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UNIVERSITY of



DAYTON

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Contact: Pamela Gregg
gregg@udayton.edu

NEWS RELEASE

UD STUDENTS HONORED FOR GOING TO JAIL

DAYTON, Ohio — Going to jail isn't usually a venerable act. But a group of University of Dayton students who go to jail once a week have been recognized for their efforts with a JC Penney Golden Rule award for volunteer service.

Known as PAGES (Prison Action Group for Education and Service), 20 to 30 students volunteer their time each week to tutor inmates in basic literacy skills. The student tutors provide one-on-one and group instruction in math, English and computer skills.

Although the program runs primarily during UD's academic year, at least five students will continue to volunteer throughout the summer.

According to Natasha Baker of the Project READ Coalition — which cosponsors PAGES with the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office literacy program — the need for the students' help is significant. "According to national statistics, 60 percent of adult inmates are illiterate," Baker said. "PAGES provides an invaluable resource for inmates who want to learn how to read or get their GED."

Anne Banerjee, literacy coordinator for the Sheriff's Office, said she "can't say enough" about the students and the 3-year-old enterprise. "PAGES is just a fantastic program," she said. "It's been a wonderful partnership between the University and the community. It gives the students the opportunity not only to give, but to get back through their volunteering, and the inmates are grateful for the students' help."

Nick Cardilino, coordinator of UD's campus ministry community outreach program, said the students who volunteer their time and energies from already busy schedules are "incredible. They do this out of the goodness and kindness of their hearts, but they also have a

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OFFICE OF PUBLIC RELATIONS
300 College Park Dayton, Ohio 45469-1679
(937) 229-3241 (937) 229-3063 Fax
www.udayton.edu

strong sense of justice. They really want to make a significant difference in the inmates' lives, and they know that education is really the way for that positive change to occur."

The student group was selected for the award from a field of 56 nominees in the regional JC Penney program, sponsored by the Center for Nonprofit Resources of Ohio and the JC Penney stores in the Dayton and Fairfield Commons malls. The group's nomination has been forwarded for consideration in the national Golden Rule award competition.

In addition, JC Penney made a \$1,000 donation on behalf of PAGES to the Montgomery County Sheriff's Office literacy program.

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For media interviews, call **Nick Cardilino** at (937) 229-2524; **Shauna Whalen**, student president of PAGES, at (606) 331-6082; and **Anne Banerjee** at (937) 224-3881.