



# Precious Blood

## *Ministry of Reconciliation*

Precious Blood Ministry of Reconciliation (PBMR) is a nonprofit restorative justice hub, located in the “Back of the Yards” neighborhood in Chicago. Sharing in Christ’s mission of reconciliation, they work as agents of reconciliation and healing with those in the community and the Church who have been impacted by violence and conflict. Their ministries reach out to the victim, the wrongdoer, and the community to create a safe space where healing can begin and where people can find the support and encouragement they need to begin reconciliation.

### **YOUTH**

Kids are a constant at PBMR. You’ll find them rummaging through the refrigerator looking for something to eat, using the small weight room trying to build muscles, working in the garden, or simply sweeping floors or mopping halls.

The PBMR “Center” is a safe place where they feel they belong, a place where no one judges them. At the Center they can get help with schoolwork or finding a job; some work part time just to feed and clothe themselves.

You often find the youth sitting in circle sharing their pain and discovering that they are not alone. They push against negative stereotypes and labels that seem to be too often depicted in the media. They sit with youth from other communities and work to stop violence or to better the schools. They work against the “schoolhouse-to-jailhouse pipeline” and offer alternatives to incarceration.

The youth are the very core of life at the “Center”.

### **FAMILIES**

PBMR recognizes that the women, especially the mothers, in the community face unsurmountable obstacles as they strive each day to raise their families and offer their children the best. They are invited into the PBMR family, and are offered a safe place to tell their stories of loneliness, fear and lack of resources. PBMR is present to each and offer one-on-one support, monthly group brunch and circle, job training, and opportunities to further their education while also providing for some of their basic needs. They are invited into the Peace Garden and accompanied them as they walk the Peace Labyrinth or sit near the Peace Fountain. They also offer Family Circles to heal hurts and help restore and strengthen family relationships.

## **DETENTION**

“I was in prison and you visited me” (Matthew 25) is a clear mandate from Matthew’s gospel. It is at the core of PBMR’s ministry – to build relationships and connections with those incarcerated. So often the relationship begins at the detention center. In that environment, a level of trust is built that enables the continuation of that journey when the detainees are released back into the community.

It is said that the “heavy lifting” is the work in the community, but the Detention Center is often where it begins.

25 volunteers go into the Cook County Juvenile Detention Center several times a week. It is a ministry of presence: sitting and listening one-to-one or in a drumming circle; standing beside them in court; and reaching out to their families; being there for them when they are released or go on to prison.

## **ART ON 51ST**

The Arts enable a person impacted by trauma to tell their story. Too often, the pain or hurt of a young person stays buried deep inside where it festers. Through PBMR’s art program, they are invited to share in whatever way they can: drawing or painting, music or poetry, theater or film.

Because it has become so central to how we tell our story – inside the detention center or jail and in the community – PBMR has opened an art gallery. There the stories are shared, music is created, paintings and drawings are displayed. In the back rooms, t-shirts are screened and young people sit at easels creating their own “masterpieces”.

Each month they have a RJ Cafe in which the community and stakeholders can gather and work to build stronger relationships and a stronger community.

## **RADICAL HOSPITALITY**

PBMR believes in restoring dignity and worth by providing radical hospitality, hope, and healing. One visit there and you can’t help but feel welcomed and included and inspired to stay connected with them. They are an oasis of hope at a time and in a place where hope can otherwise be very hard to find.