



Serving Jackson, Macon, and Swain Counties, NC

January 15, 2015

Awards Sub-Committee of the Faculty Scholarship Advisory Committee
Western Carolina University
Cullowhee, NC 28723

This letter is to confirm the ongoing support of Fontana Regional Library system for the Western North Carolina Jail Library Project. This project supports our long range plan goals of creating lifelong learners, assisting with job training and employment, and increasing public awareness of library services through local community partnerships. Reaching underserved populations requires that we expand library services beyond our physical locations, and the Jail Library Project has provided us with that opportunity.

In order to meet the specific information needs of the inmate population, we must provide a more robust book collection and ensure its long term viability. Additional funds are needed for this kind of targeted collection development, and identifying those funds is challenging. A grant to support the research of appropriate funding sources, and obtaining those funds would allow the continued growth of this service.

We will to continue to work with Jill Ellern at WCU, the Jackson County Detention Center, the Macon County Detention Center, and other organizations that may benefit from this partnership. Establishing basic collections, and convenient access to them, has had a positive impact on both the inmates and the personnel in the sheriff's departments. One inmate, after being released, visited her local library and expressed her appreciation for the materials available to her during the time she was awaiting trial. A Lieutenant at one of the detention centers commented that the library materials could help keep inmates connected to their community and the outside world, and that he hoped that would make the transition back to the community easier for them. The amount of positive feedback and support we have received from our community has been encouraging.

We look forward to continuing our work serving the information needs of inmates in western North Carolina.

Sincerely,

Karen L. Wallace, Director

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