

BOONE COUNTY OFFENDER TRANSITION NETWORK MEETING

March 8, 2007

ATTENDANCE

Boone County Community Partnership-*Steve Tatlow*
1st Ward Ambassadors-*Darrell Foster*
DED/DWD Veterans-*Craig Morton*
Boone County Community Partnership, AmeriCorps VISTA - *Michael Harper, Joseph Carr, Antoinne Jones*
Probation and Parole, District #6 Columbia-*Jaime Strange, Mike Webber*
Adult Learning Center-*John McClure*
Booneville Correctional Center-*Terri McNeal, Michelle Sumy*
Columbia College-*Stacy Ford*
University Extension-*Art Schneider*
Offender Representative-*Bill Doiron*
Alliance of Southwest Missouri Vista-*Jeanette Webley*
Health Department-*Betsy Smith*
Community Representative-*Dave Perkins*
Reality House-*Joel Putnam*
Veteran's Affairs-*Denise Heet, Larry Brady*
Missouri Veteran's Commission-*Gerry Hodge*
Missouri School of Religion-*Fran Schnarre*
Family Counseling Center-*Ted Solomon*
JobPoint-*Sue Long*
Boone County Drug Court-*Mike Princivalli*
Boone County Mental Health Court-*Stacey Crane*
Missouri Department of Corrections/DORS-*Stan Landon*
Missouri Career Center DWD-*Barb Seabolt*
Pettis County Community Partnership-*Karol McFarigold, Cheri Heeren*
Pettis County Community Partnership, VISTAs-*Patti Shumaker, Gloria Kinder*
A few additional persons present did not sign in.

OPENING

Steve Tatlow opened the meeting and introductions were made. It was noted that several members from the Reentry Process in Pettis County were in attendance, as well as AmeriCorps VISTA participants.

Steve handed out and reviewed February meeting minutes. No changes to the meeting minutes were noted.

AGENDA ITEMS

Focus Groups:

Betsy Smith indicated that a small sub-group had met on two occasions and discussed prioritizing what groups were to be targeted initially. It was decided that individuals that had been on parole for a long duration and had success and those that were getting ready to be released from 120-day incarceration were the desired groups. Further, it was discussed that some informal discussion take place with the faith-based groups and probation and parole officers to get some insight into their opinions. It is hoped that in the future focus groups will be conducted with providers and agencies that target youth to incorporate a prevention component. It was also mentioned conducting a focus group with families of offenders and females to better gauge into their special needs. Betsy reported that the basis of the focus

group is to identify what offenders think their needs are, what PO's think offender's needs are, and what services are available to address these needs, including the faith based component. Betsy stated she is trying to come up with some incentives to offer offenders who participate and mentioned that if anyone had resources to provide to let her know. Betsy reported that the information obtained would be qualitative and utilized to gather ideas from the source and get opinions. It is hoped that maybe some ex-offenders could assist in the focus group for current parolees doing well on supervision.

Mentoring:

Joe Carr reported an informal meeting was held several weeks ago and roughly 15 people attended and out of those only a couple were currently associated with an organized mentoring program. Joe stated the meeting was very passionate and that everyone there was "from the heart" in wanting to assist offenders and ex-offenders. Joe indicated that everyone was driven and focused on getting something done and increasing the availability of mentors for this population. Another mentoring meeting is scheduled for 3-8-07 at 6:00-7:30 P.M. at the Boone County Community Partnership Offices.

Day Reporting Center:

Mike Webber stated that things are still progressing, however he continues to deal with administrative issues in regard to the timeliness of the work being done at the center. The hard wall construction has not yet been started, however he reported he spoke to the contractor who indicated it would take under 30 days to complete the work entirely. Further, Mike reported he has ordered the phone and data lines as well as the furniture and office equipment necessary to open the center. Mike also reported that he obtained funding to provide lunches through July 2007. It was stated that all agency collaboration with the Day Reporting Center will need to engage in authorization up the chain of command within the Department of Corrections and more information will be forthcoming. Mike reported that the newly formed Reintegration Court might be utilizing some of the space and that if there is room in classes being offered other individuals may fill those classes. An official opening date for the center has not yet been determined, as construction of the walls has not yet begun.

Presentation to The Center for Effective Public Policy:

Mike reported that the efforts and dedication of BCOTN is being recognized statewide. Mike and Steve were invited and attended a forum with The Center for Effective Public Policy last week in Jefferson City. The delegation was from Washington and came to Missouri in hopes of establishing a guide for other states looking to improve reentry efforts.

Steve indicated that although at times, it might not seem like BCOTN is accomplishing much, in effect the group has helped several individuals and the "word on the street" is generating a lot of interest. Sue Long reported that she knows first hand that this group provides great collaboration and assistance to offenders. Terri McNeal reported it is nice to know that eventually when she is releasing offenders from Boonville Correctional Center they will have a program they can go to that will be able to address all of their needs. Mike stated that a main objective of BCOTN was networking and that it has worked on a small scale, leaving a lot of room to provide even more services. Several members concurred with the great efforts and collaboration of BCOTN. Steve reported that Mike was going to give all interested parties a tour of the Day Reporting Center at 3:15 P.M today.

Conference Planning Group:

Steve reported that a small conference planning group has met on 2 occasions and has thrown around ideas for a name of the mini-conference that is scheduled to take place June 21-13, 2007 at the

Resource Center. Steve also mentioned that this timeframe could serve as the official ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Day Reporting Center. It was stated that the idea of the conference is to de-mystify the process of the criminal justice system and address the biases that are out there. This conference hopes to allow the community to understand basic issues regarding reentry into society. Additionally the conference should provide an opportunity to promote an enhanced understanding of the reentry issues in Central Missouri communities. Steve also stated that there are several prisons holding job fairs within the prison meaning there are obviously agencies willing to recruit and hire offenders. Sue Long mentioned that the RIO Project in Texas served as the basis for her current Job Readiness Program. Terri McNeal indicated that the job fair is held within the prisons to provide offenders with information concerning jobs, however does not hire them on the spot. The offender is to then contact the employee upon their release from prison. Several members mentioned the importance of offenders having resumes and appropriate life skills to assist them in seeking employment. Terri clarified that 11 prisons have Transitional Housing Units that allow offenders to obtain these skills prior to their release, however several do not utilize this to its capacity. Several individuals threw out some suggestions regarding the conference including contacting the Chamber of Commerce to seek assistance, and inquiring as to what other cities are doing along the same lines.

Conference Roles:

Steve reported that there are several roles available in regard to the conference preparation and asked volunteers to put their names in to assist. Some roles mentioned were presenters, marketing, facility set-up, speakers, etc. Steve indicated he is in the process of creating a template for the conference and that the presenters would be incorporated based on the subject material and that at this juncture he is looking for people to assist with recruitment of presenters and resources. Denise Heet reported that she and Jerry would be interested in doing a veteran's presentation. Jerry mentioned inviting local dignitaries and stated he could talk to representative Ed Robb about it. Denise Heet offered to assist with marketing to the veteran's population, as several others did in regard to their respective clients. It was also mentioned that offenders to utilized to assist with the conference in a community service work type arrangement. Several members suggested ideas for obtaining food including local churches, Meals on Wheels, local restaurants, and Signature Foods.

Naming the Day Reporting Center:

Steve mentioned that several members and ex-offenders had expressed concerns over the Day Reporting Center being titled as it had a negative connotation and did not seem user friendly. Mike stressed that it needs a name in a timely manner so that the marquee can be ordered for the building. Much discussion was had as to whether changing the name would be advantageous or if it would cause confusion to the public. Several members stated that changing the name would not allow it to be recognized by the public, however some stated that renaming it could present it has more user friendly. Several names were presented and tossed around including Re-Entry Center, Success Net, Success Center, Reintegration, Project Restore, Transitional Network Program, Community Inclusion Network, Reintegration Opportunity Center, and Re-Entry Opportunity Center. Many members stated they liked the name and concept of Re-Entry Opportunity Center and the applicable acronym, ROC. Dave Perkins stated it should be noted that most probation clients have not been to prison, therefore are not reentering. Upon more discussion all members decided upon the name of the Day Reporting Center being changed to the

Re-Entry Opportunity Center, or ROC.

In-reach Pilot Project:

Steve stated the purpose of an in-reach project would be for an established community member to connect with offenders prior to their release from prison. Terri McNeal reported she ran a list and

roughly 13 offenders are scheduled to be released to Boone County in the next several months. Terri also stated that AmeriCorps VISTA, Joe Carr, might be a good first point of contact on this project as he is also spearheading the Mentor Program. Several others volunteered if their time was permitting, including Sue Long and Denise Heet. A meeting at the Boone County Community Partnership was scheduled for Thursday, March 15, 2007 at 4:30 P.M.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

John McClure reported that there is a Neo-Nazi march scheduled this Saturday in downtown Columbia and that the community has come together and organized an event at Douglass Park during that time to dissuade people from being in the downtown area. The best response to this movement is to have everyone go to the park and participate in all the activities that will be offered. The event will run from 12-5 P.M. John reported that he would e-mail everyone in the group a flyer to distribute accordingly.

Jeanette Webley reported that on April 20, 2007 a public forum is being held in Joplin, Missouri to address MRP efforts in that area of Missouri. Steve Tatlow and Julie Boehm, with Department of Corrections DOC Reentry Division, will be making presentations. An information flyer was distributed.

John McClure also announced that a group from St. Louis is holding a seminar on Domestic Violence on March 24, 2007 and that he would e-mail more information.

Steve mentioned that a newsletter be generated monthly to update and inform everyone on local MRP and BCOTN efforts. The Boone County Vistas volunteered to assist with this endeavor and everyone thought it was a great idea.

Future Agenda Items:

Mike stated that he would like to look at a prevention component next month, including looking at the direction of BCOTN and where it is going in the future as far as bringing some agencies that deal with juveniles back to the table in a prevention mode. Some mentioned agencies included Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Rainbow House, and the Juvenile Office.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, April 12, 2007, 8:30 A.M. LOCATION TO BE DETERMINED.

Mike Webber reported that space at the Probation and Parole Office is not available in April, as a Cognitive Restructuring Group is being conducted for roughly 20 offenders by Probation and Parole staff.