



Cuyahoga County Reentry Review

Year End Reflections

By Luis Vazquez

As we come to the end of 2010, we look back on a year that saw tremendous changes in local, state and federal government. The State of Ohio has a new Governor and we in Cuyahoga County have an entirely new County Executive and Council structure. Even with all the changes, our commitment to providing leadership and quality programs for the reentry community remains strong.

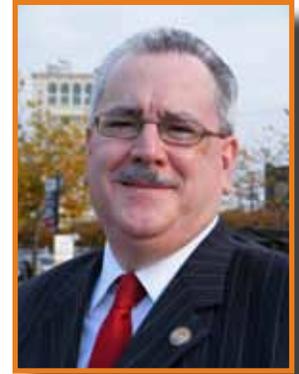
There were many highlights this year. The Grand Opening for the North Star Neighborhood Reentry Resource Center took place in April and we are extremely proud of the array of services that are currently provided.

The Greater Cleveland Reentry Strategy's Education, Advocacy and Community Participation Committee held three very successful Candidates' Forums for national and state candidates, candidates for the Cuyahoga County Executive and candidates for the 11 seats on the newly-formed County Council. Each forum was well-attended by both candidates and the public. The sessions gave the public a chance to have a dialog with the candidates and have a mutual exchange of information and opinions. We hope that the information shared will positively affect future public policy and advocacy.

The summer also marked the first full year of the Greater Cleveland Integrated Reentry Project. To date, 230 clients have received comprehensive, wraparound case management services. We will be undertaking a full evaluation of the program through Dr. David Hussey of Kent State University.

We were pleased to be a part of the most successful Fugitive Safe Surrender Program in history as 7, 431 people voluntarily surrendered to authorities during the four-day event held September 22 – 25, 2010 at Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Oakwood Village.

We would like to thank The Greater Cleveland Reentry Strategy Leadership Coalition, co-chaired by William M. Denihan and Vincent Holland and the leaders of all of its Committees. We look forward to continuing to work with our new government, our contracted and other service providers, grassroots organizations, law enforcement, and the faith-based community in identifying the reentry challenges facing Greater Cleveland and in targeting resources toward comprehensive and cost effective solutions.



Luis Vazquez



On behalf of the office of Reentry I wish you a happy, healthy Holiday Season and all the best that the New Year has to offer.

Luis Vazquez is the Manager of the Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry.

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Third Annual Office of Reentry Public Meeting



Antoine Cloud shares his story.



Attendees spent the morning at the Office of Reentry Public Meeting on October 29, 2010.



Pastor Matthews delivers a powerful and inspiring keynote address.



Eddie Montgomery shares his story



Cuyahoga County Department of Justice Affairs Director Gary Holland

By Mary Kelley

The Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry held its third annual community meeting on October 29, 2010. This is the event where the Office reports accomplishments and outcomes in a forum that is free and open to the community. Ninety people attended the event which was held at the Visiting Nurse Association in downtown Cleveland.

The Office of Reentry presented its comprehensive report for the year 2010 and was joined by a number of its partners including Project: LEARN, the Greater Cleveland Integrated Reentry Project (GCIRP), Towards Employment Networks 4 Success and the North Star Reentry Resource Center. The partners gave informational presentations and provided outcome data about their programs and what they accomplished in the past year.

Pastor C. Jay Matthews I of Mt. Sinai Ministries gave the keynote address. Pastor Matthews has been a well-respected advocate for the reentry community and his church does a lot of reentry outreach work. Pastor Matthews' address was passionate and inspirational. He spoke of the need for continued community and political support for returning citizens, common-sense changes to sentencing laws and his vision for a broad-based Reentry Community that would improve public safety and allow formerly incarcerated people to stay out of incarceration by increasing opportunities for returning citizens to provide for themselves and keep their families intact.

Attendees were honored to hear from four returning citizens who told their experiences of successful reintegration with the support of GCIRP, Towards Employment and the North Star Reentry Resource Center. They spoke eloquently about their challenges and triumphs in navigating the return home. Special thanks to Mr. Terence Blassengale, Mr. Antoine Cloud, Mr. Scott Holland and Mr. Eddie Montgomery for sharing their stories.

The Office of Reentry's' 2010 Comprehensive Report is available on-line at <http://ja.cuyahogacounty.us/en-US/office-reentry.aspx>.

Mary Kelley is the Programmatic Services Manager for the Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry



Cuyahoga County Administrator James McCafferty



North Star Reentry Resource Center Transition Specialist Marcus Bell



Towards Employment Senior Program Manager LaShon Sawyer



Scott Holland tells his story



Terence Blassengale tells his story

Legislative Update

By Edward Little

One of the goals of the Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry is to increase public awareness and advocacy around criminal justice policy issues. It is important to work toward a fair and equitable criminal justice system by examining the social and economic impact of all criminal justice policy and legislation in Ohio. Here are two bills we are watching closely in the State of Ohio General Assembly.

Ohio Senate Bill 22

Senate Bill 22 creates an opportunity for the State of Ohio to save millions in tax revenue as well as relieve the pressure of an overcrowded prison system.

- ♦ **Earned Credit**
 - o Increases from 1 to 5 days per month for the completion of specified programs
 - o The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction estimates that this stipulation will save the state roughly \$5,479,161 per year.
- ♦ **Increase in the theft threshold**
 - o Increases from \$500 to \$1000 the minimum threshold level for theft-related offenses.
- ♦ **Non-Payment of Child Support**
 - o A preference for one or more community control sanctions as opposed to incarceration in certain cases of felony non-support of dependants.
- ♦ **Equalization of Crack and Powder Penalties**
 - o Eliminates the distinction between criminal penalties for drug offenses involving crack and powder cocaine.
- ♦ **Treatment in Lieu of Conviction**
 - o The bill provides that treatment in lieu of conviction (TLC) is available to persons charged with specific theft or nonsupport offenses and authorizes TLC for an offender whose mental illness or retardation contributed to the criminal behavior.

Ohio House Bill 235

House Bill 235 creates an opportunity for the State of Ohio to save millions in tax revenue and represents a "smart on crime" response to juvenile delinquency.

- ♦ **Eliminate Mandatory Transfer of Youth to Adult Court (Bindover)**
 - o Under the current law, youth are required to be transferred to the adult court for certain serious offenses. Mandatory transfers strip juvenile court judges of the ability to make informed decisions regarding rehabilitation and/or treatment of the youth and the public safety of the community.
- ♦ **Eliminate Mandatory Serious Youth Offender (SYO) Dispositions**
 - o The practice of blending juvenile and adult sentences erodes the power of the juvenile court judge to make informed decisions based on what is in the best interest of the youth and the community. It also gives little chance for rehabilitation of the juvenile justice involved youth.
- ♦ **Increase the Threshold Age for SYO Disposition from 10 to 14 Years of Age**
 - o Currently, the State of Ohio spends over \$100,000 to incarcerate a youth. In conjunction with incarceration, counseling and treatment contribute to Ohio's youth incarceration costs.
- ♦ **Felony Offenses of Violence Should Only be Considered for Bindover and SYO**
 - o Non-violent offenders should not be considered for Bindover into the adult system. Nor should non-violent offenders be considered as Serious Youth Offenders.

Edward Little is the Policy Analysis and Legislative Advocacy Coordinator for the Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry.



Office of Reentry Policy Analysis and Legislative Advocacy Coordinator Ed Little and Office of Reentry Manager Luis Vazquez



Staff from the Greater Cleveland Integrated Reentry Project I to r.: Derrick Evans, Melissa Sirak, Erika Forde, Ellen McCarthy, Amanda Palagyi, Meghan Capistrano

We want to hear from you...

Your comments are important to us.

Write to us at

Cuyahoga County Department of Justice Affairs
Office of Reentry
310 West Lakeside Avenue, Suite 550
Cleveland, OH 44113

Our website:

<http://ja.cuyahogacounty.us/en-us/office-reentry.aspx>



Have a happy, healthy Holiday Season and all the best that the New Year has to offer.

From the Reentry Staff

The Citizen Circles Concept



Citizen participation and guidance is essential for correctional practices inside and outside institutions. The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction has embraced the needs related to offenders returning home from correctional settings and as such one strategy is the

implementation of Citizen Circles. The focus is on eight dynamic domain areas: employment, education, associates/social interactions, family/marital, substance abuse and community functioning, personal/emotional orientation and attitude. They create partnerships that promote positive interaction and accountability for offenders upon release. Circle members address risks that contribute to criminal activity by taking ownership of the solution. It is an opportunity for citizens to communicate expectations for successful reentry and help offenders recognize the harm their behavior has caused others. Offenders are able to make amends and demonstrate their value and potential to the community.

Citizen Circles Locations

The Euclid Avenue Citizen Circle

The Church of the Covenant

Kathleen Farkas
11202 Euclid Ave.
2nd Monday of every month at 7:00 pm
216.421.0482 ext. 282

CEOGC

North Star Resource Center

Lewis West
1834 E. 55th Street
2nd Monday of every month at 11:30 am
216.751.1382

East Cleveland

Andrea Graham
1850 Belmont Ave.
Last Wednesday of every month
at 5:00 pm
216.249.0330

Mt. Pleasant

Murtis Taylor Center

Diane Coates
13924 Bartlett Ave.
1st Tuesday of every month at 6:00 pm
216.751.1085

Zion Chapel

Rev. Dennis Jonel
4234 Lee Rd.
3rd Monday of every month at 6:00 pm
216.752.2743

COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS:

Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry
email: ReentryInfo@cuyahogacounty.us
phone: 216.698.2501

To receive a copy of **Going Home to Stay**

contact First Call for Help at 216.436.2000 or go online and download a copy at www.211cleveland.org/pdfs/communityreentry.pdf



GREATER CLEVELAND STRATEGY
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