

Clark, Sheila and MacCreigh, Erica. *Library Services to the Incarcerated: Applying the Public Library Model in Correctional Facility Libraries*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2006. 246 p., pbk. \$40.00. (ISBN: 1-59158-290-3)

Approximately 2.38 million Americans are being held in either federal or state prisons. Nationally the prison inmate population grew by 2.6 percent between 1995 and 2005. In Colorado, during this same period, the inmate population increased by 6.8 percent. Many Coloradans see reducing recidivism as a key factor in controlling the size of the prison population and government spending, since ninety to ninety-five percent of prisoners will be released and one of every two ex-convicts will return to prison within three years. Prison libraries are a key component in the fight to reduce recidivism because they provide the opportunity for education and change. Sheila Clark and Erica MacCreigh's book, Library Services to the Incarcerated: Applying the Public Library Model in Correctional Facility Libraries, should be of interest not only to prison librarians, but also to public librarians who deal with ex-offenders and with the population as a whole since this book deals with issues that have broader public implications. In addition, the book is truly entertaining, informational, and inspirational as it shows how prison librarians honor ALA's highest ideals while abiding by the correctional facility rules. If prison librarians can use humor, diplomacy and common sense to provide professional and ethical service, surely other librarians can apply these same lessons to less daunting environments.

MacCreigh and Clark explain that most prisoners are grateful customers. The authors include many straight-forward, yet poignant and funny anecdotes that explain the challenges and rewards of dealing with the residents and staff of prisons. For example, here is a quote from the book's sexual harassment section: "Most librarians are women. Most residents and employees of correctional facilities are man. And many of those men have been locked up for a long time or work shift hours that preclude a normal social life. Any questions?" The advice that follows about sexual harassment is equally straightforward. Do not tolerate it and draw the line.

The descriptive nature of the book makes it a wonderful resource for anyone considering working in a prison. Since many prison librarians deal with all aspects of librarianship, the book also covers many of the logistics of running any special library, including facilities, equipment, technology, collection development, service programming, human resources, budgeting and financing, and advocacy. Because of the comprehensive nature of the book, library schools may wish to consider including this in introductory classes regarding the information user or the information environment. While working with the incarcerated does seem challenging, the practical, down-to-earth tone of the book does successfully sell this career path to those who desire an interesting and varied work day.

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