



October 23, 2018.

To Whom it May Concern,

My name is Jonathan Pistotnik, Coalition Coordinator for the Anchorage Reentry Coalition. The Coalition is comprised of more than 45 programs, agencies, and individuals that are engaged in public safety, prisoner reentry, and recidivism reduction efforts in Anchorage. The mission of the Coalition is “to provide transformative, participant-centered reentry resources and opportunities beginning the day of incarceration.” The Anchorage Reentry Coalition is affiliated with NeighborWorks® Alaska a registered 501(c)3 non-profit organization (EIN#92-0082642).

Currently, the Coalition has a Case Manager that assists individuals that are reentering into Anchorage from jail and prison (“reentrants”). Reentrants commonly need assistance with finding housing, employment, alcohol or drug treatment, and mental health services. Maybe less obviously, at the time of their release many reentrants have no possessions – some have little more than the shirt on their back. There is an on-going need among many inmates for assistance with obtaining basic hygiene products and essential supplies immediately upon their release back into the community.

Some time ago Dr. Eileen Starr of Alaska Correctional Ministries decided to respond to this situation by soliciting donations from her church and local companies to obtain backpacks and fill them with essentials such as soap, shampoo, toothbrushes, toothpaste, deodorant, feminine hygiene products, and more, and give them to reentrants upon their release back into the community. Dr. Starr successfully gathered a modest amount of supplies and passed them on to the Coalition for distribution. Dr. Starr recently passed away from cancer, but there remains a strong interest in continuing to carry out her vision and honor her efforts by continuing to distribute backpacks filled with essentials to those reentrants in need of this help.

The current goal of “the Backpack Program” is to distribute at least 100 backpacks to individuals that are working with the Coalition Case Manager over the course of the fiscal year. The Backpack Program aims to acknowledge the dignity of reentrants while also providing them with a small number of items that will help them during their first 1-2 weeks as they transition back into the community.

The Coalition is seeking modest financial support to purchase supplies to fill backpacks or donations of essential products that can be included in the backpacks and distributed to a small portion of the more than 2,000 reentrants that are released to Anchorage annually. The Coalition currently has some supplies, but they vary by item and quantities are low for some items. If enough supplies are acquired and the program can become sustainable, backpacks with essential items will be given to individuals returning to Alaska on Federal Probation and to other program partners within the Coalition that work with reentrants. Attached to this letter is an itemized list of items that the Coalition is seeking.

A donation of \$1,000 would ensure the Coalition can provide backpacks and basic toiletries to 100 reentrants during the year; a more substantial donation would allow for the purchasing of socks, hats, gloves, and shoes for the winter season and may allow us to provide supplies to more partner organizations that work with reentrants.

The Coalition would be grateful for any monetary support or donations of supplies your organization can supply for the Coalition’s Backpack Program. Please contact the Coalition Coordinator at 907-677-8412 or reentry@nwalaska.org with any questions or for further information. More information about the Coalition can also be gathered from our website: www.anchoragereentry.org/ Thank you for your time and your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Jonathan Pistotnik".

Jonathan Pistotnik, MPH
Coalition Coordinator
Anchorage Reentry Coalition