

Hope Bag

RYM groups are invited to take part in a **Hope Bag** offering. This is an opportunity for your church to participate with your youth in the mission immersion experience as you collect needed items for those living on the margins. This year, the offering will go to: **Interfaith Prison Ministry for Women (IPMW)**, a nonprofit organization with a mission to build bridges of hope for women in prison before and after release through chaplaincy services, transitional programs, reentry support and community engagement.

Women are the fastest-growing segment of the prison population. Over 95% of those currently incarcerated will be released one day. They have paid their debt to society and can become successful, productive citizens, but far too often they face significant barriers to obtaining jobs, housing and social services. As a result, almost 30% of them return to prison within three years; even more return over time.

At Interfaith Prison Ministry for Women (IPMW), their goal is to interrupt cycles of poverty, addiction, and violence by resourcing women mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and physically both before and after release. They are unique in their holistic approach - addressing the mental, emotional, spiritual and physical issues both before and after release from prison.

Even in the best of circumstances, transitioning back into society after prison is challenging. Many women exit prison feeling apprehensive because of minimal access to support systems or tangible resources. An act as small as receiving a Hope Bag – reentry bags that are filled with items intended to support a woman's first days and weeks post-release so that they can focus on rebuilding their lives – communicates that they are truly cared for and that we are rooting for their success. Through the generous support of faith-based and business community partners, the Hope Bags provide an array of toiletries, gift cards and other self-care items along with referrals to community resources and services to help secure employment, housing, transportation, mental health treatment, addiction and recovery services.

Directions: Share the above information with your church and then ask if they would help collect the following items. Please make sure they are NEW. And if possible to collect regular sized items rather than hotel sized. Please place all items in a box/container. Label the box, "RYM Hope Bags" and bring with you when you come this summer to RYM!

Hope Bag Items Needed:

Blankets
Socks
Toothpaste
Toothbrush
Lotion
*Shower Gel/Body Wash
*Deodorant
Shampoo
Conditioner
Daily Planners
Journals
Pens
\$25 Restaurant Gift Cards
\$25 Store Gift Cards
Encouraging Notes/Greeting Cards

*Most needed items