



PRISONS WEEK 2008 RESOURCES

TALENT SHOW EVENT

Worthless or Talented?

The title of this year's Prisons Week, "Worthless or Talented?" comes from the Gospel Reading for the Sunday in Prisons Week which is the Parable of the Talents. One of the intentions of the theme this year is to counter some of the negative public understanding of prisons. For many, the answer to the question "Worthless or Talented?" will not be one that recognises the positive things that happen in prison and the talents that are discovered and developed.

Those who work in prisons will be very aware of the considerable challenges that prisoners can present, but they will also be aware of the good stories of lives being changed, offending behaviour challenged, talents being discovered, and lives and relationships being enhanced. They will also know of the positive and creative work undertaken by staff on a daily basis that contributes to the safety and health of a prison. Sadly good news in prison is not usually celebrated in the media, and so often the only picture portrayed is based on the negative stories.

Prisons Week 2008 with its title of "Worthless or Talented?" provides an opportunity to celebrate and publicise the positive stories.

One prison is going to hold a **Talent Show** in which a variety of presentations will be made to an invited audience to showcase the positive parts of the regime and the talents of staff and prisoners. The invitations will go to people in the local community who are engaged in voluntary agencies, faith communities and community leadership. Current volunteers will also be invited as well as guests of the staff and the Independent Monitoring Board. In some prisons it might be possible to invite some families of prisoners, especially those involved in focus groups. The presentation will provide an opportunity for multi-disciplinary cooperation between staff with the involvement of Learning and Skills, Programme Departments, Chaplaincy, Volunteers, prisoners and other staff. The presentation could also include visual and verbal art, as well as some lighter entertainment with music and singing.

Each prison has its own story to tell, and such an event could provide the prison with a positive experience and challenge the folk-lore view with the reality.

Prisons week 16th-22nd Nov 2008

www.prisonsw.org

Encouraging prayer for, and raising awareness of, the needs of prisoners and their families, victims of offenders, prisons staff and all those who care.