



# EASTERN STATE PENITENTIARY

America's Most Historic Prison

*Thank you for another incredible year!*  
*Exciting new projects are on the horizon.*

Dear Friend:

Important conversations about criminal justice reform are happening here, thanks to you. **In 2018, we welcomed more than 276,000 people into our historic cellblocks**, visitors from around the world and from our own backyard. Our staff interacted with nearly 30,000 students, interpreting Eastern State's history, but also encouraging them to ponder important questions such as, "How do identities like race, class, and gender affect our interaction with the criminal justice system?"

Such complicated topics are sometimes best illuminated by the deeply personal and emotional power of art. **We welcomed three new site-specific artist installations in 2018** including *Photo Requests from Solitary* – a project that invites people held in long-term isolation in U.S. prisons to request a photograph of something meaningful to them and then finds artists to create those images.



In spring 2019, we will unveil another slate of three new artist installations – pieces that engage with the history of the site and the complexities of the criminal justice system today. **However, perhaps our most ambitious art-related venture to date will debut in mid-August 2019.** *Hidden Lives Illuminated* will amplify the voices of currently-incarcerated people beyond prison walls. We will project original animated films, created by our students in state and county prisons, onto the façade of Eastern State every night for a month.

As well as working with individuals currently living in prisons, we also continue our work with people who were recently incarcerated. **This year saw a continuation of the Returning Citizens Tour Guide Project.** Three formerly-incarcerated staff members led visitors on guided tours this year. These tours help break down stereotypes surrounding the experience of serving a prison sentence, particularly for those among us who have never experienced incarceration firsthand.



Of course, in addition to fostering dialogue about contemporary issues, interpreting the penitentiary's past remains central to what we do. **A new *Hands-On History* tour invites visitors to explore the Officer's Mess.** This guided tour provides a first-hand look at the area where people who worked at Eastern State once gathered to eat, rest, and socialize.

None of this would have been possible without your support. In 2018, the number of donors to Eastern State increased by 51%. Together, we can make 2019 another landmark year.

**In late 2019, we anticipate breaking ground on the preliminary phase of our visitor center project.** This early work will literally lay the foundation for a state-of-the-art visitor center, which will be completed in stages as funding is secured.

The space will provide visitors from across the globe with crucial amenities and serve as a venue to host discussions with national thought leaders and policy makers. **Your continued support is vital to bringing this exciting project to fruition.** We look forward to sharing this journey with you this year and beyond.



Thank you for making the work we do possible.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signature of Sara Jane (Sally) Elk.

Sara Jane (Sally) Elk  
President and CEO