

## **PLUS Program Receives National Award**

Indianapolis, Indiana (August 28, 2009) – During the recent American Correctional Association (ACA) conference in Nashville, Tennessee, the Indiana Department of Correction (IDOC) received an award for its faith and character-based program Purposeful Living Units Serve (PLUS).

PLUS received the 2009 American Correctional Chaplains' Association (ACCA) Chaplaincy Offender Program Award. PLUS is a 16-month faith and character-based housing program that provides offenders with an opportunity to explore and choose alternatives to criminal thinking and behavior through an emphasis on spiritual, moral and character development, life-skills training, and intentional preparation for living as law abiding citizens who contribute to the well-being of their community. The curriculum is delivered by a combination of staff and volunteers, and there is a mentor component to assist in the offender's re-entry.

The program, which began in June 2005, is now offered at 18 different IDOC facilities and has a current enrollment of over 1,300 participants. The recidivism rate for PLUS graduates (13.78%) is significantly lower than the overall recidivism rate for Indiana (37%), which indicates that this program is successfully addressing a number of the risk factors that prisoners face upon re-entry into the community.

The ACCA established the Chaplaincy Offender Program award to recognize creative, effective, and outcome-based chaplaincy programs. The program must have a clear purpose or mission, have specific goals or outcomes, and have operated at least three years to be eligible for the award.



Fr. Tony Bruno, ACCA President (far left), presents IDOC Director of Religious Services Dr. Stephen Hall (middle) with the 2009 ACCA Chaplaincy Offender Program Award. Chaplain Joe Huff, PLUS Chaplain at Correctional Industrial Facility, and Major Dale Hale, ACCA Vice President, are pictured to the right. Photo was taken by Paul J. Hughes Photography.

“The PLUS program is a tremendous re-entry initiative, and I am thrilled that it has received national recognition,” said IDOC Commissioner Edwin G. Buss. “Not only do PLUS participants give back to their communities in a variety of ways, but they learn to be better citizens upon their release from prison.”

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### **Media Contact:**

Douglas S. Garrison  
Chief Communications Officer  
(317) 232-5780  
[dsgarrison@idoc.in.gov](mailto:dsgarrison@idoc.in.gov)