

Prison Club Mentors Presentation
District Executive Committee Meeting
November 19, 2021

With the advent of the Coronavirus pandemic, it has put a halt to chartering new prison clubs. Prisons were shut down totally not allowing guests/visitors to enter the prisons. Also, prisoners did not have the opportunity to hold online meetings (i.e., ZOOM, Teams, etc.) Finally, prisoners were not able to gather in one room for any activities.

However, indications are that prisons will begin to open up sometime in the near future. There are four prisons currently that have shown an interest in the past that they would like to have a Toastmasters club. Those prisons are in the following areas: Canton, Galesburg, Decatur (Women's prison), and Joliet.

Our strategy therefore is to begin chartering clubs once the prisons open up and to have a pool of prison club mentors ready to assign to any of the newly chartered prison clubs.

The role of a prison club mentor is to be a conduit between the prison and the outside world. Prisoners will be unable to call Toastmasters International or their area director, nor will they be able to participate in speech contests, TLI's, and attend the district conferences, etc. Therefore, it is imperative that prison club mentors work with prison clubs on a continuous basis to help them succeed. (It is possible that some prisons in the future will allow online meetings.) Being a prison club mentor is a long term commitment (not just a six month commitment to get credit for your education goals).

In addition, I believe that being a prison club mentor is a calling, a passion, a mission to help the less fortunate (prisoners) to attain the skills necessary to succeed in the outside world/society once they are released. It can be a very rewarding and satisfying to help prisoners.

There is data that shows that if a prisoner builds the skills to succeed once he/she reenters society then he/she is less likely to return to prison.

So, what is your role in all of this (why am I talking to you today?)-

First of all, do you have that desire, calling and passion to be a prison club mentor?

Secondly, I would like you to get the word out to the clubs in your respective area/division that there are opportunities to be a prison club mentor.

If you or anyone in your respective area/division wishes to be a prison club mentor, you can contact me, or Jon Greiner, Prison Club Manager and we will place your/their name in the pool.

Anthony (Tony) Koury, DTM
Prison New Clubs Chair (2021-2022)
Past District Director (2018-2019)