



## **Commonly Asked Questions**

*Please read carefully and sign*

### **What kind of volunteers are we looking for?**

People that are positive as well as creative, who would like to offer encouragement, guidance, and provide Christian fellowship and friendship to prisoners through cards.

### **What kind of things do I write about?**

Just be a friend. Talk about your interests, profession or hobbies. Encourage them to talk about themselves. Many prisoners haven't heard from anyone for years. They have dreams and interests that often go unheard.

### **How often should I write?**

At least once a month. We especially request that you remember to send a card for their birthday and the holidays. It takes approximately a week for them to receive mail, please keep this in mind when you are sending birthday/holiday cards.

### **Is there an age requirement to volunteer?**

Yes. All participants MUST be at least 18 years old.

### **Will I know the crime the prisoner committed?**

No. We feel strongly that this is their information to share if and when they feel comfortable. We also request you DO NOT look up their crime or google their name. We believe that no person should be defined by their worst mistakes and that *everyone needs someone* to remind them that God loves them and gives them value and purpose.

### **Once a match is made, what information does Cards for Prisoners give the prisoner about the volunteer?**

No information about the volunteer is ever given to the prisoner. This includes pictures of yourself and/or family members.

### **Should I use a pseudonym when writing to a prisoner?**

That depends on what makes you feel comfortable. Using a pseudonym does help to minimize whatever risk is involved in corresponding with a prisoner, but if you are comfortable with using your real name, that is fine too. We want this experience to be as positive as possible for both the volunteer and the prisoner. *We do request you do not use your last name.*

### **Do I have to give my home address?**

NO! We require that you use your first name only and our **P.O. Box 413 Grandville, MI, 49468.** When the prisoner responds, the letter will come to us first, we will review it for safety purposes, and then forward it on to you. When mailing your pen pal be sure to include his/her prison number on the cards as well as the envelope, or it will be returned.

**What rules should volunteers and prisoners follow?**

The prisoners are told our purpose and that we write for fellowship, friendship, encouragement, spiritual growth, and not for romantic relationships or financial gain.

**How many prisoners may I write to?**

As many as you can faithfully write to!

**My prisoner correspondent has written and asked for money. Should I send him a little money?**

This is a question we receive from time to time, as prisoners often make this request. The basic necessities are provided for prisoners. The purpose of being a pen pal to a prisoner is to provide a friend with whom to exchange letters and words of encouragement. Please, do not send any money or gifts. Cards and letters only!

**My pen pal told me that he/she is being released soon and needs help getting reestablished. What can I do?**

Once an inmate has their actual release date have them contact 70x7 Life Recovery which will help to support them with many resources, including employment.

**What type of items can I send in the mail to my pen pal?**

Cards and letters. Please do not send pictures of yourself or your family.

God Bless you and thank you for reaching out to these beloved inmates that need your love and support! May you be blessed in being a blessing!!



## **Safety Guidelines and Policies Agreement**

1. I will write my pen pal at least once a month for 2 years, including on his/her birthday and during the holidays.
2. I will remain anonymous to my pen pal and will not provide my last name or any personal information about myself or my family, including pictures.
3. I will post all my correspondence through the provided Cards for Prisoners P.O. Box.
4. I will send no financial or material goods to my pen pal, or to any members of his/her family.
5. I allow a person to read the letters that my pen pal sends to me before being mailed to my house to make sure the content is appropriate.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, do hereby confirm that I am at least 18 years old and agree to follow the above guidelines for writing to a prisoner. I confirm I have read and understand the guidelines above.

\_\_\_\_\_

**SIGNATURE and DATE**

\_\_\_\_\_

**E-Mail Address (for our use only)**

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**ADDRESS AND PHONE NUMBER**

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**CHURCH AFFILIATION**

Info about yourself (to help match you with a pen pal). A brief testimony is also helpful.