



# Prisoners Education Trust

*Unlocking potential for crime-free lives*

Autumn/Winter 2009/10

## news

Unlocking potential  
for crime-free lives



PICTURE COURTESY ANDREW AITCHISON

*'Not only has the course raised  
my self-esteem, it has enhanced  
my future prospects'*

## Peer learning mentors – helping others to learn

Funding distance learning courses is only one part of the work of the Trust and we have been working hard to raise awareness of how prisoners can help others to learn.

Last year, the Trust was fortunate to receive funding to pilot a peer mentoring project in prisons in the South East. This was followed shortly afterwards by a donation to fund a similar scheme in the Midlands.

The Trust now has a year's worth of experience in training and encouraging peer mentors. It is worthwhile to reflect on what has been achieved.

The training course has now been delivered in eight prisons and nearly 100 prisoners have participated. Each of them now has an accredited qualification and the skills to support other prison learners. Equally importantly, these new mentors report a new found confidence. In a Trust-run survey, over 80% of newly trained mentors state that they are “very confident” as a result of completing the course compared with just 20% before the course.



PICTURE COURTESY ANDREW AITC-HISON

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## The new Project Manager

Our Midlands project began in June, with the appointment of Andrea Pullen. We look forward to recruiting more learning mentors to the scheme over the coming months. Contact [andrea@prisonerseducation.org.uk](mailto:andrea@prisonerseducation.org.uk) for more information.

## Who are the mentors ...?

Prisoners like Simon. He left school at 13 with no qualifications but since sentencing, he has become a very keen student. Over the years, he has completed a huge number of courses and is now preparing for a Masters degree in Sociology. After that he hopes to study for a doctorate. His wealth of educational experience makes him an ideal candidate for other learners.

## Helping themselves ...

Informal and formal mentoring activity is a feature of prison life. Those prisoners that can read and write easily, for example, may find themselves writing letters home for those that can't. The prisoner with the calculator helps others with their basic maths or finance problems and another may help a new learner to write her first essay for a distance learning course ..... and so it goes on.

Both mentors and mentees benefit enormously from these relationships. But it is not always easy. Frequent prison moves and lock downs make the mentoring process all the more difficult.

The Trust is researching this formal and informal mentoring more closely. Once again, the Trust is working with the prison newspaper *Inside Time* to build up the picture of how and why prisoners help each other to learn. Look out for progress reports on our website.



## 'Yes, I wish to support more prisoners who help others to learn'

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact No. \_\_\_\_\_

Donation: £ \_\_\_\_\_

(cheques payable to Prisoners Education Trust)

If you wish to donate on-line, then please visit

**[www.justgiving.com/petrust](http://www.justgiving.com/petrust)**. To contribute regularly please download a standing order form from our website.

### Gift Aid

Did you know that if you are a standard rate taxpayer, you can increase the value of your donation by 28%, at no cost to you? All you have to do is sign the declaration below:

**I wish Prisoners Education Trust to reclaim tax on all my donations from April 2000 until I notify you otherwise. I am a UK taxpayer and I understand that I must pay an amount of income tax or capital gains tax at least equal to the tax the charity reclaims on my donations in the tax year.**

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Please return to: Prisoners Education Trust,  
Wandle House, Riverside Drive, Mitcham, CR4 4BU

### Funding update.....

Thank you to all those who contributed to the spring/summer newsletter appeal to support young prisoners. We haven't reached our target yet – but we never thought that it would be easy!

The Trust will continue to target this group over the coming months. We hope that we can attract additional funding from trust funds to ensure we give more young people the chance to change through education.

### Other funding news:

- Funding received earlier in the year means that we can now recruit a Development Manager, responsible for researching new educational opportunities for prisoners. This will ensure that projects are developed and targeted where there is most need.
- Next year is the Trust's 21st Birthday and we look forward to celebrating in style – and raising some money too, of course. If you would like to organise a fundraising event on our behalf, please visit the website for further information.
- Our appeal for support for women prisoners last year has been given a significant boost by generous grants this year from both the **Pilgrim Trust** and **Porticus**. We now have enough funds to help 150 women prisoners, plus money to produce career maps in key subject areas.
- Thank you also to the women at HMP Downview who are donating the proceeds from their work and craft activities to the Trust.

## For the diary ...

The Trust has a number of events this autumn/winter and we hope to see you there soon.

**All events are ticketed**, so please email [info@prisonerseducation.org.uk](mailto:info@prisonerseducation.org.uk), or call the office to book your place. Cheques should be made payable to Prisoners Education Trust and donations can be made by credit card at [www.justgiving.com/petrust](http://www.justgiving.com/petrust).

### **21/10/09 “Crime and the Camera”**

with award winning film-maker Rex Bloomstein; chaired by broadcaster Martyn Lewis CBE.

**Tickets** £15; **Venue** UCL, 20 Gordon Street, WC1H 0AJ;

**Time** 6.15 for 6.30pm.

### **11/11/09 “Why can’t we halve the prison population? What to think and do about the prison binge.”**

with Prof. Ian Loader, chaired by broadcaster Edward Stourton.

**Venue** Clifford Chance, Canary Wharf, E14 5JJ;

**Time** 6pm for 6.15pm; Please give generously.

### **3/12/09 Carol Concert**

readers include Prunella Scales and Janet Suzman.

**Tickets** £15 with refreshments; **Venue** St Paul’s Church, Covent Garden, WC2E 9ED; **Time** 6.15 for 6.30pm

### **25/2/10 Reception with the Lord Mayor of Westminster**

**Venue** Westminster City Hall, SW1E 6QP;

**Time** 6pm start; Please give generously.

*“ Having the opportunity to do distance learning has given me a new lease of life. I no longer need to lie about my qualifications, because I really do have some now. ”*