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For several years there has been an increasing awareness of the many difficulties faced by those leaving prison, particularly with trying to establish a normal life in a society that lacks understanding of their needs. Our justice view is one of “Do the crime and pay the time!” but upon release nothing is further from the truth – when does a released man cease to become a “prisoner” within society?

The vital key to successful reintegration is community involvement and support. However the community, while willing to assist, is often uncertain how to proceed and yet still maintain community safety.

The Target Communities Project has been designed to develop and implement a process, with supporting materials, to enable church and wider communities to be trained to accept, coach, encourage and hold accountable released prisoners. This includes supporting their families in a safe and sustainable way and bringing them all into fruitful community interaction.

It is envisaged that each released man or woman will gain a “circle of support” from within a trained community who will work with them to make the adjustments necessary to gain a meaningful life.

A Target Community (whanaungatanga) is one that is a “prepared” community with the heart to serve both those in prison and those being released from prison. This involves incorporating their families into the community with a view to both providing support and protection during their growth and with the goal of restoring them into full wider community participation.

**The meaning of whanaungatanga in NZ today includes: a process of getting to know each other (whakawhanaungatanga); the foundation of a selection interview (whanau interviews); the camaraderie between fellow rugby players; social community; the ‘glue’ that connects people to each other; or the essential component that makes a programme or intervention operate.**