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Roman Catholic Diocese of Charleston and its charitable outreach play a role in the state's low recidivism rate

CHARLESTON, SC — During his press conference on July 13, Gov. Henry McMaster recognized Nikki Grimball of [Restorative Justice Ministries](#) for the program's role in South Carolina being ranked lowest in the country for recidivism. The program is part of Catholic Charities of South Carolina.

“The issues of incarceration and recidivism require collective work...it takes a village. Having the opportunity to present what we do through the Restorative Justice Ministries was an honor, but it also serves as a reminder that there is so much more to be done,” said Grimball.

Recidivism is the tendency of a convicted person to repeat or re-offend after serving his or her sentence. [A recent study conducted by the Virginia Department of Corrections](#) shows the three-year recidivism rate in South Carolina is now 21.9%. This is the state's lowest return-to-prison rate since the 1990s when the data was first tracked.

The Restorative Justice Ministries include Renew and Esther's Journey. Both ministers to incarcerated men and women on a faith-based level and then support them through concrete plans of action for re-entry. Restorative Justice volunteers provide mentoring and prepare former inmates for release with a range of services including resume-building, mock interviews, basic computer skills and job search tactics. “It is imperative for society that these men and women come out healthier and with a greater social conscience. They must know that they have paid their debt and can rebuild their lives. Collectively, our goal must be about rehabilitation and not retribution,” said Grimball.

[In a Jan. 24, 2021 article in the Charleston City Paper](#), Bryan P. Stirling, director of the S.C. Department of Corrections and member of St. Joseph Catholic Church in Columbia, noted that it takes several state agencies and private partnerships to assure a smooth transition from incarceration to release. He credited in-part the efforts of Catholic Charities of South Carolina. “We are grateful to Director Stirling for his successful leadership and honored to be acknowledged for our contributions. Since 2016, Catholic Charities of South Carolina has provided \$943,000 in support to recidivism programs through the generosity of our donors,” said James Kaiser, executive director of Catholic Charities of South Carolina.

For more information on Catholic Charities of South Carolina, visit [charitiessc.org](#).

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