

# Alpha Prison Ministries Newsletter

## April 2025 Edition

*"I was in prison and you came to visit me." Matthew 25:36*

## Healing Broken Lives After Prison



Last month in our Director Dave's version of the newsletter, he very appropriately pointed out how APM has never taken or even sought federal funding. Federal tax funds have far too many strings attached and we would not be able to be effective in the same ways as a ministry.

This point has not been made in quite some time, and as Dave stated, there has never been a time when this policy has been more important. That inspires me to reiterate how our transitional housing is highly effective due in no small way to our donor only funding model and the fact that the residents we accept are at least 97% from broken (fatherless) homes.

That number confirms statistics on the fact that broken homes lead to staggering numbers of men who end up in prison. Another by-product of broken homes is not just the high level of ruined childhoods and domestic abuse, but lack of even the most basic skills to succeed in adult life.

Alpha House residents typically have never developed money handling skills, held a long term job, or learned the basics of making an honest living. The integral mentoring for these residents includes this kind of life skills training for a successful transition back to society and most have savings accounts and more upon completing their residency.



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- ♦ Praise God that rampant staffing shortages for corrections officers throughout Michigan prisons are proactively being resolved with the training, graduation, and hiring of new recruits to fill positions available and more training begins this month. Pray for success in the ongoing efforts and that APM's in prison Bible studies can resume soon in more facilities.
- ♦ One aspect of Alpha's success in helping men being released from prison beat the odds against them is our Alpha House transitional housing units. With all the chaos of the last 5+ years, this part of our ministry has continued mostly unimpeded and our capacity for residents remains at about full most of the time. Thank the Lord for this and please keep our residents in your prayers.
- ♦ New volunteers and Board members would be greatly appreciated so it is fitting to make this a prayer request so God can provide the right people.

Prayer Requests

APRIL 2025

Please cut around these prayer requests and use this as a bookmark in your Bible.

Alpha  
Prison Ministries

ADVOCAATE

## Staffing Shortages in Michigan Prisons Update

Just two short months ago in our February newsletter, I had written about a serious problem in the Michigan Dept. of Corrections (MDOC) that has been going on a long time and directly impacts the in prison ministry we are able to accomplish. That problem is crippling shortages in prison staff, corrections officers in particular.

Well, it's great to report good news and answers year's worth of prayer requests! Just literally days before this newsletter, on March 28th, MDOC announced the graduation and hiring of 224 new corrections officers who had completed the training Michigan's Lower Peninsula Academy with an additional 40 a month earlier at the Northern Region Academy, which was the largest seen in roughly 9 years.

More training classes for new recruits are set to begin at the Northern Region Academy on April 14th and at the Lower Peninsula Academy on April 28th. This is exciting news and we look forward to being able to announce more rollouts of APM in prison Bible studies being able to resume. Please pray for that process to flow smoothly, thank you.

## Multi-State Coalition Calling to Allow Cell Phone Jamming Systems in Prisons

The following is taken from an MDOC Press Release from March:

Michigan Department of Corrections Director Heidi Washington joined 31 other state corrections directors in a request for congressional action to allow technology which would interrupt cell phone service in correctional facilities, jails, and detention facilities across the country.

The technology, known as signal jamming or micro-jamming, helps to stop prisoners from using contraband cell phones to organize violent crimes such as sex trafficking, domestic abuse, and murder by ensuring the phones are unable to access service signals. A 2020 survey of 20 state correctional departments uncovered 25,840 contraband cell phones in a single year.

"Corrections departments across the country are not only seeing an increase in contraband cell phones but also an increase in sophisticated crimes being committed when prisoners have access to them," MDOC Director Washington said. "Signal jamming is a common-sense solution to this growing problem, and when implemented, will help

stop organized crime and save lives in our facilities and beyond our walls."

Correctional departments have employed various technologies to detect and disrupt contraband cell phones at significant cost to taxpayers and with varying degrees of success over the years. Signal jamming has proved to be more cost effective than other technologies and could be an impactful public safety solution for states.

Signal jamming technology is currently prohibited for state facilities by Federal law. Recently introduced legislation, H.R. 2350 and S. 1137 would allow for the ban to be lifted while also avoiding the potential for emergency signals to be blocked. The bills have bipartisan support.

## Inmate Snail Mail Down, Email Up

Our new Director Dave has been informing me that traditional inmate letters are becoming less common. This isn't too surprising when you consider that USPS postage rates are continually rising, and at a faster pace than in the past. Add in the costs of paper and envelopes and the fact that inmates are more significantly impacted due to seriously low income opportunity, and the trend becomes even more understandable.

Fortunately for inmates, a long standing system in place developed many years ago for inmates to receive funds from people on the *outside* has broadened to better meet inmate needs by providing email access at rates well below traditional snail mail. Sure, it's still expensive compared to the "free" email often taken for granted out here in the general public but all forms of communication in and out of prison require close monitoring and security and its inherent overhead costs.

This is also important to consider when compared to the previous news feature about corrections departments wanting to get outdated laws reversed to allow cell phone signal jamming systems to be used in prison facilities. These efforts, as stated in the Press Release, are to circumvent growing abuse of vulnerabilities left open when inmates acquire "contraband" cell phones they can use to commit crimes right inside the prisons.

Inmates have sufficient access to communication with the outside through the use of traditional mail, in prison telephone systems, in person visitation, and more recently, email. These all have security measures in place. Contraband cell phones do not.

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Newsletter written/edited by APM Board member Steve Chittenden

APM is an **undenominational Christ-centered ministry** to prisoners and ex-offenders

### APM Financial Summary January-February 2025

Total Income: **\$15,569.04**

Total Expense: **\$17,809.59**

Net Income: **\$-2240.55**



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