Outside In

April 1, 2004 By Tim Murphy

Hey, HIVers on the outside: Think there's no way to help inmates with HIV or hep C? Think again.

Be a pen pal. Ask local AIDS groups if you can help answer inmate mail (they're often overwhelmed by it). Or simply get your address to an inmate via the advocate groups in "The Hook-Up".

Help 'em stay sober. If you're in AA or NA, you can "bring meetings" to inmates—talk to your group's "H&I" (hospitals and institutions) chair or to your group chair about starting H&I visits. Faith-based organizations often volunteer in prison, too.

Get in the loop of veteran advocates and groups (see "The Hook-Up"). "We would be excited to figure out how to pass our program to other parts of the country," says Laura McTighe of Philly FIGHT's Project TEACH Outside. Says Delores "Dee" Garcia, from inside California's Valley State prison, "Get out of those recliners and help us live—please!"

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