



THE OHIO EX-OFFENDER REENTRY COALITION

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OHIO EX-OFFENDER COALITION Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction

Akron Summit County Library, Main Branch

60 South High Street, Akron, Ohio

Thursday, June 28, 2012

9:00 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

MINUTES

Statutory Agencies in Attendance

Gary Mohr, Department of Rehabilitation and Correction

Dwight Anstaett, Department of Education

Gerrie Cotter, Department of Job and Family Services

Kim Humphrey, Department of Youth Services

Thomas Moe, Department of Veterans Services

Tereasa Moorman-Jamison, Department of Mental Health

Sharon Schnelle, Department of Public Safety

William Zimpher, Department of Commerce

Welcoming Remarks and Introductions: Gary Mohr, Director, ODRC and Chairperson, OERC

It's a great day to be alive!

If we want to find hope, if we want to find a future, we will find it.

We have a great opportunity to make a difference in peoples' lives.

We are better off than we were in November when we started. The Collateral Sanctions legislation (SB 337) that was just signed by the Governor continues to build momentum to reduce recidivism in this state. With 12,000 staff, DRC has made it our vision to reduce crime in Ohio, and our mission to reduce recidivism. As part of this, DRC is strongly committed to developing meaningful options for jobs for ex-offenders and positive opportunities for their future.

The DRC mission statement calls for a partnership with of everyone in the room and all those individuals in Ohio who are represented by the attendees in the room today. It is important to blur the lines and bridge the gap between community and prison.

The Director made a request of all attendees: Walk out of here at noon and be committed to doing something new. Use this meeting to do something different. Our focus is and must be on people. Use these regional Reentry Coalition meetings to focus on change.

DRC Wardens in Attendance: Introduced by Regional Director Ed Voorhies

Hocking Correctional Institution-- Sam Tambi
Trumbull Correctional Institution-- Bennie Kelly
Southeastern Correctional Institution-- Sheri Duffey
Belmont Correctional Institution-- Michele Miller
Northeast Pre-Release Center-- LaShann Eppinger
Noble Correctional Institution-- Ed Banks
Ohio State Penitentiary-- David Bobby
Lorain Correctional Institution-- Marc Houk
Grafton Correctional Institution-- Kimberly Clipper

Kristen M. Scalise
Summit County Fiscal Officer

Quality reentry services contribute to the reduction of recidivism. Through collaborations with the Akron Community Foundation, the United Way Summit County, the Summit County Executive Office and Oriana House, the Summit County Reentry Network is working to reduce the percentage of ex-offenders who return to crime while enhancing the community's safety and family reunification. Stable housing and employment opportunities are known to increase the number of Summit County Citizens who can contribute to the economy through taxes and the purchase of goods and services. Employment means that people with previous felony charges can pay off court fees and fines.

Colonel Thomas Moe
Director, Ohio Department of Veterans Services

Director Mohr introduced Colonel Thomas Moe who spent 5 years as a prisoner of war after having his plane go down during the Vietnam conflict. As noted by Director Mohr, he has taken his experience in captivity and has committed himself to helping veterans who are confined or living as ex-offenders in the community because he believes they have made sacrifices themselves. Director Moe is a great hero and a great Ohioan.

Colonel Thomas Moe talked about his personal experience as a prisoner in Vietnam and how it connected to veterans in prison. He also discussed how what he experienced relates to what they can expect when they are released from prison. How does an inmate "cope" while facing injury or possibly worse from other inmates and adjust to life outside of prison?

Colonel Moe offered the following advice. No matter what life brings you, you need to plan. Don't get caught up with what if, don't plan for what if, plan for dealing with whatever comes at you. If you need help, seek it, look for it in the right places.

One word to summarize it: **PACE:**
Plan ahead.
Adjust to the reality not anticipated.
Cope with whatever life brings you.
Enjoy your life.

Director Mohr: As a group of reentry coalitions our work should always include families, our spouses, our children, and it should always stress preparing for an obtainable job, our wellness, and our physical, mental, and spiritual wellness. We need to instill a sense of hope always in those we work with and in offenders.

Director Mohr pointed out that DRC is developing a memorandum of understanding with the Army, Marines and National Guard, DRC. Has asked the Wardens to think about the veterans they have in their facilities. Having veteran units – having them mentor those people being recruited. One of the next pieces of legislation being looked at is if an offender gets recruited into the military, their period of Post-Release Supervision will be extinguished as long as they finish their service.

A presentation followed during which the audience watched video and interview footage of former DRC Inmate Rodriguis Hampton and his instructor Betty Crawford, Barber School Teacher, at London Correctional Institution.

Todd Ishee
Operations Chief, ODRC
“Reintegration Units – Realigning Ohio’s Prisons”

DRC is the process of realigning its prison system to target the reduction of violence and ensure that offenders are prepared for successful reentry transitions. A key component of this will be reintegration units. Once an inmate is assigned to a reintegration unit (minimum security), they will meet with their unit staff team, and education, medical, and mental health staff who will do an individualized assessment with the inmate’s input and assign each offender to any of several paths. The system is designed now that everyone is assigned to the Well-Being Path. Depending on the Needs Assessments they could be placed on any number of Paths. Todd and others are in the process of designing two other Paths, a Veterans Support Path and a Victim Awareness Path.

- Well-Being Path
- Faith Based Path
- Education Path
- Vocational Path
- Pro-Social Programming Path
- Recovery Path
- Community Service Path
- Family Connection Path

Within each Reintegration unit, the goal is for every offender to have at least one or more face-to-face encounters with a positive supporter, and a potential job interview before they go home.

Judge Elinore Marsh Stormer
Reentry Court - Common Pleas
Stark County

Judge Stormer started a Reentry Court in September 2006. The funding source for the Reentry Court comes mostly from ODRC. The program is not a voluntary program. In prison those who want to participate in prison programming or leave can get linked into faith-based or other types of services. This program targets Judicial Release. Participants are moderate and high risk using the current ORAS Assessment. Most of the people in the program have very significant risk factors connected to substance abuse, housing, education and employment. They are different from the high risk offenders coming into probation. The individuals coming out are saying “I’ve been thinking about this and I think I want to change my life”. There are 4 judges who are doing this program. Our target is to have 150 people in the program. Judge Stormer has about 67 participants, while the other 3 judges together have about the same amount. **There is some reluctance among her colleagues to take the high and very**

high risk. Reentry Court has enjoyed some success, but is not doing as well as it could. The Collateral Sanctions Bill is going to make this a lot easier.

70% have drug / alcohol
40% mental health issues
20% schizophrenia / bipolar
20% PTS
20% Veterans

Judge Elinore Marsh Stormer's Court meets every Friday morning at 9:00 a.m. - anyone is invited to observe. If you let her know ahead of time you can sit alongside her on the bench.

Michael Beebe
Parole Services Regional Administrator
Akron Region – Adult Parole Authority

The Vision and Mission for the Akron Region are much like the Director's – to reduce crime and to reduce recidivism in those offenders' lives that are touched. The region relies on risk-based supervision. Staff wants offenders that are capable of making change in their life to do so. One of Michael Beebe's initiatives is to find ways so that basic low offenders are not required to report to the office. Those contacts should be made with community partners or family members. These are individuals once identified that probably could supervise themselves in the community with a little bit of coaching. The region is committed to basing work assignments on skill set. The region has parole officers that are assigned specifically to supervise high risk / high need offenders that may jeopardize the community. They work in partnership with the United States Marshalls Office and the FBI who frequently visit these offenders at their homes to demonstrate that compliance with the conditions of supervision is not optional within the Akron Region.

Most importantly, working with Reentry Coordinator Felicia Braswell, who has been touching base with the wardens, UMAs and case managers – it is a mission of Mr. Beebe's, the Director, and Felicia to make face-to-face contact with the offender prior to release. If they are coming to the Akron Region, APA staff will tell them what resources are available to them, and what they can expect. The parole officers and Reentry Coordinator want to give offenders subject to supervision hope, and want to lessen the abrupt transition they experience once released from prison. The Akron Region draws on numerous community partners that it networks with routinely. Mr. Beebe expressed the expectation that Felicia and the Justice Reinvestment Officers are making contact with our community partners and developing those relationships so the transition between prison and home is seamless. That is the long term goal.

Thomas Warmouth
Justice Reinvestment Officer

The JRO concept is not new. The passage of HB86 served as the catalyst for the creation of these positions. We identified 8 areas for coverage. Thomas Warmouth and 7 others were pulled from the parole officer and senior officer staff. The territories mirror the Adult Parole Authority Regions, but are not identical. The JROs' primary function in the beginning was to produce viable information to the Courts, not just eligible offenders for release, but suitable offenders to be released. During the upcoming months, the JROs will also be assisting in identifying suitable offenders who might be viable placements in the community under appropriate HB86 provisions.

Thomas Warmouth's focus is to create, repair and enhance relationships. Also, his role is to provide information, to act as a liaison between the Courts and other community partners and integration. Ultimately, his goal is to have a direct impact on the greater vision of reducing crime in Ohio.

Joan Davidson, Local Providers
Oriana House, Inc.
Academic/Employment Administrator

Oriana House has facilities in Summit, Cuyahoga, Seneca and Sandusky Counties. In 2010, these facilities served over 5900 clients in non-residential programs, include Electronic Monitoring, specialty courts, day reporting and pre-trial. During this same period, they also served over 6200 residential clients with an average success rate 80%. All clients are assessed with various tools to determine their needs and barriers. Programming includes case management, chemical dependency, education, employment, cognitive skills, anger management and community service. All clients are screened and assessed for alcohol and drug issues. If they are found in need they can be referred to outpatient, intensive outpatient, and aftercare. They provide in-house support groups for residential facilities and linkages for community support groups. They offer a Family Matters Program that provides education and support to family members. It helps speed along the recovery process. The education department is part of Ohio's Central School System. They are an official GED practice test site. They also offer a GED test onsite with project learner. Oriana House boasts a proud 90% passing rate. Another 50% of their clients do not have a high school diploma or a GED and 50% of that population has literacy barriers. Oriana House offers soft skills training to enhance seeking and keeping skills. They have a computer lab with 8 computers with internet access for clients to develop resumes, set up email accounts and job search online.

Dennis Shahan
Broken Chains Ministries
Executive Director

Broken Chains Ministries is a faith-based, non-profit organization headquartered in the Summit County Jail. In Summit County there are 16,000 to 18,000 men and women that come through the jail annually with 600 to 700 inmates doing so on a daily basis. Some are going to go to prison, some are released to probation, some to community based programs and then released home. Why so much focus on recidivism? The average is rate 39-40%, while in Summit County they still have 60% rate. Mr. Shahan is an ex-offender with 2 felony convictions and very well acquainted with all the barriers of reentry. He is a proud graduate of the Oriana CBCF, and completed successfully 3 years of Community Control. Over the past 19 years because of the start he had in reentry he has not recidivated. He is thankful for the efforts of the Summit County Reentry Network and other agencies who are working to pull everyone together. Broken Chain Ministries has 32 mentors who go into the Summit County Jail and establish one-on-one relationships and continue to work with offenders as they go on to Community Control or to prison. They get daily updates on who is returning so they can get information into their hands about reentry. They also work directly with the Summit County Reentry Network for referrals from roughly different 80 agencies.

Terry Tribe Johnson
Summit County Reentry Network (SCRN)
Summit County Reentry Coordinator

Terry Tribe Johnson announced United Way approved a \$50K grant for the SCRN this week. SCRN had contacts with over 900 people via phone or email last year. SCRN started from the expressed needs of consumers a once a month seminar, the Friday Reentry Job Search. SCRN opened it up to

people who have felonies, misdemeanors, people on supervision, people not on supervision, family members waiting for someone to come home and all of the above. Several providers come to the job seminar, which is on the 4th Friday of the month at the Job Center at 10:00 a.m. SCRNs know that some people still think anything to do with reentry means “hug-a-thug”. So Terry and others work in Summit County to reinforce what they hear at the State level and the Federal level: reentry is not about being soft on crime, it’s about being smart on crime. SCRNs are constantly advocating, teaching, and educating the public, other providers, people who might not yet work with people who have felonies, government agencies, employers, and community citizens.

Crystal Starks
SCRN Reentry Support Group
Office of Reentry Administrative Assistant

Crystal Starks is an ex-offender who opened her remarks by thanking many of the people in the community who she says are the unsung heroes. In terms of her reentry, she said you need to not only have a plan; you need to have a Plan B, C, D, E and F.

The SCRNs Reentry Support Group meets every Friday from 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. every Friday. Everyone gets up and tells their individual stories. It’s motivational and inspirational, while maintaining their businesses, projects and interests. SCRNs don’t have all the resources or all the answers, but points individuals in the direction of someone who can offer assistance and guidance.

Krysten Palmore
Franklin County Office of Homeland Security & Justice Programs
Coordinator Reentry Task Force
President, Ohio Association of Local Reentry Coalitions

The Ohio Association was created out of the passion of directors, coordinators of reentry task forces and coalitions across the state who understand that all reentry is local. Ultimately, all offenders return home to communities across all 88 counties in Ohio. The OALRC must support those communities. The Association’s purpose is to ensure quality local reentry programs and services to assist formally incarcerated individuals navigate through the reintegration process to make sure they are connected to their communities and to their families. The Association will do this by providing technical assistance, sharing best practices, and promoting reentry services across the counties. The next meeting for the Association is July 25, 2012 at 10:00 at the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction in Columbus.

Gary Mohr, Director, ODRC and Chairperson, OERC

Director Mohr has made a commitment every year to go back to the legislature to change and reform the criminal justice system. During the next meeting of OERC, he is going to ask that the individuals in attendance participate in small work sessions where everyone will have an opportunity to talk about what new provisions should be included in any new and proposed upcoming legislation that the General Assembly might consider.

Next Meeting
Ohio Association of Local Reentry Coalition
September 26, 2012
9:00 a.m. – Noon
Ross County Service Center
475 Western Avenue
Chillicothe, Ohio 45601