

Connections Through Change

January 18, 2013



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2012 – A Year of Growth spurts

Ana Johnson,
U.S. Probation and Pretrial Services

With the end of the year approaching, let's take a moment to highlight the accomplishments of 2012. We started out the year with the annual Transition Resource Fair. Needless to say, we outgrew the classrooms of the New Holly Learning Center with the addition of new partners. Word got out the event provided "one-stop shopping" for those in transition. Partners were able to assist with onsite health screenings, child support issues, employment assistance, housing resources, and family reintegration. We welcomed a new partner, the Internal Revenue Service. "Get Right with Your Taxes," an educational packet providing information to recently released individuals in understanding their tax responsibilities, was introduced.

More information on this national effort can be found at: <http://www.irs.gov/Individuals/Prisoner-Re-entry-Program>

The summer months led to the 2012 Regional Reentry Conference – "Agents of Change" - sponsored by the Community Partnership for Transition Services (CPTS) of Snohomish County and Edmonds Community College. The event grew to 180 partners from last year's 100, together for two days of professional development. Vanessa Hernandez, an attorney with the ACLU, presented a breakout session entitled Criminal Records and Employment. Ms. Hernandez discussed the laws governing how employers should get and use criminal history records, and what job-seekers can do under Washington state law to minimize criminal history informa-

tion. Additional information on the ACLU of Washington's Second Chance Project can be found at: <http://www.aclu-wa.org/secondchances> A number of partners were also involved with the reentry summits led by King County Prosecutor Dan Satterberg. Through a series of four summit meetings, seeds of recommendations are being planted with the political leaders in our community. We will look forward to 2013 for changes on a legislative level as a result of our participation.

Along the same lines of the reentry summit, CPTS for King County and the Office of Child Support Enforcement hosted a gathering of approximately 35 partner agencies throughout Western Washington. We tackled domains related to transition and developed solutions to the identified issues. The greatest accomplishment that sprouted out of this gathering resulted in a navigator position. This newly developed position will have the knowledge to navigate systems and agencies to assist non-custodial parents through periods of transition.

If there is one word to describe 2012, it is GROWTH. Our partnership has been extended to Snohomish County and Pierce County. Both county groups have adopted the mission statement of the Community Partnership for Transition Services and we will begin 2013 with a stronger inter-county partnership. Leadership from these three counties will meet quarterly to coordinate events, share best practices, and support community growth.

Celebrate Kids! Hosts Fifth Annual Holiday Party for Children with Parents Behind Bars By: Noemie Maxwell



Photo by Gen Obata

On December 15, Celebrate Kids hosted its fifth annual festival at Rainier Beach High School. Hundreds of volunteers and family members joined together to offer a day of fun, gifts, and community love and support to over 200 children who have parents

The school halls were filled with laughter, dancing and music as children holding balloons and stuffed animals and wearing painted butterflies, kites, and hearts on their faces traveled from one classroom to the next.

Seattle Public School District provided free access to the school for the event and most of the classrooms, as well as the gymnasium, cafeteria, and auditorium, were devoted to festival fun. Children drummed and made music, danced with streamers, jumped in bounce houses, decorated masks or cupcakes, built boats, posed for photographs, broke open a pinata filled with treats, and more.

Along the way, each child chose a hand-knitted hat and scarf donated by the non-profit organization Warm for Winter. At lunch time, activities halted long enough for participants to share a delicious hot meal cooked on site by volunteers coordinated by the school's Head Cook, Sandra Jennings. After lunch, several community arts groups, including Northwest Tap Connection, provided entertainment. Then, in the long-anticipated finale to the day, children entered a gift room packed with thousands

Of toys and other presents. Here, each child chose

several gifts donated by community organizations or purchased with funds donated by individuals, including parents who are currently behind bars.

An Unlikely Dream Come True - With Help from Many Friends

Holidays can be tough for Washington's estimated 30,000 children who have one or more parents in jail or prison. Vance Bartley, founder of Celebrate Kids, knows this well. A father and grandfather sentenced to Life Without Parole under Washington's 3-Strikes law in 1997, he spent many holidays behind bars. While in prison, he dreamed of creating a program that would bring together the efforts of parents in prison, other family members of children, and philanthropic organizations to provide a joyful holiday experience for children with parents in jail or prison. It was an unlikely dream for a person serving a life sentence.

But the extraordinary happened. Bartley's sentence was overturned after he had served over a decade. Released in early 2008, he immediately enlisted the help of several community organizations and, that December, the first Celebrate Kids! party took place.

Each year, the event has served a larger number of children and has involved more nonprofit organizations, local businesses, and community members, many of whom return every year. Planning takes a full year.

"The children left behind did not commit the crime but are doing the time with Mom and Dad."

The core staff comprises volunteers, many of whom have life experiences that provide them with a deep understanding of the challenges faced by children of incarcerated parents. Many of the volunteers were themselves previously incarcerated. Many are educational and legal professionals. High school students are also at the center of the event, providing most of the volunteer hours. Every year, students from Rainier Beach and Nova High Schools, under the direction of Seattle School District (SPD) teacher Joleen Franklin, take part. Franklin, who has been the principal organizer of the event from its inception, currently coordinates SPD's Special Education Transition program Pathways to Independence. This year, students in the course entitled, "Celebrate Kids" which focuses on teaching lifelong volunteering skills, each devoted nearly 100 hours of academic time and a dozen or more volunteer hours. Some students, including Jean Ku, who was the Student Liaison between Celebrate Kids and the Pathways to Independence program, provided significantly more hours. Ku was one of nine individuals honored this year for volunteering over 100 hours of his own time to the program, in addition to class hours.

Seattle Public School District and Rainier Beach High School agencies are two of an increasing number of organizations, and businesses making Celebrate Kids! possible each year. The program's fiscal sponsor is Post Prison Education Program, a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization that provides access to higher education for people returning to society by prison or jail. Community Partnership for Transition Services (CPTS), which provides a local network of support services to individuals returning to society. In addition, provides support for this significant annual community event. Joseph E. Garcia, a co-facilitator for CPTS in King County, described CPTS as "totally focused on supporting the men and women who are in transition from prison and jail back into the community - with a special focus on family reintegration. How do we connect mom and dad back with their kids?" Snoqualmie Tribe and the law firms of Perkins Coie and Gordon & Saunders, also provided fiscal and volunteer support. Other community businesses include MOD Pizza and QFC Bellevue.

As incarceration rates have increased nationwide, nearly tripling in Washington State between 1980 and 2006 (1), increasing numbers of children have suffered hardships when a parent is removed from the home. The outpouring of community love and support for children of incarcerated parents expressed through Celebrate Kids! and the individual people, community organizations, government agencies, and local businesses that make it possible, is one small part of a complex and growing community response.





Fired Up! Ready to Go!

By: Kathy Wong

South Seattle Community College (SSCC) Workforce Education along with their community partners recognized the Fall Quarter 2012 graduates who completed the Life Skills-to-Work curriculum and GED. All 23 students were celebrated with cheers, applause, and congratulatory handshakes as each received their much-earned certificates of achievement.

Two graduations were held. The first with our King County partner led by Nate Caldwell, Director for King County Community Corrections who spoke eloquently about the choices and directions one has and the importance of a second chance. The Vice-President of Instruction for South Seattle Community College, Ms. Donna Miller-Parker came to the Learning Center for the first time spoke about pathways that lead to new experiences and open opportunities. Also present was newly-appointed Dean of Workforce Education, Wendy Price and the County Community Alternative Programs (CCAP) caseworkers, mental health support staff, and DSHS case managers. But the focus was on the students; each in their own unique way challenged themselves to find that winning is great when you are focused.,

The second graduation was held at the New Holly Learning Center. Family supporters, instruc-

tors and the Tzu Chi Foundation volunteers were all in smile mode to offer their words of congratulations, staying focused and connected. Gordon Graham, our keynote speaker, former consumer of corrections, author, and all-around kind human-being spoke from experience of a crime-laden background to a major break-through towards leading an effective lifestyle built on an earned-basis from cognitive behavioral changes. Mr. Graham's commitment to the students has paved a way for them to "pay it forward" to those transitioning back to their family and community.

Ms. Donna Miller-Parker, South Seattle Community College Vice-President for Instruction, again attended New Holly graduation offering her support of students

moving forward. The Tzu Chi Foundation as always provided their on-going support of the students with celebratory treats, strong messages of love and peace, and graduation gifts.

GED instructors Don Gropp and Karl Su excitedly announced a record number of 42 GED completers for the calendar year in a County Community Alternative Learning Center site. Also, our SSCC GO2Work team reported 132 placements in a calendar year, an all-time high in our 2nd Chance re-employment.

The students in their recognition, each announced their next steps either furthering their education, short-term training, or re-employment. As one student shouted with a pumped fist: "Fired Up. Ready to Go!"



Real Lives in Transition**By: Ethan Jordan**

Recently, I wrote an article for Access To Recovery that I wanted to share with the Community Partners in hope to encourage their transitional clients to write and post something similar piece of their life story. I think it would give insight on how a transitional client navigate their way through the social programs already in place. Also, it can help identify a missing link that could be used for grant ideas.

Life Before Recovery

Before I decided to go into recovery, I drank for 11 years straight. The first year I drank only on the weekends when I went out. In a matter of months, it became an everyday activity. I should've known better because on July 28, 1998 I went to a 10 day detox center to get off heroin and cocaine. I made a great decision not to go on methadone and just detox all together. I abstained from hard drugs, but when I drank, I felt that I was playing with fire. Even after a year of intensive outpatient treatment from 1998-1999, I was still having issues with substances and getting my life under control.

During the last 2 years of my drinking, I grew more depressed and my everyday day mood was highly unstable. I also began blacking out more frequently and passing out at inappropriate places. I drank every single day, panhandled strangers for money and bothered my family too just to buy alcohol.

My behavior finally landed me in Tent City Maricopa County Jail in Phoenix, Arizona. I spent 30 days there for an extreme DUI I incurred because I passed out drunk while driving my truck. I rolled twice and I was very fortunate that I didn't kill anyone, myself, or damaged any property but my own. I was disgusted with myself, yet I continued to drink for another year before I actually got some help and stopped.

What Recovery Looks Like

On July 28, 2011, I moved to Seattle from Kennewick, Washington, where I lived at a very safe sober housing program, I found myself at shelters here. I had nowhere to go and each way I turn someone was either drinking or drugging. I kept myself busy so I could get out of the streets and back to school and work. I became a mem-

ber of Recovery Café and started going to my choice of a Recovery Circle. They are also instrumental part of me staying sober, linking me ATR and work training which I am currently in right now. Someone in my Recovery Circle was a client of ATR and suggested I get an appointment for assistance. I did and within a week I got connected with Lisa who's an awesome person. She got my paperwork processed fast. In September of 2011, with the additional help of DESC for the move-in deposit, I was able to move to Sober Solutions in Auburn. They were another added support in my recovery. I stayed there for 9 months. The rental support I got from ATR for 5 months was a god send. I didn't have to worry about being unable to pay. I felt stable and could concentrate on myself.

Goals

I realized early on in my recovery that I needed to continue making attainable goals- even if they are small steady steps. I definitely needed a marketable career to support myself. The way that I could achieve this is to first get into an employment training program. I applied at Division of Vocational Rehabilitation where they did an inventory of my skills and interests. Then registered at South Seattle Community College where during orientation they told us about DSHS's BFET program, which stands for Basic Food Employment Training. BFET helps me by paying for my Network Administration program tuition and DVR assists with textbooks, supplies, and bus passes. I've been attending SSCC for the last year and a half. For the past three quarters I've made the honor roll list and recently I joined Phi Theta Kappa honor society. It surprised me that I could achieve this level. I just kept focusing on my goals. I hope to continue and achieve my long term goals by getting scholarships to transfer and continue to get a university degree.

My long term goals are to graduate with a Bachelor's in Information Technology and pay off bills I accrued during my drinking and drugging days. That would be a great feeling of relief when I do reach these two goals.

Real Lives in Transition Continued...

Paying Forward

For the past year and a half I have been “paying forward” by volunteering. I volunteer on Saturdays at New Holly Learning Center. I advocate for underrepresented people being released from jails or prison to have a smoother transition back into society. This demographic is in dire need of community people who are willing to speak at conferences and share innovative solutions by collaborating with organizations (private and government programs). I’m part of a group whose mission is to assist this population in becoming a responsible productive community member, by becoming mentally healthier, more educated, and involved in community building. Did you know that there are 65 million people who are incarcerated in the United States? This means there are many families- children that are affected. I truly believe that education is the best solution for anyone to get out of dead end situation. Education and work skills will offer them an alternative from the heartache of living a life of crime, being chemically dependent, locked up in jails or prisons and ultimately continuing the cycle of violence by passing the madness on to the next generation.

Right now, I’m grateful for all the caring people who are working hard to get mental ill and chemical dependent people well and back to a fruitful life. All the productive activities I’m involved in wouldn’t be possible if I wasn’t in recovery. Recovery starts with willingness to do what scares you despite how uncomfortable and difficult it can be. The willingness to do whatever it takes to stay clean and sober. I’m willing to help myself by taking action, following up, being honest with people, and assisting others by showing my gratitude through paying forward. I set my pride aside, reached out to others, and asked questions that lead me to solutions. People started believing in me because I believed in myself. My support circle grew and benefits/services such as school tuition, food, mental health, and rental assistance became available. I am thankful for programs like Access to Recovery. It’s a vital program that increases the chance for someone to stay on the path of recovery and lead a more sustainable life.



The Reentry Corps are advocates of efficient and productive transitions from prisons or jails back into society. Our members consist of former reentrants and family members who are supportive of our commitment to “paying forward” by assisting in building healthier lives and stronger communities. We are positive testimonials and encouragement to our peers.

We will:

- ◆ Plug into the network of support systems of the Archdiocese of Seattle Criminal Justice Ministry Reentry Ministry, St. Vincent de Paul’s 2nd Chance initiatives, Catholic Community Services and appropriate faith-based and community-based organizations
- ◆ Lead by example
- ◆ Conduct speaking engagements, inside and outside of prisons/jails
- ◆ Create a platform for positive testimonials and peer support
- ◆ Motivate and educate (Breaking Barriers, Corrections Education Program, 2nd Chance Opportunities

Pierce County Community Partnership Transition Services

News Updates

By: Hector R. Ortiz, Jr.



The Pierce County group would first like to give special thanks to all our community partners and supporters in Pierce, Snohomish and King County. As we all are aware of the serious epidemic issues we face as a community serving the men and women who are challenged with the various issues in re-integrating back into the community upon release from incarceration. We felt the time has come to become proactive, bring awareness, but most important reuniting our community for this cause.

We started coming together as group several months ago on a monthly basis at the Tacoma WorkSource location. Although we are still in the early stages with are efforts and mission. We were able to come up with our own Mission/ Vision statement. Not wanting to get farfetched from what are partners have already established in King and Snohomish County. We all agreed to stay in unity with the Community Partnership Transition logo and concept. For the purpose in keeping the three counties unified in all

our efforts.

Our group seeks to bring many new and exciting things to Pierce County for 2013. We will challenge ourselves in hoping to bring the 2013 Regional Re-Entry Summer Institute to Pierce County. This will take a tremendous effort from everyone to make this happen. We are fully convinced with support and collaboration from our community partners we can accomplish this.

The challenged is before us all as the growing numbers of men and women returning back into our community in need of our services. Let's continue to join hands in finding ways to bring opportunities, hope and positive changes to our society.

If you are interested possibly in joining our efforts, attend our meetings or placed on our distribution list. Please use the information below to do so.

hortiz@esd.wa.gov
(253)593-7332

Meeting information:

Location: Tacoma WorkSource

Address: 1305 Tacoma Ave S suite # 201 Tacoma, WA
98402

When: 1st Friday of each month

Time: 10am-12pm

Garcia's 9 Healthy Habits for Successful Transition

by Joe Garcia



Zella Ramsey, Joe G., Levi Fisher at the November 2012 Project Get Connected Gather at New Holly Learning Center.

The mission statement of the Community Partnership for Transition Services (CPTS) reads: To translate our vision and values through a series of purpose driven community venues that support successful transition for adults who have earned their return back to the community and their families. CPTS Partners have a strong desire in assisting those in transition and it is made evident everyday in their practice.

We witness this dedication of our community partners who contribute their time to meet the needs of the men and women transitioning from prison and jail back to their home community.

In early November of this year we hosted our Project Get Connected Partners from DSHS/Division of Child Support, King County

Persecutors Office/Family Services

Division, WA State Department of Corrections/FOSA and U.S. Department of Health & Human Services/Administration of Children & Family

Services to focus on child support issues, non-custodial adults responsibilities, re-employment strategies for this adult population and family re-integration approaches that work. In addition services provided by the community partners included housing, support groups, financial education, education and training resources, basic needs, child support and more. During the day as Partners shared their ideas on "how" to improve the process to support the parents with child support issues, I reflected on the following (9) Healthy Habits for Successful Transition that we teach in our Life Skills-to-Work classes that is the basis of our cognitive behavior "Steps2Freedom" curriculum:

Garcia's Nine Healthy Habits for Successful Transition

"How you walk in, is how you walk out..." in any situation in life.

"Everyone stand in lines, don't they? If they don't, they should – everyone else does!"

"Busy is good and busier is better!"

"Struggle with your struggles before you start struggling with the struggles of others..."

"Where does the devil live? In the details!"

"What happens when we let-up on the details? When hand-offs are dropped, people get hurt and then, the 500 lb. gorilla comes knocking at the door and then it's too late!"

"Waiting and wishing serves no one well. Hope and belief are important but remember, our creator did the heavy lifting by putting us on this earth, with the intent that we o the rest."

"Get-up, Show-up, Suit-up, Put-up and *GO2Work*"

"Remember, there are two kinds of people – those who say they work and those who work, which one are you?"

JEG 9.07

Western Washington Regional Reentry Gathering By: Terry Weber

The Administration for Children & Family Services Office of Child Support funded the event and it was co-sponsored by the King County Community Partnership for Transition Services. The event had 53 attendees representing 49 federal, state, county and tribal agencies and community based organizations that provide direct and administrative reentry services. Attendees represented education and training, corrections, courts, social services, veterans and former consumers.

The gathering was focused on Purpose Driven Domains: *To translate our vision and values through a **purpose driven** venue of focused domains that support successful transition for adults who have earned their return back to the community and their families from prison and jail.*

The Domains identified were:

Family Reintegration
Community Alternatives
Housing/Ancillary Support Services
Health and Wellness
Education, Training and Employment

Each domain contained a facilitator and recorder to guide the work group in identifying: Impact/Problem Statement. Achievable Priorities/Basic Plans and Best/Promising Practices that support initial/current investments. The group product is under final review and will be published by the beginning of 2013. During this time, a workgroup will develop a 3-5 year strategic plan based on the final product that can be replicated and localized to other reentry efforts in our state. The strategic plan can be utilized as a template for forming and/or promoting effective reentry efforts as well as providing the foundation and network to obtain funding. More information will be shared in the next newsletter.



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Thank you contributors.

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Correction Education Services

CONNECTIONS THROUGH CHANGE

Community Partnership Transitional Services

CPTS Vision/Value Statement: To build a community that takes into consideration the talents and contributions of **ALL** its members, including adults who are in transition from prison & jail back to their community and families. We aspire to join those in their life changing and defining **TRANSITION** as they integrate into society through a holistic and comprehensive set of services and support, which will allow these adults to build and lead more self-sufficient and productive lives. (William A. Ramos)

Purpose Driven Mission: To translate our vision and values through a series of purpose driven community venues that support successful transition for adults who have earned their return back to the community and their families.

Event Announcements

Online announcements link: <http://bit.ly/wdwa>

January 2013

January 4, 2013

PierceCo CPTS—10:30AM—12 PM Tacoma WorkSource

January 11, 2013

SnoCo CPTS—1PM –3PM—Edmonds Community College

January 21, 2013—MLK Day

January 18, 2013

KingCo CPTS —12:15PM –1:30PM—New Holly Learning Center

KingCo CPTS Transition Resource Fair Workgroup—11AM —New Holly Learning Center

February 2013

February 1, 2013

PierceCo CPTS—10:30AM—12 PM Tacoma WorkSource

February 8, 2013

SnoCo CPTS—1PM –3PM—Edmonds Community College

February 15, 2013

KingCo CPTS —12:15PM –1:30PM—New Holly Learning Center

KingCo CPTS Transition Resource Fair Workgroup—11AM —New Holly Learning Center

MARCH 2013

March 13, 2013—2nd Chance Employer Forum, Filipino Community Center

March 22, 2013—2nd Chance Employer Forum 8a-2p; Transition Resource Fair - TBA

Resource Link of the Quarter

reentrycorps.com

