

Project Pen Pal: Volunteer Position Description

A Quality-of-Life Initiative Connecting Incarcerated Youth & Young Adults to Hope and Community

Position Title: Project Pen Pal Volunteer

Program Overview:

Project Pen Pal is a restorative justice and community-building initiative that connects volunteers (youth and young adults) with incarcerated youth and young adults through monthly letter writing. This initiative provides positive, uplifting, and hope-centered correspondence to individuals who may feel isolated, offering them a connection to the outside world, encouragement, and a sense of belonging.

This program fosters empathy, personal growth, and social responsibility while reinforcing the power of written communication to inspire and uplift. It also serves as a bridge between justice-involved youth and a supportive, healthy community.

Volunteer Commitment:

- Minimum Commitment: 6 months
- Meetings: Monthly in-person letter-writing sessions (1-2 hours per session)
- Time Expectation: 3-5 hours per month (includes letter writing, review process, and optional program development tasks)
- Location: Organization's office or designated writing space

Key Responsibilities:

- 1. Attend Monthly Letter-Writing Sessions**
 - Participate in structured sessions where volunteers write letters to incarcerated youth and young adults.
- 2. Write Encouraging and Supportive Letters**
 - Share positive messages, motivational words, and community updates that foster hope and connection.
 - Encourage personal growth, resilience, and goal setting through written communication.
- 3. Adhere to Letter-Writing Guidelines**
 - Follow organization-approved topics and avoid sensitive, illegal, or inappropriate discussions (training will be provided).
 - Ensure confidentiality and compliance with correctional facility regulations.
- 4. Engage in Reflection and Training**
 - Participate in periodic discussions on restorative justice, the impact of incarceration on youth, and trauma-informed engagement.

- Learn about the experiences of system-impacted individuals and the role of positive relationships in reducing recidivism.
- 5. **Maintain Ethical Boundaries**
 - Avoid sharing personal contact details or making promises that cannot be kept.
 - Report any inappropriate communication or concerns to program supervisors.
- 6. **Contribute to Community Awareness and Growth**
 - Help recruit new volunteers and spread awareness about the impact of Project Pen Pal.
 - Support special events or initiatives related to youth justice reform and community healing.

Volunteer Qualifications:

- **Age Requirement:** 16+ (parent/guardian permission required for minors)
- **Strong Written Communication Skills:** Ability to express encouragement and positivity in writing
- **Empathy and Open-Mindedness:** Willingness to connect with justice-involved youth without judgment
- **Reliability and Commitment:** Ability to consistently participate for at least 6 months
- **Ability to Follow Program Guidelines:** Respectful of boundaries, confidentiality, and ethical engagement

Volunteer Benefits:

- **Make a Meaningful Impact:** Provide emotional support and connection to incarcerated youth.
- **Develop Advocacy and Leadership Skills:** Gain experience in restorative justice, social advocacy, and mentorship.
- **Earn Community Service Hours:** Recognized volunteer service for school, college, or personal development.
- **Build Friendships and Community:** Work alongside like-minded volunteers who are passionate about justice and healing.

Program Support and Oversight:

- **Facilitators:** Program Supervisor (Shine Anderson) and Designated Youth Engagement Coordinator
- **Letter Review Process:**
 - All letters will be reviewed for appropriate content and adherence to program guidelines before being sent.
 - Volunteers may receive coaching on effective, trauma-informed communication as needed.
- **Collaboration:** This initiative may partner with local juvenile detention centers, reentry programs, and youth advocacy organizations to ensure proper coordination.

Next Steps to Get Involved:

- Submit an Interest Form (Available at [Your Organization's Name] website or in person)
- Attend an Orientation and Training (Covers letter-writing guidelines, ethics, and program impact)
- Join the Next Letter-Writing Session