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THE ALEPH INSTITUTE

North East Region

Annual Report
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**ALEPH
INSTITUTE**
No One Alone,
No One Forgotten.

PROGRAM AREA: PROGRAMS FOR JEWISH INMATES IN PRISON

Prison Visitations

Newly released statistics and figures for the Department of Justice, and by private foundations (i.e.: Pew Foundation) show a whopping 6.9 million people under the care of the prison, parole and probation in the United States. In 1980, this number 1.6 million people. Religious programming and community support remain the most effective method in reducing recidivism. Department of Justice and state prison systems have recognized these figures and have begun to work and open the doors to religious and community groups. They recognize that these groups better facilitate and offer more programs to inmates being released from prison. Despite the halt in the building of Federal prisons, we have seen an increase in the number of private prisons that the Federal Bureau of prisons are hiring bed spaces from. In Pennsylvania, the Secretary of Corrections announced the building in 2009 of three new prisons, two of which will be located in western PA.

Program Highlights:

- **Allegheny County Jail:** We now have four volunteers who visit the institution at least once a week, Pinchas Naiditch and Mordechai Rosenthal are two very dedicated volunteers who primarily cover the visits at the jail, in addition Rabbi Vogel or Fred Landay will enter in an emergency to help out. Allegheny County has 40,000 arrests every year, of which an estimated 500 hundred Jewish men and women are arrested. For the most part those arrested are released within 14 hours; it is only those with more serious issues that make it to the upper floors for an extended stay. Aleph is seeking additional volunteers to cover that institution. Of the 500 or more volunteers at the jail, only three are Jewish! There is a need for more Jewish volunteers. If you know of anyone, please have them contact our office.

- Over this past year, there were fifteen Jewish men who requested and were approved for Kosher. Five were Israelis who were immigration violators and were en route to be deported.

- One significant case this past year was that of a Jewish man from Stanton Heights who is mentally challenged. Aleph intervened with the courts because the case was progressing extremely slowly. Due to the dedication of the visiting Rabbis, this error was identified and the inmate was released shortly after Alephs intervention.

- Unfortunately, Aleph was called to intervene with the death of a Jewish inmate who was a long time recipient of the Aleph services. Mr. X suffered from a seizure while in the jail and died later that night in the hospital.

The county jail has a good core staff of volunteers and the inmates are regularly visited. This is especially important given the high turnover of Jewish inmates at the jail and the acute problems that those inmates face. They are usually straight off the street and face greater challenges than the inmates in other facilities. For more

information about programs at the Allegheny County Jail, please e-mail receptionist@alephne.org.

- **Westmoreland County Jail:** Two inmates received services during this year; their needs were met through Aleph intervention.

- **Bedford County Jail:** One Jewish inmate received services over the year. The chaplain at the institution is a long-time acquaintance of Rabbi Vogel and worked with him and the Aleph Institute to provide the necessary services.

- **State Prison at Cresson:** This institution continues to receive regular visits from *Rabbi Yossi Stein*, who provides religious counseling and guidance. Unfortunately, there are Jewish inmates who have been in the RHU (restrictive housing unit also known as ‘solitary confinement’) for six months or longer. Rabbi Stein continues to visit him and provide the necessary services despite the security and confinement concerns. The five Jewish inmates at this high security prison continue to receive Torah classes, individual counseling and religious materials for study. A few of the Jewish inmates at that facility are taking advantage of the correspondence courses provided by Aleph Institute (see later in the report more about the correspondence courses).

- **The Federal Prison in Loretto, PA:** Located 1.5 hours from Pittsburgh, the Aleph Institute has provided counseling and religious services at this prison for close to fifteen years. Rabbi Stein and Rabbi Yehoshua Teitelbaum provide programs and materials for both English- and Spanish-speaking inmates. Their dedication and commitment to the large Jewish population in the Federal prison is encouraging. The Rabbis are a fighting force for the religious needs of the Jewish inmates and have won the respect of the warden, staff and inmates alike. This facility currently has eight Jewish inmates in its population.

- **Prison at Fayette, PA:** Rabbi Stein, Rabbi Chaim Oster and Rabbi Ephraim Riesner visit this **prison** located one hour from Pittsburgh. The Aleph Institute has provided counseling and religious services at this prison for over a year. The Rabbis provide programs and materials for both English- and Spanish-speaking inmates. This institution is a high security institution. Despite the high security concerns, the Jewish inmates at that facility have been able to celebrate the Jewish holidays with the help of Aleph. We thank Rabbis Oster, Reisner and Stein for their dedication and hard work with regard to the inmates at Fayette.

- **SCI Pittsburgh, PA:** Located in the Manchester neighborhood of Pittsburgh it has been served by the Aleph Institute for over fifteen years. Rabbi Eli Seidman visits that institution regularly for Aleph, and for the holidays he was joined by Rabbi Yossi Rosenblum. We thank Rabbis Siedman and Rosenblum for the dedication and commitment to the Jewish inmates at SCI Pittsburgh.

- **The State prison at Somerset PA:** Located 1.5 hours from Pittsburgh, the Aleph Institute has provided counseling and religious services at this prison for six years. Rabbi Stein and Rabbi Avi Cohen provide regular programs and materials for both English- and Spanish-speaking inmates. Yisroel Brooker and Mr. Henteleff visited that institution during the holidays and intend to continue their holiday visits. We thank Rabbi Stein and Cohen for their dedication and commitment to making sure that these inmates are cared.
- **SCI Laurel Highlands, PA:** Located one hour away from Pittsburgh, the institution is visited by Rabbi Moshe Barber and Rabbi Stein. This institution is a geriatric facility catering to the needs of the elder prison population. Their needs differ dramatically from the needs of the other institutions. We thank Rabbis Barber and Stein for their dedication and commitment to ensuring that these inmates under difficult circumstance are cared for. Unfortunately, this year Aleph was called to organize the burial of an inmate at this institution and with the help of the Hebrew Burial Society was able to ensure a respectable burial for that inmate.
- **SCI Greene, PA:** Located one hour from Pittsburgh, this is a high level security institution with which Aleph has worked with the administration and the contract Rabbi for many years. In addition, Aleph's volunteer Rabbi Mendel Markel visits this institution on a regular basis. We thank Rabbi Markel for his dedication and commitment to working with the institution and for his patience in ensuring all the paperwork was done and not losing hope. The institution includes the housing facility for states death row inmates. This facility has specific needs; unfortunately, there are two Jewish inmates who are currently being housed at the institution with death sentences.
- **SCI Greensburg, PA:** Located one hour from Pittsburgh, this is a medium level security institution with which Aleph has worked with the administration and the contract Rabbi for many years. In addition, Aleph's volunteer Rabbi Psachyeh Lichtensiten and Daniel Fridzon visit this institution on a regular basis. We thank Rabbi Moshe Shollar too for the holiday's visits and the care and concern these show the inmates.
- **SCI Albion, PA:** Located one and a half hours from Pittsburgh, this is a medium level security institution with which Aleph has worked with the administration and found a contract Rabbi for the institution when it opened. In addition, Aleph's volunteer Rabbi Mendel Markel and Yerachmiel Wice visit this institution during the holidays. We thank Rabbi Markel and Mr. Wice for their dedication and commitment to working with the Jewish inmates.
- **SCI Houtzdale:** A state Institution which is 3 hours from Pittsburgh. It is served by Rabbi Yossi Stein. This institution has a larger Jewish population and the Rabbi has been effective in creating a great working relationship with the administration.

- **Moshanan Valley Correctional Center, PA:** Located in Phillipsburg, Pa, it is a three hour drive from Pittsburgh. It is a private prison which houses non US citizens which are going to be deported. This institution houses over fifteen Jewish inmates and is visited regularly by Professor Mitch Small and Rabbi Yossi Stein. The needs of the inmates who are facing deportation are great and we thank Mitch and Rabbi Stein for their dedicated work filling the needs of those inmates.
- **SCI Mercer, PA:** Located one hour from Pittsburgh, the Aleph Institute has provided counseling and religious services at this prison for close to fifteen years. Rabbi Stein, Rabbi Eisner, with Alan Goodkind and Lenny Plotkin have provided the institution with dedication and commitment. Many of the inmates at this institution are regularly released back to society. The volunteer's assistance in making sure the office is notified to be able to provide the necessary re-entry services is encouraging.
- **PA State Hospital in Warren:** *Rabbi S. Charitonow* of Buffalo continues to regularly visit the Jewish inmates at this institution.. There was unfortunately a 200% increase in the Jewish population at that institution. The Rabbi provided them with programs for the holidays. More on state hospitals below.
- **Federal Prison at McKean County in Bradford, PA:** With a large Jewish community at this prison, the visits are very necessary. Rabbi Stein inspects the food service at the institution and provides programs for the continuing Jewish education for inmates seeking continued study. It is now fifteen years that Aleph Institute has been providing services and programs in this facility.
- **Federal Prison in Elkton, OH:** Located 1.5 hours from Pittsburgh, this institution is visited regularly by Rabbi Mordechai Rosenthal. His dedication and commitment to serving the Jewish men and women incarcerated is exemplary and is a source of encouragement to all. The Rabbi continues to visit the institution, providing Jewish inmates with rabbinical counseling and guidance. He inspects and watches to ensure that kashrus at the facility common fare room is maintained for the many Jewish inmates who eat kosher food. Rabbi Rosenthal has now been given clearance to enter the prison compound at a ceremony in the institution. He may now conduct visits without an escort. This level of trust is a rarity in the Federal prisons systems for non employees.
- **Federal Prison at Morgantown, WV:** Located 1.5 hour drive from Pittsburgh, it is visited regularly by Rabbi Zalman Gurevitz. He visits weekly to encourage, teach, and guide the many Jewish inmates at that facility. The Rabbis dedication and concern for the inmates is warming. He spends many hours traveling, despite weather that is sometimes not so hospitable.
- **Belmont Correctional Institution, Ohio:** Now visited by Dr. Michael Steinberg, who has been serving a group of eight Jewish inmates for the past eight months. We welcome him and thank him for his decision to join the Aleph Institute group of volunteers, and for his commitment and dedication over the last few months.

- **Federal Correctional Institution in Gilmore, WV:** A new institution which opened a few years ago is in the process of being organized and we anticipate Rabbi Gurevitz to visit the institution on a regular basis.
- **SCI Cooks Forest, PA:** A new institution near Marionville being served by Rabbis Stein, Yitschok Gordon, Dovber Marcus and Yehudah Ringler. Their dedication and commitment to take care of the Jewish population at that institution is exemplary and a Jewish holiday does not pass without at least one visit.
- **SCI Smithfield, PA:** An institution which is located 3.5 hours from Pittsburgh. This institution has a Jewish population which had not been taken care of prior to Rabbi Stein's visits. This institution is now regularly visited by the Rabbi who has earned the respect and admiration of the staff and inmates. Unfortunately, the Rabbi was required to do a death notice at that institution to an inmate who lost a sibling. He was instrumental in working with the office to arrange and ensure the Jewish burial of an inmate from that institution in Philadelphia.
- **SCI Huntington:** An institution which is 3.5 hours from Pittsburgh. It is one of the state's highest security institutions and was without any outside visits for many years. Thanks to Rabbi Stein, the Jewish community gets a visit regularly. It is a very tough institution to work with but the Rabbi has been very successful with achieving wonders.
- **Camp Hill Prison:** Located in central PA, it is the classification center for all PA prisons and was the object of much publicity some fifteen years ago due to riots. Rabbi Elazar Green now visits that institution on a regular basis, bringing many necessary programs and providing religious counseling for the Jewish inmates. We thank Rabbi Green for finding the time despite his heavy work load to continue visiting the prisons.
- **Coal Township:** Visited regularly by Rabbi Tzvi Perelman, it is another institution which was not visited for years, but is now regularly visited and the needs of the Jewish inmates are being met.
- **NECCI:** A new private prison in North East Ohio which provides bed space for the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and immigration cases. The institution is visited by Rabbis Eytan Rosenthal and Rabbi Yosef Itkin. We thank them for their perseverance and energy in taking care of the Jewish men and women.
- **Hazelton Federal Prison:** Located in Hazelton, West Virginia, it is a new facility with many Jewish inmates. It is visited regularly by Rabbi Stein who gives the three facilities the care and dedication required
- **SCI Muncy:** A women's facility in the center of the state, which is visited regularly by Rabbi Tzvi Perelman of the Aleph Institute. It is another institution which was not

visited for years, but is now regularly visited and the needs of the Jewish inmates are being met.

- **SCI Cambridge Springs:** A women's facility which has a long time contract Rabbi who works with the Aleph Institute and receives materials and religious items from us. In addition, Mrs. Sharon Saul, Mrs. Taibke Hyman, Mrs. Amy Schwartz, and Mrs. Barber all visit this institution. The needs of the Jewish inmates at this facility are sometimes more challenging in a women's facility than a men's facility. We appreciate the many hours of dedication these women invest in making sure that the Jewish inmates at that facility are cared for.

- **SCI Chester:** This institution continues to be served by one of the Aleph Rabbis, *Rabbi E. D. Strasbourg*. He provides regular religious services to the Jewish inmates residing at that facility and has been overseeing the correspondence course for those inmates taking it.

- **SCI Waymart:** Located close to Scranton and is visited regularly by Rabbi Leibel Itkin, who has been visiting on a regular basis for over ten years now.

Juvenile detention

Over the past six month we have seen a rise in Jewish children in juvenile detention institutions in western pa, children in detention require a different style visitation and their needs and the needs of their families are unique. We have been meeting these challenges and are developing a system to better care for these individuals.

Program Highlights:

- **Shuman Center, PA:** located in the heart of Pittsburgh, Rabbi Vogel visited this institution for three children this year, all three of whom were transferred to different facilities after the first month or two, we setup a system with the chaplain and will be filling that position with volunteers to visit on a regular basis.

- **White Springs, PA:** located north of Erie Pa, Rabbi Moshe Tombosky visited the Jewish patients at the institution arranged for their Passover needs and continues to visit on a regular basis, the parents and staff have expressed gratitude for the Rabbis visits and time and concern he shows.

- **Auberlee Center – McKeesport, PA:** Rabbi Vogel visited the Jewish patients at the institution and led a Jewish holiday gathering speaking to the entire population at the facility, as they now have a presence of Jewish children regularly a system is being put in place for a volunteer Rabbi to be able to visit on a regular basis.

Aleph is dearly indebted to the achievements and accomplishments of our full time visiting Rabbi, who in addition to spending over forty hours a week on the road visiting the many institutions, Rabbi Yossi Stein also recruits and directs the many volunteers.

Aleph is constantly seeking individuals to visit the Federal state and local prisons. If you are interested or if you know of someone who may be interested, please do not hesitate to contact us, by contacting Rabbi Yossi Stein at ystein@alephne.org or by calling 412-421-0111 x222.

Torah Studies Program – Correspondence Course

Torah study programs are available to inmates with the help of staff chaplains or the education department at the respective prison. This program is conducted via mail and currently has over four hundred and fifty participants.

Program Highlights:

- Naama, a staff member at Aleph Institute, has succeeded at the challenge to get this program organized and on track. We are deeply indebted to her and thank her for her dedication and commitment to the programs and services. You may contact Naama at receptionist@alephne.org or at extension 100.*
- There are now eight courses offered with over 450 Jewish inmates who benefit from this program. Due to the lack of internet access for inmates – as the internet is considered a security concern – this program operates via the US mail. Participants receive books, making the program the more effective although costlier.*
- This past year, the program saw an increase of courses available. These courses were written especially for this program by Rabbi Yossi Schulman. Their dedication, effort, and commitment to Jewish education is admirable.*
- Aleph constantly sees an increase of the participants in this program. Inmates in isolated prisons are studying and using otherwise dead time productively, absorbing tools and guides toward becoming productive members of society.*

This program has received letters of approval and support from state correctional agencies, is lauded by the Rabbis that visit institutions across the region, and has proven to be a very popular and needed program. The costs to run this program are substantial, and we at Aleph Institute are always looking for sponsors for this program. If you would like to dedicate a course after a loved one or would like to honor someone, please contact Rabbi Vogel rabbivogel@alephne.org.

Chesed – Mentoring Program

Based on programs offered by religious organizations throughout the US, this program matches inmates with individual mentors who work with them to modify attitudes and prepare them for reentering society. The mentors, or sponsors, continue to work with ex-inmates providing moral support and assistance with their transition into society, ensuring they receive and retain employment and become productive members of the community.

Program Highlights:

- This program continues to offer one-on-one mentoring, providing solid mentors as sponsors for the inmates. Dedicated volunteers from across the region are currently involved with this program. Training for this program is provided and a support system for the mentor is in place. For more information, or to volunteer, please contact Aleph.

Books and Religious Articles

This program offers inmates and prisons religious books and ritual items i.e.: Tallis, Tefillin etc., at no cost to the institution or the inmate when no funds exist.

Program Highlights:

- This program provides religious items at no cost to destitute inmates. For the most part these items are donated by local synagogues and individuals. They are then distributed to the institutions and inmates who in turn are able to pray in a more meaningful way.

We are always looking for used but useful Tallisim, Tefillin, Siddurim, Chumashim and other Jewish books we can distribute. If you or someone you know has any gently used books or religious articles, please contact Aleph.

Grape Juice and Matzo Program

This program ensures that grape juice and matzo are available for Jewish inmates to celebrate Shabbos and Jewish holidays in Prison.

Program Highlights:

- Volunteers oversee and ensure that the participating prisons receive grape juice and matzo delivered in a timely and organized fashion. The program brings a sense of warmth and connection to the inmates at the many federal, state and local jails participating, especially when the Rabbi cannot be there due to Shabbos or holiday observance.

Lending Library

This program ensures that Jewish men and women incarcerated in the western PA area are able to borrow and use Jewish books – covering all topics and areas of interest – allowing them to make positive use out of their time incarcerated. Institutions can and will only have a small number of Jewish books, due to the size of the Jewish population, with this lending library the inmates have access to over five hundred volumes of Jewish related books.

Program Highlights:

- The visiting Rabbis / volunteers receive on a regular bases an updated catalog of books available for borrowing, the inmates review the list with the Aleph representative and upon the next visit take those books in, the books are left for two weeks and returned back to the library.

Reference Library

With the renovation of our new facility, we now offer the Aleph volunteers a reference library with a computer which has internet access for them to be able to use in preparation for their visit. The library has manuals and instructions for ministering to the men and women in prison, Federal, state and local prison policies as well as counseling books and volunteer help books. Both Libraries are overseen by Zalman Goldwasser who spends many hours a week organizing and preparing materials for the Rabbi to take in.

Program Highlights:

- As Aleph Institute is open every evening of the week from 6:00 – 9:00 PM, the Rabbis can and do come in to make use of the extensive library.
- The library also has a video library for the Rabbis to use and show to the inmates during their visit. These videos are a valuable resource for the education of the inmates allowing them to attend classes otherwise not available to them.

PROGRAM AREA: AFTERCARE

Individual Career Services

Volunteers counsel and assist newly released inmates seeking to re-enter the job market. Career counselors offer career assessment, counseling, job search assistance and help with writing and distributing resumes. A job bank with participating local businesses offers individuals jobs to help with re-entrance into society.

Program Highlights:

- Our receptionist also instructs those returning to the work force with resume writing tools, and basic computer training. The dedicated computer in the lobby is used for that training and allows those re-entering society to be able to search jobs, post resumes, establish a e-mail address and do other legal and miscellaneous research.

- Aleph continues to rely on the help of the many local businesses – specifically Fred Landay of the Appliance Warehouse and Boruch Hyman of Crown Antiques – to provide employment for those returning to society.
- Beginning in late summer, we plan on providing career counseling courses for those returning to society, which will include resume writing, basic introductions to computers and other computer programs.

Our “Career Development Department” is always seeking businesses willing to hire individuals who are re-entering society, and volunteers to provide program training. If you or someone you know is in a position to help, please contact Rabbi Vogel in the office or at rabbivogel@alephne.org.

Community Integration

Many inmates leave prison broken and in despair. Their previous family has fallen apart, and they are left with emotional issues to address.

Program Highlights:

- Isabel Bloom, MSW of the Jewish Children and Family Services works with our ex-inmates, offering them emotional support and assistance in obtaining government support. She works with them upon their release and continues with them as they adjust to their new lives.
- The Jewish Community Center continues to work with us, providing their services at little or no cost to ex-inmates who are rebuilding their lives.
- The Jewish Family Assistance Fund has worked with us providing assistance for newly released inmates so they can buy the minimum of necessities upon re-entry to society.
- The Hebrew Free Loan Association has provided loans for those exiting the prisons, helping them get re-established in society.
- The Hebrew Free Loan Association once again sponsored the Chanukah Gelt Program providing gifts for the children of Jewish inmates who are themselves not able to take care of such an important task. We thank Rabbi Eli Seidman for his dedication and commitment to making sure this program is organized and runs smoothly. You may contact Rabbi Seidman at eseidman@alephne.org.

Hotline

Former inmates in a bind, families with children in trouble, spouses on the edge, all are in a quandary. There is a hotline 24/6.

Program Highlights:

- The Aleph Institute provides a Hotline for families and individuals in trouble and in need. In the past six months, many emergency calls have been received after office hours. A Rabbi with knowledge of the criminal system monitors this phone line, offering guidance and his extensive knowledge of what is another culture and society. In this way he is able to help and direct an otherwise bewildered family member.

Aleph House

Aleph House provides emergency housing for individuals in the community who are homeless, and transitional housing for those leaving prison.

Program Highlights:

- Over 90 percent of those leaving prison are homeless. The “Aleph House” is a short-term resource providing housing for up to ninety days. This allows the individual to get back on his feet. In the past year we have provided housing for five ex-inmates and one family.
- Currently we are still renting various apartments across the city, with special thanks to the various landlords who rent to us at nominal cost. This service enables the inmate to begin life anew.

Shabbos and Holiday Programs

This program provides for those reentering society to be “adopted” by a family for Shabbos and holiday celebrations in a warm and friendly family environment. It also ensures that services and support will be available to inmates and their families for Shabbos and holidays.

Program Highlights:

- As the majority of inmates are isolated and without family or loved ones to spend time with, this program offers family-style support. Currently this program hosts three individuals.
- For the High Holidays, various prisons that do not receive regular rabbinical visitation were visited and provided with necessities for the holidays.

PROGRAM AREA: FAMILY SUPPORT

Government statistics report that every inmate incarcerated affects nine additional people. Family members are among the most affected. The children are especially hard hit. What do they tell their friends? Their pain and suffering is enormous.

Program Highlights:

- High Holiday needs were distributed to many families of inmates, allowing them the opportunity to observe the holiday despite their hardships and loneliness. The Aleph Institute acknowledges the dire consequences that families of inmates face and works with the spouses and children to help them through their difficult hour.
- Holiday clothes and arrangements for holiday meals were made for the families of inmates.
- Support groups, usually with individual families, are conducted by Aleph Rabbis.

PROGRAM AREA: IMMIGRATION PROBLEMS

Aleph continues to provide assistance for Jewish inmates of foreign descent who, due to their “stateless” classification, have become “lifers” in the prison system. Prior to 9/11 the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) released “lifers” who were incarcerated for minor non-violent charges to Aleph custody; this is no longer true. Today Aleph works with the INS to seek a solution to this growing problem.

Program Highlights:

- Hundreds Israeli citizens were arrested once again in the holiday-season crackdown at malls across the North East were re-united with their families in Israel. Aleph worked with authorities to rush their deportations.
- Aleph provides religious, emotional and family support to others who are stateless and whose case is awaiting determination.
- Aleph works with the Federal Immigration and Naturalization Services to help expedite the relocation of ex-inmates to Israel, thus enabling them to be reunited with their families. Without Aleph’s efforts, some of these cases would drag on for years.

PROGRAM AREA: GUARDIANSHIP

With the aging of the prison population there will be an increase of aging Jewish inmates who pose no threat to society and who will be released to the Jewish community. Some of these individuals may be able to function independently, while others may need nursing or other similar care.

Program Highlights:

- The current rented “Aleph Houses” provisions are being made to accommodate those individuals who are able to lead a somewhat independent life. This house

can accommodate them on a temporary basis until permanent housing is available.

- The Jewish Association of Aging has agreed to work with Aleph to provide services for inmates with terminal illnesses, affording them the respect and care we as a community provide to all our brethren.

OTHER NEWS: ADVOCACY

- The Honorable Dan Frankel and Senator Jay Costa continue to work with the Aleph Institute to encourage the Department of Corrections to provide religious rights to Jewish inmates as it does to members of other faiths. The above individuals were recently successful in securing funding for the many programs we provide the community here at Aleph.
- In response to the increasing number of Jewish inmates and the need for more visits, volunteers and staff have also grown.
- Aleph joined other religious and humanitarian groups at a town hall forum in the capital asking for more cooperation and collaboration in working with the Justice system to offer more and better alternatives to incarceration.

PROGRAM AREA: DOROTHY'S FRIENDS

With the discovery of a Jewish woman who had spent over seventy years in a state institution without a visit, a program was launched to offer visitation in every state hospital and nursing home where there are Jewish patients. This program is now being organized by Rabbi Eli Seidman and Mrs. Amy Schwartz and we thank her for her time, dedication and commitment to this program.

Program Highlights:

- After recruiting many dedicated volunteers, this program provides visits for those who otherwise would be forgotten. Beginning with the holiday of Purim volunteers will be traveling to the local state hospital to bring the warmth of the holiday to these forgotten members of the community. Those visiting will have undergone a training exercise as required by the state.
- Preparations are underway for more holiday and visits and supplies to these facilities.
- **State Hospitals and group homes PA:** There are over forty state hospitals and state funded group homes in PA; Aleph has been charged by the state to provide religious programming for each of these institutions. Rabbi Efraim Reisner has accepted the task of implementing the contract across the state. It is a new,

interesting and hopefully lucrative challenge for the Aleph Institute. We appreciated the time and dedication the Rabbi spends on developing this program.

If you are interested or you know someone who is available to donate time to this important project, please don't hesitate to call the Aleph office or write aschwartz@alephne.org or to contact Rabbi Reisner please call extension 116 or ereisner@alephne.org.

SUPPORT PROGRAMS

With the hundreds of Jewish men and women being released to the local area from the many prisons, more has to be done to provide the necessary resources so they do not return to prison. One area needed is support groups, both the anonymous series (AA, NA etc.) and the traditional support groups led by professionals. To that point, the center was made available for many of the groups to meet, we do not charge (they pay symbolic fees).

Program Highlights:

- Rabbi Moishe Mayir Vogel leads the family support groups which meets both regularly and for emergency family counseling, re-entry counseling and coaching.
- Rabbi Chaim Naiditch has been works individually with those returning to society providing religious counseling and direction to the many.
- Dr. Bruce Rabin has been leading a 'stress management group' weekly, which has had an excellent attendance.
- Alcoholics Anonymous, Gamblers Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous are just some of the groups that meet here regularly. We thank Naama Vysotsky and Yehudah Miller for being here and overseeing the running of these meetings on a regular basis.

Please contact our office for more information about these and other meetings.