

# Dallas company expands educational program serving Texas prisons

*Under the leadership of Perry Holloway, Understand People is teaching the art of public speaking to Texas inmates*

DALLAS, TX, UNITED STATES, August 14, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Just outside [Dallas](#), there's something interesting going on in the last place that anyone would suspect.

Prison.

In fact, the last thing people would think of when they think of a Texas prison would have to be public speaking. And yet, nestled in the rural area surrounding Palestine, TX, home to some of the largest and most notorious prisons in the entire country, something unexpected is happening.

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One of the reasons I love Toastmasters is because it gets right to work teaching skills that are generally lacking and desperately needed in the prison population.”

*Perry Holloway*

Behind the barbed wire and brick walls of these prisons, one man is making a big difference that's hard to ignore. He's teaching the art of communication through the lens of the [Toastmasters](#) Competent Communicator Program.

For 18 years, Perry Holloway has been getting into his car and driving from his comfortable suburban home to the last place any person would want to spend their weekends.



Texas Department of Criminal Justice exterior.

Maximum security prisons in the great state of Texas.

What started as ministry outreach has evolved into something remarkable. And remarkable is the right word. Every Saturday, men who normally wouldn't mix with each other sit in hot gyms on plastic chairs practicing the art of public speaking.

And it's working.

His passion to make a difference in the lives of inmates and their families has taken shape in the form of teaching better communication using the Toastmasters syllabus.

"One of the reasons I love Toastmasters is because it gets right to work teaching skills that are generally lacking and desperately needed in the prison population," says Holloway.

Holloway got started volunteering through the church and still remains active in ministry, but over the years, he realized something was missing.

"Certainly, there's a need to bring a spiritual message into the prison system, but for many inmates, the ability to communicate is equally important. Over the years, I've seen men who have been completely shut down and unable to mumble more than a few words become fearless speakers who hold audiences in the palm of their hands," says Holloway.

As the success of Toastmasters spread throughout the system, Holloway slowly earned the trust of the administration. This has paved the way for large events and competition between facilities.

At a recent matchup between the largest prison in the state and a nearby facility, family members and prison staff got a front-row seat to a speaking competition and debate they'll never forget.

"It's hard to argue with results. Every week, prison clubs filled with aspiring Toastmasters work tirelessly on the basics of public speaking. There's a strong focus on evaluations because feedback from trusted members of their own community resonates so deeply. It's not



Toastmasters TDCJ Group Photo



The Greatest Speakers You've Never Heard

uncommon to see a member's speech torn apart one week, only to have that same speaker return weeks later and completely changed," according to Holloway.

After decades of volunteer work, Holloway realized he was face-to-face with a big problem that doesn't get much attention. Prisons are filled with men and women who have a tremendous problem communicating.

"I realize many of the inmates enrolled in Toastmasters may never give a public speech or stand in front of a boardroom, but none of that matters. What does matter is that I'm seeing people have meaningful conversations with their families that would have never happened. I'm seeing people take words trapped in their heads and speak them clearly to family, friends, and parole boards," says Holloway.

It's no wonder Holloway is the subject of a soon-to-be-published book filled with interviews from his students, along with some great stories you'll never forget.

Stay tuned because, according to Holloway, who's 69 years old, he's just getting started.

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