



# Cuyahoga County Reentry Review

In This Issue 1...North Star 2...Harbor Light 3...Citizen Circles

## New North Star Neighborhood Reentry Resource Center is Open

The lights are on, fresh coffee is brewing all day long, and a trained staff is ready to help. Open since February 15 2010, the North Star Neighborhood Reentry Resource Center (North Star) is a welcoming place and a welcome addition to the variety of services available to the returning citizens of Cuyahoga County.

Located on Cleveland's East 55th Street in a large building that used to be an appliance store, North Star is an innovative facility that exists to provide information and services to the reentry community. It is open to all Cuyahoga County residents who have been incarcerated at some point in their lives, residents who have been involved in the criminal justice system now or in the past, and their supportive family members and friends. The center is named for the brightest star in the Northern sky, the North Star, which has been used by people for centuries to find direction. In that spirit, the center is designed to help reentering citizens find their way to begin again and become contributing members of their families and their communities.

Funded by the Cuyahoga County Board of Commissioners Department of Justice Affairs Office of Reentry and operated by Oriana House, Inc., the center has a clear mission. Office of Reentry Manager Luis Vazquez explains. "The ultimate goal is to help prevent individuals and families from falling into the cycle of

hopelessness and criminal behavior that leads to repeated prison sentences. Our society can no longer afford to just lock people up with no thought to what will happen when they get out," Mr. Vazquez said. "It is good public policy to invest in human potential. Communities are stronger and safer when all residents have the opportunity to become self-sufficient."

Oriana House, Inc. has absorbed the cost of extensive renovations on the 7,000 square foot facility. North Star is opening in two different operational phases due to the construction. The main lobby, lounge area, and information center that opened for business on February 15, 2010 is Phase One. Phase Two opens on April 1, 2010, with full staffing, a new computer lab with internet access, a library, and several meeting spaces for both large and small groups. In addition to Oriana House's own considerable resources, North Star is also linked to United Way's 211 First Call for Help system, with access to all of the information and agencies that are available to First Call for Help.

"Actually, we see North Star as a bricks and mortar version of 211 First Call for Help," said Phil Nunes, Vice President of Cuyahoga County Correctional Services for Oriana House, Inc. "The people that are returning to the community from prison know very well the obstacles they will face when they come home. North Star is a safe space where we will treat them with respect. We plan to offer a full schedule of programs and activities, including mentoring, Citizen Circles, faith-based programs, 12-step groups, computer training, and assistance with looking for work and a place to live," Mr. Nunes said.

### We're Here to Help

"For someone who has just come home from prison or even for those people who have been out for a while or are on probation, it's hard to keep track of all the services that are out there and know how to actually get through the different requirements and systems to get the help you need," said North Star Manager Nicky Roberts. "We want to provide the best possible information, let people know about other resources they



might not be aware of, and help them make the connections they need. We can't do it all for them, but we can try to empower our visitors with the information and activities that can help them become independent and successful on their own," Ms. Roberts said.

North Star Cognitive Behavioral Specialist Monica Lee already enjoys the friendly and helpful environment of North Star. "We are dedicated to serving people," she said. She looks forward to helping clients more fully develop the cognitive skills that will enable them to change negative thoughts and behaviors into positive ones. "Thinking controls behavior," Ms. Lee said. "We can all learn how to change our thoughts and behaviors to become more effective in our lives."

Reentry Review staff visited North Star during its first week of operation. On the day we were there, a client was in immediate need of detox services. Her situation was made more urgent by the fact that she is pregnant. Ms. Lee made a number of calls and found a program that would have a spot open in four days. The client could not wait four days. Not giving up, Ms. Lee stayed on the phone for two hours and found an open bed at Metro Hospital. The client was able to get in to detox that same day.

North Star Transition Specialist Marcus Bell summed it all up. "We want you to know that we are here for you. We have an open, respectful attitude. I don't want you to walk out the door without feeling like I have helped you – a lot."

North Star provides informational services to any  
*(Continued on Back Cover)*

### North Star Neighborhood Reentry Resource Center

Hours: Monday 9-5  
Tuesday 9-5  
Wednesday 12-8  
Thursday 9-5  
Friday 9-5

1834 East 55th Street  
Cleveland Ohio 44103  
216-881-5440

## The Salvation Army Harbor Light Complex

**W**hat comes to mind when you think of The Salvation Army? Holiday season singers, ringing bells and big red collection pots? There is a lot more to the story. The Salvation Army Harbor Light Complex (Harbor Light) provides a wide variety of essential services to local individuals and families.

The Harbor Light Complex is a residential facility that occupies 150,000 square feet over eight floors at 1710 Prospect Avenue in downtown Cleveland. Executive Director Beau Hill says, "We've been around since 1949 and at this location since 1970. Even so, there are a lot of people out there who do not know that we are here and who don't really know the breadth of services we provide. As a Christian-based organization, we want people to not only know about the services but the reason why we provide those services."

Each floor of Harbor Light houses a variety of different community programs and the bustling activity continues all day, every day. The kitchen staff prepares and serves more than 1,000 meals per day in the two separate dining rooms. A gym and mini park provides residents with areas for recreation, reflection and rest. Of special interest to the reentry community, Harbor Light operates a number of programs for formerly incarcerated individuals. In addition to community corrections, Harbor Light provides shelter, meals and other necessities to homeless people, including entire families. The Zelma George Family Emergency Shelter is located on the second and third floors. In total, the shelter can accommodate up to 35 families with housing and other supportive services provided to the residents.

Community Corrections programs for men occupy the fourth and fifth floors of Harbor Light. Currently 115 men are finishing out their sentence at the facility. Caseworkers assist the clients with a variety of needs, including help with getting a GED, vocational training, and employment. Residents who are under electronic monitoring are here as well. More than 75% of participants in this program secure jobs and effectively complete the program. Twenty women are also housed at Harbor Light in the Community Corrections Program located on part of



the sixth floor. Caseworkers are now assisting 20 women with securing successful reintegration into society.

A detox program and intensive outpatient treatment serves patients on the sixth floor. More than 1,500 people complete this program every year. Both programs are certified by the Ohio Department of Drug and Alcohol Addiction Services. HIV/AIDS Early Intervention/Education is an integral component of this program.

The seventh floor is dedicated to the Pick Up, Assessment, Shelter and Services (PASS) program which is for homeless men. Caseworkers work with each client to increase levels of training and abilities and develop life-changing skills. Residents may remain in the program for up to two years. More than 60% of the men obtain permanent housing and about half of them eventually secure gainful employment.

Criminal behavior is often linked with alcohol and drug use. Men in the alcohol and drug addiction community corrections program, located on the eighth floor, are given the opportunity to address the problems of addiction and recidivism through informational classes, Alcoholics Anonymous attendance, cognitive behavior therapy sessions, discussion groups, life skills workshops and participation in spiritual development. More than 80% of the clients successfully complete this program. Finally, transitional housing is available for a monthly fee, based on the individual's financial resources, with the goal of self-sufficiency for the participants.

For those who wish to participate, The Salvation Army provides spiritual guidance and support at Harbor Light that can reinforce the recovery and rehabilitation process. Traditional Sunday worship services, a Gospel Meeting on Thursday evening and weekly Bible discussion groups complement Harbor Light's therapeutic environment. The Salvation Army is an evangelical part of the Universal Christian Church. They hold a number of wor-

ship services at the Complex and have a number of area core Churches as well. However, Mr. Hill and Community Corrections Program Administrator Debra Winston make it very clear that the spiritual aspects of programming are voluntary and people of all faiths and spiritual beliefs are welcome at their programs and churches. The Salvation Army actively works with people who practice a different spiritual tradition or no spiritual tradition at all. They are open to the public and respectful of all visitors.

Mr. Hill and Winston are passionate advocates for the people they serve. Nearly 100 years ago the founder of The Salvation Army, William Booth in his last public address said:

*“While women weep, as they do now, I'll fight;  
while children go hungry, as they do now, I'll fight;  
while men go to prison, in and out, in and out,  
as they do now, I'll fight;  
while there is a drunkard left,  
while there is a poor lost girl on the street,  
while there is one dark soul without the  
light of God,  
I'll fight, I'll fight to the very end”*

Mr. Hill and Ms. Winston are pleased that Harbor Light carries on those same principles today. "The Salvation Army Harbor Light Complex is one of the Cleveland's best kept secrets. The community needs to be aware of the major impact that the continuum of services being provided has on the hundreds of people served annually," Ms. Winston said.

The Salvation Army was founded in London, England by William Booth in 1865. The organization has been active in the United States since 1879. The Salvation Army is now an international movement in 118 countries and is involved in several charitable activities throughout the world.

**To access services at the Salvation Army Harbor Light Complex:**

By far, most people who use the services are referred because they are in transitional control or under electronic monitoring. Referrals can also be made by Probation Officers. Walk-ins are generally discouraged for safety and space availability reasons. The phone number is: 216.781.3773. Services available are: Alcohol and Drug Addiction services, pastoral care, the Corrections program, the Zelma George Center for homeless families, as well as PASS, Project Share and Railton House programs for homeless men.

**Sources:** Interviews with Beau Hill and Deb Winston, Harbor Light Complex informational floor by floor guide.



## Citizen Circles Make a Difference... One Life at a Time

On the back cover of each month's *Reentry Review* is *The Citizen Circles Concept*—an explanation of Citizen Circles. While it provides useful information about the idea of the Citizen Circles, we thought it would be more meaningful to hear about the difference they can make to ex-offenders reentering mainstream communities. Fred Bolotin, of the Reentry Review staff, spoke recently with Niely C. Cuyler about his experience with the Euclid Avenue Citizen Circle.

**Reentry Review (RR):** I understand that you were formerly incarcerated. Do you mind telling me the background of your offense and when you were released from prison?

*I committed one offense—armed bank robbery—in my early twenties. I served nearly 30 years in prison before being released in November of 2008.*

**RR:** What has been the biggest obstacle or challenge that you have faced since your reentry?

*Finding employment. I've had a few temporary jobs, usually being paid under the table, but nothing permanent. I just went for a job interview yesterday. Afterward, they asked me to take a physical and a drug screen, so I'm hopeful. It will be working at a steel factory*

**RR:** That's terrific. I'm sure that's a great relief. I know that you have been participating in the Euclid Avenue Citizen Circle. Tell me, how did you first learn about the Citizen Circle?

*Yes. I'm very happy about that. I went to the Star Emporium that they have in the Lerner Building. So I heard about the Citizen Circle there. I read a little information about it. Then I talked with my state parole officer, and she told me that she would recommend me, because you have to have a recommendation.*

**RR:** So what made you decide to go the Citizen Circle?

*Well, I figure sometimes two heads are better than one. A lot of things that I was running into—I was getting the run around about a lot of things. I figured I might make some contacts with people who might be able to steer me in the right direction.*

**RR:** When did you first go a Citizen Circle meeting?

*I first went in December of 2008. Ever since then I've been going once a month—never missed a meeting.*

**RR:** What were your initial reactions at the first meeting you went to?

*I loved the people that comprised the group. I felt vibes from everyone. They greeted me warmly and they seemed like genuine people. I liked the fact that they're volunteers. They don't have to be doing it; that makes them a lot more genuine.*

*Just at this point in the interview, Mr. Cuyler had to interrupt because his potential employer was calling. He called me back to continue our discussion.*

*I just got the call. They want me to start Monday morning. This is the first meaningful employment that I've had since I got out.*

**RR:** That's fantastic. I'm glad I was able to share the good news. I'm sure we scooped all the other media with this breaking news. Getting back to your experience with the Circle... what happens at the meetings?

*I go to a meeting and they ask me what I've been doing and if I've had any problems with anything, in any area of life. Like maybe I needed health care and haven't been able to get it, they give me their input on what resources they know about that may be available to me. They gave me bus passes and a Dave's Market gift card. It shows that these people really want to help me. A lot of other groups are filled with people that just give you a lot of rhetoric, but no real help. Even the parole officers are like that. They want you to get a job and they have some resources, but they pick and choose who they give those resources to. It just makes it hard, especially for a person like me, who's been gone so long.*

*I keep in touch with several of the individual members of the Circle—the volunteers. I've done some work for some of them outside the Circle. I mean, I love those guys in that group, because they really help me. They push for me. They've written letters of recommendation for me to my ward councilman. I was a member of the Towards Employment program and they wrote a letter of recommendation to them for me. I mean, these guys, they really show me support. I want to give that back; I want to support them. I told them that I want to become a volunteer. I don't want them just to give to me. My goal for the Citizens Circle is for me to become a volunteer.*

**RR:** Do you think that you'd be where you are today if you hadn't gone to the Citizen Circle?

*You know that's a question that's hard to answer because I'm a survivor and I'm very tenacious about survival. I don't get discouraged easily, because I know things aren't easy. But what I can say is that I know that they helped me a lot; they really helped me a lot. I show my appreciation in little ways, like I haven't missed a meeting in over a year. That shows you that it's something I want to attend. They've done good things for me. I want to help other people now. I used to be a taker, but now I want to be a giver; I want to give to other people. Citizen Circle is a wonderful thing. The Circle, by far, has exceeded any expectations that I had when I first went. You know, a lot of times us guys that come from prison think that these groups are a bunch of baloney. But this isn't what the Circle turned out to be. I mean, I knew from the very beginning that it wouldn't be, because the people were really different. They were really genuine. I sensed it right off the bat.*

*I want to be a citizen. I want to be a productive member of my community—a contributing member of my community. These guys really help.*



**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

## New North Star Neighborhood Reentry Resource Center is Open *(Continued from Front Cover)*

Cuyahoga County resident who has had involvement with the criminal justice system and their family and friends. However, North Star encourages visitors to become North Star Center Members. Membership is free but is needed to access the full range of activities and services.

The Center is open for walk-ins during the open business hours (see information box on this page). No appointment is necessary. North Star can also be reached at 216.881.5440 or by calling First Call for Help at 211.

Please save the afternoon of April 20, 2010 from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. for an Open House to present the fully-operational North Star Neighborhood Reentry Resource Center.

**Source:** Interviews with Oriana House, Inc. staff, North Star staff and Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry staff.  
Special thanks to Nicky Roberts, Jason Rock, Monica Lee and Marcus Bell.



## 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 Congregational Church

Kathleen Farkas  
9606 Euclid Ave.

2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month at 7:00 pm  
216.421.0482 ext. 282

### East Cleveland

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

### Zion Chapel

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

### CEOGC

### Medical Arts Building

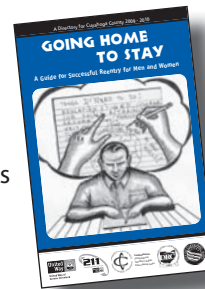
Lewis West  
2475 E. 22nd St.  
(Lower level)  
2<sup>nd</sup> Monday of every month at 11:30 am  
216.357.2621

### Mt. Pleasant Murtis Taylor Center

Diane Coats  
13411 Kinsman Ave.  
1<sup>st</sup> Tuesday of every month at 6:00 pm  
216.751.1085



**COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS:**  
Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry  
email: [ReentryInfo@cuyahogacounty.us](mailto: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](http://www.211cleveland.org/pdfs/communityreentry.pdf)



**Funded by the Cuyahoga County Board of Commissioners.**

**Citizens Circles Trainings are now being planned.**

Please call 216-698-2501 for more information.