

# Volunteers Gain as Well as Give

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is another in a series of articles by volunteers of Volunteer Service in which they describe their experiences. Bob Berg has been volunteer coordinator of Friends in Contact since July. He now is returning to UCSC and says his experiences with the jail visitation program has motivated him to become an attorney.

The small amount of spare time I have, I certainly do not want to waste. I have enjoyed spending a lot of this time working with Friends in Contact. I have learned a lot from interacting with the volunteers, prisoners and jail staff at the county jail and I have had some high times and laughs.

I have been asked to do everything from finding a girl friend and arranging a marriage in jail to cashing checks and checking on lost cars and stolen property. The prisoners have little opportunity to use the telephone so we often contact friends, family or attorneys for them.

One inmate was afraid he'd be evicted from his apartment while in jail so asked me to go over and see the landlady, pay his rent and assure her he'd be back. Many of the prisoners have commented on how much they appreciate our coming once or twice a week to rap or arrange to do favors for them on the outside.

The present jail facilities are in-

credibly inadequate for the number of prisoners in terms of space and opportunity for physical exercise and fresh air. We do seem to provide a real and much needed service in giving them a break from the monotony and sometimes making possible enjoyment of sunshine on the roof.

The jail staff is usually very cooperative so I know our presence is appreciated. We try to joke and talk to make their jobs a little more pleasant too.

With my school schedule I won't be able to go into the jail as often as I have been, and we do need more volunteers, particularly men to visit the male inmates. We always go in pairs with visits to the men two evenings a week and to the women two afternoons a week.

I believe this program has been beneficial to me and is of service to the community. I find significance in the experience of unity with inmates. Their problems aren't so different from ours on the "outside".

We have inservice training for volunteers and we're currently studying Transactional Analysis to help us understand why people react the way they do. The next session is Monday at 7:30 p.m. at the Volunteer Service office, 1105 Emeline. For more information call 423-0554.