



**UPAN Newsletter** Volume 12 Number 1 | **JANUARY 2025**  
*"Empowerment and Growth Through Knowledge and Unity"*

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**Holiday Project for Kids a Success – New Mail System – Tour of USCF Currant’s Facility, Library, Pharmacy, & Meeting 3 Men – *Dell-Emerald Topics* – UCI & More**  
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**Next Meeting:** Monday, January 13, 2025 6:30 – 8:30 pm. Speakers: Molly Prince & UPAN Directors on Advocating  
Join all meetings at <https://bit.ly/UPAN-Meet>

**Following Meetings:** Monday, February 10, 2025 6:30 – 8:30 pm. **Guest Speakers:** UPEP Director Andy Eisen & Education Director Darcy Gomez.

**Monday March 10, 2025 6:30- 8:30 pm. Guest Speaker:** Oasis Perez Utah’s 211 Directory.

*Meetings Available on UPAN Facebook Live and on UPAN’s Facebook page afterwards. Visit UPAN Facebook page for newsletters. Visit website (page 10) to subscribe to the UPAN Newsletter, or Utah Prisoner Advocate Facebook Page for link to current monthly meeting. Free to the public. Zoom link: <https://bit.ly/UPAN-Meet>*

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***Disclaimer: Formulate your own opinions about the information presented. This information is presented for the reader’s enlightenment and evaluation.***

**“The new year stands before us, like a chapter in a book, waiting to be written.” – Melody Beattie**

**All Hearts Come Home For the Holidays Campaign a Success!**

by Karen Thompson, Director of Special Projects

So many worked on this first holiday program to benefit the children of incarcerated parents in Utah, but I have to give a shout out to Shane, Molly, Chris, Heidi, Deon Jessica, Howard and Ellen. And Susan Z., it was her dream that inspired this attempt of an almost impossible task.

Let’s face it, sometimes we are not a popular cause but our community did not forget the children. We had support from our UPAN Family, UDC employees, anonymous donors, KSL viewers and random citizens. At the post office my husband was mailing about 200

letters to our LOs, updating them on the program. A gentleman asked him why there were so many Christmas cards. Richard explained the All Hearts Program to this man. When we were pulling out of the Post Office parking lot he waved us down and gave us \$50.00 “for the kids”.

We asked UPAN families and friends to share the All Hearts public Facebook page and those memes inspired many sponsorships. A BYU law professor saw the interview by Mike Anderson on KSL and contacted me and asked for some lists to sponsor.

We received requests from parents in USCF, CUCF and 6 county jails. That resulted in a total of 356 Amazon wish lists, one for each child nominated. These kids live all over the state and across the nation. That's why we utilized the long reach of Amazon.

While we couldn't provide every item wished for, our generous Donors made sure that every child was remembered. This is a Holiday miracle!

On 15 December we had a drawing and selected 3 winners from all the group members and participants who helped us to spread the word and share the wish lists for the children in The All Hearts Come Home For The Holidays Campaign. But we were all winners. When this project was first considered we had four goals.

1. Let our incarcerated loved ones feel the Spirit of the Holidays

2. Help the custodial parent / guardian with Holiday gifts and needs
3. Let the children know they can have Hope for the Holidays and every day
4. Bring our UPAN families closer by supporting each other

With everyone's support and help, we reached that goal! We are on a long difficult journey, but we are not alone on this prison journey. We have support and help is available. We have so much to be grateful for. I have learned so much about good hearts and kind people because of the project. Each one of us can do what we can, whenever we can, and we can make a difference. If we can do this, we can do even more. Thank you, all of you, for being part of UPAN. Thank you for Stepping Up and Standing Tall.

### **Families Can Take "Captain Your Story" Course in the Community**

Do you want to take the Captain Your Story course in the community while your loved one takes it behind the walls? Or has your loved one already taken it and you want to catch up with what they have learned and experience it yourself? We have heard comments from families that they wish they could take the Captain Your Story course to better understand what their loved ones are learning.

Now you can take the course in the community! My Story Matters has received some scholarship funding for classes for individuals living in the state of Utah that are 18 and older and are parents. Executive Director Amy Chandler is offering this opportunity to UPAN families.

If you are interested in participating, please go to this link and fill out this form: <https://wkf.ms/3ObK5xu>

### **Information and Answers to Some Questions About the New Mail System** by Molly Prince, LCSW

*The information in this article comes after a variety of meetings and discussions with various UDC administrators over a period of time regarding the decision to move to a third party contractor for mail. The most recent answers were received in a meeting in November with Lt. Diehl who is over Support Center Services, which includes mail, laundry, property, and culinary in USCF. Lt. Brewer is over these services in CUCF.*

**Overview and a little history.** UDC has been considering moving toward a third party contractor to handle incoming non-business mail from family and friends over the past six or seven years. UPAN has advocated to keep physical mail coming from family rather than moving to electronic only methods like many of Utah's jails have done. Many families feel that allowing our loved ones to have a physical letter and paper photographs to have in their possession, to hold in their hands, look at, read, and re-read is vitally important to the psychological well-being of an incarcerated person.

UDC has been considering this move as another approach to reducing the increasing contraband within the prisons. UPAN and other advocacy groups have suggested that families in visiting and mail are not the primary source, although we are aware that visitors and mail can be sources. It has been acknowledged that if the amount of drugs within the prison does not significantly reduce, then UDC might need to look more carefully within the system rather than focusing primarily on visitors and mail.

I have personally discussed the downside of moving to a mail scanning system in Utah's 2 prisons with several UDC administrators over the years. In addition to the

need for physical mail that is held on to by inmates and can move from facility to facility with someone over the years (versus electronic access that changes between jails and the prisons), we also have discussed the low quality produced by many contractors who scan mail and print it out to be sent into inmates.

While the UDC administration believes that moving to contracted mail delivery system will reduce the amount of drugs entering Utah's two prisons, there is not a lot of research that I could find to support that, but it is a growing trend throughout the US. Once we learned it was going to happen no matter what, we are trying to look at the upside. Those of us who have been involved in these discussions hope that this move will be another step in helping UDC determine the source of contraband that is not through the mail.

**Why a Contract?** Families have asked why the UDC has contracted and will be sending Utah funds to a company in Nevada to do the scanning. We are told that UDC has been searching for a good contractor that also has affordable prices because setting up a system like that for the volume of mail that Utah's two prisons receive is too costly to do in-house. The contract is more cost effective than it would be to acquire all the

equipment necessary to process the volume of mail that comes through USCF and CUCF mail rooms.

**Pigeonly will be the contracted mail system for Utah's prisons.** Former Warden Bart Mortensen showed the products to several UPAN directors in October. He explained that Pigeonly will scan letters, cards, drawings, photographs sent in by family and friends and then Fed Ex the physical print outs to the prisons to be distributed to inmates. We saw the high quality of the printed scans and the quality of the photographs which were printed on photo paper and looked very clear. Pigeonly already does this work with 70 other prisons in the US and has quite a few contracts with the Texas Dept. of Corrections we are told. Pigeonly is the contractor that had the highest quality product for an affordable price. We were not provided with the cost of the contract.

**Safety of Mail Room Staff.** One other factor that needs to be considered is the safety of mail room staff when opening and examining the content of mail. Reports of mail room staff in other states being contaminated by handling drug infused paper have risen according to some reports. Also as recently as August 2024, a mail room supervisor in a California prison died after being exposed to drugs in a piece of correspondence. It is also reported that a mail room clerk inhaled fentanyl that had turned to powder in the letter and died from that. It is incidents like these that are also influencing the UDC's decision to move to a scanning system.

**The importance of physical mail, photos and cards.** A prisonpolicy.org November 2022 article expresses some of our concerns about the emotional impact of mail scanning on inmates. It states, "*Physical mail carries great sentimental value for incarcerated people, which translates into a more hopeful experience behind bars. In one [inmate's] words, Under the new policy of digitizing mail [in Florida], [we] are losing the visceral experience of touching a letter or smelling perfume on an envelope.' Taking that away has real, measurable*

***"No matter how hard the past, you can always begin again." – Buddha***

**New Off-Site Mail Process Starting Monday January 6, 2025** Source – UDC Website: corrections.utah.gov

The Utah Department of Corrections has partnered with Pigeonly to create a new system for handling and processing incoming mail. The goals are to improve mail delivery, allow more types of mail to be received inside its facilities, and reduce contraband introduced into the facilities through the mail.

**Beginning Date:** The UDC will transition to an off-site mail process on Monday, January 6, 2025. There will

***New Mailing Address for Friends and Family via Pigeonly:***

**USCF** Incarcerated person Name - Offender ID Number  
Utah State Correctional Facility -1700  
PO Box 96777 Las Vegas, NV 89193

**Mail Processing/Delivery:** Pigeonly will accept letters, postcards, pictures, birthday cards, etc. Within 24 hours

*consequences for mental health, behavior, and even recidivism after release. Incarcerated people return to their mail over and over to be reminded of their support networks; scanned mail, on the other hand, is often low-quality or incomplete, lacking the same meaning. Even if contraband occasionally enters prisons through the mail, the practice of scanning all mail senselessly punishes all incarcerated people and their families for a few infractions."*

<https://www.prisonpolicy.org/blog/2022/11/17/mail-scanning/#:~:text=We%20found%20four%20third%2Dparty,a%20prison%20system%20using%20it.&text=Physical%20mail%20carries%20great%20sentimental,families%20for%20a%20few%20infractions.>

**The Process.** Another article in this newsletter shares the information about how things will work, the mailing address, and what attorneys and legal firms including public defenders need to do to get a QR code to send Legal Mail directly to Utah's prisons. UPAN posted the process that families need to go through on the Utah Prisoner Advocate Network Family Facebook Group in early December. UDC website at corrections.utah.gov posted this information for families and the community on their public website on December 2, 2024. We are also told this information was posted on the tablets inside the prisons for incarcerated folks to read. We encourage everyone to read it in detail.

**Frequently Asked Questions: Two sided letters** are accepted. Pigeonly scans both the front and back of pages, so it is perfectly fine to write on both sides. This includes the UPAN newsletter – families and volunteers can still send it for 1 Forever stamp, printed on both sides.

**Ameelio, Pelipost** and other mailing services are considered business correspondence and can still be sent to the prisons rather than Pigeonly. PLEASE REFER TO "New Mail Process Details from UDC" article in this newsletter for specific information.

not be a "grace period." Mail delivered to USCF/CUCF from friends and family after January 5, 2025, will be returned to the sender. (UPAN NOTE: This suggests that any mail sent to the prisons should be sent prior to December 25 to allow for the length of time the Post Office may take to get it there. Then start mailing letters to the Pigeonly Las Vegas address around January 4<sup>th</sup> or 5<sup>th</sup>.)

**CUCF** Incarcerated person Name - Offender ID Number  
Central Utah Correctional Facility -1701  
PO Box 96777 Las Vegas, NV 89193

of receiving mail, they will scan & print a high-quality copy of each item. Special items like birthday cards &

photos will be reproduced using appropriate materials. Copies mailed to USCF or CUCF via USPS 1-3 day Priority Mail.

#### **Potential Benefits to Incarcerated Individuals:**

Incarcerated individuals may now be able to receive items previously not allowed, such as copies of greeting cards, colored envelopes, colored paper, card stock, and multi-layered stationery. The mailrooms at USCF and CUCF will be able to track mail better, allowing for a quicker resolution to instances of lost mail.

Contraband interdiction will be improved with this new process, which is hoped to decrease the amount of controlled substances in the facilities.

**How to Receive Privileged Legal Mail?** Those wishing to send privileged legal mail must be authenticated beforehand. Lawyers will need to sign up via <https://privileged.pigeonlycorrections.com/>. After a person is authenticated, they will have access to print a QR Label to be affixed to the mail.

**Privileged legal mail can then be sent directly to USCF or CUCF as long as it has the QR label affixed to it.** Attorneys have a separate process they go through to receive a QR code to put on their correspondence so it can be delivered directly to USCF or CUCF. The front of the envelope must be clearly marked with the QR label.

**If Pigeonly receives ANY PRIVILEGED LEGAL MAIL, it will be returned to the sender.**

**What About Public Legal, Government, or Business Correspondence?** Those wishing to send official public legal, government, or business correspondence should send the letter directly to USCF or CUCF. These letters may be subjected to a search. If it is determined that mail sent directly to USCF or CUCF is from friends or family, it will be denied.

Examples of places non-privileged correspondence is from, that should be sent directly to USCF or CUCF: Courts and court staff, Government office and/or entity, Attorney's office, Attorney General's Office, Congress, Embassies and consulates, The United States Department of Justice, State governors, Members of the State Legislature, Schools, Banks/Credit Unions, Law enforcement officers in their official capacity.

**Receiving Books, Magazines, or Periodicals.** There will be no changes to how books, magazines, and periodicals are received. **As a reminder, all books, magazines, and periodicals are subject to the publisher-only rule.**

**Books must be purchased by the incarcerated individual from one of the approved book vendors.**

#### **Pigeonly's Accepted Mail Size Requirements:**

All mail must have a return address

Envelopes must be no larger than 4 in. x 9½ in.

Letters must be paper that is no larger than 8½ in. x 11 in.

Greeting Cards must be no larger than 5 in. x 7 in.

Postcards must be 5 in. x 7 in.

**Photographs** must be 4 in. x 6 in. (limit 10 per parcel)

#### **Pigeonly's Prohibited Mail Rules (similar to UDC's rules)**

- Mail with glitter, rhinestones, stickers, or glued items
- Wax paper letters
- Shaped-cut photos or papers
- Letters written on tiny papers or sticky notes
- Crystals, religious tokens, coins, toys, keychains, stickers, artwork items
- Unused/blank envelopes, paper, stationery, & stamps
- Newspaper clippings
- Envelopes: Express or Priority/hard mail/bubble type/large thin paper envelopes
- Stapled items
- Books, booklets, magazines, or anything spined
- Greeting cards that are overly thick, electronic, fold-out, 3D, have pop-ups, or are oversized
- Polaroid photos and photographs from 3rd-party vendors (ex. Shutterfly)
- Official documents
- Bulk mail
- Documents you do not want destroyed, such as Birth certificates, driver's licenses, Soc. Security cards, etc.
- Any type of legal mail
- Envelopes written in light or colored ink
- Illegible envelopes
- All forms of money (if unopened): cash, checks, coins, gift cards, credit cards, etc.

Any prohibited mail will be returned to the sender

#### **Frequently Asked Questions**

***How long does it take for an incarcerated individual to receive non-privileged mail?*** Within 24 hours of receipt, Pigeonly will open and scan incoming mail, share the electronic scan with the UDC for further screening, and then print and prepare the mail for shipment. Printed mail delivered via Priority Mail to the designated correctional facility will be received within 1-3 days of shipment.

***How long is mail held at Pigeonly's processing facility?*** Original copies of postal mail are held for 45 days. After this period, it is destroyed.

***I sent mail to an incarcerated person(s), and it was returned as undeliverable. Why?*** It may have been returned because it violates the mail policy. All mail is inspected for prohibited materials. Mail that contains the following will be flagged and is subject to being marked as undeliverable: nudity, explicit sexual material, obscene material, violent language, promotion of violence, and contraband such as, but not limited to, weapons, drugs, or items of an unknown substance or odor.



**As a sender, I would like to request my original parcels back.** All mail is held at our mail processing facility for up to 45 days. If you would like to request your original parcel back, please email [support@pigeon.ly](mailto:support@pigeon.ly) within that 45-day period.

Please be sure to include all the information for the sender and recipient as written on the envelope. Once received, Pigeonly will return the parcel to the original sender as listed on the envelope.

For More Information:

<https://corrections.utah.gov/2024/12/02/new-incarcerated-persons-mail-delivery-system-at-utah-department-of-corrections-facilities/>

## *Dell-Emerald Topics* **Nine Women Graduate from the Makin' It Work Program**

Summarized by Molly Prince, LCSW

On December 17, the UDC posted on its Facebook Page that 9 women graduated from the Makin' It Work Program which is part of UCI. This course empowers participants with skills that include problem solving, recognizing triggers, and making smarter choices. *Sending a shout out to these women who completed the course and are making positive changes in their lives!*

The Makin' It Work class consists of 10 class sessions, two hours each, and a graduation ceremony. Some of the topic discussions are based around the following categories: Recognizing High Risk Situations, Knowing Your Triggers, Stop and Think, Actions and Consequences, Working Together, and Problem Solving. These discussions are guided from a student workbook with stories relatable to a work environment.

For graduation, the speakers usually consist of the certified instructors, UCI Administration staff, and two incarcerated employee speakers. Upon release, program participants are given their Makin' It Work booklet they completed in class.

According to the website, the class was originally created for UCI inmate employees who are releasing soon. Over time, UCI has found that including those without a release date has also had a positive influence and impact, stating, "The feedback received from participating offenders, with or without a release date, has been extremely positive and beneficial. They have indicated that they use these skills not only at work, but in their housing areas as well. These are the transferable soft skills that we all use on an everyday basis."

### **My Captain Your Story Story**

By Alana D.

Captain Your Story changes lives, and the proof is in the vision. What is 'vision'? Vision is what you want, what you dream about, what keeps you up at night, and keeps you motivated going forward; making the good choices and staying on the straight and narrow with the big picture in your sights and plans to make it happen.

Everything but the 'how.' The 'how' is none of your business. It takes hard work and dedication. Once you commit to doing the hard work and doing the writing (there is A LOT of writing), everything will come into focus and things will start to happen. It's kind of weird how it all falls into place.

I tell people all the time, Captain Your Story is better than any therapy, DBT, or medication I have had or taken in my life, in my humble opinion. I have learned more coping skills and better understanding of the way my brain functions from this course than I have in a very long time. The way they explain trauma, psychological needs and Maslow's Hierarchy, Regulating fight – flight-freeze-fawn, I feel like I am prepared for almost any situation. Including seeing the BOPP in 8 years. Reintegrating back into society after 15+ years, I will be out in the community and reuniting with my family after so long.

I have removed labels I have placed on myself and that society has placed on me that don't need to be there because I am not that person. I'm a creator, intentionally kind, and the best mother in the world. I am a best-selling author. I am a beloved daughter of God. Captain

Your Story has helped me with that also. It can help ANYONE with that. It makes you dig deep to figure out WHAT you want, WHO you are, and WHY you want it.

What really solidified my belief in the program was the final piece of my own transformation falling into place. It literally felt like the last piece falling into place. There is no other way to describe it. We had just learned about the Harbor of Focused Action and I was trying to think of a way to combine all of my "I AM" statements into a statement that I could focus on that said everything I was in one statement: "I am the best mom in the world," "I am a best-selling author," etc.

A few weeks prior, we had done an exercise on power/trigger words and I had found the word 'prodigious' which means: exciting wonder. I fell in love with that word and thought it described me to the letter and I wanted to incorporate that into my statement. Now, at this time it's 5 a.m. My brain has decided about 30 minutes ago it was time to get up and start thinking about this and nothing but this. So I'm lying in bed, in the dark, huddled under my blankets, trying to think of a way to combine everything that encompasses ME into one statement at o'dark-30.

I think I fell back to sleep for a little bit because the next thing I know, my pod mates are getting up and getting ready for work and it's time to get ready for breakfast. The officer yells, "Stage for chow!" and it hits me, something whispers in my ear, "I am a prodigious woman that will conquer the world!" Yes, the

exclamation point was included in the whisper. Something in my brain literally clicked, the heavens parted, angels started singing and my vision grew in my mind and I knew what I wanted to do and all the ideas I had, and more ideas of conquering the world flooded my mind. Changes I could make to help make this place better. Ideas to make it a better community. My mind was racing. I couldn't write it down fast enough. I didn't have time to go to breakfast. I needed to talk to my inner community! I needed to talk to my extended community! I needed to do soul work! I wanted to climb on top of the roof and shout at the top of my lungs, "I AM A PRODIGIOUS WOMAN WHO WILL CONQUER THE

WORLD! AND HERE I COME!" And I haven't stopped since!

I have made amazing contacts by doing the focused action every day; the intellectual, spiritual, physical and social work that balances my life that allows my vision to become reality and led this article to become a reality and hopefully will inspire others to chase their vision to become reality also.

Thank you Amy, Josh, Natty, Maryann, Beth, Lisa, Ms. Tammy, and the rest of your amazing behind the scenes team for bringing this much needed program to us and giving us the tools to change our lives!

### **Unprecedented Tour of USCF Currant Facility Gives Advocates a Peek into the Clinic, Infirmary, Mental Health Housing, and Geriatric Men's Facility** by Molly Prince, LCSW

On December 12<sup>th</sup> USCF provided an in depth tour for directors of prison advocate groups in Utah to the Correctional Health Services (CHS) infirmary, clinic, mental health units, and men's geriatric units in Currant. This is another unprecedented step by the UDC in an attempt to improve transparency and facilitate understanding of how complex our prison system healthcare service is.

We were able to walk through the corridors in **Mental Health** housing and learn the process of how patients are supported to move from the more restrictive housing area to less restrictive as they become stabilized on medications and demonstrate the ability to manage their behavior. There are 40 beds in the psychiatric infirmary. There is a women's mental health unit as well as a men's mental health facility within the sprawling Currant building.

Eight directors from UPAN attended: Karen Thompson, Chris Moon, Molly Prince, Deon Corkins, Susan Sundstrom, An Bradshaw, Marsha M., and Ginny Robertson. Paige Norton represented Paige Norton Society's Advocate. Sandra Bytendorp is an advocate at large who helps wherever she can.

Captain McDonald, Lt. Christensen, Amanda Alkema, Dr. Powers, and Dr. Wisner provided answers to a wide variety of questions regarding housing processes as well as treatment approaches.

There were three representatives from Salt Lake's Latino Behavioral Health Services dedicated to supporting parolees receive the medical, mental health services and other resources they need in a timely manner.

There are mental health therapists and peer support specialists available to provide counseling and support to these individuals on their journey to stability. The ultimate goal is for a person in the Mental Health Unit to stabilize to eventually return to general population.

The community interest in developing a Prison Hospice was represented by a member of the newly formed Prison Hospice Task Force.

We were escorted into the **Clinic** area and saw the individual holding rooms in which incarcerated patients needing a variety of services from x-ray to examinations spend their time waiting to be seen. This is very different than the group holding room in the old USP in which patients from all over the prison were chained to the bench as they waited as a group for various medical visits and procedures.

Administrators and Officers who accompanied us on the tour shared information and answered questions include staff from UDC CHS and DHHS: Dr. Marcus Wisner of DHHS; Dr. Gabriel Power, Medical Administrator at UDC for Correctional Health Services; Amanda Alkema, LCSW, Mental Health Director for CHS; Dr. Deana Kenyon, Pharmacy Director; and Lacey Kimber, CHS Program Manager.

We went into an area of the **Infirmary**, outside of treatment rooms or patient beds. There are 4 trauma rooms with beds. To respect patient privacy, we did not go into the area of the infirmary where patients are in hospital beds. The infirmary has the capacity for 36 patients, which is extremely different from what was available in the Draper facility. We again stopped and asked questions which were answered freely by Dr. Powers and other staff.

Currant Leadership accompanying us and explaining how housing and processes work were. Captain Shawn MacDonald; Lt. Jeb Christensen; and Sgt. Maloney.

We toured the **Dental Service** and the actual **Pharmacy** where every prescription is filled. We met some of the med techs the nursing staff who meet and discuss everything before taking the medication carts to the various units. Finally, we saw the **Men's Geriatric**

Deputy Warden Travis Knorr joined us. He is the new UDC/CHS Liaison. Other UDC administration included Josh Lofton, Public Information Officer and Jon Butterfield Senior Consultant. Director of Communications Glen Mills joined part of the tour. This tour was organized by Stakeholder Experience Coordinator Esekia (Skee) Afatasi.

**Housing** area and talked to Claudia, librarian in the Library in Currant.

The Library and Pharmacy articles are in this newsletter and Dental will be covered in February.

### **USCF Currant Tour: The Library** by Molly Prince, LCSW

The UPAN Directors and others on the tour had the opportunity to go into the Currant Library and speak with Claudia, the Librarian. Claudia's love of her work was evident in her enthusiasm as she guided us through the various sections of fiction, non-fiction, self-help, spiritual books, periodicals, and more. She showed us how approximately 8,000 books and magazines are organized and shelved in a way that really optimizes the limited space she has to work with. This Library is the source of books for the men in the Geriatric Unit of Currant, as well as those books taken to the Mental Health Units within the building.

Claudia makes sure books are taken to the housing units within Currant where people are unable to leave to go to the unit's library location to choose books. She has a profound desire to make sure that everyone in Currant has the opportunity to stay occupied with reading material and use these resources to learn and improve their lives.

This library also is the source of books for the library in Antelope. A few UPAN Directors took a tour of Antelope in August, 2024 and we saw that the tiny library space there was being remodeled due to water damage. At the

time of the tour we only saw boxes of books, so it looked like a storage area. It was explained to us at that time that the Antelope library would be up and running soon.

As of mid-December, we learned that Antelope's library has shelving and is ready to receive books and become functional. The books earmarked for Antelope's library are ready and waiting to be put on the shelves there. Unfortunately, something administratively is holding up that process. Therefore, Antelope still does not have a functioning library all these months later.

UPAN is hoping that the residents of Antelope will soon have reading material available to them to assist them in filling their time productively. They can use those books to entertain and educate themselves while improving their mental, emotional, and spiritual well-being.

We were impressed at the care and effort that Claudia and her incarcerated assistants in Currant are putting into maintaining and operating the Currant library. In all these years, this was only the second time I have had the privilege to actually go into a library deep within the fences of Utah's prison system. For that, we are thankful to Captain McDonald and Lt. Christensen.

### **USCF Currant Tour – Meeting Donald, Gregory, and Jon** by Molly Prince, LCSW

While on the tour of Currant on December 12<sup>th</sup>, Captain McDonald and Lt. Christensen granted my request and brought three men out into the hallway for us to meet and chat with for a few minutes.

Donald N and Gregory S from the Currant Men's Geriatric Unit crocheted all 16 UPAN directors beautiful hats prior to our tour. They had asked for favorite colors or colors of sports teams a few months ago and created these hats for each director specifically. They did this to show their appreciation for the efforts that all the directors at UPAN do to advocate for them and support them in improving their lives.

Jon W coordinated and organized communication with UPAN about this project, as well as provided necessary craft supplies to help them make thank you cards to go with each of the hats. It touched our hearts to know that these men funded and undertook such a project to thank

us for our work! It was a profound pleasure to meet each of them and shake their hands.

We picked the hats up from Property that morning before the tour. We were able to thank them, and speak with them for a few minutes. Gregory expressed their desire to highlight the Crochet Program in Currant. He credited Lt. Christensen with helping to make it happen. Hopefully we will get more information about it and have an article about it in a future newsletter.

It was very helpful to be able to look into the housing area and see what people are talking about when they write us about how things happen in Currant Geriatric.

The hats have been sent to the UPAN directors unable to attend the tour. We are all impressed with the high quality of crocheting and the skill required to make these.

### **USCF Currant Tour: What To Know About The Pharmacy** by Molly Prince, LCSW

#### **Deana Kenyon, PharmD (Doctor of Pharmacy) is the Director of Pharmacy for USCF.**

She accompanied us on the tour and answered a variety of questions that others were unable to answer.

**Vaccines.** She shared a very important piece of information with us, which is that vaccinations do not cost incarcerated patients anything. Unlike a shot that is prescribed by medical provider as a treatment for an illness, the vaccines that the prison receives are already paid for through the State of Utah. They come through

the Dept. of Health & Human Services. We were told the week of the tour that USCF has received the remaining supply of flu shots and COVID boosters for this fall's vaccinations. They should be offering them to general population in USCF soon. It is reported that everyone in Currant already received their vaccinations if

they wanted them. We were told that the week previous to the tour, those in CUCF received their vaccinations if they wanted them. Anyone who has not received the opportunity to get their flu shot for this season, their COVID booster, or their pneumonia shot can put in a healthcare request and receive one.

**One Central Pharmacy Located at USCF.** Dr. Kenyon led us into a small area outside of the pharmacy in Currant. We were able to look in and saw the rows and rows of medications waiting to be dispensed, much like a large pharmacy one would see in the community. This pharmacy processes all the prescriptions for USCF, CUCF, and the 20 contracted county jails in the Inmate Placement Program.

There is not a pharmacy in CUCF. Between 15-20 years ago, there was a small satellite pharmacy room at CUCF that was open part time. But it was closed when UDC switched from paper charting / prescriptions to an electronic health record, and the main prison was selected to house a centralized full service pharmacy.

**Prescription Refills.** She explained that they have settings in the pharmacy software that allow them to refill all requested prescriptions early. Each location is set with a slightly different time allowance to make sure they arrive before they are next due. Due dates used by the prison pharmacy are similar to those at retail pharmacies set by the insurance companies to keep patients from refilling too frequently.)

- USCF up to 2 days early
- CUCF up to 4 days early
- all County Jails up to 14 days early

**Delivery of prescriptions.** The Pharmacy uses different methods of delivery for the different locations.

**USCF** prescriptions are picked up from the pharmacy and taken to the med rooms by the nursing staff.

**CUCF** prescriptions are sent Monday - Friday in secured medical cases with UDC custody staff to CUCF, then delivered to the nursing staff to take to the med rooms.

**County jail** prescriptions are mailed via US Postal Service as Priority mail to each county jail, and the distribution is completed based on each county jail policy. Mail goes out Monday - Friday, several times per week for each location. The Pharmacy keeps a log of each shipment and tracks its delivery.

#### **Staffing of the Pharmacy.**

**Pharmacists:** There are a total of six pharmacists, which includes Director Kenyon. They have different duties. Dr. Kenyon is the one pharmacy director who is the identified pharmacist in charge. Of the three Staff Pharmacists who work in the pharmacy filling the prescriptions directly, 2 are on duty Monday – Friday and 1 pharmacist works on weekends.

There is one Clinical Pharmacist who works part time and reviews the treatment plans of chronic care patients. He also makes recommendations to CHS providers to improve care.

There is one 340B Specialist Pharmacist who monitors and audits UDC's 340B program which allows it to access reduced pricing from manufacturers for prescription medications.

**Pharmacy Technicians:** Technically, the pharmacy is approved for 9 pharmacy technicians. Currently they are running with 7 pharmacy techs with 1 vacant position that is open for hire. Their jobs are broken down as follows:

1 Pharmacy Technician Supervisor who supervises the technicians and handles the daily management, ordering of supplies, and responds any Level 1 grievances and other inquiries.

8 Staff Pharmacy Technicians have the responsibility to fill prescriptions, receive the wholesaler orders, maintain the DOSIS (automated blister packager), fill and maintain the automated dispensing cabinets in the nursing stations, and a variety of other duties that keep a pharmacy in operation.

Due to increasing prescription numbers and increased workload, the Pharmacy has asked for both more pharmacy technicians and more pharmacists, especially to handle the new MOUD (medications for opioid use disorder) program.

#### **How many prescriptions does the Pharmacy handle for both prisons and patients in the IPP program?**

They currently have about 24,000 active prescriptions in the pharmacy software. They fill new prescriptions and refill prescriptions 7 days a week. The average rate is between 600 to 1000 prescriptions each day.

Pharmacists also prepare the parole/release medication packets for all patients who are leaving each week on Tuesday mornings. Each patient's packet contains 30 days' worth of all active prescription-only medications, *excluding those that require direct healthcare professional oversight / administration.*

**Pharmacy Hours.** The Pharmacy is open Mon - Fri from 5 am to 5 pm, and Sat - Sun from 5 am to 3 pm. It is closed on federal and state holidays, but does have some on-call coverage, as well as maintains emergency medications available in the Pyxis ES med stations around the clock.

#### **Average Time and Process to Fill a Prescription.**

Once the prescriber enters an order in the EHR (electronic health record) it takes up to 5 minutes for the EHR to send that prescription to the pharmacy software.

There may be exceptions for non-formulary medications that require approval by the medical director which can take up to 3 days, but often are approved the same day it is written. (A formulary is basically a list of medications that are considered by the prison's medical/ professional staff to ensure high quality, cost-effective drug therapy for the prison population.)

Once a prescription is received, it is processed exactly like a retail pharmacy in the community processes



prescriptions. It is typed by a technician, reviewed by the pharmacist, counted out and packaged by a technician, then verified by a pharmacist. Finally scanned ready for delivery by technician, and then sent as described above.

**If the medication is formulary**, it is usually filled the same day it is ordered (depending on the time it is ordered, of course) and sent to the housing immediately at USCF, or shipped out the next morning for CUCF or the county jails.

**If the medication is non-formulary**, the pharmacy may not have it in stock and have to order it from the wholesaler. USCF receives deliveries from the wholesaler Monday - Friday, which allows most non-formulary orders to be filled the next day. Unless, it is ordered late Friday. *UPAN Note: For non-formulary medications, how quickly it gets to a patient after the patient sees the medical provider seems to be based in the timing of when it is prescribed and approved by those authorized to review it. For example, a non-formulary medication ordered late Friday afternoon may not get to the patient until after the weekend once it is approved, if it is not already available in the pharmacy's inventory.*

In general, most prescriptions for patients at USCF leave the pharmacy and are available to the patient the same day. At CUCF most prescriptions arrive on site the next day. At county jails most prescriptions are received within 1-3 days of being ordered by the provider.

**Finding ways to stretch the budget for the necessary medications.** Dr. Kenyon has worked hard to stretch the financial resources to cover more medications for more people. She has accessed the 340B program that

### **Utah Correctional Industries: Empowering Inmates through Knowledge and Skill Development**

By Molly Prince and Shane Severson; more information <https://corrections.utah.gov/utah-correctional-industries/>

*The following information was presented by Amanda Merquado of UCI at the UDC Citizen's Academy on August 24, 2024. Additional information has been added from the UCI website.*

Utah Correctional Industries (UCI) plays a pivotal role within the Utah Department of Corrections (UDC) by offering incarcerated individuals meaningful work opportunities. UCI is a self-sustaining entity, generating its revenue through the sale of goods and services produced by inmates while providing these inmate employees a higher than normal wage in the prison setting.

These programs serve a dual purpose: providing real-world job training and helping reduce recidivism by preparing incarcerated individuals for employment after release. UCI is self-sustaining and does not use taxpayer funds from the legislature to operate.

**Mission and Goals.** UCI was created by the Utah Legislature with the Utah Correctional Industries Act (64-13a). It's goal is to reduce recidivism by training inmates in essential work habits and specialized skills, ultimately

allows eligible entities (i.e. hospitals, prison infirmaries, etc.) to enroll and receive an ID number that allows them to purchase certain medications at discounted prices.

**UDC Pharmacy at USCF processes are compatible with what is practiced in the community.** Pharmacy Director Kenyon responded to my questions about concerns reported about medications not getting to the patient in what might be considered a timely manner. She states, "Yes our pharmacy services do mirror what is available through retail pharmacies as well as many of the services that are available at hospitals or long-term care facilities. We follow all the same rules and regulations. We are licensed with both the state of Utah and with the DEA."

She went on to explain that many of the concerns she receives come from either a patient transferring from one housing location to another and their medications not following, or when a prescription expires and the patient needs to see a provider to have a new prescription ordered. She states, "We are actively working with both nursing and providers to find ways to decrease these problems, and I hope someday to find a better solution; but please know that once the problem is brought to our attention our pharmacy staff sets out to resolve it immediately."

It has been evident in Dr. Kenyon's enthusiasm to show us the pharmacy and explain how it works during this tour, as well as our communications in the following days, that she takes the health of the patients that the pharmacy serves seriously. She is dedicated to continue identifying challenges and problems and finding solutions to them so that her patients receive their appropriate medications in a timely manner. She clearly loves her work.

increasing their chances of finding employment after their release. UCI aims to instill good work habits and provide opportunities for personal growth, helping inmates transition back into society as productive citizens.

**Application and Interview.** Incarcerated people applying for UCI jobs go through a formal application and interview process that matches what they might experience in the community. These jobs provide inmates an opportunity to produce useful products and services for customers while gaining the tools needed to succeed when released back to their communities. These jobs also help the incarcerated stay positively engaged while serving time, reducing the idleness, boredom, and hopelessness that can trigger management and security problems for staff, visitors, volunteers, and other offenders. The opportunity to engage in paid work through UCI is a powerful motivator

for improving inmate behavior, as well as help reduce recidivism upon their release.

**Work Programs and Locations.** UCI runs 12 work programs across various industries, employing a total of 414 prisoners (as of August) at the Utah State Correctional Facility (USCF) and the Central Utah Correctional Facility (CUCF) combined. 338 men are employed between USCF and CUCF. 76 women are employed at USCF. UCI also employs 45 civilian staff, including administrative, finance, and operations personnel. They generally work 40 hours per week.

**These programs include** - Embroidery, Sewing, Furniture Manufacturing, Seating and Upholstery, Signage Production, Printing, Document Scanning, Beverage Processing, Graphic Design, License Plate Plant, and UCI Commissary.

**Eligibility Requirements.** Not all incarcerated persons are eligible to work in UCI programs. UCI has a set of criteria that individuals must meet before being employed:

**Good Behavior.** Applicants must have a clean behavioral record, including no recent write-ups or disciplinary actions.

**Qualification for the Job.** Potential UCI workers must qualify for the type of work UCI offers, with specific skills or training being required for some positions.

**Ethical Standards.** Workers who have had ethical violations or issues in the UCI shop will be let go and must wait six months to reapply.

**No Worker Pod or Housing for UCI Workers.** UCI does not have a specific worker housing unit or pod. These workers must integrate into the general prison population.

**Inmate Pay Structure.** Inmates working in UCI programs participate in two types of employment:

**Traditional Work:** Average stipend pay is \$1.25 per hour, which includes deductions which are contributed to incarceration costs, restitution, and savings. An

example of this type of work would be in the Plate Plant.

**PIE (Prison Industry Enhancement) Jobs:** These jobs can pay up to \$19 per hour, with portions deducted for housing and restitution.

**Contributions to State and Society.** Utah state agencies must request bids from UCI before purchasing from external vendors. This provides consistent contracts for UCI while supporting cost efficiency for the state. Public customers can purchase UCI's goods under certain conditions, although UCI does not compete with the private sector.

**Skills and Career Development.** UCI's work programs teach inmates both technical and soft skills. Inmates gain experience working with equipment and processes while learning communication, customer service, and professional conduct. Participants in UCI programs also exhibit lower recidivism rates post-release.

**Makin' It Work Class.** According to the UCI website at <https://uci.utah.gov/reentry-employer-opportunities/>, UCI provides an opportunity for incarcerated participants to attend the *Makin' It Work* class. The class focuses on soft skills and cognitive behavior. The staff attend a 3-day instructor's class taught by Dr. S. Parese. Currently, UCI has 12 certified *Makin' It Work* instructors. (See Dell-Emerald article in this newsletter with details about the class).

**Challenges and Opportunities.** UCI faces challenges related to competition with private businesses and limitations on wages. Despite these restrictions, UCI remains one of the highest-paying *Makin' It Work* prison work programs in the country.

**Conclusion.** Utah Correctional Industries (UCI) provides valuable opportunities for incarcerated individuals to gain work experience, contribute to state operations, and prepare for life after release. The program reduces recidivism by equipping inmates with marketable skills, helping them transition to productive, law-abiding citizens. Despite challenges, UCI continues to be a critical component of Utah's corrections and rehabilitation strategy.

***“This year, let your dreams be bigger than your fears and your actions louder than your words.” Anonymous***  
***“The future depends on what we do in the present.” – Mahatma Gandhi***

### **Couple of Smiles and Maybe a Laugh**

He's friendly, when he sees an ocean wave, he waves back ~ A penny for your thoughts. You put in your two-cents worth. Is someone making money here? ~ When George Washington was asked for his ID, he just showed them a quarter ~ What do you name a cow that experienced an earthquake? Milkshake ~ What do you call sleeping male cattle? Bulldozers.

***If you want to be above it all, look upon the new year as progress, have goals, maintain hope – You're cool. Ed***

### **Utah Prisoner Advocate Network Contact Info:**

#### **Our Contact Information:**

Utah Prisoner Advocate Network  
P. O. Box 464, Draper, UT 84020

Website: UtahPrisonerAdvocate.org  
Email: contact@utahprisoneradvocate.org  
Facebook: Facebook.com/UtahPrisoner

**“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world, indeed, it's the only thing that ever has.” Margaret Mead.**