



[Home](#) » [Magazine](#) » [December 2007](#) » [Behind Bars Cards](#)

## OPENING STATEMENTS

# Behind Bars Cards

December 2007 Issue

By [Stephanie Francis Ward](#)

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Terrye Cheatham wanted to send her brother-in-law a birthday card, but Snoopy's happy dance and Maxine, the cranky cartoon senior citizen, didn't convey the message she wanted.

"He was in prison for 12 months, and I went to my local Hallmark store, looking for a card that was kind of subdued," she says. "I didn't see anything that I thought was perfect."



Then an attorney with the Los Angeles County counsel's office, Cheatham visited correctional facilities for work and noticed that the greeting cards sold in the canteens were old. So last summer she started Three Squares Greetings, a card company that caters to prisoners, their families and friends. The name refers to prisoners' meals, and the slogan is "For those who can't come home."

There are two lines: cards to send to those incarcerated, and cards the incarcerated can send to the outside. Some feature drawings of barbed wire and a yellow rose. Cheatham also designed a birthday card that reads, "I know you'd rather be anyplace else right now." A Christmas card is in the works.

"I'm trying really hard not to make them generic cards, because I want them to be very specific," says Cheatham, now an assistant general counsel with the Los Angeles Unified School District.

Cheatham sells the cards for \$3.99 each through her Web page at [threesquaresgreetings.com](http://threesquaresgreetings.com), at street festivals and at a few regional stores, and she is currently looking for more retail outlets.

Corrections institute employees who have seen the cards have expressed interest in carrying them in their prison canteen operations, she says. The cards don't make noise or have pop-ups, glitter, nudity or profanity, all of which are banned. Cheatham hopes to get her line into Hallmark stores, and she plans to approach car washes as well.

"With over 2 million people in custody," she says, "there's a market."

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