



Cuyahoga County Reentry Review

Fugitive Safe Surrender Turnout at Mt. Zion Oakwood Village Breaks National Record

The Fugitive Safe Surrender program returned home to Cleveland and produced an overwhelming turnout of people who wanted to take care of their outstanding felony or misdemeanor warrants and move forward with their lives. During the four-day event, September 22 – 25, a total of 7,431 people turned themselves in to authorities at the Mt. Zion Baptist Church in Oakwood Village.

By early afternoon on the first day, staff and organizers of the event knew that something very big was happening. United States Marshal Peter Elliott said, "Never has there been any site that has had this many people on the first day. This is off the charts." Marshal Elliott credited the Church, under the direction of Bishop Larry Macon, Sr., for the overwhelming turnout.

The organization and planning was extensive. More than 260 volunteers worked with the participating organizations and were essential to the success of this massive undertaking. For those four days, the Justice Center was transplanted and duplicated in the welcoming location of Mt. Zion Oakwood Village.

Tracy Chatmon, Church volunteer said, "This is a very good day. It's a blessing that these people can take care of these outstanding warrants and go on with their lives. It's an honor to be a volunteer here to see this."

*The Information Center, Front Lobby of
Mt. Zion Oakwood Village*

Bishop Larry Macon Sr. summed it up in a statement released after the event.

"I saw the face of God in the hopes and dreams of those who wanted to account for their wrongs and failings. The entire community united to offer redemption to the least of these, and I am profoundly moved by what can only be described as a life-changing event," Bishop Macon said.



Fugitive Safe Surrender September 22 – 25, 2010 held at Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Oakwood Village, Ohio



Processing Area for Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court



safety checkpoint at the front entrance to Fugitive Safe Surrender

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Talking With: Pastor C. Jay Matthews I

In 2005, the very first Fugitive Safe Surrender was held at Mt. Sinai Baptist Church in Cleveland, Ohio. The program has gone nationwide in the last five years and literally thousands of fugitives have turned themselves in to authorities in safety. Reentry Review Staff interviewed Pastor C. Jay Matthews of Mt. Sinai Baptist Church in Cleveland, Ohio to get his thoughts about the return of Fugitive Safe Surrender to the Cleveland area on September 22 – 25, 2010.

Reentry Review: You were involved in the first Fugitive Safe Surrender in 2005. How did you get involved with that?

Pastor Matthews: United States Marshal Peter Elliott came up with the idea and worked with Douglas Weiner, who was then an Assistant Prosecutor in the Cuyahoga County Prosecutors' Office. Marshal Elliott shared the idea with Mr. Weiner, who contacted me, and we put the program together and shared it with the other law enforcement and all of the other partners who worked to make it a reality.

Reentry Review: What motivated you to offer your church as the location?

Pastor Matthews: We were looking for alternative ways to get fugitives to surrender safely.

Reentry Review: What was your reaction to the large turnout that arrived in 2005?

Pastor Matthews: We were very surprised. It was a new idea that had never been tried. I remember the first morning at 6:00 a.m. We had everyone in place - Judges, Sheriff, attorneys working pro bono - we were wondering if anyone would actually show up. But they did. In all, over the four days, 850 people surrendered on felony and misdemeanor warrants. There was also a residual effect - people turned themselves in even without outstanding warrants.

Reentry Review: What are your Church's current efforts and programs in reentry?

Pastor Matthews: The work of Fugitive Safe Surrender never stopped for our church. Reentry is part of our commitment to serve. It's part of our regular prison ministries. We have been working in different prisons, and primarily at the Marion Correctional Institution, for the last several years. The ministry includes helping former inmates transition back into the community. Our prison ministry is led by Doug Blankenship, he is one of our unsung heroes.



Reentry Review: What do you believe has changed in local reentry in the last five years since the first-ever Fugitive Safe Surrender?

Pastor Matthews: In communities that have hosted Fugitive Safe Surrender, it has proven to be a valuable and alternative tool to make communities safer. People are given the opportunity to act responsibly and turn themselves in by their own accord to deal with their issues. It has had an impact and a positive effect on communities all around the country.

Locally, our Greater Cleveland Reentry Strategy Coalition is known throughout the state. It coordinates our efforts and resources. All of the entities are working together, law enforcement, government, faith-based, non-profits, service providers and both the public and private sectors are coordinating efforts and resources to have a larger impact and to make greater improvements and change. It is a welcome asset both to Cuyahoga County and through the state.

Reentry Review: What would you like to see happen in the next five years in terms of local reentry?

Pastor Matthews: I would like whoever is elected to look at the reality of two decades of sentencing laws and the results. We have very high incarceration rates for low-level felonies. This has taken away tremendous resources from our state budget and it is unnecessary. I would urge state legislators to support the SB 179, the Second Chance Bill sponsored by Shirley Smith which deals with expungements. Locally, I would like to see us continue to focus on creating real reentry opportunities for returning citizens.

Source: Interview with Pastor C. Jay Matthews I

VOTE
Election Day is
Tuesday, November 2, 2010

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>

Greater Cleveland Integrated Re-Entry Project (GCIRP)

When the inmates at our recruiting institutions are first informed about the Greater Cleveland Integrated Re-Entry Project (GCIRP), they are not quite sure about how we can assist them with their transition. While many inmates may feel they are “programmed out,” they quickly learn about the wide array of benefits we offer to assist them in achieving a successful transition back to the community. Moreover, it is our goal that the intensive case management and wrap around services will decrease the likelihood of recidivism.

GCIRP case workers work with their small caseload of twenty-five or thirty individuals very intensely. Case Managers (CMs) work with incarcerated individuals on a bi-weekly basis. During this time, the individual is able to give the CM a strong background of where he or she has been, and where he or she would like to go after being released. A strong relationship is built between the CM and client. GCIRP CMs hold themselves to a high level of accountability. For many clients, this means their CM needs to be their outlet to the outside. For the first 3-6 months, the CM is simultaneously providing case management services to the incarcerated client and the support network person(s). The support network person will positively influence the client through support and interaction. This support network person is usually a family member, but can be a friend, neighbor, church community etc. The relationship formed with the client and support network person allows the CM to work as a family mediator. This is critically important, since many of the families have suffered from trauma and/or other life-altering events. The CM is diligently preparing both the incarcerated client and support network person for the clients’ release plans. The CM acts as a conduit, which affords all parties involved the opportunity to begin coping with unhealthy or distant relationships of the past. For those individuals with no family, their caseworker will work with them to find support in the community. For many individuals that had a drug problem prior to incarceration, a sober living environment is their biggest need. As many are quite aware, housing options are scarce. However, GCIRP CMs can anticipate a client’s housing needs while they are incarcerated, and try to find a sober place for them to go upon release. For “Jane” this is exactly what she and her CM began discussing while she was still incarcerated.

Jane was addicted to crack prior to her incarceration. She has been using for twenty-two years and was incarcerated for one year on drug possession. While working with her CM, Jane realized that the only realistic way for her to stay clean was to be released straight to treatment. Jane reported to her CM that she was going to be on Parole when released. Through the Adult Parole Authority in collaboration with GCIRP, Jane was slated to be released straight into an inpatient drug treatment facility. However, a week prior to Jane’s release, her CM was informed that the Judge had made an error when sentencing Jane. As a result, Jane was leaving prison on a straight release. Without insurance, there was nowhere for Jane to go straight from release. All treatment facilities that accepted individuals without insurance had a lengthy wait list. Jane’s CM was able to get her into a transitional shelter that offered her intensive outpatient treatment. Although Jane would have preferred inpatient treatment immediately, she found she was able to stay sober with the structure of the transitional center, outpatient treatment, and the constant support from GCIRP. Jane has been sober for five months and successfully completed her outpatient treatment. Jane

currently attends Narcotics Anonymous (NA) meetings daily and follows up with her GCIRP CM regularly. Nevertheless, Jane is still faced with daily struggles.

Although she suffers from COPD and needs a variety of medications, her Medicaid and Social Security, which she had prior to incarceration, have not yet started. Unfortunately, the process of getting back on Medicaid and Social Security is quite lengthy. Jane is able to stay on top of her appointments, medications, and her benefits application with the help of her CM. Jane, along with her CM, is also in the process of obtaining a more permanent housing option. Her stay at the transitional shelter will be coming to an end very soon. Although Jane still has no source of income, she has to find another housing facility. Jane and her CM are researching other possible housing options. Yet, both Jane and her CM know all too well the frustrations around this process. As her CM puts it, “There are not a lot of housing options out there for people with no income, in fact, the resources are few, but what I can promise Jane is that I will work as hard as I can to find one, and we will work together from wherever her road may take her...”

Working endlessly for their clients’ needs is the motto of GCIRP CMs. As Jane’s CM explains, “I cannot create resources where there they do not exist... I cannot promise they won’t face struggles when they come home. However, what I can promise my clients is that I will be there facing their struggles with them every step of the way...I will be there to support them in any way that they may need...I will advocate for them in any way I can...I will never stop trying to help them.”

GCIRP CMs and the entire GCIRP team have a passion to not only help every individual that they serve, but to advocate for the re-entry population on a larger scale, so that the future for individuals coming home will not be so hard. As Jane explained, “The individualized attention and personal relationship I receive from my CM has been critical to my journey.” GCIRP will continue to demonstrate that, in its endless efforts to help those in need.

Source: Greater Cleveland Integrated Reentry Project Staff

Cuyahoga County Department of Justice Affairs Office of Reentry

3rd Annual Greater Cleveland Reentry Strategy Community Public Meeting

Friday October 29, 2010

8:30 a.m. – Noon

Visiting Nurses Association (VNA)
2500 East 22nd Street, Cleveland, Ohio
(free parking available)

Keynote Speaker: Pastor C. Jay Matthews, I
Mt. Sinai Ministries – Mt. Sinai Baptist Church

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Fugitive Safe Surrender Turnout at Mt. Zion Oakwood Village



Fugitive Safe Surrender Founder United States Marshal Peter Elliott



Mr. Charles See, Executive Director of Community Re-Entry for Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries



Frank Feazzell, Cuyahoga County Protective Services, works in the Cuyahoga County Common Pleas Court Cashiers Office set up at Fugitive Safe Surrender.



Every bit of available space was used over the four-day event. This is one of the workstations that was set up in the Front Lobby of Mt. Zion.



A large, first-day crowd fills the Sanctuary of Mt. Zion Baptist Church, Oakwood Village, Ohio on September 22, 2010.



Mt. Zion Church Member Tracy Chatmon volunteers at Fugitive Safe Surrender on September 22, 2010.



The work piled up quickly at the biggest and busiest Fugitive Safe Surrender event in history.



Everyone who turned themselves in during Fugitive Safe Surrender started here at the Registration Tables.

GREATER CLEVELAND STRATEGY

Cuyahoga County Reentry Review



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

