

Mothers' Union in HMP Greenock



It all started from a phone call as a prison officer had heard that the Mothers' Union help out in prisons, then an appeal to the local church for volunteers. Since then we have been providing a play area for visiting children for more than two years. As the prisoner officer Paul Shelton says, "The crèche has had a positive effect on prisoners, their partners and children. It has allowed adults time to discuss issues that should not be discussed in front of children and it has also given the children some positive interactions with an adult in a play scenario that sometimes may be lacking."

Isabel Cameron responded to God's call to be the Mothers' Union organiser and has gone on to help with the very popular Family Days, when they painted some faces and stuck on tattoos. As Paul says "The assistance from the Mothers Union at our family days is invaluable as the prisoners really appreciate the opportunity to play games with their children and see them with painted faces. Every prisoner who responded to our survey on the family day gave very positive feedback. We had comments like "the best visit I have ever had", "I wish all the visits could be like this" and "I have never seen my child so happy at a visit" ".

We have also been providing a Christmas card to all the prisoners and have wondered how they are received, but Paul say, "the prisoners do appreciate it though they may not always articulate getting a Xmas card as this may be the only card that they receive and it lets them know that someone other than their families are thinking of them at this time of the year."

Isabel is keen to develop the invitation to provide a 'Book bug' session with some of the female prisoners, this is the latest initiative and we pray that this will work out.

Hilary Moran

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