

Cooman, Kevin

From: PMUNY ORG <joycemcandrew@gmail.com>
Sent: Sunday, September 11, 2022 3:14 PM
To: Cooman, Kevin
Cc: Ray Buchanan
Subject: Re: Inter-Religious Consideration
Attachments: PMUNY Issue - August 2022 (Scope of ministry).docx

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.
Hello Kevin,

THANK YOU for the time you have spent thus far on my request.
I appreciate the information shared with me in your attachment re: EMP Bylaws and Certificate of Incorporation.
Your email prompted some thoughts.....

I am thinking about the fact that typically the Prison Chaplain invites incarcerated individuals to participate in each of our prison/jail programs i.e. Residents Encounter Christ, Fully Alive and Houses of Healing. Most often those incarcerated individuals are Christian but not always. Historically our programs have served to enrich the incarcerated individual's faith life. Participation in our programs has also at times served as a catalyst for some individuals to participate in and officially join ("convert") a Christian faith community within the prison for the first time. On a personal note....I typically view myself as a "bridge builder" and a sincere believer that all human beings are Children of God. I am interested in being true to our founding principles and acting as a peace ambassador, especially at this time in history when there is such division and polarization locally, nationally and globally.

Again Kevin, I very much appreciate the time and effort extended by you and other EMP Directors on this issue. THANK YOU.
I look forward to learning the results of your discussions.

Blessings To One And All,

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On Sep 11, 2022, at 12:52 PM, Cooman, Kevin <kcooman@mccmlaw.com> wrote:

Good afternoon Joyce - We have not forgotten the questions that you posed about the HOH program, and the issues that it presents for PMUNY, and in turn for EMP. I have pondered this,

done some research, and will seek the sense of the EMP Board at tomorrow night's quarterly board meeting. I originally thought it might be a non-board matter, but I think the implications are significant enough that the entire board should be aware.

My review of our EMP organization documents leads me to the conclusion that an "inter-faith" emphasis would be outside the scope of EMP's mission and purpose. My personal view is therefore that EMP would not want to see PMUNY as one of its supporting ministries broadening its public website emphasis to include "inter-faith", since that would be a direct reflection on EMP itself. That will be my recommendation to the Board for their consideration. What is unclear to me (and hence my looking to the view of the board collectively) is what this means in practical terms for PMUNY's sponsorship or involvement in the facilitating of the HOH program at Attica.

I will lay this out for the Board tomorrow evening, and get back to you with whatever direction we have. I've attached for your information the written presentation on this issue that I will be sharing with the Board for their consideration today, and discussion tomorrow night.

Kevin

Kevin S. Cooman, *Partner*

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----- Forwarded message -----

From: PMUNY ORG <joycemcandrew@gmail.com>

Date: Aug 2 2022, 4:35 pm

Subject: Inter-Religious Consideration

To: Kevin Cooman <kcooman@mccmlaw.com>

Cc: Ray Buchanan <buchananray39@hotmail.com>

[EXTERNAL EMAIL] DO NOT CLICK links or attachments unless you recognize the sender and know the content is safe.

Hi Kevin,

As per our phone conversation on Friday afternoon July 29th I am writing to share some information and seek your guidance.

Recently PMUNY was asked to facilitate the Houses of Healing (HOH) program inside Attica Correctional Facility.

Together with the Coordinating Chaplain at Attica, we submitted a program proposal to the Department of Corrections and Community Services (DOCCS) for HOH. We are awaiting DOCCS approval of the proposal. Once approved, PMUNY hopes to begin a 2 hour-13 week program beginning September 2022. One of the individuals applying to serve on our team of volunteers is a Jewish Rabbi. She is talented, compassionate and eager to begin her volunteer service inside a correctional facility.

To my knowledge this is the first time a potential prison ministry volunteer is not part of an Christian faith community. Given PMUNY's relationship with EMP I am seeking your guidance.

PMUNY's website specially states that we "enable Christian volunteers to minister to incarcerated individuals and share Jesus' message of love, mercy, healing, forgiveness and reconciliation".

The REC program is historically a Christian program. The HOH program is not affiliated nor does it encourage any organized religion. HOH encourages each participant to develop a spiritual path most meaningful to them.

HOH is definitely a spiritual program however it is not a religious program from the standpoint of endorsing or encouraging any organized religion. Christians, Jews, Muslims, Agnostics, Atheists etc....all are welcome.

Given the Jewish Rabbi's recent interest in serving on the Attica HOH team...

Given PMUNY's Vision statement and Christian emphasis...

Given the term "ecumenical" implies Christian and HOH is an "inter-faith" program not "ecumenical"...

I suggested we look at our website from an "inter-faith" perspective vs. "ecumenical" and consider making some edits.

My suggestion raised concern from some of our Leadership Team members.

Thus, all of us on the PMUNY Leadership Team would like you to weigh in.

Will you please share your comments, suggestions or concerns given our Leadership Team's recent discussion?

We look forward to your perspective.

THANK YOU Kevin!

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