

BOONE COUNTY OFFENDER TRANSITION NETWORK MEETING

May 10, 2007

ATTENDANCE

Boone County Community Partnership-*Steve Tatlow*
Boone County Community Partnership, AmeriCorps Vista-*Joe Carr, Michael Harper, Antoinne Jones*
Probation and Parole, District #6 Columbia-*Jaime Strange, Mike Webber*
VA Hospital-*Larry Brady*
Booneville Correctional Center-*Terri McNeal, Michelle Sumy*
Health Department-*Betsy Smith*
Reality House-*Joel Putnam*
Job Point-*Sue Long*
Boone County Drug Court-*Mike Princivalli*
Boone County Mental Health Court-*Stacey Crane*
Phoenix House Programs-*Libby Brockman-Knight*
Vocational Rehabilitation-*Duane Shumate*
Victory Circle-*Dan Hanneken, Allen McCarter*
Community –*Brad McConnell*
Algoa Correctional Center- *Scott Kintner*
Tipton Correctional Center-*Samona Kosfeld*
MO Restorative Justice Coalition-*Wanda Hoffman*
Voluntary Action Center-*Julia Fortune*
Youth Empowerment Zone-*Lorenzo Lawson*
Division of Workforce Development-*Craig Morton*
MO Dept of Corrections-*Stan Landon*
MO Dept of Mental Health-*George W. Norman*
Job Point-*Nicole Gerdemann*
Community Representative-*Dave Perkins*
MU School of Nursing-*Tonya Eddy, Cara Miller, Maggie McKinney*

OPENING

Steve Tatlow opened the meeting and introductions were made. April meeting minutes were passed around for review. No changes were noted. A sign-in sheet was passed around and everyone was asked to update his or her e-mail address if not receiving the minutes.

AGENDA ITEMS

MU Nursing Project:

Steve reported that he is currently working with several nursing students from the MU School of Nursing on navigating through the available resources in the Boone County area. Maggie McKinney and Cara Miller are currently working on what is hoped to be the ultimate resource guide, which will

be directly centered on offenders and ex-offenders. Their goal is to update the health services portion. They have been working with several local agencies and checking websites to gather information. Steve reported that Antoinne Jones is also working on a guide for re-entry efforts and it is in a rough draft phase. It is hoped the guide will also be available online at the BCOTN website once completed. The information collected to date was passed around for review.

Youth-System Entry Prevention:

Steve introduced Lorenzo Lawson from the Youth Empowerment Zone to discuss local youth prevention efforts. Lawson stated the Youth Empowerment Zone was created with a grant to address gang violence and youth prevention. The main objective was to address the areas that had severe gaps such as the 1st Ward. Currently YEZ is partnering with the Division of Youth Services to assist youth in their system with getting into school and employment. Caseworkers also work with youth, their parents, and the school in addressing all need areas. Lawson reported that YEZ allows youth to have a place to go and the support they need when they are ready to make changes in their lives. Lawson stated that they have many corporate sponsors and are currently a non-for profit organization. YEZ serves youth 15-24 years old in the hopes of seeing them through college and into young adult life. Lawson further reported that he hopes BCOTN agencies would refer young people to the program. Lawson announced that Jeffrey Canada, who started the Harlem Children's Zone, would be in Columbia June 18-22, 2007 to do a presentation on his program. There might also be radio and television appearances. Several members of the group congratulated Lawson on his hard work and dedication and reminded everyone that it takes a community to raise a child. Mike Webber also stated that BCOTN should be about making parents, who are also offenders, accountable and to encourage and promote the building of strong families. Mike indicated that parents need to be role models for their children and that partnering with youth programs will prevent criminal behavior down the road.

Vision:

Steve indicated that it is impossible to complete all objectives in a 2 hour meeting therefore everyone needs to think about where they see this group in 3-5 years. What will it look like? Steve stated that at this juncture it would be beneficial to come up with a strategic plan and discuss possible visions for this group. Steve suggested individuals share their visions for BCOTN in the next 3-5 years.

Mike Webber indicated that he envisions the main objective being addressing employment and reducing technical violations. He further stated that he sees the ROC as a place where offenders can go to and reconnect if they relapse, lose a job, have mental health issues, etc. Mike reported that he sees the main objective as being able to identify an individual's needs upfront and providing a network of services to address those needs. Mike stressed that the bottom line is offenders are coming home and we need to be able to have a network of service for them to utilize.

Brad McConnell stated it would be beneficial to know the statistics on technical violators and if they are getting the right resources. Brad also stated it would be important to know that the positive indicators are as well. Steve agreed and reported it would be helpful to get a snapshot of why people are going back to prison. Dan Hanneken reported that it is hard to get accurate information from offenders in research studies because most don't participate or follow through. He reported he is doing research in St.Louis and will be meeting with offenders face to face to get information. Mike reported that the University of Central Missouri in Warrensburg recently conducted a self-report study on parolees, however the results are not yet available. Sue Long suggested that most offenders don't trust Probation and Parole Officers so when conducting research through officers not going to get accurate information. More likely to get accurate and truthful information in face to face interviews with people they trust. Scott Kintner indicated that he could arrange for a tour of Algoa Correctional Center for

those who are unfamiliar with the prison setting. Betsy Smith and Dave Perkins are conducting a focus group at Boonville Correctional Center with inmates being released to the Boone County area to discuss need areas and reentry concerns.

Sue Long stated her vision is that a really large ROC exists and serves as a spot where all people feel comfortable and have a plethora of resources available to them. Offenders know where to get help and are comfortable getting it. Sue also stated that someone has to inspire change in offenders and set successful examples.

Steve reported he envisions a seamless system starting with corrections and ending with the offender being successfully reintegrated into society. Steve indicated he sees a holistic approach including personal plans for all offenders and easy to access resources.

Duane Shumate reported he also envisions a resource center where all resources are available and accessible and that offenders are assigned consumer advocates to assist them with the connectivity. Duane reported case management and “re-entry advocates” would be pivotal to success.

Larry Brady stated he agrees that advocates would be helpful in developing relationships, which would be key to a successful future. Larry indicated there might be grant money available to fund case managers.

Allen McCarter from Victory Circle indicated it was commendable to see so many people at the table for ex-offenders and stressed that it is important to have people facilitate the transition from prison to community. As an ex offender Allen indicated that an offender has to want to change his life and that holding them accountable can facilitate change. Allen reported that housing is a major obstacle for offenders.

George Norman offered that the system is not doing a good job coordinating services. George mentioned that through grants DOC has been able to provide transitioning inmates recovery and support systems. George further stated that information needs to be available prior to release and that state organizations need to come together to better serve offenders.

Terri McNeal reported that all offenders are given fact sheet and pamphlets of resources before leaving prison, however many of the young offenders are not ready for change and not committed to it. Stan Landon added that the function of a Transitional Housing Unit is to make resources available and that statistics show that the recidivism rates of offenders in a THU for a longer duration are lower than those offenders who are there for a shorter time.

Many indicated that they would like to see other agencies such as school officials, police officers, sheriff’s deputies, faith based agencies, children/youth services, and politicians at the table for further collaboration, however Betsy Smith cautioned not bringing more agencies to the table until it is clear what their role will be.

Key points made from visioning discussion include connectivity, youth prevention, case managers, results, real relationships, holistic approach, role models, trust, generational issues, seamless system of delivery, individual case plans, statistical data on success and weakness, and establishing trust with offenders.

Strategic Planning:

Mike stated that as a group we need to be decide what we want to have happen and that within the next month everyone needs to think about their agency's involvement and where/how they want to be involved in the future. Mike reported that he plans to develop a worksheet to distribute next month to inquire about participation and commitment. Mike indicated that after collecting the worksheets a small group will meet for a half-day to put all information gathered together and come up with a strategic plan incorporating all ideas and recommendations. Mike stressed that BCOTN needs to be formal on its approach and create a roadmap. A more formalized structure could also lead to more grant opportunities and possibly non-profit status. No concern or opposition to this plan was noted. Stan Landon he has visited with other Re-entry groups and observed smaller sub-committees with a formal large meeting for group reports. Mike reported he would bring the worksheets to next months meeting and requested everyone be prepared to fill out and return the following month.

Website:

Steve reported that BCOTN currently has its own website at www.bcotn.org. Through this website it is hoped that meeting minutes will be available as well as information and a list of the current members. Steve also indicated he hopes to make a resource guide available at this site. If anyone does not want their name or company name listed on the website please let Steve know. Stan Landon reported that Community Connections no longer exists and is being replaced by the 211 System. The United Way is currently hiring individuals to work on this system.

Sub-Committee Updates:

Focus Groups: Betsy reported she and Dave Perkins are going to Boonville Correctional Center on 5-11-07 to conduct a focus group with roughly 15 offenders coming to the Boone County area.

Mentoring: This group is meeting at the Boone County Partnership Building on Thursday nights. The next meeting is for tonight at 6:00 PM.

ROC: Mike reported that the money has been located for the ROC and OA is now trying to get a contractor hired to start the work. Once the work is started it should take no longer than 30 days until completion. June 30, 2007 is the target date of opening !!

Conference Planning: Steve reported that the conference is going to be pushed back until later this summer/fall to coincide with the opening of the ROC and to look at some possible restructuring of the conference. He will need to look at booking the large conference rooms within the Resource Center ASAP. Duane Shumate said he would look into the availability of the rooms for September 2007.

In-Reach Project: Meeting tonight, 5-11-07, at 4:30 P.M at the Boone County Community Partnership Building.

ANNOUCEMENTS

Mike Princivalli announced that Blair Campmier has been hired as the new Reintegration Court Coordinator and would be starting in the next week.

NEXT MEETING

Thursday, June 14, 2007 from 8:30 -10:30 A.M. LOCATION TO BE DETERMINED.