

Press Release  
September 18, 2024

## **Libraries host “College Behind Bars” screening and panel discussion at Greenfield Public Library, Saturday, September 21<sup>st</sup> from 11:00-1:00**

The Griswold Memorial Library, Belding Memorial Library, and Greenfield Public Library, together with Greenfield Community College and the Franklin County Sheriff’s Office will host a screening of part one of Ken Burns’ “College Behind Bars,” directed by Lynn Novick. This event takes place as part of Prison Banned Books Week, a week-long campaign to raise awareness about censorship in jails and prisons, and the struggle to provide educational opportunities and information access for people who are incarcerated.

The event will take place in the community room at the Greenfield Public Library on Saturday, September 21st from 11 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. The screening will be followed by a panel discussion with Sheriff Donelan and Jenny Abeles of the Franklin County Sheriff’s Office, Ally Dowds of the Massachusetts Board of Library Commissioners, Ricky Gaines of the Returning Citizens’ Association, and Chelsea Jordan-Makely and Sarah Hertel-Fernandez, from the Griswold Memorial Library in Colrain and the Belding Memorial Library in Ashfield. This event is sponsored in part by the ALA Building Library Capacity Grant and is open to the public.

The Griswold Memorial Library, Belding Memorial Library, and Greenfield Public Library have been providing library outreach services to residents at the Franklin County Jail since 2022. These services include lending books and filling informational requests, book clubs, and “Read to the Children,” a program whereby caregivers who are incarcerated can record a video of themselves reading a book to their children.

The Griswold Memorial Library (GML) is a community hub where open access to current tools, resources and services support the enjoyment of reading and the informational, educational, and communication needs of the public.

Belding Memorial Library is a small public library serving the rural community of Ashfield. The library aims to promote creativity, civics, free inquiry, and lifelong learning in a safe and welcoming environment.

The Greenfield Public Library serves as a public center for enrichment, entertainment, access to technology, self-directed learning and the exploration of ideas. The Library serves all members of the community, regardless of age, income, education, religious or political beliefs and makes no judgment on the nature of individual inquiry.

The Franklin County Sheriff’s Office is committed to supporting criminal offenders by addressing the underlying causes of incarceration through effective, evidence-based treatment, vocational training, accountability and education.

The Returning Citizens’ Association aims to increase the economic, political and social capital of returning citizens in the United States, and to decrease the recidivism rate.

Learn more about Prison Banned Books Week at [prisonbannedbooksweek.org](http://prisonbannedbooksweek.org).