

JANETTE L. STEWART, WILLIAMSPORT, PA.
Supporting the Muncy Group

For about a year now, I have been conducting monthly discussion meetings at the State Correctional Institution at Muncy Women's Prison. I am the Williamsport District leader in Pennsylvania. In the Muncy Group, we chant to my small, portable Gohonzon, study and share experiences. This is a first at the Muncy Prison.

The prison chaplain, Joanne Torma-Kelly, through her belief that all religions should be properly represented in the prison community, has enabled the SGI-USA to hold weekly meetings. Darlene Riffert, an inmate for 12 years, has been taking responsibility for the propagation and growth of Nichiren Daishonin's Buddhism here without ever receiving the Gohonzon. The chaplain felt it would be beneficial to connect this group with some sort of guidance and thus opened her heart and the facility to me as a representative in faith.

Williamsport District has 25 members and is geographically isolated from any community center and most other members. (We are about four hours away from the nearest community center.)

It has been my pleasure and tremendous fortune to have this opportunity to encourage people to chant — especially women who, for one reason or another, have not been able to function productively in society. I leave these prison discussion meetings with new vitality, inspired by the sincerity and freshness of women who have discovered that they truly can change their incredibly deep karma.

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