



Cuyahoga County Reentry Review

Know Your Representatives:

United States Congresswoman Marcia L. Fudge

By Belinda Prinz

For many people, math was not a favorite subject in school. Congresswoman Marcia L. Fudge had a different view. During her high school and college years, she discovered she enjoyed working with numbers. Fudge also had a strong sense of fairness and a lifelong desire to work for the good of her community. After obtaining a law degree from Cleveland State University, Fudge applied her skills in finance administration in various private and public sector jobs. She went on to become the first African American and first woman to be elected Mayor of Warrensville Heights and served there for 9 years. But it was not until she was elected to Congress in 2008 that Fudge hit her stride, fully combining her academic skills with her passion for fairness and social justice.

When it comes to the millions of Americans who paid their debt to society after a criminal conviction, she knew the numbers didn't add up.

"Our Nation has approximately 5% of the world's population but roughly 25% of the world's prison population," the Congresswoman

said after the House passed the National Criminal Justice Commission Act, a bill she introduced in Congress last year. Fudge called for a commission to thoroughly review policies, practices and criminal justice costs - at every level of government. It had been decades since such a review took place and she had a clear goal in mind; reduce violence, reduce costs and reduce disparities in sentencing and incarceration rates. "Almost 1 of every 45 adults is currently behind bars, which is five times the world's average incarceration rate. These rates indicate inconsistencies and flaws within our judicial system. This must change," she said.

The Senate failed to pass the bill last year but Fudge remains undeterred. The Congresswoman plans to re-introduce the measure this term. She also co-sponsored legislation that calls for amending the federal criminal code to allow individuals convicted of a non-violent offense to file for expungement, provided they fulfill all requirements of their sentence. She was a strong advocate for the Fair Sentencing Act which reduced sentences for crack cocaine possession to make them uniform with possession of other forms of cocaine. Of the more than 12,000 inmates imprisoned for crack cocaine offenses, 96% were black or Latino. They now have an opportunity to

go before a judge and seek reductions in their sentences.

On other fronts, she's worked to fund programs for offender/re-entry programs, as well as improve education and nutritional offerings in juvenile detention facilities. In 2010, Fudge worked with Congressman Dennis Kucinich and many other reentry supporters to secure a \$400,000 appropriation for the Cuyahoga County Department of Health and Human Services Office of Reentry.

She supported the work of U.S. Marshal Peter Elliott who created the Fugitive Safe Surrender Program in Cleveland. Her office helped to publicize the program and in a four-day period last year, 7,431 fugitives safely surrendered at the event at Mt. Zion Church in Oakwood Village. The turnout set a national record. What's next? Congresswoman Fudge has set her sights on helping ex-offenders find jobs. She's reached out to local employers and sponsors of training programs and will connect them with candidates referred by local agencies for a job development workshop next month. Reentry



United States Congresswoman
Marcia L. Fudge

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Community Assessment and Treatment Services Inc. (CATS) Success Story: JC, a former client and current case manager at CATS

By Lisa Casini

Just four years ago, JC was addicted to heroin. She was penniless, without hope and living on the streets. Her addiction began when she was barely out of childhood, like many do.

Her young life moved fast. She began drinking at age 12 and gave birth to her daughter at age 17. Soon after, she continued drinking and began using cocaine.

By age 18, JC was an alcoholic and addicted to drugs. Without a strong family safety net, she tried on her own to navigate the jagged terrain of supporting herself and her child, while supporting her addiction as well. She began bartending, making it easier to support herself and her habit. She got married at age 22. During a series of dental visits where she had major work done, she began taking pain meds, which led to her addiction to prescription drugs. Then one day, someone offered her heroin to snort. She was instantly hooked.

By age 24, she started using heroin intravenously. Her four-year marriage was collapsing, and she began staying away from home more often to drink and use. While she engaged in illegal activity to support her habit, she began leaving her daughter for longer periods of time in the care of her sister. As her addiction grew, her body weakened, her spirit dimmed, and her family and friends gradually faded from her life—including her daughter. JC's marriage eventually came to an end.

By 2006, her addiction had nearly controlled every moment of her life. Where to get it, how to get it—can't live without it. It consumed her whole life, to the point where she had no time, nor energy, to care for her own basic needs.

Her life became a vicious cycle only an addict would understand: Breaking the law to support her habit, living on the streets, buying heroin and getting arrested for possession.

During this time, JC entered treatment. She completed the program, but began using following her stay.

After months of descending deep into addiction—marked by the streets and incarcerations, JC hit rock bottom: She was 29 years old, physically sick, and had no money. She lost everyone and everything that had meaning in her life. Alone and spiritually broken—she was taken from the streets to jail—again. Her probation officer noticed her rapid decline, and kept her in jail for a few days to detox. The next four days in jail—detoxing without medical intervention—were

the most physically painful days she had ever experienced. On the fourth day, in January, 2007, she was transported from jail to Community Assessment & Treatment Services, Inc. (CATS). When she arrived, she was exhausted, sick and broken. She weighed less than 110 lbs and her arms and legs were marked with the scars of her addiction. She knew this was it—if she left CATS she would die.

JC stayed at CATS' women's residential treatment center for 90 days. For the first time in a long time, her basic needs were provided—meals, shelter and a safe place to stay. CATS provided the structure and security she needed to focus on the solutions to her most pressing issue—her addiction. She began the hard work of recovery and slowly began to rebuild personal relationships—especially with her daughter and sister.

She felt glimmers of hope at CATS, and began to plan ahead. She was eventually given work privileges. She found work as a waitress across town, and took the rapid transit train and two busses to get there and back every day. Every evening after work, she went to 12-step support meetings.

She began taking small steps toward independence, and credits her CATS case manager for guiding her along the way. After she successfully completed her 90 day stay at CATS, her case manager referred her to Transitional Housing Services, Inc., located on Cleveland's west side. She lived in transitional housing for several months, until she could save enough money to afford a place of her own. After several months, JC moved into an apartment, and for the first time in her life, she was able to support herself on her own. She continued waitressing, continued her commitment to the 12-step program and daily meetings, and continued to rebuild her relationship with her daughter and family.

Today, JC and her daughter are close again. She has chosen chemical dependency counseling as her life's vocation, and for the past year, has worked as a Case Manager at CATS. She volunteers at local treatment centers and continues to attend 12-step meetings nearly every day. She seeks to help others and sponsors other women in the 12-step community. She found a way to turn her negative experiences into instruments of strength and support for other women.

JC credits her personal sense of faith, her daughter, her family and the 12-step program as her continual sources of

strength and hope. She sees accomplishment and hope for her future. She wants to continue to be a significant part of her daughter and granddaughter's lives. JC also hopes to continue her education, get her degree, and build upon her outreach and volunteer efforts.

As insidious as addiction is, JC's courage, fierce determination and inner strength in taking control of her life and overcoming her addiction is a testament to the power of

the human spirit. It's also gives credence to the life-changing impact that comprehensive, quality treatment can have on a person's life—if the person is wholly committed to sobriety.

JC's honesty, courage, and willingness to share her story serves to inspire and give hope to those who walk where she once walked. Her life reflects true grit and determination. Her achievements are monumental, with future plans and goals she still wants to reach. No doubt she'll get there—one day at a time.

Lisa Casini is Development Director for CATS, Inc.

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

- o SMALL BUSINESS 101
- o MAKE YOUR BUSINESS LEGAL
- o WELCOME TO THE 21ST CENTURY
- o MONEY, MONEY, MONEY
- o 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

CONGRESSWOMAN MARCIA L. FUDGE

ELEVENTH DISTRICT OF OHIO

Hosts A

JOB DEVELOPMENT AND PLACEMENT FOR RESTORED CITIZENS FAIR

MONDAY, NOVEMBER 7, 2011

9:00A.M.- 5:00P.M.

R.S.V.P. ONLY

Cuyahoga Community College RECREATION CENTER GYMNASIUM

2900 COMMUNITY COLLEGE AVENUE
CLEVELAND, OH 44115

This Fair is to provide the necessary tools and resources to restored citizens that will assist them with a successful and healthy transition back into the community and to help them prepare for and secure employment. Spaces are limited. **RSVP only.**

Participants and Highlights of the Fair include:

- Peace in the Hood Presentation
- Tri-C Resume Workshop
- Job Development Training
- Health Services Resources
- Housing Resources
- Employers will be on site
- Jobs available

For more information and to **RSVP** contact:

Phone (216) 522-4900

Email: Ariella.Brown@mail.house.gov



Know Your Representatives: United States Congresswoman Marcia L. Fudge (Continued from Front Cover)

issues are one of her top priorities in Congress. Her current district includes mostly the eastern half of Cleveland and 22 suburbs, but Fudge is keenly aware that barriers to employment for the ex-offender community are national in scope. That's why she plans to continue tackling those barriers so all citizens have a chance to lead productive lives.

"If we fail to implement effective reform, our nation will continue to spend more on prisons while depleting

already financially stressed state and local budgets," says the Congresswoman. "Worse yet, we will not make our communities safer or reduce high recidivism rates. We can and must do better."

Belinda Prinz is the Communications Director for the Office of Congresswoman Marcia L. Fudge, OH-11

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

Write to us at

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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.

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**

