



PSEC Addiction & Recovery Taskforce Report

2023 PSEC Annual Fall Meeting

The mission of the PSEC Addiction & Recovery Taskforce is to share God's love with people suffering from the destructive disease of addiction and their affected family members and friends. Our goal is to decrease stigma surrounding addiction by broadening individual knowledge, awareness, and understanding while providing support, resources, and other vital information about this disease to ministers and congregations.

- **Prisoner Pen Pals:** The Taskforce has a vibrant Pen Pal program with inmates at Phoenix Maximum Security State Prison in Graterford. People held in our criminal justice system are children of God and worthy of our compassion. Pen pals provide hope of knowing that someone cares about their wellbeing.

This program offers a safe and effective way to communicate with an inmate electronically through a secure app, sanctioned by the Department of Corrections. No personal phone or address information is exchanged.

At present, there are 22 inmates in the program – 9 of which are in need of their own Pen Pal. If you have any interest in this beautiful ministry, please contact a member of the Task Force.

- **Warm Winter Clothing Drive:** The Taskforce is collecting all types of warm winter clothing – Gently used and clean...Sweaters, jackets, coats, hats, gloves, mittens, scarves, socks, and hand warmers. The need is for adult items only at this time. Clothing will be delivered to 'Operation in my Backyard', based in Philadelphia. If we collect more than they can take, we will disperse locally.

Collection points are set up at St. Peter's Tohickon in Perkasio and Zwingli in Souderton. The collection is going on until November 22nd. Contact Cheryl A. Rathbun at 267-261-5460 for more information.

- **Grandparents raising Grandchildren:** The Taskforce is focusing on a challenge that faces many in our communities. Penn State extension reports that nationally, 5.5 million children are living in households headed by grandparents and other relatives. Pennsylvania ranks seventh among the states in terms of number of children living in grandparent-headed households, with over 164,000 children fitting into this category.

There are many reasons grandparents take on this role with many of these children needing a home when their parents are involved in addictions. The financial, social, legal, and other issues these seniors face can be overwhelming but there is support available. The Task Force will provide information on where these families can find resources and support.

- **Community Relations:** Two of our members have volunteered with 'Operation in my Backyard', a grass-roots harm reduction organization based in Philadelphia, specifically in the area of Kensington. Volunteering to pass out food and drink to those addicted, homeless, or down-on-their-luck people, was an eye-opening experience that will have a personal impact for many months to come. We will continue to expand our community knowledge by meeting with resource personnel in various areas.



PSEC Addiction & Recovery Taskforce Report

2023 PSEC Annual Fall Meeting

(con)

- **Speaking Engagements Available:** Want to know more about how your church can help people with addiction or their families members? Are you curious about how God's love can be expressed in these situations? Let us help!
 - Personal experiences are shared, as well as learning about the spiritual, psychological, and physical aspects of the disease and recovery. Question and answer periods are provided.
 - Call us to schedule!
- **Web Page:** The Taskforce webpage contains useful information for Clergy, Family, Congregations, Addicts, and other caring individuals. This includes personal stories, 12 Step breakdowns, theological and personal essays, helpful videos, Narcan information and other links and resources. Member contact information is also available.
Website: <https://psec.org/missions-ministries/justice-witness/addiction-and-recovery-task-force/>
- **PSEC eNews:** Weekly articles are published in the eNews on various subjects throughout the year. Is there something on addiction and recovery you'd like to learn about? Tell us about it!
- **Taskforce Membership:** Do you have a heart for God's children, especially the ones that people call druggies, drunks, or just plain 'sinners'? Do you have one hour a month? Do we have the place for you!

You don't need to be addicted, or know someone addicted, to help God's children feel His love. We meet monthly on Zoom and welcome visitors at any time to learn about this vital mission.

If God has put this on your heart, please contact Cheryl A. Rathbun, Task Force Secretary, to receive the next Zoom invitation. Email: psec.ar.taskforce@gmail.com COME JOIN US!

Respectfully submitted by Rev. Dr. Deborah Rahn Clemens, Chair of the PSEC Addiction & Recovery Task Force.