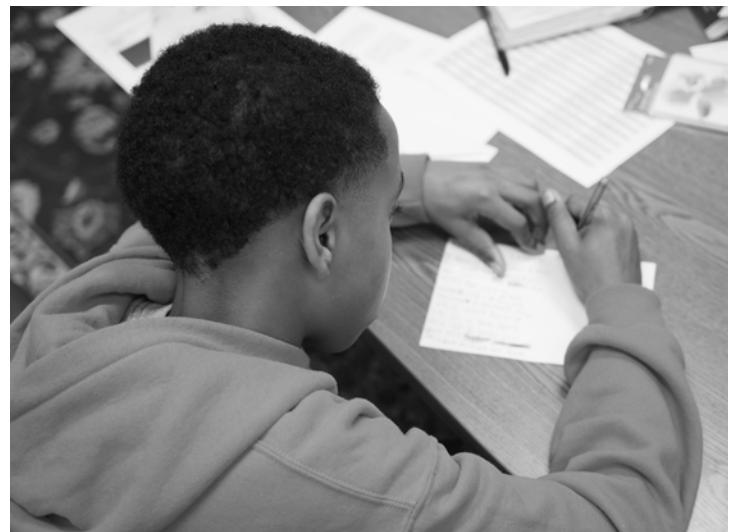


# RIPPLE EFFECT HANDBOOK

Instructions on "reaching into prisons with purpose and love"  
in order to reconnect families



ejp EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT  
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN



OCTOBER 2018

# **Reaching Inside Prisons with Purpose & Love**

**“Reconnecting our community, one letter at a time”**

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# WHY RIPPLE EFFECT?

## PURPOSE

Ripple Effect CU (Champaign-Urbana) is a community-based group in Central Illinois. We provide emotional support to individuals and families impacted by incarceration, and we provide emotional support to individuals behind bars. We accomplish both of those things through gathering to write letters.

Our signature activity is organizing monthly letter-writing groups. The majority of the letter recipients are behind the wall, but in the spirit of “reconnecting our community one letter at a time,” Ripple Effect CU has extended its outreach to include writing letters to those impacted by U.S. immigration policies.

Our other main activity is open community forums that provide neighbors an opportunity to discuss their experiences with incarceration and other related topics.

Through our work, Ripple Effect CU provides support to family members on the outside, helps to reconnect family with incarcerated loved ones, and raises awareness in our community of issues related to incarceration, criminal justice, and reentry.

Thank you for reading this guide. We wrote it to encourage other groups to start Ripple Effect groups of their own.

## HISTORY

Ripple Effect CU was launched in June 2015 as a result of a community-led partnership between families impacted by incarceration and the University of Illinois’ Education Justice Project (EJP). Earlier that year, EJP had organized a screening and discussion of the movie Middle of Nowhere. To more fully process the powerful film, EJP hosted a separate meeting, to which nearly 20

people showed up. At this open meeting, community members urged the university to address the concerns of people in Champaign county who have family and friends behind the wall. A committee was formed and Ripple Effect was born four months later, after researching feasible community models from across the country that could be adapted for Champaign-Urbana.

## Participants Ripple Effect CU:

- **Experience a sense of community.**  
Ripple Effect creates a family environment where people from all walks of life gather for the common purpose of expressing compassion to others through letter writing; it is a space in which everyone feels welcome and unconditionally accepted.

- **Give and receive hope.**  
The gift of letter writing provides people an opportunity to reach out to others, express care and concern, and reaffirm the humanity in each of us.

- **Strengthen relationships.**  
Writing letters to and receiving letters from family members who are incarcerated can strengthen family bonds.

- **Develop leadership skills.**  
Ripple Effect can increase confidence in one’s ability to make a difference in their community and to develop leadership and civic engagement skills, especially for adolescents and emerging adults.

- **Advocate.**  
For some, Ripple Effect inspires them to learn more about incarceration and it motivates them to get involved in creating larger changes for disenfranchised individuals and those most affected by incarceration.

## Ripple Effect CU benefits both those who write letters and those who receive letters.

### In the words of letter recipients

“It does the heart so much good to know that people outside your immediate family do care. This is love, once again. Thank you.”

“I appreciate your touch of humanity towards me and I want to send loving kindness thoughts your way.”

“I really appreciated all of the mail that your group has been sending to me, especially this past holiday. Thank you so much.”

### In the words of participants

“Everyone is welcome and no one is treated different based on their gender or lifestyle; we accept all, like a family gathering.”

“Through Ripple Effect, I have reconnected with my father.”

“Ripple Effect, helps me to inform [people who are incarcerated] there is more out here than just negativity; it prevents me from getting in trouble and it prevents them from getting in trouble too. It’s like being a leader.”

“I have people listen to me... I can get a helping hand by comparing my story and listening to theirs.”





# ESTABLISHING YOUR ORGANIZATION

In this section, we describe important considerations as you develop your organization. When possible:

- Establish a committed and effective leadership team.
- Create a financial plan to increase sustainability of the efforts.
- Secure meeting logistics well in advanced.
- Outline marketing strategies to promote organization via social media.
- Select a group(s) who will be recipients of the letters and arrange the logistics of mailing letters in advanced.
- Ensure all organizational and related materials are in place before starting out.
- Recruit letter writer participants.



## LEADERSHIP

### Form a planning committee:

Invite participants to serve on a planning committee to spread the load of organizing Ripple Effect gatherings. Ripple Effect CU has found it particularly helpful to have a diverse, representational, and community-based planning committee by reaching out to various groups including those touched by the issues the group are concerned about. The planning committee should spend considerable time thinking through the logistics of organization, its purpose, and how it will function in the community. After your Ripple group gets going, you will probably find it necessary for your leadership team to meet at least monthly.

### Model an open and welcoming atmosphere:

It is crucial for the leadership to model and help foster a welcoming, open, and non-judgmental atmosphere at letter-writing meetings. Ripple Effect participants often comment on the sense of community and

comfort they feel at meetings. In a group discussion with Ripple Effect participants, they indicated they felt as if meetings were family gatherings, and felt a strong sense of community with other participants.

Leadership and volunteers play a large role in setting the welcoming environment. Some concrete strategies we employ are using nametags at all Ripple CU gatherings so that we can address individuals personally and reaching out to first-timers, while trying not to be over-bearing or intrusive.

### Internal documentation:

In order to help with organizing work flow and staff turnover, consider creating internal documentation which captures institutional knowledge. Creating a workflow, organizational chart and job descriptions can help define responsibilities and train incoming leaders. Further, keeping meeting minutes helps maintain institutional knowledge which can otherwise be lost through time or turnover.



## FINANCES

### Seed money:

To get Ripple Effect meetings off of the ground, some one-time/irregular expenses will be necessary. Those might include printing costs to distribute your organizational plan to all participants of a community meeting where you'll discuss a proposal for a Ripple program, or mailing costs or food for such an event, or extra flyers to promote the very first Ripple session. Some of these initial expenses can be circumvented through donations from local businesses or community members. Other expenses to consider are setting up a P.O. box, legal fees for filing for nonprofit status, buying a secure box to set out for donations, and purchasing tubs to bring supplies to and from meetings.

Other supplies include cards, paper, pens, and markers, that will be used over a long period of time and will need to be bought just once, or perhaps replaced and replenished as needed.

### Meeting budgets:

A basic letter-writing gathering for Ripple Effect CU costs on average \$100/meeting. The main costs are postage for 100 letters, and pizza and drinks. It may be helpful to have a bare-bones budget to help get the letter-writing meetings off of the ground, and then to gradually work towards meetings with more features that may require more funds.

We have elected to use postage stamps rather than a non-profit stamp on our mail because postage stamps are more "homely" and we can convey additional expressions of encouragement to our letter recipients by choosing stamps that carry messages like "LOVE" or "Latino Heritage Month."

### Long-term/special occasion budget:

Ripple Effect CU occasionally hosts community forums and other events. It may be useful to set fundraising goals to work up to bigger events further down the road.



### **Financing and fundraising:**

Money may come from multiple sources. Your organization may receive funding as a project or branch of another organization, as Ripple Effect CU does. It may also be worthwhile to have donation boxes at the letter-writing meetings, but placed inconspicuously so participants don't feel obligated to give. Also, donations of goods and food can also be a great way of reaching out for donations from individuals, organizations, and small businesses/restaurants. Ripple Effect CU has created a letter to use when seeking such donations. Another way to seek donations would be to solicit them via emails to a listserv.

## **LOGISTICS**

### **Pick a date and location:**

Ripple Effect CU meets once a month. We've found that keeping a consistent meeting time, e.g. the third Thursday of every month, helps get people accustomed to attending. Ripple Effect CU has had good luck working with churches and mosques, who do not charge a facility fee, to secure space for letter writing. Of course, it is important that the location be accessible to all. Ripple Effect CU organizers always make an effort to be mindful of the spaces and do small gestures, such as bring trash bags and throw away all garbage.

### **Volunteers and tasks:**

Ripple Effect CU has a team of committed members who work to accomplish various tasks that support the letter-writing meetings. We divide tasks into two areas: logistics and outreach. You could also think about dividing tasks in another way, e.g. outside the letter-writing meetings and at the letter-writing meetings.

We suggest creating easy-to-follow protocol and checklists so that the work that needs to be accomplished can be done so consistently and in a timely manner.

### **Outside of the meetings**

- Compiling and updating the list of recipients
- Replenishing cards and other supplies
- Mailing the letters
- Reading any letters that come in response
- Communicating with participants via social media and other platforms

### **During the event**

- Setting up
- Cleaning up
- Welcoming participants and being available during the meeting
- \*And many more listed in the section that details the logistics of the event in the next sections of this handout

## **MARKETING**

### **Internet presence and online communication:**

Communication with participants and reaching out to those who may be interested in joining letter-writing meetings is very important. It is advisable to ensure you have an appropriate internet presence and communication platforms via social media, email, etc. to stay in touch with your participants and be able to update them regularly. Having a website of some sort which is kept up-to-date can be very helpful for folks who hear about the meetings or just

wanted to verify information without having to contact someone to do so. Creating an email address may also be helpful for members' privacy.

#### **Reaching out:**

Ripple Effect CU has reached out to different organizations, such as houses of worship and social justice organizations, to spread the word about our gatherings. Sometimes our members are invited to speak about Ripple at community events, and we find these a good outreach method. Another tactic that we've used effectively is going from door-to-door to spread the word. It may also be helpful to create pamphlets, flyers, or brochures to hand out at events or hand out at meetings to encourage people to attend a Ripple event.

## **RECIPIENTS**

#### **Pick which group(s) to write letters for:**

Ripple Effect CU writes letters to people who are incarcerated as well as to refugees, immigrants and undocumented university students. Your group might choose to write to one or all of those constituencies. You may also choose to have a main group of recipients to write to regularly, and occasionally write to other groups if there is interest from participants.

#### **Gather names of individuals to write to:**

Ripple Effect CU's motto is "reconnecting our community one letter at a time." Accordingly, we invite community members to share with us the names and addresses of their loved ones who are locked up in jails or prisons. Compiling and updating the list of recipients is a key task. We currently use an excel database, and print the excel sheets prior to each gathering and place them on the writing tables so our participants can address envelopes and personalize the letters with recipients' names. For us, it's not necessary that everyone on the list receive a

letter every month; your group may come up with a different rule.

Where possible, we include the birthday of each person on our list. This information is available from our state's DOC website; we are careful not to read details of the crime for which they have been incarcerated, because that's none of our business. Many of our participants prioritize writing to individuals who have birthdays coming up. We currently have about 160 names on our recipient list.

We do not distribute names of refugees or immigrant families or undocumented students to our members, for the protection of the letter recipients. Instead, we write generic "hello, neighbor" cards to them, and pass these cards along to trusted organizations who distribute them to individuals who could use encouraging words.

#### **Establish channels to distribute letters:**

Whichever group(s) you choose to write to, you need to determine how your letters can be distributed to them. If your group chooses to write to people who are incarcerated, for example, you will probably need to establish a connection with the community/public engagement liaison at your state's Department of Corrections. Each state, and sometimes each facility, may have very specific requirements with respect to the content and format of letters and cards. Your letters may not be delivered if these requirements are not satisfied. We distribute our letters to jails and prisons via U.S. mail.

One thing you are likely to need is a return address. Ripple Effect CU uses the address of its parent organization, the Education Justice Project. If your group chooses to write to refugees and immigrants, you will need to learn how to reach them. Ripple Effect CU works with local advocates to get letters distributed to those populations.

## STARTING OUT

### Nonprofit status:

Ripple Effect CU strongly recommends working underneath an existing nonprofit or establishing your own nonprofit status.

### Procure cards and supplies:

We suggest getting blank cards from dollar stores or in bulk stationery packages. It may be nice to include cards relevant to different holidays and seasons at different times of the year. These supplies could also be donated. (See donation letter). You will also need a selection of pens, markers, etc. In a typical 1.5-hour meeting with 25, Ripple Effect CU has found that we can produce 100+ cards.

### Create instruction sheets:

Ripple Effect CU has found it can be helpful to have several laminated copies of instruction sheets available on letter writing tables so new attendees have guidelines to refer to as they write. See example in

the appendix. You may need to create new sheets if you expand to different recipient communities and the sheets may need to be updated occasionally.

## PARTICIPANTS

### Identify participants:

It may be helpful to reach out to local organizations who may share similar values and mission statements. At letter-writing events, we encourage participants to spread the word to their family, friends, and social circles.

We maintain a list of participants and send them regular reminders of upcoming events. We typically have between 10 and 50 participants at a given session. Holiday seasons bring more people. Ripple CU is explicitly family-friendly, so we intentionally meet in places where children can comfortably play, should they get bored with drawing.





# HOW TO RUN A RIPPLE EFFECT LETTER WRITING EVENT

## BEFORE THE EVENT

### Checklist

(some tasks that have been mentioned in the previous section)

- Pick a date and location
- Have tasks and volunteers assigned
- Pick which group(s) to write letters for
- Establish channels to distribute letters
- Procure stamps, cards, and supplies

- Create/update instruction sheets
- Identify participants and reach out to new groups
- Publicize, publicize, publicize!
- Arrange food
- Donation boxes

### Publicize the event:

Ripple Effect CU creates a flyer (see example below) before each meeting and emails it to its mailing list so members can help spread the word. Ripple Effect CU also promotes its events on Facebook, by going door to door (especially on Sunday afternoons), by sending flyers to churches, barber shops, etc.

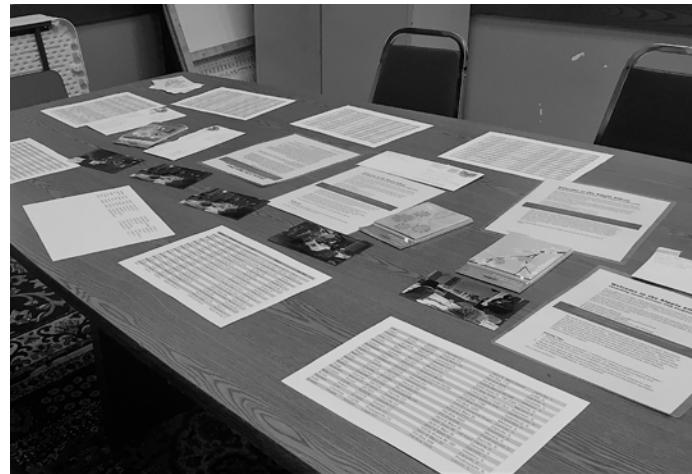
### Arrange food:

If possible, having food available helps attract participants and put them at ease. Food can be purchased by organizers or donated by local businesses (see example donation letter). We suggest having vegetarian options to accommodate dietary preferences and not serving alcohol to ensure the event is family friendly and a safe space for those recovering from addictions. Ripple Effect CU often provides pizza, chips, chocolate and drinks.



## **Consider conducting educational forums:**

It may be beneficial for Ripple Effect participants to learn more about the issues for they are writing letters. To this end, Ripple Effect CU has held periodic educational forums, separate from letter writing events, to share information and educate the community about issues such as the effects of mass incarceration. Once your group's letter writing meetings are up and running, you may wish to consider holding such forms as well.



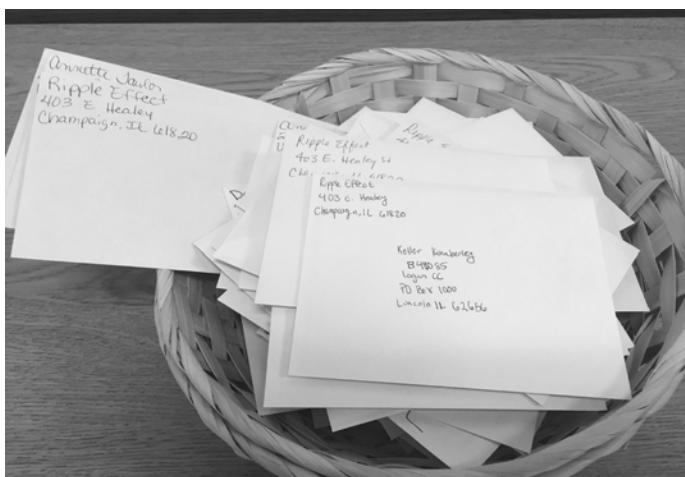
## **DURING THE EVENT**

### **Set up welcome table(s):**

This should preferably be done near the entrance with a sign-in sheet, nametags, and brochures about your organization (see photo at top right). If available: We suggest at least one person should sit at the table to greet people and help them get signed in and at least one person should act as a floater/greeter by showing visitors around and helping them get oriented and settled.

### **Set up writing table(s):**

We suggest distributing color-coded instructions for each group of letter recipients. We laminate those instructions to make them more durable. Each table also has a variety of blank cards and pens. (Note: Check with your local DOC. In Illinois, for example, we do not use stickers, glitter or



address labels due to prison regulations.) Our current arrangement is to have several smaller writing tables instead of one big table. We find that better encourages conversation among participants, but you might want to experiment with different configurations

### **Set up food table:**

Ripple Effect CU has found that it's helpful for food and drink to be available near the writing table(s) so participants who want to eat as they write are readily able to do so.

### **Set up collection table:**

We suggest setting up a basket for each group you are writing to so everyone who attends can see how many letters have been produced for each group (see photo at bottom left). It is a way of keeping us encouraged.

### **Set up kids table:**

Ripple Effect CU has found it can be helpful to have a separate table with coloring books and such so kids can "participate" as well. Older children are encouraged to write cards.

### **Start event:**

We suggest having a group leader or host kick off the event by welcoming attendees, discussing instructions and reminding attendees about food and logistics such as the location of bathrooms.

**Write letters:**

For about an hour, invite attendees to sit, chat, eat and write together.

**Conduct sharing circle:**

Ripple Effect CU typically closes meetings by inviting attendees to share information such as what brings them to the event or updates on people that have been mentioned at previous gatherings. This sharing circle can occur away from or close to the letter writing table.

**Collect letters:**

Ripple Effect CU has found it can be helpful to have a volunteer go around to pick up any completed letters periodically (Note: It is suggested that letters not be sealed initially

so that volunteers can look through them to make sure they don't include anything inappropriate before mailing. The exception is when people are writing to their own loved ones.)

**Conduct sharing circle:**

Ripple Effect CU typically closes meetings by inviting attendees to share information such as what brings them to the event or updates on people that have been mentioned at previous gatherings. This sharing circle can occur away from or close to the letter writing table.

**Clean up:**

Ripple Effect CU brings garbage bags to make cleanup easy.

## WHAT TO WRITE

"What do I write?" At Ripple Effect CU gatherings, we often hear that. Below are some suggestions that we provide to our letter-writers. You'll find additional suggestions on the sample laminated instruction sheet in the appendix.

Bear in mind that not all participants at a letter-writing session may be writing to strangers. We have found that Ripple Effect CU also offers a supportive space for those who wish to write to their loved ones on a regular basis. Please note that we do not ask individuals who are writing to their loved ones to leave their envelopes open for our inspection, out of respect for their privacy; and that we request that they use their own return address, not Ripple Effect CU's.

**Cards can be brief:** It's not necessary to write a lot.

**Share a little about yourself, but not too much:** For example, "I'm from Central Illinois," not "I work as a technician at General Hospital and am 40 years old." We advise participants to use their first name only.

**Be positive:** The cards are meant to cheer and encourage.

**If you include words of faith, be inclusive:** The letters should not be an occasion for evangelizing. (At Ripple Effect CU, we sometimes have to pull letters that go too explicitly in this direction.) Don't assume the faith of the person you are writing to, or that they have a faith at all.

**Important Note:**

At Ripple Effect CU, we have made a very conscious decision not to operate as a pen pal service. That is partly because we don't want to make promises we can't keep about sustaining correspondence, and partly because it is important to us to keep this as a family-friendly initiative. Many pen-pal programs blur the line into romance. To be very clear about our intentions, we include a slip of paper in every card that states that this is not a pen-pal service and that if a person chooses to write back to Ripple Effect CU, they are likely to hear from a different person in return. There is a sample in the appendix.

## AFTER THE EVENT

### Review letters:

Ripple Effect CU leadership reviews letters submitted to look for and discard ones that are inappropriate, e.g., letters that are overly religious, children's scribbles, etc.

### Connect with participants:

We suggest following up via email with everyone who attended, letting them know how much you appreciated them, and informing them of the date of the next meeting. Let the new members know that they'll be added to your mailing list.

### Replenish supplies:

You'll probably need to acquire more stationery. Check that the pens are still working. If you used evaluation forms at the gathering—and we suggest this, especially as you're just getting started—discuss them and decide if you're going to do things differently next time. At Ripple Effect CU, we hold a monthly planning meeting at

which we address ongoing logistical and outreach matters.

### Collect incoming mail:

Occasionally at Ripple Effect CU we get mail from individuals who have received cards from us. These are often heartfelt cards of appreciation, which remind us why we do this work! We bring those cards to the next meeting and read them aloud and pass them around. We ask for a volunteer to write back to the person who sent the letter. Our preference is to ask a different person than the person who wrote the original letter, to emphasize the fact that Ripple Effect is a community of caring individuals, not a single person and not a pen-pal service.

**We hope that you are inspired  
to start your own  
Ripple Effect group!  
Please let us know how it goes!**

**-Ripple Effect UC**





## **ABOUT THE AUTHORS**

This handbook was created as a class project for EPSY515: Multicultural Issues in Counseling, a course at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. It was developed in collaboration with the Ripple Effect group in Spring 2017. It was updated by Rebecca Ginsburg in September 2018. Rebecca directs the Education Justice Project and can be reached at [info@educationjustice.net](mailto:info@educationjustice.net). Annette Taylor, the coordinator of Ripple Effect CU can be reached at [Ripple@educationjustice.net](mailto:Ripple@educationjustice.net).

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Brittney Walker

Ted Worm



## **ABOUT THE COVER**

“Photos of Ripple Effect CU gatherings.” Photo credit: Rebecca Ginsburg and Allen Majors



## **APPENDICES**

Note: Digital (editable) versions can be obtained by contacting The Education Justice Project:

### **EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT**

University of Illinois

1001 S. Wright St.

Champaign, IL 61820

217.300.5150

[www.educationjustice.net](http://www.educationjustice.net)

[ripple@educationjustice.net](mailto:ripple@educationjustice.net)



## APPENDIX A: SAMPLE MEETING FLYERS

### Do you have a family member behind bars? Would you like to talk about it?

The Ripple Effect invites you to join us each month. Whether you have a loved one in prison, are formerly incarcerated yourself, or have a heart to reach out to individuals behind bars, you're warmly invited.



**MONDAY OCT 17, 2016**

**5:30 - 7 pm**

write letters and cards to your loved ones in jail and prison  
stationery and postage provided  
children's activities  
refreshments  
opportunity to share and support one another

**\*\*Third Monday each month\*\***

All activities at **New Covenant Fellowship | 124 W. White Street | Champaign** Free parking in the lot on the West side of Randolph

Ripple stands for "Reaching Inside Prisons with Purpose and Love." It is a program of the Education Justice Project at the University of Illinois. Most of us have loved ones in prison ourselves. We want to be there for one another, and for you. For more information: [info@educationjustice.net](mailto:info@educationjustice.net) or 217.300.5150 or [www.educationjustice.net](http://www.educationjustice.net).

**ejp** EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT   
OF THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

## *Reconnecting Our Community One Letter at a Time ...*

Join us **February 20**, when we gather to write cards to friends, family, and neighbors who are separated from us, or are threatened with separation, due to incarceration and immigration policies. Help us extend the spirit of care and solidarity that exists in our community. Learn what we can do.

### **FEBRUARY RIPPLE EFFECT GATHERING**

**5:30 - 7pm**

**Monday February 20, 2017**

**Bethel AME Church**

**401 E. Park Street, Champaign**

Free street parking

\* Stationery and postage provided

\* Dinner provided

\* Children's activities

\* All welcome! Bring addresses, reach out to your neighbors,  
share your concerns

#### **About the Ripple Effect**

Ripple stands for "Reaching Inside Prisons with Purpose and Love." We are a program of the Education Justice Project at the U of I. We want to be there for one another and to demonstrate the care and concern that exists in our community. For more information: info@educationjustice.net or 217.300.5150 | educationjustice.net. We welcome donations and your support.





## APPENDIX B: SAMPLE FORUM DOCUMENTS

# THE RIPPLE EFFECT

*"Reaching Inside Prisons with Purpose and Love"*



## COMMUNITY FORUM

How can we best support those behind bars and those on the outside?

**5:30 - 7:30pm, Thursday June 16, 2016**  
New Hope Church  
911 W. Bradley Ave, Champaign  
(dinner served following forum)

Featuring speakers from our own community who will share about having loved ones in prison. Come learn and share!

Crystal Ransom  
Annette Taylor  
Kevin Williams



For more information:

217.300.5150  
[info@educationjustice.net](mailto:info@educationjustice.net)  
[www.educationjustice.net](http://www.educationjustice.net)

ejp EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT 

**Tuesday April 12**  
**6 - 7:30 pm**

Robeson Pavilion, Room C  
Champaign Public Library  
200 W. Green St.  
Champaign

Refreshments provided.  
Child care provided.

**All Welcome!**



PUBLIC WORKSHOP FOR THOSE IMPACTED BY INCARCERATION

## ADVOCATING FOR YOUR LOVED ONE IN PRISON

State Representative Carol Ammons and the Education Justice Project invite you to the second in a series of four workshops in 2016 designed to support and inform community members who have a loved one incarcerated in Illinois. It will be held Tuesday April 12, 2016 at the Champaign Library.

The workshop will feature special guest Gwyn Troyer from the John Howard Association in Chicago. Gwyn is in charge of JHA's **Prison Monitoring Project**, a program that investigates state's prisons' conditions around health care, education, disciplinary procedures, and more. During this workshop she'll discuss why prison oversight is so important, what she's learned from monitoring Illinois' prisons, and how family members can engage in **advocacy around prison conditions**. There will lots of time for Q&A and discussion.

To be kept informed of future workshop schedules, please call Representative Ammons' district office at 217-531-1660 or the Education Justice Project at 217.300.5150.



### EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA-CHAMPAIGN

This event is hosted by EJP and State Rep. Carol Ammons. Thank you to co-sponsors CUCPJ and First Followers.



EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT | 403 E. HEALEY ST CHAMPAIGN IL 61820 | 217.300.5150 | INFO@EDUCATIONJUSTICE.NET

## **Workshop: Advocating for Your Loved One in Prison Feedback Form**

Thank you attending this event! It was sponsored by the Education Justice Project (EJP), State Rep Carol Ammons, First Followers, and Champaign-Urbana Citizens for Peace and Justice. We are very interested in your feedback. PLEASE take a moment to complete this anonymous form and leave it on the table on your way out.

Many thanks!

1. Overall, how would you rate the quality of this event? (1 very low, 5 very high)

<input type="checkbox"/>				
1	2	3	4	5

Please explain the above rating. Why did you rate it as you did?

2. Please offer an example of what you learned at tonight's workshop.

3. What questions did this event generate for you – about advocating for your loved ones or other topics?

4. What ideas or recommendations do you have for future events like this? Feel free to write on the back of this page.

Feb 9, 2016

# Feedback Form

---

**Workshop: Reentry in Urbana**

**Guest Speaker: Alec Bautista, Human Relations Commission, Urbana**

Thank you attending this event! It was co-sponsored by the City of Urbana's Human Relations Commission and the Education Justice Project (EJP) of the University of Illinois. We care about your feedback. PLEASE take a moment to complete this anonymous form and leave it on the table on your way out.

Many thanks!

1. Overall, how would you rate the quality of this event? (1 very low, 5 very high)

                         
1            2            3            4            5

Please explain the above rating. Why did you rate it as you did?

2. Please offer an example of what you learned at tonight's workshop.

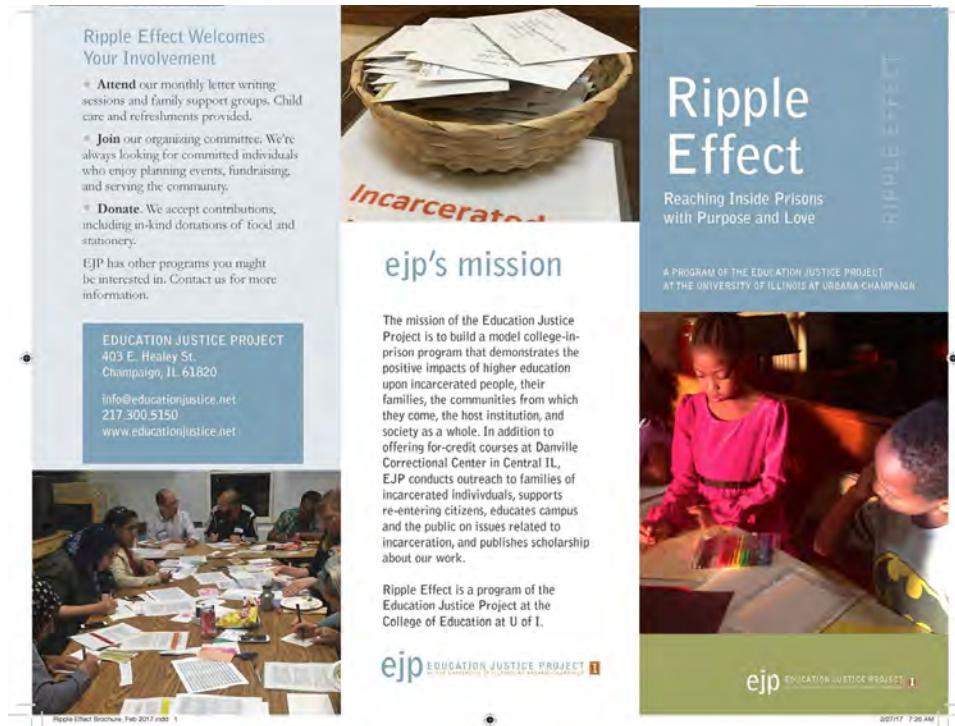
3. What questions did this event generate for you, about reentry or other topics?

4. What ideas or recommendations do you have for future events like this? Feel free to write on the back of this page.

April 28, 2016



## APPENDIX C: BROCHURE



Ripple Effect Welcomes Your Involvement

- \* **Attend** our monthly letter writing sessions and family support groups. Child care and refreshments provided.
- \* **Join** our organizing committee. We're always looking for committed individuals who enjoy planning events, fundraising, and serving the community.
- \* **Donate**. We accept contributions, including in-kind donations of food and stationery.

EJP has other programs you might be interested in. Contact us for more information.

**EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT**  
403 E. Healey St.  
Champaign, IL 61820  
[info@educationjustice.net](mailto:info@educationjustice.net)  
217.300.5150  
[www.educationjustice.net](http://www.educationjustice.net)



**Incarcerated**

**ejp's mission**

The mission of the Education Justice Project is to build a model college-in-prison program that demonstrates the positive impacts of higher education upon incarcerated people, their families, the communities from which they come, the host institution, and society as a whole. In addition to offering for-credit courses at Danville Correctional Center in Central IL, EJP conducts outreach to families of incarcerated individuals, supports re-entering citizens, educates campus and the public on issues related to incarceration, and publishes scholarship about our work.

Ripple Effect is a program of the Education Justice Project at the College of Education at U of I.

**Ripple Effect**  
Reaching Inside Prisons with Purpose and Love

A PROGRAM OF THE EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT  
AT THE UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT URBANA CHAMPAIGN



**ejp** EDUCATION JUSTICE PROJECT

REACHING INSIDE PRISONS WITH PURPOSE AND LOVE

2017-7-26 AM

“Do you feel like you have no one to talk to about your loved one's incarceration? Do you feel alone in this? Would you like to come to a trusted environment and be around other individuals going through the same thing? Let's help each other.”

- Annette Taylor,  
Ripple Effect Coordinator



### Future plans:

- \* Family retreats
- \* Fun fundraisers
- \* Make a Ripple Effect video
- \* Film screenings
- \* Guest speakers
- \* Attend conferences together
- \* Advocacy work

### What Is Ripple Effect?

Ripple stands for **Reaching Inside Prisons with Purpose and Love**. We are a community-based group and many of us have friends and family behind the wall. You're welcome to join us at our events:

\* **Letter-writing groups** on the third Monday of each month. We provide stationery and stamps. Bring your questions about life behind bars. Formerly incarcerated

people are there to provide answers. 5:30 - 7pm. Venue varies.

\* **Community forums** held occasionally, where our neighbors discuss their experiences with incarceration and other relevant topics.

\* Workshops on matters you care about, like how to advocate for your loved one in IDOC custody. All welcome.

“I came to the Ripple Effect to write note cards of hope, love, and support to those behind the wall.

After joining, I no longer felt isolated. Hope, love, and support were extended to me and my loved one, who recently was released from prison.”

Starting in Fall 2016, we have extended our outreach to include those impacted by U.S. immigration policies. We now write welcoming letters to refugee families who have settled in the Midwest and to local individuals who are undocumented. Our motto is “reconnecting our community one letter at a time.”



“Because of Ripple Effect's awesome groups, gatherings, and meetings, I don't feel alone or ashamed or voiceless anymore.”

## APPENDIX D: SAMPLE OUTREACH LETTER



### **Education Justice Project**

403 W. Healey, MC-423  
Champaign, IL 61820  
217-300-5150  
[info@educationjustice.net](mailto:info@educationjustice.net)  
[www.educationjustice.net](http://www.educationjustice.net)

December 8, 2016

Dear Friends,

Warm greetings from the Ripple Effect!

You're all invited to our special letter writing gathering on **Monday December 19, 2016**.

We're concerned and frightened by the possible implications of a Trump presidency for families impacted by immigration policies and deportation. Their situation is very similar to that of families impacted by incarceration. So we'd like to do something special at our gathering on the 19<sup>th</sup> from 5:30 – 7:00pm at Bethel AME Church in Champaign, to express our solidarity with families impacted by immigration policies and deportation and also draw attention to the issues.

*Our motto is "reconnecting our community one letter at a time."*

Ripple supplies stationary, postage, dinner and childcare. Please see flyers.

Ripple Effect stands for "Reaching Inside Prisons with Purpose and Love." We're a program of the University of Illinois' Education Justice Project, a unit of the College of Education at UI of I, and we stand with individuals who have loved ones behind bars.

We hope that you'll help spread the word about the December 19th event. We'd welcome opportunity to work with you around these important matters. You can reach both of us via the main Education Justice Project number, 217.300.5150, or at our email addresses, below. We are also seeking co-sponsors, so please let us know if your organization or congregation would like to cosponsor the event.

Thank you for reading this letter. We hope to hear from you.

Sincerely,

Annette Taylor,  
Ripple Effect Coordinator  
[mstaylor217@gmail.com](mailto:mstaylor217@gmail.com)

Rebecca Ginsburg,  
Education Justice Project Director  
[rginsbur@illinois.edu](mailto:rginsbur@illinois.edu)



## APPENDIX E: SAMPLE LIST OF RECIPIENTS

(Note: Name and PIN info has been removed)

Last Name	First Name	PIN	Location	Address	City, State	Zip	Cor	Address checked
Menard	Correctional Facility	PO Box 1000	Menard, IL	62259	Yes	Corty		
Menard	Correctional Center	PO Box 1000	Menard, IL	62259	Yes	Dansberry		
Lawrence	Correctional Ctr	10930 Lawrence Road	Sumner, IL	62466	Yes	Davis		
Menard CC		PO Box 1000	Menard, IL	62259	Yes	Delgado		
Pontiac	Correctional Facility	PO Box 99	Pontiac, IL	61764	Yes	Diaz		
Logan	Correctional Facility	PO Box 1000	Lincoln, IL	62656	Yes	Feazel		
Logan	Correctional Facility	PO Box 1000	Lincoln, IL	62656	Yes	Ferguson		
Pontiac	Correctional Facility	PO Box 99	Pontiac, IL	61764	Yes	Fernandez		
Decatur	Correctional Facility	PO Box 3066	Decatur, IL	62524	Yes	Fisher		
Menard	Correctional Center	PO Box 1000	Menard, IL	62259	Yes	Ganus		
Pontiac	Correctional Facility	PO Box 99	Pontiac, IL	61764	Yes	Garcia		
Logan	Correctional Facility	PO Box 1000	Lincoln, IL	62656	Yes	Gosby		
Menard	Correctional Center	PO Box 1000	Menard, IL	62259	Yes	Griffin		
Menard	Correctional Center	PO Box 1000	Menard, IL	62259	Yes	Gutierrez		
Menard	Correctional Center	PO Box 1000	Menard, IL	62259	Yes	Hadnot		
Logan	Correctional Facility	PO Box 1000	Lincoln, IL	62656	Yes	Hawthorne		
Logan	Correctional Facility	PO Box 1000	Lincoln, IL	62656	Yes	Howard		
Logan	Correctional Facility	PO Box 1000	Lincoln, IL	62656	Yes	Jenkins		
Menard	Correctional Center	PO Box 1000	Menard, IL	62259	Yes	Johnson		
Pontiac	Correctional Facility	PO Box 99	Pontiac, IL	61764	Yes	Johnson		
Pontiac	Correctional Facility	PO Box 99	Pontiac, IL	61764	Yes	Kaszuba		
Pontiac	Correctional Facility	PO Box 99	Pontiac, IL	61764	Yes	Kirkpatrick		
Logan	Correctional Facility	PO Box 1000	Lincoln, IL	62656	Yes	Kopf		
Lawrence	Correctional Ctr	10930 Lawrence Road	Sumner, IL	62466	Yes	Kuonsky		
Pontiac	Correctional Facility	PO Box 99	Pontiac, IL	61764	Yes	Love		
Stateville CC		PO Box 112	Joliet, IL	60434	Yes	Madel		
Logan	Correctional Facility	PO Box 1000	Lincoln, IL	62656	Yes	Massaro		
Logan	Correctional Facility	PO Box 1000	Lincoln, IL	62656	Yes	McDowell		
Pontiac	Correctional Facility	PO Box 99	Pontiac, IL	61764	Yes	McGruder		
Pontiac	Correctional Facility	PO Box 99	Pontiac, IL	61764	Yes	Ocampo		
Menard	Correctional Center	PO Box 1000	Menard, IL	62259	Yes	Pabon		
Menard	Correctional Center	PO Box 1000	Menard, IL	62259	Yes	Padilla		
Western Illinois CC		2500 RL, 99 South	Mount Sterling	62353	Yes	Postelwait		
Pontiac	Correctional Facility	PO Box 99	Pontiac, IL	61764	Yes	Rasho		
Pontiac	Correctional Facility	PO Box 99	Pontiac, IL	61764	Yes	Reid		
Logan	Correctional Facility	PO Box 1000	Lincoln, IL	62656	Yes	Rice		
Menard	Correctional Center	PO Box 1000	Menard, IL	62259	Yes	Rivera		
Menard	Correctional Center	PO Box 1000	Menard, IL	62259	Yes	Santiago		
Pontiac	Correctional Facility	PO Box 99	Pontiac, IL	61764	Yes	Santiago		
Pontiac	Correctional Facility	PO Box 99	Pontiac, IL	61764	Yes	Salgado		
Lawrence	Correctional Ctr	10930 Lawrence Road	Sumner, IL	62466	Yes	Smith		
Logan	Correctional Facility	PO Box 1000	Lincoln, IL	62656	Yes	Smith		
Pontiac	Correctional Facility	PO Box 99	Pontiac, IL	61764	Yes	Snyder		
Pontiac	Correctional Facility	PO Box 99	Pontiac, IL	61764	Yes	St Pierre		
Pontiac	Correctional Facility	PO Box 99	Pontiac, IL	61764	Yes	Timm		
Logan	Correctional Facility	PO Box 1000	Lincoln, IL	62656	Yes	Toliver		
Menard CC		PO Box 1000	Menard, IL	62259	Yes	Villalobos		
Pontiac	Correctional Facility	PO Box 99	Pontiac, IL	61764	Yes	Weneka		
Logan	Correctional Facility	PO Box 1000	Lincoln, IL	62656	Yes	Williams		
Logan	Correctional Facility	PO Box 1000	Lincoln, IL	62656	Yes	Wilson		
Lawrence	Correctional Ctr	10930 Lawrence Road	Sumner, IL	62466	Yes	Zayas		



## APPENDIX F: LAMINATED INSTRUCTION SHEET

### Welcome to the Ripple Effect! (Reaching Inside Prisons with Purpose and Love)

This page provides more information about writing to incarcerated individuals.

We write to three groups of people behind bars:

1. Women at Logan Correctional Center, IL.

Women who participate in bi-annual retreats sponsored by a group called Women at the Well Ministries, will have your cards and letters read out loud to them during the retreat. The women will not be allowed to keep them. Please sign with: your first name, the city you're from, and your age if you're a child. These women especially appreciate hearing from children. Do not place in an envelope. We send the cards and letters in a large batch to Women at the Well.

2. Our family and friends.

Please treat these like a personal letter. Use your own return address. You can either seal these envelopes and leave them with us to mail, or take them home and mail them yourself.

3. Individuals wishing to hear from others.

We focus on reaching out to people from our community and also to your loved ones. Our motto is 'Reconnecting our community one letter at a time.' There are lists on the tables that have the names and addresses that we've been provided. Please let us know if you'd like us to add your loved one's name to the list!

Please note the following if you decide write to someone on this list:

- Provide the insert about Ripple Effect or provide information, e.g. "Ripple stands for Reaching Inside Prisons with Purpose and Love. We are a group that meets each month to write to individuals whose names we have received. These correspondences are to let you know that you haven't been forgotten. Many people on the outside care."
- Use collective pronouns such as "we" and "our" instead of "I" and "me." This is so the recipient won't get the impression that you're seeking to form a one-on-one relationship with them.
- Use the Ripple Effect mailing address as the return address: Ripple Effect, 403 E. Healey St, Champaign, IL 61820.

Last updated 02.20.2017

- If you do wish to enter into a personal correspondence, write your personal return address on the envelope. We suggest you use your first name only. We ask that you please be intentional about this. It is a big responsibility to maintain a correspondence with someone who is locked up; they will be looking for your letters and will be discouraged if you don't respond. Be careful about the expectations you're setting up.

**\*\*Please note that Ripple Effect exists to support family members with incarcerated loved ones and to reach out to those behind bars who may not have other forms of support. We are not a pen pal service.** If you're interested developing a close relationship with someone in prison, please visit one of the many websites that exist for that purpose. \*\*

### **Writing Tips**

1. Share a little bit about yourself, but not too much, especially if you're not seeking to develop a relationship. For example, "I'm writing from Central Illinois" or "I have family who have been incarcerated," NOT "I work as a nurse at Carle Hospital."
2. Be positive! Some examples: "I send hope and encouragement in this letter" or "I hope that this card lifts your spirits" or "please be encouraged, and know that many of us have not forgotten those behind bars."
3. It's fine to include words of faith in your letters sent via Women at the Well, a Christian group. However, it's important to remember that we don't know the religious affiliation of others. Please don't assume. Also be aware that Ripple Effect is an inclusive group and our members represent a range of religious affiliations. All are welcome.

### **Important Pointers**

- 1) Include the DOC number on the envelope for individuals incarcerated in state prison. Your letter will not be delivered without this number.
- 2) No stickers or glitter are allowed in letters..
- 3) Please do not seal your envelopes. We will look at the cards before sealing and mailing them.
- 4) Never promise to send anything to an individual who's incarcerated (unless you know them). This includes money, stamps, books, and everything else. These packages would not be admitted into most prisons. Furthermore, we don't want to give the impression that Ripple Effect is a source of material goods.
- 5) Do not include your phone number or email address if writing to someone you don't know. Even if you're open to a pen pal relationship, don't include that information until you know a person very well.

Last updated 02.20.2017



## APPENDIX G: SAMPLE FUNDRAISING FLYERS



El Toro II is proud of their staff, food and the service they provide to the Champaign-Urbana area. We could not do it without YOU, and NOW we would like to say thank you in another way.

You, Your Family, Your Friends, Your Co-Workers, Your Neighbors, come to  
**El Toro II Mexican Restaurant at 723 S. Neil St., Champaign**  
And WE will donate 20% of your bill\* to  
**Ripple Effect**

Donation Day Guest Copy

Organization: Ripple Effect  
Donation Day: **May 9, 2016**  
Guest Check Total: \$\_\_\_\_\_

20% Contribution: \$\_\_\_\_\_

---

Organization: Ripple Effect

Donation Day: May 9, 2016

**Guest Total:** \$\_\_\_\_\_

El Toro II  
723 S. Neil St.  
Champaign, Illinois 61820  
(217) 378-7807

**FLIER MUST ACCOMPANY ORDER FOR DONATION TO BE APPLIED**

\*Not valid with any other coupons or discount offers. Offer valid on date listed only.  
Carry-Out orders qualify for donation. Must mention flier when placing Carry-Out order.  
Alcohol purchases do NOT qualify for donation. Other restrictions may apply.



## APPENDIX H: COORDINATOR DESCRIPTION



### Education Justice Project

#### Ripple Effect Coordinator Position Description

The mission of the Education Justice Project (EJP) is to build a model college-in-prison program that demonstrates the positive impacts of higher education upon incarcerated people, their families, the neighborhoods from which they come, the host institution, and society as a whole.

The Education Justice Project, a unit of the College of Education, provides a range of programs for people impacted by incarceration, including family members of incarcerated individuals and formerly incarcerated individuals through our FACE program (Family and Community Engagement). The Ripple Effect is one of FACE's projects.

Ripple Effect is a new initiative. It currently meets monthly in Champaign to provide space for people to "reach inside prisons with purpose and love." Activities include sharing a meal together and writing cards and letters to people incarcerated in jails and prisons. In addition, the Ripple Effect hosts occasional public gatherings that address issues related to incarceration, especially as it impacts families.

The Ripple Effect is open to the entire community.

Goals of this initiative include providing support to those who have incarcerated loved ones, providing a venue for sharing of information and resources, and creating a platform for advocacy. We also hope to raise the spirits of incarcerated men and women through sending notes and letters.

The Ripple Effect Coordinator reports directly to the FACE Director. A large part of the position in 2015-6 will be solidifying the program's foundations, so as to ensure long-term sustainability (e.g. establishing roles and procedures among Ripple members) and continued program design (i.e. deciding exactly what Ripple Effect does, and how).

In particular, the Coordinator's responsibilities include:

Program

-Oversee the designing, organizing, execution, and evaluation of Ripple Effect programs, such as the monthly gatherings

Outreach

-Oversee outreach for the Ripple Effect

Last updated July 26, 2011

- Provide input into the creation of publicity and informational materials related to the Ripple Effect, including the EJP website and FACE brochures

-

#### Administration

-Maintain database of contact information for Ripple Effect

-Assist the EJP writer/editor to maintain archives related to the Ripple Effect

#### Management

-Coordinate Ripple Effect meetings

- Maintain contact information for all Ripple Effect team members

**Please note:** The Ripple Effect Coordinator cannot participate in on-site activities at DCC.

In addition all EJP coordinators are asked to regularly evaluate their performance with respect to the following:

#### 1. Communication

This refers to sharing information, concerns, announcements, etc. with members of their program, their EJP Director, members of the public, and relevant others.

#### 2. Monitoring

This refers to ongoing assessment of their program and making fixes as problems arose. It includes collecting information to learn how things are going within a given program. It also involves making use of that information to make changes to the program as required.

#### 3. Nurturing

This refers to guiding, mentoring, and supporting EJP members in their program. It involves identifying people in need of nurturing or mentoring. It also includes developing a nurturing culture within their program.

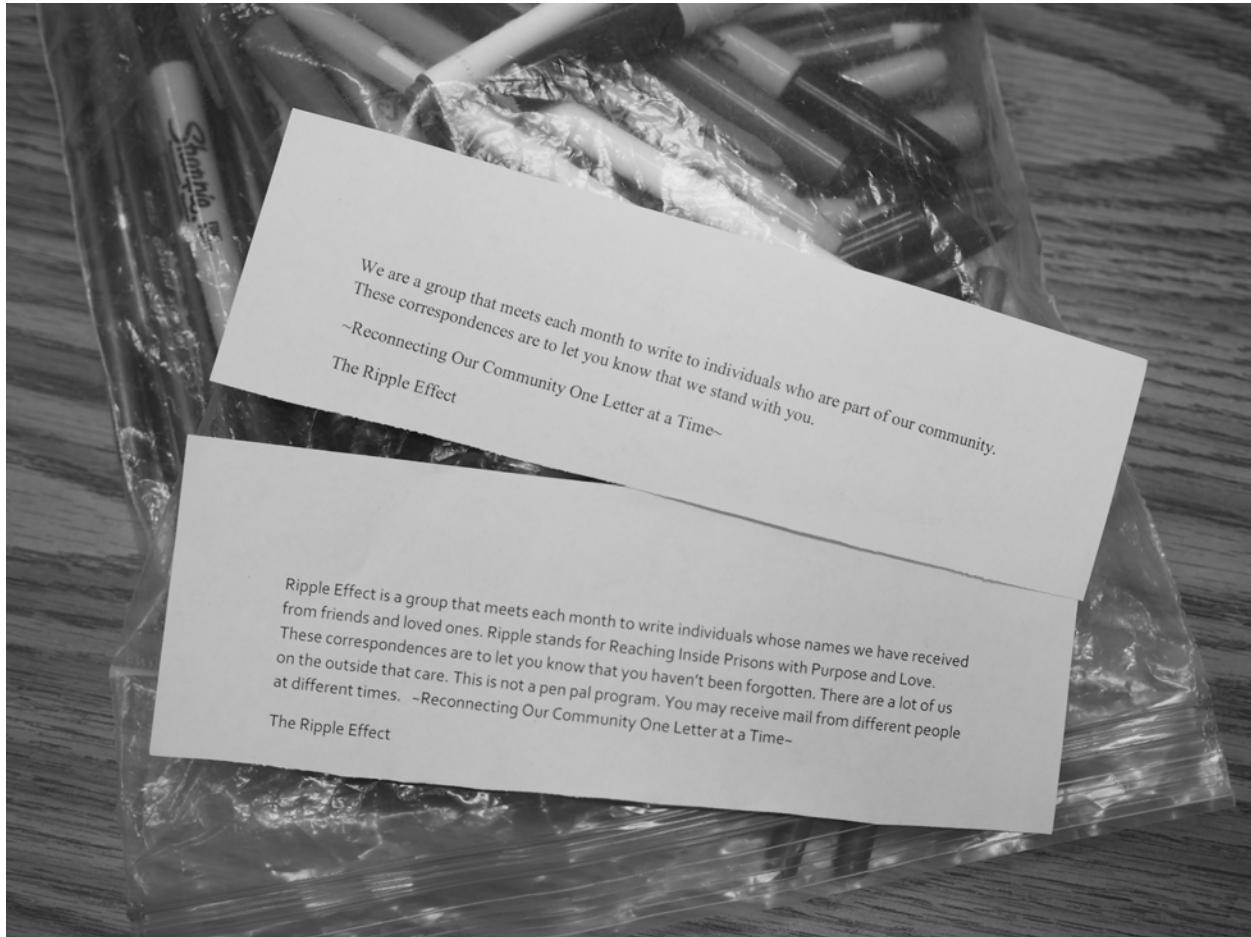
#### 4. Decision-making

This refers to exercising leadership and taking initiative. It could include making bold decisions and developing themselves as a leader (e.g. through workshops or readings).

Last updated July 26, 2015



## APPENDIX I: NOT PEN PAL-SERVICE SLIPS



Contact:

**Ripple Effect**

c/o Education Justice Project  
University of Illinois  
1001 S. Wright Street  
Champaign, IL 61820  
[ripple@educationjustice.net](mailto:ripple@educationjustice.net)  
[info@educationjustice.net](mailto:info@educationjustice.net)  
[educationjustice.net](http://educationjustice.net)  
217.300.5150