



Cuyahoga County Reentry Review

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT: TO VOTE! By Mary Kelley and Edward Little

More than 100 people attended a Voter Education Event on September 21 at the North Star Neighborhood Reentry Resource Center. Voting is your right as a citizen and a power you can still use in Ohio – even if you have a felony record or were formerly incarcerated in prison. Unfortunately, too many citizens do not vote, whether or not they have a criminal justice history.

The event was organized and hosted by the Co-Chairs of the Greater Cleveland Reentry Strategy's Education Advocacy and Community Participation Sub-Committee, Ms. Erika Forde and Ms. Crystal Bryant. The Panelists were Ms. Shakyra Diaz, Policy Director for the ACLU of Ohio, Mr. Kyle Early of the Cleveland Voter Coalition, Mr. Basheer Jones of Organizing for America, Mr. Edward Little, Policy Analyst and Legislative Policy Advocacy Coordinator for the Office of Reentry, and Mr. Luis Vazquez, Program Director of the Office of Reentry.

Voting rights for people who were formerly incarcerated or have criminal records are different depending on the state where you live. Hundreds of thousands of formerly incarcerated individuals around the country do not have the right to vote. In Ohio, you do. This is why it is important for formerly incarcerated individuals in Ohio to vote.

Here are some resources to find out more

about voting, elections, candidates and issues:

The Cuyahoga County Board of Elections
216-443-3200

<http://boe.cuyahogacounty.us>

This website has information about how to find out if you are already registered to vote, how to register to vote, how to find your polling place, what you need to take with you for identification to vote at the polls, and how to vote by mail/absentee ballot. On this website, you can also find election calendars and full lists of the candidates and issues.

The Ohio Secretary of State
1-800-SOS-OHIO

www.sos.state.oh.us/sos.voter.aspx

This website also has complete information about how to register to vote and how to vote along with calendars and other election information.

The ACLU of Ohio
216-472-2200

www.acluohio.org

The ACLU has created a pocket-sized Ohio Voter Empowerment Card with helpful voting information. Contact the ACLU to get one.



Dennis Anderson, Manager of Community Outreach for the Cuyahoga County Board of Elections and Willie Hills, Registered Voter



Event Organizer Erika Forde, GCIIP Project Director and Co-Chair of the Greater Cleveland Reentry Strategy Education, Advocacy and Community Participation Sub-Committee



Event Organizer Crystal Bryant, Recent Law School Graduate and Co-Chair of the Greater Cleveland Reentry Strategy Education, Advocacy and Community Participation Sub-Committee



Panelist Shakyra Diaz, Policy Director for the American Civil Liberties Union



Event Attendees Line Up for Voting Registration Information

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Talking With: Owen Taylor with Key Decisions Positive Choices

By Marcus Redfearn

Owen Taylor can truly understand and empathize with his clients at Key Decisions/Positive Choices because he knows what it's like to struggle with poverty and addiction. Mr. Taylor was once homeless and alone – a father who wanted to be a part of his children's lives, but the disease of addiction had robbed him of many years with his wife and children.

"It was like a light bulb just went off," he said, as he reflected back on the time he woke up one day, missing his family desperately, and realized there had to be a better way.

With a new attitude and looking toward the future, he was able to overcome many obstacles. He pursued an education, obtained a Bachelor's Degree from Ohio University and became a Licensed Independent Chemical Dependency Counselor. Throughout his career, he has served as a Chemical Dependency Therapist, Case Manager, Assessment Specialist, Treatment and Prevention Education Program Designer, Program Director, and an Independent Drug and Alcohol Consultant and has been employed at such leading institutions as Glenbeigh Hospitals, The Hitchcock Center for Women, Recovery Resources, Genesis, and The Center for Families and Children.

He is now the executive director and founder of Key Decisions/Positive Choices. Key Decisions/Positive Choices has a staff of ten and acts as a single agency providing comprehensive Alcohol and Drug Treatment programs and services to various communities throughout Northeast Ohio. Mr. Taylor's core areas of expertise include chemical dependency assessment and treatment, recovery and relapse prevention support, individual and groups, child and adolescent prevention education, occupational health concerns, program design, development, and administration.

When asked what was the most gratifying aspect of opening his own business, Mr. Taylor smiled and said, "Everything."

The Positive Choices side of the program helps chemical-

ly dependent individuals attain a drug-free life through a holistic approach, which includes an informed consent from the client, family members and/or significant others in the process and uses Bio-Psycho-Social Evaluation methodologies. Positive Choices provides services in the following: Drug and Alcohol Assessment (includes Urinalysis Screenings), Individual Counseling, Group Counseling, and Family Counseling. This program's fee schedule has a sliding scale that's available to all who qualify. Due to extensive educational training and classes, Key Decisions/Positive Choices also are Medicaid service providers.

Key Decisions provides a 72-Hour Driver Intervention Program to impaired drivers from across Northeast Ohio. This includes alcohol and drug education classes and an 8-hour Remedial Driver's Course for individuals who want to obtain a 2-point credit on their drivers' license or are under 12-point suspension. Many clients are referred by the judicial system as an alternative to jail program. Here participants attend informative lectures and participate in group discussions.

Mr. Taylor said that Key Decisions/Positive Choices offers a friendly 'at home' environment that caters to a diverse population which includes judicial referrals, the homeless, mental health clients, and youths. Recently Mr. Taylor expanded his business as well as his staff to help in meeting the great need in the community for teaching people how to use healthy coping skills and mechanisms instead of turning to drugs or alcohol.

Contact Information for Key Decisions/Positive Choices:

Offices: 3030 Euclid Ave, Suite 312

Cleveland, Ohio 44115

Mail: P.O Box 10844

Cleveland, Ohio 44110

Phone: (216) 391-0977

Fax: (216) 391-0978

E-mail: keydecisions@keypos.ldmi.net

Marcus Redfearn is a Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry intern who is majoring in Human Service at Cleveland State University.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

YOU HAVE THE RIGHT: TO VOTE! continued from Front Cover

"I was convicted of a felony. Can I still vote?"

- ◆ **Yes.** As long as you are not incarcerated right now. Even if you live in a half-way house or the Nancy R. McDonnell Community Based Correctional Facility (CBCF), or are on probation, you can still vote.
- ◆ **BUT** - if you did not re-register to vote when you were released from prison, you will need to register to vote again.



"If I have been charged with a crime but I haven't been to trial yet, can I still vote?"

- ◆ **Yes.**

"I was convicted of a misdemeanor. Can I still vote?"

- ◆ **Yes.** This is true even if you are currently incarcerated for a misdemeanor.

Source: Ohio Dept. of Rehabilitation and Correction publication "Find a New Direction: Reclaim Your Right to Vote" 9/2008

"O.K. So I can vote. Why should I?"

- ◆ Formerly incarcerated individuals should vote in every election, from local elections to presidential primaries. It provides the opportunity to voice your opinions about potential elected officials and their overall policies and plans, including all the ways they plan to spend tax money. Every voter pays some form of tax like income tax or sales tax. We have the right to have a say on how that money is spent.
- ◆ Elected officials like the President right on down to your local Council Representative or Judge work for you! They are hired by the voters. As voters, we are their supervisors. You have the power to keep track of their votes and positions, hold them accountable, and supervise them if you vote.
- ◆ There is power in numbers. There are thousands of formerly incarcerated people who are out of prison. Voting can give you the power to make decisions about the future of your community by electing individuals who will reflect your views and values.
- ◆ In United States history, and all around the world, people march, fight and even die for the right to vote and be recognized as equals in society. One of the best ways to show you belong to and care about the future of your community is to vote!

SAVE THE DATE

FREE

HOW TO START YOUR BUSINESS AS A RESTORED CITIZEN WORKSHOP

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 8, 2011

8:00 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

**Center for Families & Children
Mandel Community Center
4500 Euclid Avenue
Cleveland, Ohio 44103**

SCHEDULE OF WORKSHOPS

- **SMALL BUSINESS 101**
- **MAKE YOUR BUSINESS LEGAL**
- **WELCOME TO THE 21ST CENTURY**
- **MONEY, MONEY, MONEY**
- **RESOURCE FAIR**

**For more information, please contact
Ashley Field @ 216.325.9431 or afield@c4fc.org**

Sponsored by:
Catholic Charities, Center for Families & Children/Greater Cleveland
Integrated Re-Entry Project "GCIRP", City of Cleveland
Community Re-Entry, Inc.
Congresswoman Marcia Fudge, Ohio House of Representatives
Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry, Ohio Department of Development
Entrepreneurship and Small Business Division
Small Business Development Center
Oriana House, Inc. & Towards Employment

Luis Vazquez Named to Advisory Boards

Cuyahoga County Office of Reentry Program Director Luis Vazquez was named to two Ohio advisory teams on reentry. He now serves on U. S. Senator Robert Portman's Advisory Team for the State of Ohio on reentry issues and on the Executive Committee representing Northeast Ohio on the Local Coalition Association of the Ohio Ex-Offender Reentry Coalition.



We want to hear from you...
Your comments are important to us.

Write to us at

Cuyahoga County - Office of Reentry
310 West Lakeside Avenue, Suite 550
Cleveland, OH 44113
www.reentry.cuyahogacounty.us

You Are Invited to attend
the Cuyahoga County
Office of Reentry's

Annual Public Meeting

featuring
Keynote Speaker
Judge Nancy Margaret Russo

Friday October 21, 2011
from
8:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

at the Ford Community Room
Visiting Nurse's Association
2500 E. 22nd Street
Cleveland Ohio 44115

Reentry Review Staff

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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. i 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.

Offenders are able to make amends and demonstrate their value and potential to the community.

Citizen Circles Locations

The Euclid Avenue Citizen Circle
216.421.0482 ext. 282

CEOGC
North Star Resource Center
216.751.1382

Mt. Pleasant
216.751.1085

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
**Cuyahoga County
Reentry Review**



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