group with others who have similar pictures to discuss the meaning of their pictures.
- Small groups create a common picture together.
- Participants use Lego or tinker toys to create images for community.

Activities for exploring personal healing

Symbols of Healing (exercise 20)

- Participants present their symbols to the group, responding to the questions provided.
- If the group meets over a period of time, several participants can be assigned to make presentations each session. Even if someone doesn't want to talk about his/her symbol, they can be encouraged to bring something to show to the group.

My Personal Web of Relationships (exercise 1)

Coloring My Relationships (exercise 11)

- Participants draw or build with yarn their personal webs and discuss in small group.

My Place on the Path (exercise 10)

- Participants physically place themselves on a continuum on the floor in which one end is “agree” and the other “disagree.” Participants explain why they placed themselves where they did.

Keeping the Positive, Throwing out the Negative (exercise 19)

- Participants say their positive quality to the group and throw away their negative quality in a trash can in the middle of the room.

Victim/Offender (exercise 8)

- Participants physically place themselves on a continuum on the floor in which one end is “offender” and the other “victim.” Participants explain why they placed themselves where they did.

Life Graph (exercise 4)

- In small groups, participants discuss their life graphs and the questions.

Traveling on the Healing Path (exercise 26)

- Participants create their plan privately during the reflection time.
- Participants create a group plan for creating, for instance, healing spaces or restorative justice projects in the prison.

Labyrinth (exercise 29)

- Participants walk through a labyrinth that is recreated on the floor.
- Small or large group discussion about experience in the labyrinth and learnings about one’s personal healing.

Activities for exploring offender issues

A Time I Hurt Another (exercise 16)

- Participants discuss their responses in small groups or as a large group. Participants do not have to talk about what happened. Rather, they discuss their questions and responses.

Do No Harm Room (exercise 17)

- In small groups or as a large group, participants create a common “do no harm” room and discuss what aspects of that room they already experience and what aspects they can create on their own.

Envisioning Accountability (exercise 7)

- Participants draw their own individual pictures and then create a small group with others who have similar pictures to discuss the meaning of their pictures.
- Small groups create a common picture together.

Labyrinth (exercise 29)

- Participants walk through a labyrinth that is recreated on the floor.
- Small or large group discussion about experience in the labyrinth and learnings about one’s healing as an offender.

Activities for exploring offender family issues

Family Values (exercise 6)

- In small groups, participants discuss the questions from their own perspective and explore their experiences.

Family Stories (exercise 15)

- In small groups, participants tell their stories to each other and explore the questions.

Coloring My Relationships (exercise 11)

- Participants draw or build with yarn their personal webs and discuss in small groups.

My Personal Web of Relationships (exercise 1)

- This activity can be a group meditation.

Supporting Family (exercise 23)

- Participants role play times they found it hard to be supportive or felt like they were not able to provide adequate support. Large group brainstorms ways to be supportive in the situation.

Activities for exploring victim issues

A Time I was Hurt (exercise 5)

- Participants discuss their responses in small groups or as a large group. Participants do not have to talk about what happened. Rather, they discuss their questions and responses.
- Add discussion about what participants learn from their experience about the experience of other victims, including their own.

Journal Letters (exercise 24)

- Participants read their letters to each other and accept feedback and respond to questions.

Time I've Been a Crime Victim (exercise 14)

- Participants privately complete individual tally sheets. The individual tally sheets are added together for a group score.
- Group discussion about individual or combined results.

Supporting Family (modified to be Supporting Victims) (exercise 23)

- Participants brainstorm what people need from others when they are hurting and the qualities that support people should embody. Participants then role play as “victim support” people and victims to explore the impact of crime and victim needs for justice.

Note: Howard Zehr’s book, *Transcending: Reflections of Crime Victims* (Good Books, 2001) is an excellent resource for educating on the victim experience and restorative justice. We cut out and laminated photos and taped interview excerpts to the back. These photos were used in the following ways:

- Participants selected a photo, “introduced” the victim to the group.
- Participants read the quote to the large group and offered a response to the quote.
- Participants reflected on the quote privately and wrote responses to such questions as:
 - o What is the person saying about the meaning of justice? Healing?
 - o What is personally challenging about what this person is saying?
 - o What do you wish for this person?
 - o What can you learn about your own healing journey from this person?

Regardless how they are used, the photos provided a victim “presence” during the session.

Activities for exploring daily life

Creating a Mantra (exercise 18)

- Participants create mantras on their own and share with the group during the last session.

Oath (exercise 27)

- Participants create oaths on their own and share with the group during the last session.
- Participants create a group oath that outlines how they will live as a restorative community.

Rating Prison (exercise 9)

- Participants physically place themselves on a continuum on the floor in which one end is a “1” and the other a “10.” Participants explain why they placed themselves where they did.

Creating Sanctuary (exercise 22)

- Participants draw their own individual pictures of sanctuary and then create a small group with others who have similar pictures to discuss the meaning of their pictures.

Restorative Justice Ditty (exercise 12)

- In small groups, participants create a ditty and present to the rest of the group.
- Facilitator assigns each individual, or small group, a different restorative justice related word with which to create the ditty.

Restorative Living (exercise 28)

- Participants practice restorative justice as they go about their business between group sessions. They report in about their experiences, including the challenges.
- Participants role play dilemmas they face living out restorative justice.

PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

- Family Resource Center at SCI Graterford
- Family Virtual Visitation
- Family Transportation Services
- Official Visitors
- Parenting Skills Education
- Re-Entry Services Program
- Restorative Justice Resources
- Service to Elder Prisoners
- Support for Kids with Incarcerated Parents
- Working Group to Enhance Services for Incarcerated Women

PUBLICATIONS

- *Correctional Forum*
- *Graterfriends*

HEADQUARTERED IN PHILADELPHIA, the Prison Society is a private, nonprofit agency governed by a board of directors. It is aided by chapters organized by county and a statewide network of Official Visitors.

Unite with others who know that justice and compassion are not exclusive:

- Become a member—you will receive our monthly and quarterly newsletters
- Attend meetings at your local chapter
- Become an official visitor
- Support the Prison Society by making a financial contribution

The Pennsylvania
PRISON SOCIETY
SOCIAL JUSTICE SINCE 1787

245 N. Broad Street • Suite 300
Philadelphia, PA 19107

Administrative Offices: 215 564-6005
Services/Programs Offices: 215 564-4775
Fax: 215 564-7926

E-mail: geninfo@prisonsociety.org
www.prisonsociety.org