



NATIONAL CRIME  
PREVENTION COUNCIL

MISSION  
STATEMENT

*To enable people to create safer and more caring communities by addressing the causes of crime and violence and reducing the opportunities for crime to occur.*

The National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC) is a private, nonprofit tax-exempt [501(c)(3)] organization whose primary mission is to enable people to create safer and more caring communities by addressing the causes of crime and violence and reducing the opportunities for crime to occur.

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# Introduction

In the United States more than 140 million people consider themselves to be members of a community of faith<sup>1</sup>. Many in these communities seek to live out their faith by making their communities better and safer places to live. They work to prevent crime from happening by participating in efforts such as Neighborhood Watch, but they also focus on the situation of offenders and prisoners by offering prison ministries and reentry programs that seek to break the cycle of crime and incarceration. They give attention to at-risk children and youth, mentoring children of prisoners, working with gang-involved youth, and providing alternative sentencing options for juvenile offenders.

*Faith Community and Criminal Justice Collaboration: A Collection of Effective Programs* looks at how people of faith work with or in criminal justice institutions to reconcile, restore, and nurture individuals back into families and communities. You'll read about people of faith serving across the entire criminal justice spectrum, from alternative programs for juveniles to support services for newly released ex-offenders. Crime will find less opportunity wherever religious communities weave networks with criminal justice organizations.

The people who are involved in these programs come from different faith traditions, but they have something in common: they want to prevent the suffering caused by crime and to provide healing where crime has occurred. The Jewish community speaks of *tikkun olam*—to repair the world. Christians follow one who said he was bringing "release to the captives." People of Islamic faith feel a deep commitment to social justice. Buddhists speak of the "Middle Path." The call to bring healing and to restore communities unites people of different religions, races, and ethnicities.

Criminal justice organizations benefit greatly from the involvement of people of faith. They provide an enormous resource of highly motivated volunteers and professionals who work to prevent crime by offering at-risk youth positive alternatives to gang membership and criminal activity; providing alternative sentencing options for substance abusers, shoplifters, and juveniles; and seeking to engage program participants in their neighborhoods and communi-

## *Introduction*

ties. People of faith work within prisons as well, offering programs that have been shown to decrease the risk of recidivism, such as helping prisoners maintain connections with their families, providing assistance with education programs, and developing reentry plans that ease the transition into the community. Faith communities provide various aftercare ministries that seek to prevent ex-offenders from returning to criminal activity. In all of these programs, they extend the reach and the efforts of criminal justice organizations; they create important relationships of trust with youth and ex-offenders that can be a powerful influence for good; and they help mobilize communities to address the causes of crime and violence.

We call this publication “A Collection,” but it is only a sampling of what is happening wherever people of faith and criminal justice agencies work in creative partnerships to prevent crime and to address its effects. Although the document has a broad sweep, we know that there are many more programs being done by people working together to make good things happen. We hope that this publication will inspire you to forge effective partnerships, develop programs that work, and then share them with your colleagues.

# 1

## Restorative Justice and the Courts

In the U.S. court system, crimes are considered to be committed against the state rather than the individual. But criminals owe a debt to their victims as well as to society. Restorative justice is an effort to achieve reconciliation between offender, victim, and the community. Restorative justice focuses on restitution rather than punishment—offenders work to repair the damage they have done both to their victims and to their communities. Restorative justice

### SIGNPOSTS OF RESTORATIVE JUSTICE

Harry Mika and Howard Zehr described restorative justice in *Conciliation Quarterly*, the publication of the Mennonite Central Committee.

We are working toward restorative justice when we...

- Focus on the harms of wrongdoing more than the rules that have been broken
- Show equal concern and commitment to victims and offenders, involving both in the process of justice
- Work toward the restoration of victims, empowering them and responding to their needs as they see them
- Support offenders while encouraging them to understand, accept and carry out their obligations
- Recognize that while obligations may be difficult for offenders, they should not be intended as harms and they must be achievable
- Provide opportunities for dialogue, direct or indirect, between victims and offenders as appropriate
- Involve and empower the affected community through the justice process, and increase its capacity to recognize and respond to community bases of crime
- Encourage collaboration and reintegration rather than coercion and isolation
- Give attention to the unintended consequences of our actions and programs
- Show respect to all parties including victims, offenders and justice colleagues

Crime wounds . . . justice heals.<sup>2</sup>

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may involve enabling the offender to make restitution to the victim rather than serving time. For example, the offender may perform a certain amount of community service or, in the case of property damage, work to make money to pay for repair or restoration. The offenders benefit also when they are able to repair damaged relationships with their families and community.

Restorative justice is an approach that many faith groups find compatible with their teachings because it provides a bridge between faith and action, between belief in the value of every person and a ministry to both victims and perpetrators of crimes.

## Intervening Early With Shoplifters

### Faith-based mentors intervene early with shoplifters

**PROBLEM** Shoplifting is often a young person's first crime and may lead to more serious criminal activity.

**PROGRAM** The Shoplifter Education Program was started in 1986 in Newton, KS, by Offender Victim Ministries (OVM), a faith-based nonprofit organization. In cooperation with the Harvey County, KS, court system, OVM created the three-month Shoplifter Education Program to provide an alternative to prosecution for juvenile offenders. Most participants in the program are young (eight to 17), but adults are referred to the program as well. Funding comes from the United Way, chamber of commerce, merchants' associations, churches, grants, and county agencies. Local schools help with referrals. Participants are matched with a volunteer mentor who is often from a local congregation. The volunteer meets with the juvenile approximately five times to discuss values, goals, and other issues. The young person signs a contract requiring him or her to do well in school and follow rules at home. Most important, he or she must write an apology to the store where the shoplifting occurred and deliver it in person. Community retail managers and county attorneys explain that shoplifting will have serious consequences.

**ROLE OF FAITH** Offender Victim Ministries is a nonprofit organization that was formed within a Mennonite congregation. It began with a traditional Mennonite prison ministry and evolved into a nondenominational Christian social ministry focusing on restorative justice. Staff, volunteers, and service recipients are welcome to participate regardless of their beliefs. Many of the program's mentors come from local congregations.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** Finding volunteers and funding can be difficult. Educating neighborhood congregations about the success of programs that employ this strategy can bring support from volunteers as well as donors.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** According to a 1996 evaluation by the Harvey County Attorney, from 1991 through 1995, 89 percent (166) of the 187 juveniles re-

ferred to the program, successfully completed it. Of those 166, only 18 were rearrested, a 10.8 percent recidivism rate. But the recidivism rate was almost twice as high—21.4 percent—for the youth who were already on probation when they participated in the program, which indicates that the earlier inter-

vention works best. The cost is minimal, \$300 per juvenile.<sup>3</sup> Parents of participants report that the program improved their communication with their children. The program has now expanded to a nearby community.

## PRISON FELLOWSHIP MINISTRIES

Chuck Colson was an aide to President Richard Nixon when the Watergate burglary took place in 1972. Colson entered a plea of guilty to Watergate-related charges and was sentenced to one to three years in prison. He served seven months in Alabama's Maxwell Prison. Shortly before his incarceration, Colson converted to Christianity. After his release, he founded Prison Fellowship Ministries, an organization that partners with local churches across the country to minister to prisoners and ex-prisoners and their families. In 1983 he established Justice Fellowship, a nonprofit online community of Christians advocating biblically based principles of restorative justice. One strategy is to host large-scale forums for states that have requested them; at the forums, staff present examples of the use of restorative justice to heal victims, reform offenders, and restore peace to communities. For more information, visit [www.pfm.org](http://www.pfm.org) or [www.justicefellowship.org](http://www.justicefellowship.org).

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## Prehearing Conference Facilitation

**Mediators facilitate prehearing conferences in Family Court, bringing together families, attorneys, social workers, and others involved in child protection cases.**

**PROBLEM** The courts are not always the best place to resolve child protection disputes. Families often have less than ten minutes to present their case, and without proper follow-up services, children may remain in foster homes for years.

**PROGRAM** The Good Shepherd Mediation Program (GSMP) is a neighborhood, faith-based justice center with the mission to “empower Philadelphia community residents to creatively search for meaningful and lasting solutions to their conflicts without resorting to crime or violence.”<sup>4</sup> GSMP is based on the philosophy of the Sisters of Good Shepherd, an international order of Catholic sisters. The mission of the Sisters of Good Shepherd is reconciliation, its philosophy, “Each person is of more value than a world.”

Prehearing conferences were implemented in 1997 in one “Model Court” as part of the Pennsylvania Court Improvement Project to streamline the overcrowded court system. GSMP provided the mediators, who were either staff or contracted professionals. The Model Court was found to be effective after a formal evaluation, and the prehearing conferences were implemented in all Philadelphia courtrooms.

The mediators work with the court's Dependency Unit, which processes petitions filed in Family Court against parents accused of child abuse, neglect, or abandonment. Before the adjudicatory hearing, cases go to a prehearing conference, which takes a collaborative rather than adversarial approach. GSMP mediators facilitate dialog in this informal meeting, and family members play an active part in the process. The goal is to protect the child and prevent further abuse and neglect but also to encourage the maintenance of the family unit whenever possible.

**ROLE OF FAITH** GSMP mediators are dedicated to peacemaking, and the services are available to everyone, regardless of religion.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** Courts may be resistant to a process that seems informal and difficult to control. To add such a process to the court system requires the cooperation of faith-based and justice representatives. In some cases, the prehearing conference will not be successful because the parties cannot reach an agreement. Parents may spend the time arguing about responsibility for the situation, or they may refuse to make any of the changes necessary to retain or regain custody of the child.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** Since 1997, GSMP has facilitated more than 11,000 prehearing conferences in Family Court, serving more than 89,000 participants (an average of eight per session). Ninety-two percent of the prehearing conferences have resulted in recommendations that the participants agreed upon, which were sent to the judge for his or her consideration in rendering the court order.

The National Center for Juvenile Justice reported, "The prehearing conference was generally viewed by Model Court participants as the tangible centerpiece of the pilot effort—the innovation that front-loads the process. . . . [C]ourt participants suggested that by bringing people to the table, the conference helped to open communication and defuse hostilities. . . . Some participants suggested the conference empowers parents and provided examples where parents had been accompanied by a support network of family, friends, and/or service providers at the prehearing conference."<sup>5</sup>

The Model Court project (with prehearing conferences) was fully institutionalized throughout the Philadelphia Dependency Court system and is now a model for other jurisdictions.

## SENTENCED TO TAI CHI

In 2003 a New Mexico judge came up with an alternative sentencing program for violent offenders. Collaborating with local Taoist practitioners, the judge diverts offenders to a therapeutic rehabilitation program of Tai Chi, an ancient Chinese form of meditation combined with movement. A psychologist for the New Mexico State Corrections Department and a spiritual leader and practitioner of Oriental medicine worked together to develop this program, which teaches violent offenders techniques for impulse control.

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## Alternative Sentencing for Drug Offenders

**The faith community establishes a spiritually based residential drug treatment program as an alternative to incarceration.**

**PROBLEM** There is little evidence to show that incarceration effectively treats substance abuse in convicted offenders.

**PROGRAM** Beit T'Shuvah, a Jewish congregation, provides a wide range of drug treatment and recovery services for the Jewish community in Southern California. The faith-based model of residential treatment emphasizes meditation, prayer, and discussions based on shared Jewish heritage. Its primary care program has 20 licensed clinical therapists from the faith community, staff therapists with expertise in addiction counseling, and rabbinic staff. Residents who have been in recovery for more than four months may participate in the Sober Living program, resuming work and outside activities while continuing to live in the facility. Eventually they graduate to a fully independent living situation.

The congregation also sponsors an aftercare program that connects graduates to the support services of the community through activities and services:

- Alumni groups
- Torah study
- Individual and spiritual counseling
- Training for alumni who want to volunteer as paraprofessional counselors
- Social, recreational, and spiritual events

**ROLE OF FAITH** Beit T'Shuvah is an inclusive Jewish worship community of all ages that includes addicts and nonaddicts. Staff believe the strength of the recovery program and the success of treatment can be attributed to the faith-based nature of the program. Residents are supported and nurtured through the faith community as they participate in study, meditation, prayer, and discussion. They develop or reestablish a connection to their Jewish heritage and community of faith. Beit T'Shuvah is funded by grants from the Jewish Federation Council and contributions from private charitable organizations and individuals.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** A good relationship with the courts and the judges is essential. It may be difficult to find funding, staff, and therapists for the residence. Spiritual leaders must be committed to the program and to finding resources for it.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** Addicts who participate in high-quality treatment programs are less likely to relapse or resort to violence and more likely to reunite with their families. Of the 140 alumni who participated in the program for at

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least 30 days, according to the program's evaluation, 78 percent remained out of jail and employed, and 64 percent maintained their connection to Judaism and the Jewish community.

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# 2

## Corrections and Rehabilitation

*“We must accept the reality that to confine offenders behind walls without trying to change them is an expensive folly with short-term benefits—winning battles while losing the war.”*

**—Former U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Warren Burger**

In 2002, more than two million people were incarcerated in the United States.<sup>6</sup> When released—at a rate of about 630,000 per year<sup>7</sup>—these ex-offenders face significant barriers to successful reentry, such as limited employment and housing options. Crime prevention efforts at this stage seek to interrupt the cycle of criminal activity and incarceration and to prevent recidivism; they focus on helping releasees return to their communities, find housing and jobs, and resume (or create) nurturing family relationships.

The word *penitentiary* derives from the Latin word *paenitere*, to repent. But repentance or remorse for a crime committed is likely to wear thin after many months—or years—of incarnation if the prisoner sees little likelihood of an improved life when he or she is released. Depression, bitterness, and anger may quickly replace the intention to atone for the crime and to rebuild broken relationships. In addition, many who enter prison lack the basic skills and education needed for a productive and healthy lifestyle when they are released. In a 1997 survey of the educational level of state and federal prisoners, 41 percent had not completed high school, compared to 18 percent of the general population. The survey also found that the higher the educational level, the more likely the offender was to be employed at the time of the arrest and the less likely to have had a prior sentence.<sup>8</sup>

Education can provide a powerful motivation for change, and it can improve the offender’s employability and help him or her become a responsible part of the community upon release. Education programs are provided in about 90 percent of state prisons and private prisons and in all federal prisons. The majority of the programs focus on preparing for the GED. More than half of the inmates surveyed in 1997 reported taking classes while they were incarcerated.<sup>9</sup> Studies have shown that educating prisoners helps prevent further offenses and reduces recidivism. One such study, by the Virginia Department of Correctional Education, found that over a 15-year period, recidivism rates were 59 percent lower for those who had completed educational programs. Another study had similar findings although the difference in recidivism rates

was not quite as great.<sup>10</sup> A recent report of a three-state recidivism study, *Education Reduces Crime*, found that participants in educational programs had a lower rate of recidivism and a higher rate of income than nonparticipants in the three states (Maryland, Minnesota, and Ohio).<sup>11</sup>

Faith communities often see their role in prison ministry as helping inmates change and grow. They offer programs that focus on parenting techniques, conflict resolution, healthcare, job skills, or substance abuse treatment. Each of these options can provide inmates with the opportunity to leave prison with more than they entered—an education, a sustained or repaired relationship, or skills needed in the job market. Ex-offenders who are able to find jobs and rejoin supportive families are less likely to commit crimes.

## Storybook Project for Incarcerated Mothers and Their Children

### **Incarcerated women record stories to be sent to their children.**

**PROBLEM** At the end of 1999, there were an estimated 126,100 children whose mothers were in prison, nearly double the number in 1991. While 60 percent of the women in state prison had some kind of weekly contact with their children, more than half of them (54 percent) never received an actual visit from their children while they were incarcerated. This was at least partly due to distance—prisons are often far away and inaccessible by public transportation. Sixty percent of parents in state prison were more than 100 miles from their last residence.<sup>12</sup> Children can lose contact with their mothers if they are not aided by caring adults.

**PROGRAM** Once a month, mothers in the Lane Murray Unit of the Texas prison system in Gatesville participate in the Storybook Project. Volunteers from faith communities bring new books and tapes to prisons to help the women record stories to mail to their children. Communication with the parent—even just hearing her voice—can be a great comfort to the child and help him or her adjust to the absence. Doing things “together-apart,” such as reading the same story, can help a mother stay connected to her child while she is incarcerated.

The Texas prison system is the largest in the Western world, and Lane Murray, with more than 1,200 inmates, is one of the largest women’s prisons in the United States.<sup>13</sup> Women are sent to the prison from across Texas and from other states. Most are hundreds of miles from their homes, which makes visitation with their children difficult.

The Texas Baptist Women’s Convention donated more than 800 new books, tapes, and mailers to the project to get it started. A lay leader from St. Mark’s Episcopal Church in Austin made visits to the women’s units and formed relationships with the officials there. It took almost a year of visits to the prison

before the project could be established. A prison social worker helped implement the program and continues to volunteer on Saturdays. When a new warden at the unit abruptly stopped the program, the project was moved to another unit. Volunteers are required to spend four hours at the prison prior to their first storybook session for an intake screening, including a criminal record check.

St. Mark's pays two social workers to provide parenting classes for the offenders. While half the group is recording the stories, the other half is attending the parenting class.

**ROLE OF FAITH** The Storybook Project is an interfaith ministry for St. Mark's Episcopal Church, Temple Beth Shalom, and the Texas Baptist Women's Convention. Volunteers from other faiths and from the Austin community also participate. The project is seen as a vital outreach ministry to these highly vulnerable members of the community, incarcerated mothers and their children.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** The approval and cooperation of prison officials is essential. They may choose to limit the scope of the project for one reason or another—for example, a prison may have space for only one reading at a time. Others may not allow frequent visits or may require lengthy intake screening for volunteers. Illiteracy can be a problem for some of the mothers. A volunteer may assist the mother as she reads, encouraging her to memorize simple verses or to select a book with pictures and repetitive phrases. The sponsoring organizations may want to consider adding a literacy class to the project.

## TIPS FOR A SUCCESSFUL STORYBOOK PROJECT

Sr. Patricia Davis of the Prisoner and Family Ministry of the Lutheran Social Services of Illinois offers the following tips for running a successful Storybook Project:

- Always follow jail and prison rules no matter how you question them. Everything counts on your reputation with corrections officials.
- Different groups do this [project] in different ways. Some do it as the ending part of a parenting class or part of a literacy class. Many do it as a special event before Christmas or Mother's Day.
- If there is time, the mom may want to write a little note to her child in the front cover of each book.
- Don't forget that women are housed in county jails as well as in state and federal prisons.
- Some make this a weekly effort with a few volunteers and some monthly with more volunteers. A lot of this depends on how the prison authorities think it will work best.
- Realize there will be a lot of waiting time while the women are being called. They may not be available on many occasions. Expect to be disappointed on occasion.
- Ask for a location where there won't be a lot of noise.
- Bring quick-to-read handouts to give to the moms so they can decide if they want to take part in the program. You may go to a tier to explain the program to a large group and then the women will fill out a request. Or the prison may take care of that and have the women ready for the program when you arrive.
- Make sure the prison gets some good publicity for their part in the program. If they are willing to stick their neck out and cooperate, they deserve it.
- Don't forget that there will be some who sincerely think you shouldn't be doing this. Listen to what they have to say and then share your own experience.<sup>14</sup>

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** This strategy originated with a Chicago Lutheran organization in 1993 and has spread to more than 20 states. It can be implemented at little cost to the sponsoring congregation. Temple Beth Shalom and St. Mark's Episcopal Church take six or seven volunteers to visit the prison each month, allowing 35 to 40 mothers to record stories. Program administrators estimate the cost of mailings and transportation to be less than \$65 per month.

For many of the children who receive a tape, this will be the first time in years that they have heard their mother's voice. "Families of offenders report [the children's] poignant . . . reactions to the sound of their mothers' voices: they carry their tapes around, talk back to them, and go to sleep listening to them."<sup>15</sup>

Although the project was designed for the benefit of the children of incarcerated parents, the mothers say that the program has made them want to become better parents, and many have begun to study parenting skills on their own. The mothers want to participate in the program and because offenders are chosen to participate according to merit, their behavior improves. The social worker reports that the self-esteem of the participating mothers improves because they know they are doing something positive for their children.

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*For more information on programs for children of prisoners, see "Amachi: People of Faith Mentoring Children of Promise."*

## **Surrogate Parenting for Inmates**

**A faith-based organization provides a program for incarcerated men to establish healthy and supportive relationships with youth.**

**PROBLEM** Prisoners may have come from distressed or abusive families and have repeated those patterns in their adult lives. They may have become alienated from their families who might provide support for them when they leave prison.

**PROGRAM** The HOPE (Helping Offenders Pursue Excellence) for Life Program teaches incarcerated men how to be good parents by helping them explore past failed relationships and teaching them how to create healthy relationships with troubled juveniles.

Adult inmates who are selected to participate must pass an intensive screening process and then take a parenting program provided by Bethesda Family Services Foundation (BFSF). BFSF is a faith-based organization that developed the program in cooperation with the Lewisburg Intensive Confinement Center (ICC) in Pennsylvania. This program currently operates in two federal prisons.

Many of the inmates in the program are fathers who no longer have regular contact with their children. The youth selected for the program have been abused or abandoned by their own fathers. The idea is to help the prisoners build healthy and supportive relationships with these young boys (who are not their own children) in a safe and nurturing environment. Participants are matched on the basis of family similarities, and they join a group guided by trained therapists and facilitators. Each inmate is given the opportunity to consider and evaluate his behavior with his own children, and the youth is encouraged to think about his relationship with his own father. Counselors take participants through role-plays designed to evoke an understanding of failed relationships and a release of repressed pain and grief. Participants share their life stories and may read letters of apology or memories to the group, which then provides discussion and support. These experiences are intended to prepare the adult and the juvenile to work with their own families—the adult practices being a father, and the youth learns how to relate to his own parents.

Other activities include the following:

- Group counseling
- Writing and reading personal autobiographies
- Writing and reading letters that confront their chief offenders
- Writing and reading letters of admission that seek forgiveness
- Providing support and direction for other participants
- Working through problems identified in the group
- Setting realistic goals for resolution of family conflict

These activities help inmates understand how their individual method of parenting was developed, establish a plan of action for change to become better parents, and, through facilitated visits, practice the methods of interaction learned in the program with their own family members.

**ROLE OF FAITH** The program is funded primarily through the U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Prisons. BFSF staff do not promote any particular religion but support faith-based affiliations. According to BFSF staff, “We recognize that sacred writings contain moral absolutes that reinforce traditional values that are relevant to our lives today, regardless of individual circumstances or denominations/religious preference, and it is these truths that help guide people through life.”

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** Budget constraints are always a concern with prison programs. Confidentiality is also an important concern and is problematic when

participants are incarcerated. Prison staff need to support the program, and inmates must be able to trust that their work with the group will remain confidential. The therapists and counselors must also be prepared to be flexible—inmates' schedules can change at a moment's notice for a variety of reasons.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** During 2003, 190 men successfully completed the HOPE for Life program. (BFSF doesn't follow the progress of the youth after they complete HOPE for Life because it is only a small part of the boys' treatment, which is handled by another corporation.) New groups start every six weeks, and the program is currently operating in two federal prisons (Schuylkill and Lewisburg).

On Father's Day 1996, the HOPE for Life program was featured on *Bad Dads* on Fox TV; on the same day, the partnership between BFSF and Lewisburg ICC was featured on *ABC World News Sunday*. *Bad Dads* has subsequently been shown across the nation in many prisons. BFSF receives frequent requests for additional materials, training, or information about the program from prison staff, inmates, and family members. The program has been featured in several other documentaries.

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**STRATEGY IN ACTION**

*As told by Bethesda Family Services Foundation staff:*

An inmate from our Lewisburg class volunteered to be in the program but was very resistant to change at first. He was filled with rage that stemmed from abusive situations with his father and stepfather. He grew up to repeat the abuse in his own relationship with the mother of his daughter. He was referred to as "Demo-Man." . . . He tried to medicate his rage with drugs and alcohol. During the Bethesda HOPE for Life Program . . . [h]e broke down, wrote an emotional letter to his deceased father, and played out numerous scenarios with other inmates and juveniles. Afterwards he reconciled with the mother of his child and became an active partner and father while still incarcerated.

*He was so grateful for the opportunity, and he wrote to us:*

I would just like to send you all my sincerest thanks for all the help and love that was given to me. You opened my eyes and my heart to a better way of life. I learned to express my feelings in a more mature way. I learned how to be a "father," something I never was, with all the help and guidance that you have given me. I will use it to better myself and pass on this gift of life to others who are what I used to be. This is the first step in a new way of life, and I thank you for guiding me in this direction. I am truly a better man today. Please tell the younger folks that they played a great part in my new life, and I will never forget them. Please give them my thanks, and tell them to try as hard as they can to be strong.

## Literacy Coaching for Inmates

### Volunteers train inmates to teach reading skills to other inmates.

**PROBLEM** A substantial number of prisoners are functionally illiterate; many have learning disabilities, and most of these leave prison still unable to read. The 1992 National Adult Literacy Survey, which included only a small sample of prisoners, found that 70 percent were at the lowest level of literacy, and more than a third reported that they had learning disabilities.<sup>16</sup> A study of Texas inmates by the University of Texas Medical Branch at Galveston found that 80 percent of the adult prisoners were functionally illiterate, many with undiagnosed learning disabilities. Most of these leave prison still unable to read. The average adult offender in Texas dropped out of school in the sixth or seventh grade and functions at a fifth-grade level or below.<sup>17</sup>

**PROGRAM** Texas HOPE Literacy is a nondenominational Christian nonprofit that collaborates with the Texas Department of Criminal Justice to bring reading improvement programs to Texas prisons. Volunteers from faith communities train prisoners to teach reading skills to other inmates. Students sign up to meet for weekly sessions. The volunteers administer tests to determine whether the coaches and students have attained mastery in curricula areas. Students receive certificates for their accomplishments. The program is designed to provide remedial education for inmates who are functionally illiterate, many with learning disabilities. Literate inmates are trained to be literacy/math coaches for their peers. Becoming a coach empowers the inmates and decreases the likelihood of recidivism.

The program began in Hutchins State Jail and the Gatesville Trusty Camp. The curriculum includes alphabet dictionary skills (learning the alphabet in order to be able to use dictionaries, encyclopedias, telephone directories, etc.), reading/comprehension, grammar/diagramming, spelling, cursive writing and composition, and math.

**ROLE OF FAITH** Although all volunteer tutors are required to have a “personal relationship with Jesus Christ” and are allowed to share information about their faith with the inmates, the services of HOPE Literacy are offered to all inmates and are not contingent on a profession of faith. However, a Christian curriculum is used to help the inmate coaches “discover their God-given talent and equip them to be peer mentors,” according to Director Lucy Smith. “Our coaches are challenged to examine their past experiences in the viewpoint of God’s word, to ascertain truth for their lives, and discover God’s unique design for their lives, his goals and purposes, and how they see themselves attaining these goals. Each activity is designed to help the inmate discover God’s purpose for their lives. The Bible is the source book, particularly the Book of Proverbs.”

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** The high turnover of staff common to short-term facilities can endanger the stability of a peer-taught literacy program. Funding may also be a problem. HOPE Literacy receives funds from individual donors, churches, and foundations. Unfortunately, foundations usually limit giving to one to three years and will not fund operational expenses.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** Texas HOPE Literacy was implemented as a statewide model by the Texas Department of Criminal Justice (TDCJ). HOPE is projected to be a pilot site in the TDCJ peer mentoring program. As a result of HOPE's success in the Texas prison system, in 2003 the Texas legislature passed a law that "the state jail division may allow a defendant who is capable

of serving as a tutor to tutor functionally illiterate defendants and shall actively encourage volunteer organizations to aid in the tutoring of defendants. A person who acts as a tutor may function only as a teacher and advisor to a defendant and may not exercise supervisory authority or control over the defendant."<sup>18</sup>

### FAMILY TELECONFERENCING WITH INMATES

Mt. Moriah Baptist Church, an African American congregation in Brockton, MA, is pioneering an innovative partnership with the Plymouth House of Corrections. With funding from a local foundation, the church provides videoconferencing services to inmates. Loved ones who find it financially or emotionally difficult to visit the prison will have access to the inmate in the church environment. Families benefit from follow-up support services provided by the church. The church also plans to use the videoconferencing units to connect laypeople with inmates 90 days before their release. Through these prerelease conferences, the volunteers will help prepare the inmates for life on the outside and connect them to community services. Mt. Moriah is part of the national Congregations of Promise Network with America's Promise. To find out more about this program, contact Heather Thomson at 508-894-2576.

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## **Habitat for Humanity: Learning Job Skills While Serving the Community**

**Offenders who volunteer with Habitat for Humanity learn vocational skills while they help build houses for low-income families.**

**PROBLEM** Many prisoners have poor job skills and lack a high school diploma or G.E.D.<sup>19</sup> Others may lose their licenses to practice their trades or professions because of their felony convictions. Finding employment after their release will be difficult.

**PROGRAM** Offenders who volunteer with Habitat for Humanity, an ecumenical, Christian nonprofit organization, learn valuable job skills while they help build houses for low-income families.

Collaboration between a Habitat for Humanity affiliate, a correctional facility, and a group of offenders includes these key components:

- The affiliate provides an orientation for the offenders about its mission, principles, and methods of operations.
- The affiliate and correctional facility maintain regular communication with regard to their respective goals, abilities, needs, and limitations as well as logistical issues (e.g., transportation of offenders to and from the worksite, corrections supervision at the worksite, rules and regulations of the facility, orientation about appropriate interaction between offenders and free-world individuals).
- The affiliate and facility hold neighborhood meetings to inform the community that some of the volunteers on the Habitat project will be offenders.
- The affiliate and facility promote positive media coverage of the collaboration.
- The affiliate provides the offenders with safety training on the tools and equipment they will be using.
- Each party treats the other as equals—with dignity and respect—and recognizes them for their efforts.

Founded in 1976, Habitat for Humanity International works to eliminate substandard housing and homelessness worldwide. Through Habitat for Humanity's Prison Partnership program, eligible offenders volunteer with a local Habitat affiliate. They learn academic, vocational, cognitive, decision-making, and interpersonal skills, and they contribute to the community during their incarceration. Parole boards are likely to consider service with Habitat for Humanity as a positive factor.

The correctional facility screens potential participants, reviews each project request with the Habitat affiliate, and makes a good-faith effort to have the offenders available although sometimes circumstances such as inclement weather or a lockdown may make it impossible. Facility staff inspect the work site to assess its safety and security; provide for the maintenance, insurance, and operation of the vehicle to transport the offender crew to and from the construction site; and provide meals for the offender crews. The Habitat affiliate provides materials, tools and equipment, safety gear, and construction supervision.

Offenders may volunteer at the Habitat construction site or within the facility through vocational programs where they prefabricate housing components such as wall panels, cabinets, trusses, and storage sheds, or they can provide administrative support by drafting blueprints, printing newsletters, or producing hobby or craft items for fundraisers.

Local prison ministries often serve as facilitators for the initial contact between a Habitat affiliate and a correctional facility. In some instances, the prison ministry also provides support to the partnership by providing orientation to the correctional staff and offenders about Habitat for Humanity or transporting the completed housing components to the construction site.

## TIPS FOR APPLYING THE STRATEGY

- Review state and local laws to make sure there are no state statutes, constitutional provisions, or county laws that would impede the partnership, especially if one of the partners is a faith-based organization. For example, is there a Blaine Amendment in the state constitution that would prohibit the state from assisting sectarian organizations? Do the statutes prohibit offenders from working with nongovernment entities?
- Define the role of the offender crew, the goals of the faith-based organization, and the goals of the correctional facility.
- Assess the respective needs, capabilities, and limitations of the faith-based organization and the correctional facility.
- Develop an effective partnership by communicating frequently; designate liaisons, and schedule regular meetings.
- Clearly explain the rules and regulations to each partner and formalize the agreement.

When the construction project is finished, the Habitat affiliate coordinates with its partnering correctional facility to put on a media and recognition event. In addition to public recognition for their efforts, offenders acquire marketable job skills.

**ROLE OF FAITH** Habitat for Humanity is a Christian ministry but not a church. Neither homeowner applicants nor volunteers have to be Christian to participate. As an ecumenical organization, Habitat welcomes people of different faiths.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** Budget cuts have resulted in the reduction of correc-

tional educators and officers to instruct and supervise offenders. The primary source of funding for the program since 1999 has been private donations. Habitat for Humanity does not meet the grant criteria for many foundations, which may require that faith-based organizations provide a wide range of after-care social and job-placement services for former offenders, engage in legislative activity, or advocate systemic changes in the criminal justice system.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** Since 1999, offenders around the country have volunteered more than half a million hours with approximately 365 local Habitat affiliates. They have helped build more than 500 houses at construction sites, prefabricated more than 1,600 housing components, and participated in over

## STRATEGY IN ACTION

Approximately 25 offenders from the Carol S. Vance Unit participated in the 1998 Jimmy Carter Work Project (JCWP) in Houston, TX. Houston Habitat for Humanity set the stage for healing the relationship between the offenders and the community. It provided the offenders with hands-on training as well as the opportunity to contribute to the community in a positive manner. The organization also gave the community a way to recognize and appreciate the efforts of the offenders. Mentors from the resident prison ministry, the InnerChange Freedom Initiative, worked side-by-side with the offenders at the construction site. The Vance Unit transported the offenders to and from the construction site and supervised them. Houston

Habitat provided meals for the offender crew. At the closing ceremony of the Jimmy Carter Work Project, the audience gave the offenders two standing ovations.

Most of the offenders who volunteered during the project had never finished anything in their lives, yet at the end of the week-long event, they had completed an entire house that passed code inspection with flying colors. The recidivism rate for those men who volunteered during the JCWP is less than 10 percent. Furthermore, since 1999, Houston Habitat for Humanity has hired six former offenders. Two of them have since opened their own businesses in the construction industry.

300 special projects. Several ex-offenders have been hired by a partnering Habitat affiliate, and many more are gainfully employed in the construction industry. A few releasees have become Habitat homeowners.

*Contact Information*

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## College Beyond Bars

### **Mentors and tutors help prisoners work toward their bachelor's degrees.**

**PROBLEM** Although studies indicate that prisoners who complete educational programs while incarcerated have a better chance of finding a job and staying out of prison than those who don't,<sup>20</sup> the number of college-level programs for prisoners has radically declined from the early 1990s. Many attribute this drop to the Crime Control Act of 1994, which barred prisoners from receiving federal Pell Grants. (Pell grants are need-based and, unlike loans, do not have to be repaid.) Prisoners usually take correspondence courses, but they must pay for tuition, books, and materials.

**PROGRAM** Boston University's (BU) Prisoner Education Program sponsors college programs at three prisons in Massachusetts, offering 36 courses every year. Professors hold weekly classes at the prisons, and inmates can earn a bachelor's degree. But inmates must have nine college credits with at least a 2.5 grade point average to be admitted to BU's program. Partakers' College Beyond Bars, a program of an Episcopalian community ministry, was founded to help inmates meet this requirement. Each congregation that signs up with Partakers agrees to raise \$3,000 to sponsor an inmate, and members of the congregation volunteer to be mentors for the inmate.

Each inmate student is supported by a team of two to ten volunteer mentors who make a minimum of 12 visits each year. The volunteers help the prisoner prepare for admission to the BU program. If the prisoner is accepted, the volunteers continue to provide support until he or she has completed the four-year liberal arts degree.

**ROLE OF FAITH** Partakers volunteers and staff do not proselytize but will provide "opportunities for spiritual growth" to those who are interested. Partakers

“strives for reconciliation between prisoners and society” as part of restorative justice. Prisoners are held accountable to their victims and to society but, at the same time, the community participates in helping offenders learn, change, and make amends by becoming productive members of the community. According to Jeannette Hanlon, then Partakers executive director:

Partakers is based, as are all religious faiths, on the precepts that all human beings are worthy of dignity and respect and, perhaps with outside help, capable of change. My own Christian faith has provided the strength and motivation for my involvement, but Partakers is nonsectarian. We are not seeking to convert anyone to a particular faith, but to provide opportunities for spiritual, as well as educational and psychological, growth for prisoners and for our volunteers. I have been particularly interested in providing opportunities for faith communities to fulfill their mandate to be present to the disenfranchised.<sup>21</sup>

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** Collaboration with prison authorities is essential for this program to work. Prisoners usually don't have access to college-level books or an adequate library. They are not allowed to use the Internet, and classes may be interrupted or cut short by prison officials.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** According to Partakers' internal program evaluation, the recidivism rate drops from 44 percent (the Massachusetts statewide rate)<sup>22</sup> to less than 10 percent for inmates who participate in the College Beyond Bars program. Volunteers for the program come from 54 faith communities. Boston University does not charge tuition for the program, which serves about 150 students per semester. More than 100 inmates are on the waiting list.

## FAITH-BASED PRISON

In December 2003, Lawtey Correctional Institution in rural northeast Florida became the first faith-based correctional facility in the country. Inmates benefit from a variety of religious services, parenting classes, character-building activities, and job training opportunities. A reentry plan enlists volunteers from the faith community to help inmates find a job after release. Clergy and volunteers offer pastoral counseling, sacred text study, choir practice, and meditation in the evenings and on weekends. Inmates may volunteer for the program and may also transfer out of it at any time; in order to participate, they have to be within three years of completing their sentence. State officials hope to lower Florida's 38 percent

recidivism rate through this new experiment in inmate rehabilitation. Eight hundred inmates from 26 faiths volunteered to participate.

Critics have raised objections to this taxpayer-funded program as a violation of separation of church and state. Americans United for Separation of Church and State has filed a public records request with the Florida Department of Corrections. In addition, although many faiths are represented, the majority of the inmates are Christian, and virtually all of the groups sponsoring dorms at Lawtey, as well as the clergy and volunteers, are Southern Baptists and other evangelicals.<sup>23</sup>

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## Wellbriety for Prisons

### Native American spiritual leaders provide a substance abuse treatment and recovery program in prisons.

**PROBLEM** A 2000 study of American households found that an estimated 4,700,000 people age 12 or older needed treatment for an illicit drug abuse problem.<sup>24</sup> In 1997, approximately 13,000 individuals received substance abuse treatment in federal prisons, 100,000 in state prisons, and 34,000 in jails.<sup>25</sup>

**PROGRAM** Ten years ago, resources were limited or nonexistent for incarcerated Native Americans with substance abuse problems. Men and women in the Idaho prison system developed a program of videos, artwork, and a curriculum as a tool to recovery. This was the foundation for the Wellbriety Movement, led by White Bison, Inc.—an American Indian-owned nonprofit organization. White Bison defines *wellbriety* as “a state of sobriety plus a life that is balanced emotionally, mentally, spiritually, and physically.”<sup>26</sup>

#### MEDICINE WHEEL AND 12-STEP PROGRAM

*The 12 steps are put in a circle:*

- North—Finding the Wisdom of the Elders
- East—Finding the Creator
- South—Finding Yourself
- West—Finding Your Relationship With Others

*White Bison’s teachings are based on the Four Laws of Change of Native American elders:*

1. Change comes from within.
2. In order for development to occur, it must be preceded by a vision.
3. A great learning must occur.
4. You must create a healing forest.

The Medicine Wheel and 12-Step Program, the substance abuse recovery program created by White Bison, is used by Native and non-Native inmates in prisons, jails, treatment facilities, halfway houses, and prerelease centers across the country. It incorporates Native American spiritual symbols and teachings into the Alcoholics Anonymous 12-step program.

The Medicine Wheel and 12-Step Program are culturally based, but the curriculum and programs can be adapted to

include ceremonies from any tribe. Participants are encouraged to incorporate their tribe’s traditions into their own healing processes. After a person has been sober for at least a year, he or she can take training to become a “firestarter” (facilitator). Trainees must make a four-year commitment to lead a Firestarter

Circle. Firestarter Circles are made up of Native and non-Native people who work the Medicine Wheel and the 12-Step Program of sobriety. Firestarters must lead a circle in the community before they take it into prisons.

**ROLE OF FAITH** The Medicine Wheel is common to many Native American traditions. Although rooted in Native American spiritual teachings, the Wellbriety program can be adapted for other faiths. Drum groups, sweat lodges, singing, traditional dances, traditional language, and the wisdom of local leaders are sometimes part of the Medicine Wheel and 12-Step Program.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** Prison officials may discourage volunteers from relating personal information and building relationships with the prisoners, both of which are necessary to the program. Inmates may be reluctant to participate because, as one firestarter said, “Successful drug abuse treatment requires a ‘baring of the soul.’ Successful adaptation to being in jail requires no baring of the soul.”<sup>27</sup>

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** White Bison has been the national leader in the Wellbriety movement for Native and non-Native Americans since 1988. “Journeys of the Sacred Hoop” have taken hundreds of Native leaders on a 6,000-mile circuit each year to raise awareness of the movement across the country. There are now more than 350 Firestarter Circles operating throughout the country—at least one in almost every state. Over a hundred prisons are using the program with Native and non-Native inmates. The vision of White Bison is to see a hundred Native American communities living in wellness and sobriety by 2010.

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## **Spiritual Care for Detainees and Asylum Seekers**

**Trained volunteers provide spiritual care to asylum seekers who are in detention and help them settle in the community when they are released.**

**PROBLEM** Language problems and poverty often make it difficult for asylum seekers to obtain refugee status in the United States. This situation has been exacerbated by new anti-terrorism measures following the attacks of September

11, 2001. As a result, many asylum seekers end up in detention centers, jails, or prisons. Even if they are released and granted asylum, these people often lack the resources and support system they need to find stable housing and employment in their new country.

**PROGRAM** A community-based ecumenical network of faith groups coordinates visits to detention centers and jails housing asylum seekers in five cities in the Northeast. Interfaith Spiritual Care for Detention is an ecumenical program of a nonprofit faith-based organization, Refugee Immigration Ministry. The program includes training and certification of programs using the training. A community outreach program is designed to get the community involved in responding to asylum seekers and those paroled by the U.S. Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE). This program has been replicated in other areas of the country.

Refugee Immigration Ministry trains spiritual caregivers (SCGs) to provide culturally appropriate support to detainees. SCGs are trained by clergy and mental health professions in active listening skills, cross-culture skills, grief counseling, self-care and boundaries, separation, depression, antiracism, spirituality, prison culture, posttraumatic stress, and the legal issues involved in seeking asylum. Trainees learn to assess personality disorders and trauma; they receive prison orientation; and they learn about ICE policies and practices in order to develop “an authentically collaborative and respectful relationship with [ICE],” an essential for working with detainees.

The coordinating agency works closely with local officials to grant access to the detainees in correctional facilities. Agency staff arrange a preliminary meeting with the faith-based groups and the local ICE director where program standards and training are introduced. Trained and certified volunteers are shadowed in visitations to the correctional facility and must sign a nonproselytizing agreement.

The interfaith coalition also sponsors asylum seekers in federal custody. Representatives from the sponsoring congregations and interfaith coalitions work cooperatively with ICE to receive the parolees who pass a Credible Fear Interview (proving that there is a “credible fear of persecution” if they are forced to return home). Several congregations form cluster groups to offer basic social services to asylees/parolees. When released, an asylum seeker and his or her family are placed in a host home in a cluster group. The host helps the family obtain housing, childcare, job training, and English classes, as needed, and works with the U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services to help the asylee obtain work authorization.

**ROLE OF FAITH** The program has the following goals:

- Provide appropriate spiritual care for all detainees as desired
- Exhibit respect for all faith traditions
- Provide clinically and professionally trained accountable spiritual caregivers

- Develop an authentically collaborative and respectful relationship with the INS [Immigration and Naturalization Service, now ICE]
- Provide spiritual care for the whole institution (detainees and staff)
- Develop a sense of community
- Validate present programs and, if suitable, complement them by the addition of the Spiritual Care Givers program
- Eliminate individual isolation (within the institution)
- Link detainees and staff to faith communities
- Facilitate community integration
- Practice authentic spiritual discipline as the foundation and motivation of the project
- Encourage inclusivity and diversity among participants<sup>28</sup>

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** If volunteers and program staff do not strictly adhere to ICE rules, they may damage the very important relationship. They need to remember at all times that they are not allowed to serve as legal advocates in any way for their clients.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** The program provides detainees with support from faith communities. Refugee Immigration Ministry has helped released detainees settle in the community.

*Note:* Also see “Legal Assistance for Survivors of Torture” on page 63.

*Contact Information*

**Interfaith Spiritual Care for Detention**

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## Prison Meditation Program

### **Meditation programs help prisoners break the cycle of addiction, violent behavior, and incarceration.**

**Problem** If the prison environment is not conducive to rehabilitation, ex-offenders will find limited job opportunities and housing options when they are released, increasing their risk of committing additional crimes.

**PROGRAM** Teaching prisoners the practice of meditation increases their ability to deal with anger and frustration within the correctional institution and prepares them to adjust to the difficulties of life on the outside.

The Prison Project was initiated in 1996 when a prison mental health worker asked the head teacher at the Upaya Zen Center, a Buddhist study center in Santa Fe, to help her with work in a maximum-security setting. The Upaya Prison Project quickly began to involve more staff, including an inmate who was teaching meditation to ex-offenders on their release from prison. His 18 years of experience inside the institution helped him understand the needs of prisoners. In 2003 several of the teachers branched off to found a separate nonprofit prison project, the Heart Mountain Prison Project.

The Heart Mountain Prison Project has reached hundreds of juvenile and adult inmates in New Mexico correctional facilities through day-long retreats, weekly meditation classes, residential activities, and post-release work. These programs teach inmates to deal with difficult emotions through meditation. When they are released, they are better prepared to seek and keep employment and to avoid violent behavior, substance abuse, and additional crimes. Prison Project directors have worked in all the major prisons in New Mexico, collaborating with prison staff, medical directors, psychiatrists, mental health directors, directors of drug treatment professionals, educators, and chaplains. Teachers from the community, representing different Buddhist traditions, provide weekly meditation classes.

When then-Governor Gary Johnson requested that state corrections officials improve the prison environment and thus reentry prospects for released inmates, the state secretary of corrections and the bureau chief of addiction services met with representatives of the Prison Project. This resulted in the establishment of a “meditation pod,” a dormitory in a medium-security prison in Grants, NM. Buddhist spiritual leaders help the men create an environment conducive to meditative practice. Over the years the pod has become a place of mutual support, free from drugs and violence. The men learn to deal with the stresses and anxieties of prison life as they learn new and positive skills that will improve their employability when they are released and enhance their prospects for reentry.

### ZEN BUDDHIST PRISON RETREATS

The Gateless Gate Zen Center provides five-day interfaith retreats for inmates in 12 correctional facilities in North Central Florida. The correctional facility provides a hall or teaching space separate from the rest of the prisoners. At least one correctional officer is encouraged to participate so that the program has support from staff. Inmates participate in ten consecutive hours of silent meditation. A variety of faiths are represented. One of the retreats at the Federal Correctional Center at Coleman, FL, featured a visit by Trappist monk Thomas Keating, founder of the centering prayer movement and the Contemplative Outreach Program for the Catholic Church. The Gateless Gate Zen Center has conducted over 600 prison programs in local jails, prisons, and even on death row. Visit [www.gatelessgate.org](http://www.gatelessgate.org) to learn more about the program.

**ROLE OF FAITH** The Prison Project provides nondenominational programs that emphasize spiritual values that include all faiths. The volunteer teachers come from various Buddhist traditions. Residents of the meditation pod also come from a variety of faiths that use meditation as part of their spiritual practice.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** This program has received significant support in New Mexico, which has one of the fastest growing prison populations in the nation. The program will not succeed without such support.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** As a result of the improvement in prisoner behavior, meditation is offered in several New Mexico prisons. Heart Mountain visits six prisons in addition to the meditation pod at Grants.

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## Interfaith Prison Dorms

**A yearlong, faith-based residential program inside prisons provides a supportive and stable network of support for inmates at midsentence.**

**PROBLEM** Every year more than 600,000 inmates are released from jail or prison.<sup>29</sup> Often after years of incarceration, they are ill-prepared to return to their communities as positive contributors.

**PROGRAM** Kairos Horizon Community Corporation is a nonprofit organization that establishes faith-based residential programs in prisons throughout the country. Faith leaders work with corrections officials to create a separate dormitory to provide volunteer-led, faith-based, and restorative programs to inmates at midsentence to prepare them for reentry. The first faith-based prison dorm was established in the Tomoka Correctional Institution in Daytona Beach, FL, in 1999. The first interfaith unit was established at the Marion Correctional Institution in Marion, OH, in 2000. Dorms are divided into Jewish, Muslim, and Christian family units or “pods” of six or eight people. The Davis Correctional Facility in Oklahoma also has a Native American pod. Horizon currently hosts the program in seven medium- and maximum-security prison units serving 500 inmates and their families.

To establish a residential program, Horizon creates a broad collaborative among the participating faith leaders, the director of programs for the state prison system, and a representative of the state department of human services. Program costs are about \$100,000 a year for a program involving 50 to 125 inmates—the size depends on the housing situation. Two staff members are needed—one oversees the implementation inside the prison, and the other recruits community volunteers and develops program resources. The prison must have a supportive warden and chaplain and a unit or wing that can be slightly modified to create an interfaith dormitory where inmates live in family units of six to eight. Program space separate from other prisoners provides an

environment where participants can improve their social functioning, develop a sense of community, and hold one another accountable. In the dorm, prisoners participate in mentoring, devotionals, and restorative programs stressing life skills, job skills, and recovery from addictions.

Inmates volunteer for the 10- to 12-month program, preferably at mid-sentence. They learn to live with others in an environment of mutual support and accountability. Programs are infused with spiritual values and undergirded with prayer. Participants must maintain their regular assignments in the facility.

Volunteer mentors and facilitators are recruited from local churches, synagogues, and mosques. They lead programs two or three times per week. The programs include one-on-one, faith-specific mentoring. This is informal mentoring, not religious instruction. Program goals emphasize

- Personal responsibility (anger management, communications skills, addiction recovery, conflict resolution)
- Family responsibility (letter-writing, parenting, financial stewardship, participation in Family Day)
- Employability (computer skills, education)

Corrections departments have allowed Horizon to present rehabilitative programs, host a Family Day, and provide writing materials and stamps so that participants can write family members. One of the most significant signs of the program's effectiveness is the restored relationship between the inmate and his or her family.

**ROLE OF FAITH** Horizon maintains core principles of spirituality, accountability, and respect. Faith-specific studies, conflict resolution, daily devotionals, prayer support, and small-group work offer inmates opportunities to live out these core principles. Volunteers from the local churches, synagogues, and mosques facilitate programs and serve as role models of their faiths. (Funding sources may influence or dictate the depth and directness of religious instruction.)

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** The main challenge is the lack of a consistent funding stream (funding that remains in place for at least three years). Few foundations and corporations give to prison ministries. A good working relationship with prison authorities is the first step.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** Since 1999 Horizon has operated at Florida's Tomoka Correctional Institution (CI) under three different wardens. In 2001 the Florida legislature mandated replication of the Tomoka model in six other prisons in the state, and the Federal Bureau of Prisons announced plans to open five programs based on the Horizon Interfaith model at the Marion Correctional Institution in Ohio.

When the Horizon program was first initiated at the Tomoka CI, almost all of the security staff were skeptical or opposed. Two years later, in an informal

interview a security officer said there would be a riot if the program were withdrawn, not among the inmates but among the corrections officers!

Kairos Horizon is the subject of a major Compassion Capital Fund (CCF) grant awarded to Caliber Associates to evaluate the program's effects on participants and their family members. Caliber has already found the goals of the Kairos Horizon program to be consistent with those of the correctional facility and the community: "to promote public safety and achieve self-sufficiency among prisoners, ex-prisoners, and their families."<sup>30</sup> The Florida Department

of Corrections and the Administration of Children and Families of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) have been supportive of this research. In 2001 HHS named Horizon "A Model for the Future."

#### TIPS FOR APPLYING THE STRATEGY

Here are two guidelines that are important to the implementation of this program:

- Collaborate with fatherhood programs, state departments of human/family services, departments of corrections, and major religious leaders. Human service agencies serve the population suffering the fallout of incarceration and have programs needed by all parties.
- Resist the temptation to make it a prerelease program. When inmates are nearing the end of their sentence, they do not focus on internal change. Long-term inmates contribute substantially, and those with two or three years remaining have time to internalize the program's teaching and values in their current setting. This leads to stabilizing both the family and the institution.

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# 3

## Children and Youth

Children and youth are our future. This is why they must be at the heart of any efforts to deal with crime—its causes, its prevention, and its impact. Reducing the violence children and youth witness and experience—at home, in their communities, and in school—is essential if we are to raise healthy and responsible young people who will take their rightful place in society. Our young people hold great promise but, for many, this potential is diverted by crime and poverty in their communities. The Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention of the U.S. Department of Justice found that juvenile offenders are involved in approximately one-fifth of nonfatal violent victimizations.<sup>31</sup> For those youth who become involved in gangs or criminal activity, diversion or alternative sentencing programs can provide a second chance and a better (and much cheaper) option than incarceration. Young people who live in neighborhoods where crime seems the best—or even the only—choice can benefit from community recreational activities, mentoring, and afterschool programs. For children who have one or both parents in prison, a relationship with an adult mentor can make a great difference in their lives.

A caring community nurtures its children and young people. When they make mistakes, the community works to guide them back to positive choices and responsible living. Many communities of faith believe that this is an important part of their mission, and they provide programs, activities, and volunteer efforts to help young people who are involved or at risk of being involved in the criminal justice system.

### **Amachi Mentoring Children of Prisoners<sup>32</sup>**

**A partnership of secular and faith-based institutions recruits volunteers from congregations to mentor children of prisoners.**

**PROBLEM** According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, in 1999 an estimated 1.5 million children had an incarcerated parent.<sup>33</sup> By 2004, estimates of the

number of these children ranged as high as 2.5 million.<sup>34</sup> Many of these children will suffer long-lasting effects in every area of their lives as a result of their parents' incarceration. For those who were living in poverty before the incarceration—and many were—the situation worsens when the parent is in prison. The children often move from relative to relative; they may feel abandoned and stigmatized and become at risk for difficulties in school and at home.<sup>35</sup> Some studies have shown that these children have a greater likelihood of being incarcerated than the population as a whole.<sup>36</sup> People of faith who become involved in mentoring programs for these children can make a big difference in the life of a child.

**PROGRAM** The Amachi initiative recruits volunteers from congregations to mentor children of prisoners. Amachi is a partnership between Public/Private Ventures (P/PV), a national nonprofit organization; Big Brothers Big Sisters of America (BBBSA); and the Center for Research on Religion and Urban Civil Society (CRRUCS) at the University of Pennsylvania, with funding from The Pew Charitable Trusts. It also receives support from the Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) members of AmeriCorps and Senior Corps help staff the mentoring effort. Amachi works closely with prisons, community and youth development agencies (both faith-based and secular), social services, juvenile delinquency agencies, and others. Mentors are recruited from Philadelphia-area churches.

Religious leaders are recruited to endorse the program and encourage members of their congregations to volunteer to be mentors. All mentor applicants are carefully screened (including a criminal background check and child abuse clearance). Those who are accepted make a commitment to mentor one child for one hour a week for one year. Mentors receive training as part of the screening process, and ongoing training is offered as needed.

In order to identify children for the program, Rev. W. Wilson Goode Sr., former mayor of Philadelphia, goes into prisons to present the program to prisoners. He explains the problems their children may face (damaged self-image, cognitive difficulties, emotional problems, mental health issues, behavior problems, problems in school, posttraumatic stress from witnessing a parent's arrest, and, especially, an increased likelihood to be incarcerated themselves). Many parents were relieved to know that a mentor, another caring adult, would be looking out for their children's well-being and gladly gave their permission and contact information for their children. Children and mentors were matched by Amachi staff, and the program is carefully monitored.

Through systematic data collection and follow-up. AmeriCorps and Senior Corps members serve as the primary contact point for mentors, making weekly contact and collecting monthly data on meetings between mentors and mentees.

**ROLE OF FAITH** Through mentoring children of prisoners, people of faith demonstrated their concern for and commitment to the neighborhood where they worshiped.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** Obtaining sufficient resources may be a problem although mentoring costs only average \$1,114 per child, according to an analysis performed in 1999.<sup>37</sup> Sources of funding should be in place at the very beginning.

Identifying and locating the children can be difficult, and obtaining the support and understanding of prison officials is essential because the prisoners themselves are the best source of information. Children of prisoners often lead unstable lives and often move from relative to relative.

Mentors need to receive training and encouragement because children of prisoners may find it difficult to build trust in a new relationship, and mentor-mentee bonding may take much longer than expected. Perseverance is important. Mentors must be cautioned not to provide children with material things; the mentor's role is to be a friend, not a Santa Claus. Concerns about a family's social service needs can be passed on to the mentoring agency or the religious community.

Mentoring is not a quick and easy solution, and mentors who don't do their job well may cause more damage than good. Careful screening and training of volunteers and regular monitoring and evaluation help keep the program operating smoothly and effectively.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** During Amachi's first two years of operation (April 2001 through March 2003), there were 556 matches, and a high percentage of these matches remained active over time. A 2002 survey by Big Brothers Big Sisters found that mentored children became more self-confident and improved their academic performance and classroom behavior. But the real test is whether "the number of children who follow their parents into prison [declines]." When that happens, "We will know Amachi works."<sup>38</sup> It will be several years before these statistics are available.

## **MAD DADS WORK THE STREETS**

MAD DADS (Men Against Destruction—Defending Against Drugs and Social Disorder) is a national community empowerment organization whose mission is to provide young people with viable alternatives to drugs, gangs, and violence. The model consists of mapping community assets and identifying and responding to factors that push youth to the streets and into risky behaviors. Street patrols go into the neighborhoods to talk to these young people and to get them off the streets. MAD DADS develops programs for youth who have made the decision to leave the streets. Programs include rites of passage, cultural exchanges, teen centers, and juvenile diversion programs, as well as other options that address the

specific needs of the local communities. MAD DADS is a faith-based organization encompassing people of many different faiths. Street patrol DADS pray before and after the street patrol but do not impose their faith on the youth unless in response to a request.

Started in Omaha, NE, in 1989 by a group of African American fathers, MAD DADS has spread to 16 states in 54 cities and is now multiethnic. Over 18 countries from around the world have come to learn about the model, and it has been identified as an American best practice. For more information, visit [www.maddads.com](http://www.maddads.com), or call 877-230-0214.

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## Teen Community Center

### **Law enforcement officers partner with the faith community to establish a teen recreational facility to provide alternatives to juvenile crime.**

**PROBLEM** Young people who live in neighborhoods with no recreational facilities or other positive activities may turn to alcohol, drugs, and gang activity. Latchkey children are often especially vulnerable to these unhealthy alternatives.

**PROGRAM** The SAFE (Safe and Friendly Environment) is a community center that serves teens ages 12 to 15 who live in a public housing project within walking distance. It offers a safe and attractive alternative to the streets by providing activities after school and evenings, weekends, and during the summer. The SAFE was developed through a partnership between officers from the Decatur, AL, Police Department Crime Prevention Unit and 13 area churches. It is staffed by volunteers from the faith community and the police department.

The Crime Prevention Unit of the police department oversees the center's operations, and officers are always present when the center is open. To engage the faith community, officers approached local youth pastors who responded enthusiastically. Faith-based organizations provide additional supervision for the youth, as well as entertainment, food, and spiritual guidance. Church groups sign up to sponsor weekend events, and there are occasional field trips.

Youth who attend The SAFE are given free time to hang out with friends and to play in the game room. The volunteers interact with them to build relationships. Staff believe that the most important thing they can do is to show the kids that people care.

**ROLE OF FAITH** Volunteers from the faith community help youth meet spiritual as well as physical needs. The program introduces the teens to a variety of local church groups, and many have become involved as a result.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** The program is neither baby-sitting nor an extension of school but rather a way to meet teens' developmental needs. Communities with recreation and parks departments may be reluctant to see resources diverted toward a facility focused on one age group in one neighborhood.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** Establishing the teen center within walking distance of the public housing unit where many at-risk youth live made the program acces-

sible to these kids. It serves some 2,500 young people. In the target group of juveniles, staff report positive attitude changes, increased self-esteem, and improvements in social behavior in the neighborhood and the schools. School surveys sponsored by the Decatur Police Department show an overall improvement in participants' school performance and behavior. Staff believe The SAFE has alerted teachers and principals to the special needs of these young people in part because

several of the church volunteers also work within the school system.

The strategy builds community cohesion. Officers from the Crime Prevention Unit have established a rapport with these young people, which has improved the relationship between the police department and the community. The faith communities have been able to connect with a group of teens they would not have met otherwise.

#### Contact Information

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### STRATEGY IN ACTION

Sergeant Noel Mayfield described a 13-year-old African American boy who has benefited from The SAFE:

As law enforcement officers, we've dealt with this young man's family for years. In fact, he has two brothers who have already been through the corrections system. We know the conditions and environment that this young man lives in. He became involved with us through The SAFE and has become a great asset to the program. He shows up early on program nights to help set things up and is always willing when it's time to clean afterwards. In addition, he has become a positive influence among the young people in his public housing unit and has become a role model at The SAFE. He visits frequently at our Crime Prevention Unit office and travels with us to ballgames. He's also become involved with a local church youth group from his exposure to volunteers at The SAFE. He now says he wants to become a police officer when he grows up, which is pretty amazing considering his family's distrust of law enforcement. Because of his involvement in this program, we believe we've seen the cycle of crime broken in this young man's family.

## Vocational Placement for Gang-involved Youth

### College-age evangelists offer gang-involved youth vocational training, a job, and a caring relationship

*"Most of these men want jobs—but they don't know how to go about getting one. They are a perfect fit for the street, and a perfect misfit for the workplace."*

—Rev. Roger Minassian

**PROBLEM** An estimated 24,500 violent youth gangs with some 772,500 members committed tens of thousands of crimes in 2000, according to the National Youth Gang Survey.<sup>39</sup> A gang member who wants to leave the gang must reject an entire lifestyle in addition to breaking with his or her friends. For many young people who have dropped out of school and live in poverty, the future is unclear. They need money to survive, but they don't have a high school diploma or any marketable job skills. Unemployed youth are more susceptible to recruitment into larger criminal organizations engaged in drug trafficking. When drug dealers and criminals are the wealthiest members of a community, crime will have a strong appeal for youth.

**PROGRAM** “A caring relationship plus a job lift a gang member from the streets into the American mainstream.” This is the motto of Hope Now for Youth, a Christian nonprofit organization. In 1993 Hope Now established a successful job placement program for gang-involved youth. The organization hires minority Christian college students to work in inner-city churches as role models and vocational placement counselors for young men. While helping gang-involved youth, this innovative technique also provides an income for the college students and a scholarship fund toward their education.

Clients find out about the program through extensive street outreach efforts by the faith/lay leaders and through word-of-mouth from Hope Now graduates. The young men on the streets are given business cards with a 24-hour hotline number to call when they are ready to leave the gang. The men must make contact on their own as evidence of their commitment to change their lives. Hope Now will not accept calls from family members or girlfriends or referrals by court orders. Once in the program, each young man is assigned to a mentor and begins a five-week training process. The mentors model Judeo-Christian values and work ethics to inspire productive citizenship. Volunteer homeowners and business owners from the participating churches provide on-the-job training through paid, short-term employment while the young men are in the five-week program.

Seven churches in the city donate recreational facilities, office space, computers, materials, utilities, and volunteers for the program. Hope Now works to recruit business owners willing to hire its graduates. Participating businesses in turn recruit other businesses and work with the media to recruit employers. Hope Now leverages additional local resources. Professionals in the community donate emergency legal, medical, psychological, and dental services; provide pro bono tattoo removal; help the youth obtain driver’s licenses; and offer family and parenting classes. Men may also look forward to job placements for friends and relatives through the program.

A board of criminal justice professionals, faith leaders, and business owners oversees the organization. The faith community works closely with the criminal justice system, meeting monthly with law enforcement and business leaders to discuss juvenile crime-related issues. Parole and probation officers call Hope Now for Youth to discuss their clients.

**ROLE OF FAITH** Hope Now for Youth was founded by a Presbyterian and is a Christian nonprofit with an explicitly religious mission statement: “Based on the examples of our Lord Jesus Christ, Hope Now for Youth provides opportunities and support for young men who want to break their ties with gangs, by changing their lives and becoming productive, responsible, and law-abiding parents and citizens.” Area churches provide volunteers and facilities, and the career counselors are Christian college students from local schools. Staff include Cambodian, Laotian, Hmong, and Latino members who want to give back to the community that reached out to them. Youth can take part in religious activities as part of the program, but participation is voluntary. Individuals, churches, and local businesses fund Hope Now for Youth.

## A TEN-POINT PLAN TO MOBILIZE THE CHURCHES

The National Ten Point Leadership Foundation (NTLF) is a coalition that organizes partnerships among clergy, law enforcement, and the community to work for youth development and violence prevention among inner-city youth. The ten-point plan is as follows:

1. Establish four to five church cluster-collaborations that sponsor "Adopt-A-Gang" programs to . . . evangelize youth [who are] in gangs; inner-city churches would serve as drop-in centers providing sanctuary for troubled youth.
2. Commission missionaries to serve as advocates and ombudsmen for black and Latino juveniles in the courts. Such missionaries would work closely with probation officers, law enforcement officials, and youth streetworkers to assist at-risk youth and their families. They would also convene summit meetings between school superintendents, principals of public middle and high schools, and black and Latino pastors to develop partnerships that will focus on the youth most at-risk. We propose to do pastoral work with the most violent and troubled young people and their families. In our judgment this is a rational alternative to ill-conceived proposals to substitute incarceration for education.
3. Commission youth evangelists to do street-level, one-on-one evangelism with youth involved in drug trafficking. These evangelists would also work to prepare these youth for participation in the economic life of the nation. Such work might include preparation for college, the development of legal revenue-generating enterprises, and acquisition of trade skills and union membership.
4. Establish accountable, community-based economic development projects that go beyond "market and state" visions of revenue generation. Such an economic development initiative will include community and trusts, microenterprise projects, worker cooperatives, and democratically run community development corporations.
5. Establish links between suburban and downtown churches and front-line ministries to provide spiritual, human resource, and material support.
6. Initiate and support neighborhood crime watch programs within local church neighborhoods. If, for example, 200 churches covered the four corners surrounding their sites, 800 blocks would be safer.
7. Establish working relationships between local churches and community-based health centers to provide pastoral counseling for families during times of crisis. We also propose the initiation of drug abuse prevention programs and abstinence-oriented educational programs focusing on the prevention of AIDS and sexually transmitted diseases.
8. Convene a working summit meeting for Christian black and Latino men and women in order to discuss the development of Christian brotherhoods and sisterhoods that would provide rational alternatives to violent gang life. Such groups would also be charged with fostering responsibility to family and protecting houses of worship.
9. Establish rape crisis drop-in centers and services for battered women in churches. Counseling programs must be established for abusive men, particularly teenagers and young adults.
10. Develop an aggressive black and Latino curriculum, with an additional focus on the struggles of women and poor people. Such a curriculum could be taught in churches as a means of helping our youth understand that the God of history has been and remains active in the lives of all people.

From the National Ten Point Leadership Foundation website, [www.ntlf.org](http://www.ntlf.org).

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** For many youth a gang is a surrogate family, providing recognition, self-esteem, purpose, a source of income, and protection in a frightening world. Some have simply yielded to peer pressure and intimidation from their friends or relatives. Volunteers from the faith community who would like to intervene may be intimidated by gangs and by their violence. A

strong relationship with the city police can help residents and volunteers feel comfortable and supported in their efforts. An understanding of why youth join gangs will also be helpful.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** Since 1993 Hope Now for Youth has organized programs with 30 participating churches, built lasting relationships with 260 businesses in the area, and collaborated with all levels of the criminal justice system. According to the organization's website,

As of April 15, 2004, [Hope Now had] placed 1,047 youth . . . in jobs with 275 Fresno and Sanger businesses with an 85 percent success rate and an 8 percent recidivism rate. Almost all of these youths have criminal records and over 65 percent are school dropouts.<sup>40</sup>

It costs more than \$41,000 to hold a juvenile in detention for one year in California.<sup>41</sup> At only \$4,000 per youth to provide a mentor, training, and a job, Hope Now provides a cost-effective alternative to incarceration.

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## Home Visits for At-risk Youth

**A team of clergy, law enforcement officers, and a community prosecutor visit the homes of at-risk youth and connect them with community services. Home visits are noninvestigative, informal meetings between youth and a team of clergy and justice professionals.**

**PROBLEM** At-risk youth are in danger of dropping out of school, joining gangs, and engaging in criminal activity.

**PROGRAM** The Neighborhood Prosecuting Attorney Program in Kalamazoo County, MI, convenes teams to make unannounced visits to parolees and probationers throughout the county. Operation NEAT—Neighborhood Enforcement and Assistance Team—comprises a police officer, a religious leader, a community prosecutor, a probation officer, a parole officer, and a victim assistant. During the visits, the team tracks the progress of the ex-offender and provides referral services to ensure successful reentry.

This program is part of the Community Prosecution movement, which takes prosecutors out of the courtroom and sends them into neighborhoods.

There they partner with law enforcement and grassroots agencies, including faith groups, to develop crime prevention initiatives. This keeps the caseloads down, with the ultimate goal of eliminating the need for the community prosecutor to be in court at all. Community prosecutors are assigned to serve one neighborhood, and they become a visible and trusted authority there.

A community prosecutor assembles an average of three teams of six professionals each to cover hot spots. In an email to probation, parole, and law enforcement officers in the targeted area for that month, the prosecutor asks officers to identify people who should receive a visit. The ex-offenders are selected, and pertinent terms of probation/parole and contact information are collected.

The teams vary the times of their visits to ensure that they are not predictable. Ten teams make an average of three home visits one day per month. The parole or probation agent takes the lead in introducing the group and talking to the former offender. The other team members speak to friends and relatives in the house. They try to keep the meeting nonconfrontational, short, and to the point. They provide referrals for shelter, food, and identification papers, and they sometimes visit neighbors to find out if the former offender is integrating successfully into the neighborhood. The clergy member provides a calming presence, reassuring the ex-offender that this is not a threatening situation. The visits are very informal and rarely lead to arrests. If the team finds the former offender is in violation of probation or parole, he or she is told to call the supervising officer the next day. The team also emails a report on the visit to the supervising officer.

If additional assistance is needed, the team members will line up resources and locate an appropriate agency to take the case.

**ROLE OF FAITH** Clergy make the team less intimidating to the youth and his or her family. The clergy provide a calming presence, leading prayer with the participants if requested, and they remain on call for the youth and their families to provide spiritual counseling. Pastors are rooted in the community and knowledgeable about the activity on the streets. They help law enforcement and community prosecutors identify at-risk youth and potential gang members who would benefit from a home visit.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** The faith community members who conduct home visits in partnership with justice authorities must be careful that collaborating with law enforcement does not weaken community trust. All team members must agree to treat the former offenders and their families with respect. Team members must be properly trained on safety measures.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** Operation NEAT rotates among all neighborhoods in the county. In 2003, Operation NEAT had ten operations; the teams contacted 165 parolees and probationers and over 200 friends and relatives. The program provided employment assistance, education, mental health counseling, mentors, childcare, and emergency assistance to more than a hundred clients.

Perhaps the most important outcome was the creation of a formal mechanism for partner groups to come together to coordinate efforts. This relationship between diverse faith and justice groups is sustained through a formal commitment from partners. The Kalamazoo County Neighborhood Prosecution Program was designated as a National Community Prosecutor Leadership Site by the U.S. Department of Justice.

## JUVENILE VISITATION AND AFTERCARE

Serve Our Youth (SOY) Network is a Christian organization that reaches out to youthful offenders in juvenile detention facilities and transitional shelters in central Iowa. Founded in 1999 the network trains and equips volunteers from the faith community as victim advocates, mentors to high-risk youth, and facilitators of victim-offender dialogs. Its vision is “to equip an expanding network of congregations to provide high-risk youth with resources and relationships where God’s hope and healing are shared.” Through its Visitation Program, SOY provides activity hosts for youth in detention and shelter facilities. The aftercare program matches these youth with congregational mentors and support teams in a long-term committed relationship to help them assimilate into the community. SOY also provides mentors for detention centers, drug courts, shelters, and other institutions in Iowa. With support from Polk County Youth Services, SOY has empowered the faith community to serve juvenile justice in a fashion that honors both groups. Every year SOY trains more than 150 new congregational volunteers to provide services and support to more than 2,000 high-risk youth. Visit [www.serveouryouth.org](http://www.serveouryouth.org) to learn more.

### *Contact Information*

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## Intervention for Runaways in an Immigrant Community

### **Police work with leaders of the faith community to provide culturally relevant counseling and skill-building activities for Cambodian youth who are first-time runaways.**

**PROBLEM** The Lowell (MA) Police Department found that an overwhelming majority of juveniles charged with violent crimes had been reported missing or runaway at least once before the offense. The National Runaway Switchboard reports that one in seven kids between the ages of ten and 18 will run away from home. Some will return, but some will remain on the streets where there are an estimated 1.3 million homeless and runaway youth and children. Every year approximately 5,000 of these young people die of assault, illness, or suicide.<sup>42</sup> Immediate intervention after the reported runaway incident may prevent further delinquency.

**PROGRAM** Lowell Weed and Seed (a federal program designed to “weed” by eliminating crime and criminal activity from a community and “seed” by restoring human services to the neighborhood) operates out of the Lower Highlands Community Policing Precinct and often works closely with the police department on prevention and intervention projects. Lowell Weed and Seed joined

forces with the Trairatanaram Temple, the local Cambodian Buddhist Order, to develop Operation Middle Path. Using funds from SAMHSA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services), the program connects first-time runaway Cambodian youth with the Buddhist monks at the temple. Weed and Seed staff and police officers identify runaway youth and, after the teenager has returned home, they visit to introduce Operation Middle Path to the youth and his or her parents. This home visit involves the whole family and gives parents an opportunity to request other services to reduce risk factors for their child.

Lowell Weed and Seed contracts with a taxi service to transport the young people to the Trairatanaram Temple two nights a week. The monks at the temple are among the few authority figures universally respected by Cambodian youth. While at the temple, the youth follow a rigorous prayer schedule and learn meditation and self-control techniques, but they also get to enjoy each other's company in a safe environment. Operation Middle Path seeks to foster self-esteem, a sense of direction, pride, and a sense of belonging that at-risk Southeast Asian young people often seek in gangs.

The monks meet with the youth in small groups and counsel them about improving their relationship with their parents. Many of the young people are truants or dropouts, and most are affiliated with gangs in the area. They learn how to be responsible citizens through the precepts of Buddhism, which teach them not to engage in drug use or violent behaviors. The Lowell Weed and Seed holds an annual banquet to reward the youth and the monks for their work in the program. Youth are also given free memberships to the Boys & Girls Club for afterschool activities such as tutoring, recreation, and computer lab access. Two family liaisons were recently hired to interview parents and collect data on needs in the community.

**ROLE OF FAITH** Weed and Seed staff recognized that religion has a strong place in Cambodian life and culture and that the Buddhist spiritual leaders in the community were revered by the youth. They turned to the Venerable Khon Sao, leader of the Trairatanaram Temple and president of the Cambodian Monks Association. Venerable Sao has been working with Lowell Weed and Seed and the Lowell Police Department since April 2003. He believes that the Weed and Seed concept is harmonious with the precepts of Buddhism, and he travels around the country encouraging temples to work with local police departments to reach runaway and gang-involved youth.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** Attracting former runaway youth to the program is the first hurdle. In addition, many immigrant and refugee families have negative perceptions of law enforcement from experiences in their home countries and will be wary of this joint effort. Local Refugee Resettlement agencies can help officers gain access to this population.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** Staff and volunteers report that the participants in Operation Middle Path show improved self-esteem and conflict resolution skills.

## RAVEN'S WAY: ALASKA NATIVE SPIRITUAL WILDERNESS TREATMENT<sup>43</sup>

The Southeast Alaska Regional Health Consortium (SEARHC) uses Alaska Native cultural elements in treatment and activities. Alaska Natives have an alcohol-related mortality rate 3.5 times greater than non-Natives. According to the Alaska Commission on Rural Governance, 97 percent of the crimes committed by Alaska Natives are committed under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Raven's Way is an intervention program for 13- to 18-year-olds who have problems with alcohol or drug abuse. This focused youth intervention program combines conventional and adventure-based therapy to help the youth find their own path to spiritual healing. The program includes a three-week wilderness excursion, two weeks

of family-oriented living in a group home, and a ropes challenge course. Referrals come from the courts, villages, and state agencies. SEARHC works with court officials to ensure follow-up and aftercare for program graduates. Alaska Native Elders guide the teachings, and healthcare providers help youth develop teamwork skills and improve self-confidence through a treatment that uses both Alaska Native cultural elements and traditional interpersonal techniques. These include talking circles, ceremonial protocols, and Native art forms. Since 1989 Raven's Way has graduated 638 students, with 83 percent completing the program successfully.<sup>44</sup>

Parents report that they are communicating with their children better and that school attendance and adherence to curfews have improved. Parents are more involved in their child's education, and the Southeast Asian community has developed a better relationship with law enforcement officers. Lowell Weed and Seed is currently working with an evaluator to assess the program formally.

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## Reducing Racial Disparity in the Justice System

**Advocates from the faith community help arrested minority youth and their families navigate the juvenile justice system and help develop alternative sentencing options on behalf of minority defendants in court.**

**PROBLEM** Minorities are overrepresented at all stages of the juvenile justice system, from arrest to sentencing. According to the Office of Juvenile Justice and

*“Equality before the law in a true democracy is a matter of right. It cannot be a matter of charity or of favor or of grace or of discretion.”*

—U.S. Supreme Court Justice  
Wiley Rutledge

Delinquency Prevention, in 1996–97 African American youth represented 15 percent of the youth population in the United States but 26 percent of the youth arrested, 30 percent of those referred to juvenile court, 46 percent of those whose cases were judicially waived to criminal court, and 40 percent of the youth in residential placement.<sup>45</sup>

**PROGRAM** Reintegrating Alternatives Personal Program (RAPP) is a faith-based nonprofit in Washington, DC, that seeks to reduce the racial disparities in the justice system by providing a supportive presence in court for at-risk juvenile offenders. Cases are referred to the program through the congregation or by local law enforcement. For young offenders, RAPP sends letters to the judge and the defendant’s attorney explaining the organization’s services and offering them as an alternative sentencing option. Whenever possible, RAPP staff and volunteers accompany the juveniles to court to help them navigate the system and even to testify on their behalf. The fact that a volunteer is willing to appear in court and advocate for the youth indicates to the judge that the young person deserves a chance and will have support if he or she enters the program.

RAPP provides a range of services to court-involved youth and to ex-offenders. Its parole and probation monitoring program allows volunteers to keep in touch with their clients’ supervising officer to make sure they are complying with all court orders. The ex-offender mentoring program matches clients with parishioners to build relationships and connect them with needed services through bimonthly sessions. One of the greatest challenges for ex-offenders is finding a job when they get out of prison. Through a partnership with the private sector, RAPP connects clients with employers in the community who have committed to hiring ex-offenders.

Faith Tabernacle of Prayer, the church in which RAPP is based, organizes citywide events to mobilize other congregations to help inmates make the difficult transition from prison to home. RAPP works closely with Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency of the District of Columbia (CSOSA) to build partnerships between the city and its religious organizations to help ex-offenders and the neighborhoods to which they return.

**ROLE OF FAITH** RAPP operates out of a nondenominational church, and Rev. Dr. Judith Talbert, the executive director of the organization, is also a pastor at the church. Staff and volunteers are members of the congregation; they believe that this work allows them to “exemplify Christ as his disciple” and that God works through them to help offenders stay out of prison by providing “miraculous” relationships with employers who are willing to hire ex-offenders.

RAPP is able to reach former offenders because it has grown from a religious congregation that is rooted in the community it serves. Returning offenders settle in its neighborhood in large numbers. Members of the congregation—who are also the neighbors of these former prisoners—are a source of relationships and practical support.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** A staff member or volunteer needs to commit the time to recruiting and training volunteers and monitoring their progress over time.

## DEINSTITUTIONALIZING GIRLS: A PARTNERSHIP EFFORT

DESIST (Deinstitutionalize Every Sister and Insist on Some Treatment for Her) was founded by Rev. Roslyn Satchel, to address the situation of sexually exploited children in the Georgia State juvenile justice system. DESIST works with the Fulton County Juvenile Court, the Fulton County Public Defender Office, and a law firm to provide adequate legal representation for these children—mostly girls—and to find alternatives to detention, such as treatment and release to an appropriate placement within the community. DESIST has taken faith community leaders into juvenile detention centers and group homes to work with children in state custody. Faith

community representatives also sit on DESIST's board of directors. Rev. Satchel, who is also a lawyer, had represented abused, neglected, and imprisoned children as part of an Open Society Institute Justice Fellowship to curb excessive and inappropriate use of imprisonment of girls. DESIST works to educate the public about the need to provide rehabilitation and alternatives to detention. In May 2001 Rev. Roslyn Satchel joined other child advocates to establish the Interfaith Children's Movement of Metropolitan Atlanta (ICMMA), an organization of faith communities acting on behalf of children living in poverty or in state custody.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** RAPP's advocacy efforts have improved outcomes for minority youth and adult ex-offenders. Hundreds of clients are assisted each year in the courts, through community supervision, in job placement, and with addiction recovery. RAPP has been recognized by CSOSA as a leader in Washington, DC, prisoner reentry efforts. The U.S. Department of Justice has contracted RAPP to train mentors in a national reentry effort as part of the Value-based Initiative of the Community Oriented Policing Service.

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## Alternatives to Detention for Juveniles

**The faith community works with courts, parents, and school officials to divert young offenders from detention and to help them succeed academically.**

**PROBLEM** Because of language and cultural barriers, some parents of court-involved immigrant and refugee youth are not able to navigate the juvenile justice system and effectively advocate for their children.

**PROGRAM** The Asian Youth Services Program (AYS) collaborates with the New Orleans Juvenile Court System to divert youthful offenders from incarceration

into the afterschool and summer youth program. According to a 2001 survey of the Mary Queen of Vietnam Church Parish, 129 of the 502 youth living within the Versailles Garden community (a resettlement location for Vietnamese refugees since 1975) and enrolled in the youth education program had a grade D average or lower. Another 32 adolescents enrolled in the program had already dropped out of school. The Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of New Orleans began the AYS program as a response to concerns about these Vietnamese youth.

The program's three-tiered design addresses at-risk Vietnamese youth at different stages of their development.

- **Tier One: a recreational program with sports activities, field trips, art classes, and weekend outings.** Young men learn to perform the traditional Vietnamese Dragon Dance, which requires discipline and builds pride in their cultural heritage. The youth learn teamwork and leadership skills from counselors and mentors as they participate in basketball, volleyball, and soccer games.
- **Tier Two: a family life education program.** Chapters on sexuality, relationships, health, violence prevention, and community responsibility help at-risk youth understand themselves, learn to make good choices, and set goals. Parental involvement is key to the child's success, especially in this part of the program. Counselors make home visits to help with family problems and to mediate issues between teens and parents. Life planning curriculum workshops are offered to parents as well as youth.
- **Tier Three: a computer-based afterschool tutoring program with interactive educational software.** These teens are often discouraged by poor school performance and undermotivated. Most are two to three grade levels behind their age level, and many are deficient in both Vietnamese and English language skills. The computer program is less intimidating than the classroom because it proceeds at each student's individual rate. As an added incentive, youth who improve their scores are rewarded with special events. When the youth improve their academic skills, they often want to return to school, and Catholic Charities employs two full-time counselors who work with school officials to get youth reenrolled.

**ROLE OF FAITH** The mission of the program is to provide at-risk teens in the Versailles Gardens community not only with educational and recreational services but also with the spiritual guidance they need to develop "God-centered" and productive lives. Staff believe that their clients suffer spiritually, and through counseling sessions and life planning lessons they hope to show them "God's loving presence in their lives." Their goal is to guide youth toward responsible behavior and more "prayerful" living.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** Getting youth to participate in the program may be difficult. But the three-tiered system of AYS, with sports and other recreational

## REENTRY PROGRAMS FOR JUVENILE OFFENDERS

Straight Ahead Ministries focuses on young people who are already entangled in serious, chronic, and violent delinquency. When these youth come out of juvenile lockup, they are ill-equipped to reenter society: they are likely to have poor reading and writing skills and to be a few years behind their grade level in school. These high-risk youth are difficult to manage in any community, especially when they enter it without a positive support system to hold them accountable. As a result, schools develop policies to keep them out of the classroom, and many employers refuse to hire them because they are ex-offenders. Many are rearrested within a year of their release.

Since 1987 Straight Ahead Ministries, a Christian-based 501(c)(3) organization, has been working to interrupt this cycle of juvenile crime. Straight Ahead staff and affiliates facilitate weekly programs in more than 350 juvenile facilities through 32 staff and several hundred volunteers from faith-based communities. Programs include Bible studies, one-on-one mentoring, and special events. Straight Ahead's aftercare program includes a three- to five-month stay at a residential facility, three to four months in Straight Ahead Independent Living, and participation in an ongoing mentoring program. For more information, visit [www.straightahead.org](http://www.straightahead.org).

activities, helps draw in youth who might be intimidated by life-planning sessions or computers or who want to avoid daily tutoring.

Some of the youth who have participated in the program have gotten into legal trouble. The program maintains contact with these youth while they are incarcerated and welcomes them back to the group when they are released. One of these children made a marked improvement in his outlook and actions after release and has stayed out of trouble.

Welcoming new girls to the program has been a challenge. The girls bond throughout the program and were often not open to newcomers. To address this problem, the older girls (and boys as well) may be given particular duties and responsibilities, such as tutoring the newcomers. This breaks up the cliques. Staff try to draw in new girls slowly rather than in larger groups, which is less threatening to current participants. They try to gear sports and other recreational activities to the girls' interests.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** In the program's 2002 evaluation, 77 percent of the parents surveyed noted an improvement in their relationships with their children. One parent who saw a big improvement commented, "H. knows how to listen and seems to care for us more." Another parent commented, "They seem to have a new perspective on life." When asked, "Does AYS help your child in any way?" many parents responded positively: "Yes, it helps her to get on track with her life." "Very much, after the retreat camp, H. paid more attention to the family." "Yes, AYS helps [by] providing the at-risk kids activities that eliminate trouble in the community." "Yes, it helps my child with everyday obstacles such as peer pressure." "Very much, you take care of our kid's education daily."

The National Asian American Pacific Islander Mental Health Association identified the AYS program as one of the eight most "innovative, culturally competent" programs serving at-risk Asian American youth in 2003. In February 1998, the New Orleans *Times-Picayune* described the program as an oasis for troubled teens.

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## **Child Abuse Prevention**

### **The faith community helps build nurturing parent-child relationships to reduce the incidence of child abuse and neglect.**

**PROBLEM** In 1999, an estimated 1,396 children in the United States died as a result of parental maltreatment and neglect—nearly four children a day.<sup>46</sup> Isolation and poverty are among the factors that can lead to poor parenting and neglect. Many parents don't know how to utilize services in the community or believe that they are not entitled to them. Many are repeating the pattern of their own childhoods.

**PROGRAM** Trained volunteers from the faith community serve as rural parent aides, making weekly home visits to families at risk of child abuse or neglect and helping them manage the household and develop healthier parent-child relationships in their isolated environment.

Lutheran Social Services of Wisconsin and Upper Michigan (LSS) is one of the largest human service agencies in the two-state area. The Stop Child Abuse and Neglect (SCAN) program provides the community with faith-based child abuse prevention, support, and parenting programs for families. Law enforcement officers refer families to SCAN when they see a potential for abuse but no legal cause to intervene. Community agencies also make referrals, and families who have had their children removed may seek the help of the program. Referrals from the justice system, the court commissioner, the probation and parole office, or the department of human services provide an opportunity to reach families who are involved in the child welfare system. This initiative is funded by the United Way of Racine County.

A program case manager visits the home to assess the needs of the family and to identify stressors such as the presence of an older dependent in the home, poverty, and isolation. A trained volunteer parent aide from a local congregation is assigned to the family. The aide calls and visits weekly, providing techniques for positive parenting, from discipline to recreation, and keeping the parents informed about healthy family activities and events. He or she helps the

## STRATEGY IN ACTION

A woman who had lost custody of her three children was ordered by the court to attend the SCAN program. At first she was reluctant and felt overwhelmed by the requirements she had to meet in order to have her children returned. But after about three weeks of the program, she started arriving early, eager to discuss the homework assignments. By the end of the program, the family was having unsupervised visits and was working toward reunification. The children were delighted with their mother's motivation to complete the classes.

parents or caretakers communicate with the children, develop a household budget, and plan for the children's future.

**ROLE OF FAITH** As the social ministry arm of over 800 Evangelical Lutheran Church in America congregations in Wisconsin and Upper Michigan, Lutheran Social Services is "motivated by the compassion of Christ to help people improve the quality of their lives." SCAN volunteers are recruited from local Racine area churches, and congregations will some-

times "adopt" a participating family. Services are available to all regardless of faith.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** Parents or caregivers who have been mandated to participate through the court system may be reluctant because of negative experiences with the criminal justice system. Probation and parole agents may need to come to the program to take a participant into custody because they have been unable to locate him or her elsewhere, which adds an intimidating factor. The sponsoring agency needs to protect its image as a volunteer-based community service, not as part of a government agency that could take children away from parents.

The screening process should be thorough. For their own safety, volunteers should never be sent into homes where drugs are known to be present or where alcohol appears to be a problem even though these families may desperately need the intervention. Such a situation should be handled by trained professionals.

## EARLY INTERVENTION PROGRAM

Pastor Ken Scrubbs at the First Baptist Church of Leesburg, FL, works with a variety of city agencies to provide early intervention strategies for first-time offending youth and juvenile status offenders (those who have committed non-criminal offenses such as truancy and loitering). His technique is to "surround the life of the child" by providing a caring volunteer to be a consistent presence for that child. Volunteers from the congregation connect with youth before they are released from juvenile detention centers. The volunteers form Accountability Groups and lead character-building sessions, Bible study, and academic counseling exercises. When the youth return to school, Pastor

Scrubbs and other faith-based volunteers make weekly visits to their schools to make sure they are sticking to the goals they set in their Accountability Groups. The youth are invited to a Saturday fellowship program that serves 200 kids each week. Eight buses tour the city and pick up children. Volunteers meet with the kids ages four through 18 for recreational and fellowship activities. Pastor Scrubbs has also developed a relationship with probation officers who will often turn youth over to his faith-based nonprofit, the Youth Action Network, where they can perform community service hours with mentors rather than serving time in a juvenile detention center.

*Children and Youth*

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** The SCAN program provides child abuse prevention services to 35 to 40 families each year. Law enforcement officers trust the work of this organization and often call on staff to intervene in order to avoid putting children and adolescents in contact with Child Protective Services.

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## 4

## Probation, Parole, and Reentry

*According to a report of the  
Office of Justice Programs,*

The reentry of serious, high-risk offenders into communities across the country has long been the source of violent crime in the United States. As more than 630,000 offenders are released from prison every year, the problem of their recidivism has become a crisis that affects all parts of a community. Fewer than half of all released offenders stay out of trouble for at least three years after their release from prison, and many of these offenders commit serious and/or violent offenses while under parole supervision.<sup>47</sup>

In the hours and days following release from prison, former inmates are vulnerable to the trap of past behaviors. A study by the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS) found that of 272,111 prisoners released from prison in 15 states in 1994, 67.5 percent—more than two-thirds—were rearrested within three years.<sup>48</sup> Prisoners may be released “at odd hours of the night” and without appropriate identification.<sup>49</sup> In a nationwide survey conducted by the American Correctional Association in 2000, two-thirds of the states reported that they did not provide any documentation or reporting instructions to inmates upon release.<sup>50</sup> Releasees may be given nothing more than a bus ticket and some pocket money and sometimes not even that.<sup>51</sup> They may have substance abuse problems that may or may not have been treated in prison. According to BJS, in 2000 fewer than one-third of the prisoners received needed drug abuse treatment.<sup>52</sup>

Ex-offenders face many obstacles as they look for employment. Many businesses are unwilling to hire people with a criminal record. According to a report on prisoner reentry published by the Urban Institute in 2003, “Job training and placement programs show promise in connecting ex-prisoners to work, thereby reducing their likelihood of further offending. Yet, fewer inmates are receiving in-prison vocational training than in the past and fewer still have access to transitional programs that help connect them to jobs in the community.”<sup>53</sup> Many inmates have inadequate education and incomplete job experience. They may already be difficult to employ in the poor job markets of the impoverished areas to which they usually return, and adding a felony conviction makes it much harder. In addition, housing is often a problem when offenders have become estranged from their families and also may not be permitted in public housing.

All of these factors make it crucial that releasees receive assistance dealing with the challenges of reentry.

## Tracking and Monitoring Young Ex-offenders

### **An initiative targets high-risk young offenders (17 to 34) to help them with reentry.**

**PROBLEM** Many ex-offenders leave prison with no job prospects and no money, support system, or adequate housing. They are at risk of reoffending when they return to their neighborhoods.

**PROGRAM** The Boston Re-entry Initiative (BRI) is a partnership between the Boston Police Department and the Suffolk County Sheriff's Department that also involves the collaborative efforts of social service providers, other law enforcement agencies, and faith-based organizations—the Ella J. Baker House, Bruce Wall Ministries, the Nation of Islam, and the Ten-point Coalition (see page 33). The BRI targets 17- to 34-year-old inmates who are considered high risk for continuing their involvement in crime. Most of the offenders selected have extensive criminal backgrounds, histories of violence, firearm offenses, and gang associations. In addition, they come from—and will probably return to—communities designated as high-crime areas. The BRI seeks to prevent these young people from reoffending by offering them comprehensive and effective transitional resources and by carefully monitoring their reentry process.

The Boston Police Department's Gang Intelligence Unit identifies high-risk offenders as they are entering the prison (Suffolk County House of Correction). The unit recommends 15 to 20 inmates per month for the program. Program participants develop a "transition accountability plan" that outlines whatever treatment and rehabilitation is needed. The inmates attend a panel session with representatives from law enforcement and criminal justice agencies, where the message is fair and balanced with social service, faith, and law enforcement messages. Each panel member speaks from his or her own perspective: faith-based and social service organizations, for example, talk about resources and support available while the inmates are in prison and after their release, while law enforcement speaks about the consequences of reoffending. The overall impact of these sessions is to diminish the inmates' sense of anonymity and to help them understand that they have the power to choose not to return to criminal behavior.

After the panel session, inmates are assigned caseworkers and faith-based mentors who meet with them while they are still incarcerated. Education, substance abuse, and other rehabilitative programs are part of the transitional accountability plan. On release, a family member or a mentor meets the person at the door. Mentors and caseworkers continue to assist ex-offenders with immediate issues such as IDs, driver's licenses, health insurance, shelter, transportation, clothing, etc. The ex-offenders are encouraged to continue these relationships during the reentry period, and they are tracked and monitored after their release.

**ROLE OF FAITH** All of the faith-based organizations are in the neighborhoods to which the offenders return. This provides additional credibility for the program. Religion is not a factor in selecting program participants but sometimes plays a role in matching mentors and participants.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** Funding for this work is scarce. This program requires extensive coordination and cooperative work, which may not be possible in all jurisdictions.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** This program is strongly supported by the mayor, the police commissioner, the sheriff, and many religious leaders in Boston. The partnership has led to the creation of a very successful juvenile reentry program with the Massachusetts Department of Youth Services, as well as a small pilot Federal Re-Entry Program, under federal supervision.

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## **Ex-offender Eldercare Teams**

### **A faith-based organization employs ex-offenders to provide social services for elderly residents of public housing.**

**PROBLEM** Former offenders have trouble finding employment within the community.

**PROGRAM** Ex-offenders are hired to work on Care Teams that provide services for senior citizens in public housing. They escort them on trips to the bank or the store, make home visits, and assist them with errands. Faith-based partners in Cleveland, OH—the ecumenically sponsored Community Re-Entry (CR) program and its administrative agency, Lutheran Metropolitan Ministry (LMM)—developed the program to address two community problems: ex-offenders’ difficulty in finding employment and the vulnerability of elderly public housing residents. Cuyahoga Metropolitan Housing Authority (CMHA), which has its own police force, agreed to this new approach to increasing the safety of residents. The collaboration won funding from local foundations, United Way, and CMHA.

Community Re-Entry worked closely with CMHA residents, the local advisory council, police, and management to explain how Care Teams would serve the residents and at the same time be a life-changing ministry for the ex-offenders. Board members from the Episcopal, United Methodist, Catholic, United Church of Christ, Presbyterian, and Lutheran faiths were part of the process and provided additional credibility.

Ex-offenders for the program are carefully selected and must not have a history of violent or sexual offences. They must pass drug tests and receive conflict mediation training and an orientation to the work site. New employees shadow experienced employees before they are considered for a full-time, more independent position. The Care Teams are carefully supervised and monitored, and there is immediate follow-up if there are any problems or concerns.

Through the Care Teams program, 40 full- or part-time former offenders serve more than 500 Cleveland residents of public housing.

**ROLE OF FAITH** Faith is an important motivation for board members and many of the staff of LMM and CR, but it is not required, and evangelizing is not permitted.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** Putting ex-offenders in close relationships with vulnerable elderly people is a challenge, and it may be difficult to get acceptance for the idea—the community, prospective funders, and even the intended recipients themselves may be skeptical and with some justification. Ex-offender participants must be carefully screened and trained, and any concerns must be addressed immediately. Careful monitoring is essential. It helps if the agency or group implementing the program is already known and respected in the community, as was the LMM/CR partnership.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** The recidivism rate for active Care Team members has averaged less than five percent for the 25 years of the program.<sup>54</sup> CMHA residents rely on the services. Each year they use 7,500 escorted trips, 12,000 shopping or banking runs, 14,000 home visits, and 20,000 building safety checks.

A 1988 evaluation by CMHA (the primary funder) found the following results:

- During the first six months of the program at Lakeview and Cedar estates, there was a 50 percent reduction in residents' complaints.
- The residents of all the participating buildings overwhelmingly responded that they want this "very vital service" to continue.
- The aspect residents liked most about the Care Team members was "the sense of security they brought about."
- On a scale of one to ten (best), respondents' answers to the question "How would you rate the overall performance of the Care Team?" averaged nine.

The CMHA evaluation observed that the Care Teams "have been effective in changing the quality of life for our residents in a most positive manner. In addition, services they render are invaluable and would be sorely missed if discontinued."

## TIPS FOR APPLYING THE STRATEGY

It is important to address the following key questions during program design:

- What previous offenses will disqualify a participant?
- How will service delivery disputes be handled?
- In what way does being faith-based affect the program, and are all parties comfortable with that?
- Where does the initial funding come from, and what is the outlook for sustainability?
- How will media relations be handled initially and in the event of any adverse events?
- What level of achievement will indicate success, and what level will indicate a need for improvement? How will they be measured?
- How will the concept be presented to service staff, residents, and other community stakeholders?
- How will we involve others in the faith community through volunteers, donations, advocacy, or other action?

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## **Moment-of-release Contract**

### **Members of the faith community help prisoners plan for their return to the community.**

**PROBLEM** Prisoners face many barriers when they are released, such as limited housing and employment options, lack of vital papers, etc. They need help dealing with these difficulties and reintegrating into the community.

**PROGRAM** Exodus Transitional Community, Inc. (ETC), is a faith-based organization that works with men and women released from New York State correctional facilities. Located in East Harlem in New York City, ETC was founded in 1999 by clergy, volunteers, and ex-offenders. Volunteers make contact with returning offenders within the first 24 hours of release. They may pick up the inmate from the correctional facility or provide transportation to the aftercare center. Volunteers help releasees make critical decisions about their future, write a service plan, and make an “ETC contract” to keep them accountable to the plan. The contract commits the ex-offender to actions to reduce recidivism such as drug rehabilitation, relapse prevention measures, anger man-

agement classes, job training and placement, empowerment strategies for women, academic counseling, computer literacy, family relationship building, HIV/AIDS support groups, as well as education on housing, voting, employment rights, and health insurance.

ETC's assessment tool and action plan enable participants to evaluate their progress in each of the following areas: education, employment, family, community, spirituality, and health. Participants use self-evaluation to formulate goals and to assess areas where they need more support. Through the contract they begin to take control of their lives and to connect with a network of caring individuals, many of whom are ex-offenders who have successfully reintegrated. The volunteers provide or connect ex-offenders to programs and services to correspond to each component of the moment-of-release contract.

ETC also provides aftercare services. Housing is a major problem for ex-offenders. Public housing, Section 8 housing, and other federally assisted housing programs are denied to certain offenders, such as those convicted of drug-related crimes. In addition, households with members who are sex offenders or were convicted of methamphetamine production in public housing are permanently denied public housing. This means that ex-offenders may not be able to move in with their families.<sup>55</sup> Sometimes their only option is to reside in an overcrowded and unsafe homeless shelter depriving them of important family support. ETC does not have a housing facility, but staff work with participants to link them to housing programs throughout the city. In many cases, family members and friends work with ETC to help ex-offenders identify goals, access resources, and network with a support system.

**ROLE OF FAITH** ETC was founded by seminarians, formerly incarcerated men and women, and a coalition of churches. Congregations have continuously funded and supported the organization. ETC is housed in the Church of the Living Hope, a United Church of Christ congregation in Manhattan. The Living Hope chapel is available to ETC participants every weekday morning for personal contemplation. Through many of its services, participants are asked to look at the role of faith in their lives. ETC believes that faith is essential for people in transition and that having a spiritual base—whether or not it is rooted in traditional religion—is essential to successful reintegration.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** Volunteers will need support and encouragement as they assist ex-offenders through this difficult transition.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** ETC staff report a 20 percent recidivism rate for clients who come through the program—less than one-third of that reported in the 1994 study mentioned above.<sup>56</sup> ETC empowers traditionally unrecognized leaders by employing a staff of formerly incarcerated individuals. ETC's National Leadership Initiative gives a voice to ex-offenders and increases awareness of the need for postincarceration transitional programs. ETC has assisted more than 1,200 released men and women in transition.

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## **Notification Sessions for High-risk Ex-offenders**

**In a mandatory meeting for ex-offenders on probation or parole, clergy and law enforcement officers offer reentry services and present a strong antiviolence message.**

**PROBLEM** The reentry of serious, high-risk offenders into communities across the country has long been a source of violent crime in the United States.

**PROGRAM** Mandatory Notification Sessions for high-risk ex-offenders combine notice of tough enforcement of the laws with the promise of free, community-based services. Clergy and law enforcement officers on the Clergy Community Coordination project attend quarterly sessions that include representatives from the drug abuse prevention coalition, parents, educators, lay leaders, and mental health providers. About 25 ex-offenders attend each session. Clergy are recruited by the Center for Community Safety at Winston-Salem State University in Winston-Salem, NC.

At Notification Sessions, ex-offenders learn

- The community and the authorities know where they are.
- The community and the authorities are watching.
- Reentry services are free and available.
- Violence will not be tolerated.
- The consequences of violence and other crimes will be swift and severe.

Clergy also serve on Operation Reach teams with law enforcement officers and service providers. They visit the homes of youth who have attended Notification Sessions or who have otherwise been identified as at-risk of future violence. Team members talk with the kids about their concerns, encourage them to stay in school, and assess family issues that may contribute to delinquent behavior. The teams “take to the streets” to visit areas with high levels of drug traffic. They hand out literature about treatment programs and crisis hot-lines and tell the kids about project Fresh Start. This job placement and training program offers a small stipend for juvenile offenders ages 17 to 21 who attend job training classes and accept mentoring from a volunteer from the faith community.

**ROLE OF FAITH** The Center for Community Safety has been a leader in creating collaborations between the faith community and the criminal justice system. It is funded by a \$1.8 million, five-year grant from the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust. This university-based program employs a clergy/community coordinator to recruit members of the faith community. According to Clergy/Community Coordinator Dr. Linda Beal,

The clergy [do] the work because it impacts all of us. The church is the bastion of the community and [the community] is mandated to support it. [The church] has helped more kids in our community stay out of trouble than any other institution—even more than the criminal justice system! It's the greatest institution around for making meaningful change in a young person's life. This is why we are bringing clergy to the front end of service. They are here now to do the prevention work and the immediate follow-up after a former offender has reentered the community. Clergy won't be left out of this process any longer.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** Combining a message from law enforcement with a caring message from clergy is not always easy. Each party must support the other's message and consistently follow through on promises of services and threats of punishment. Recruiting clergy can be a challenge, especially when a diverse, multicultural, and interracial coalition is sought. It is important to build trust between religious leaders and law enforcement.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** Notification Sessions and other “lever-pulling meetings” (law enforcement officers “pull every lever” to ensure severe consequences for continued violence) have been taking place in cities all over the country, including Boston, MA; Indianapolis, IN; and Newark, NJ. Thousands of probationers and parolees have attended these meetings. In Winston-Salem, the Clergy Community Coordination project has created a formal mechanism for partner groups to come together to coordinate efforts and has increased information-sharing between neighborhood groups and the police. Respect and trust between clergy and law enforcement has improved, particularly among those who had previously had poor relationships. The involvement of faith-based partners through the Center for Community Safety is showcased in the U.S. Department of Justice's Project Safe Neighborhoods: America's Network Against Gun Violence.

*Contact Information*

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## Job Placement for Ex-offenders

### **A carpentry shop provides permanent jobs, competitive wages, career tracks, and ownership opportunities for ex-offenders.**

**PROBLEM** Ex-offenders returning to the community face many obstacles as they look for employment especially in the poor job markets of the impoverished areas to which they usually return and with their generally inadequate job skills and qualifications.

**PROGRAM** HIS Carpentry Shop, a Christian nonprofit, employs former offenders from Maine's jails and prisons to manufacture unfinished furniture. Income from furniture sales is the funding mechanism for the program, which teaches job and life skills. Under the auspices of Set Free in Maine, HIS Carpentry Shop provides permanent jobs, competitive wages, career tracks, and ownership opportunities for ex-offenders and disadvantaged people.

Program directors and the organization contact prerelease programs at jails and prisons, seeking referrals from social workers, chaplains, prison guards, and even other inmates. Once potential participants are identified, mentors work with the prisoners three to six months before their release, providing a spiritual support community, substance abuse treatment referrals, and help with housing.

The business is self-sustaining, and the sponsoring congregation doesn't have to seek grants or public funds. The profits go to fund employee scholarships, transitional housing, and a multiservice center to serve this population. Ex-offenders earn enough to support themselves while they learn transferable life and job skills. The program is supplemented with housing assistance, opportunities for fellowship, spiritual enlightenment, and guidance. Members of the sponsoring congregation help offenders put together a life plan.

**ROLE OF FAITH** When members of the Set Free in Maine congregation decided to develop a program to serve prisoners, staff and volunteers at the local prison told them that what was needed was not another Bible study. "They saw practical Christianity (walking the walk, not just talking the talk) as the greatest need and desire of the inmates they were working with," according to Pastor Kenneth Stevens. "If you want a clear picture of the role of faith in the development of this program, refer to the book of Nehemiah [in the Bible]. Nehemiah—the wall builder—has been our guide. We are working on the broken down walls of human life."

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** The labor costs for HIS Carpentry Shop are double the normal manufacturing costs because the program uses unskilled labor. The program needs support and advice from a strong board of business professionals, and it needs to have a business plan that takes into account these additional costs. Although foundations are increasingly interested in funding social entrepreneurial ventures such as this one, many are reluctant to invest in businesses that hire ex-offenders.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** The program is self-sustaining. HIS Carpentry Shop also wholesales furniture back to community organizations for their fundraising efforts, collects and distributes food donated by local congregations, and donates scrap wood from the shop to low-income families to heat their homes in the harsh Maine winters. Set Free in Maine used profits from HIS Carpentry Shop to open the Dream Center, a multiservice transitional facility for ex-offenders and substance abusers. As a result of the program's success, the Maine Department of Corrections has asked the congregation to set up a statewide mentoring program for all returning offenders.

*Contact Information*

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## Prison Aftercare Ministry

### Faith-based prerelease and aftercare mentors provide a support system for offenders on parole.

**PROBLEM** Ex-offenders often lack a support system to help them reenter the community.

**PROGRAM** In 1993 St. James' Episcopal Church, a small congregation in Montgomery County, MD, began the Prison Aftercare Ministry program with six volunteers who were committed to preventing offender recidivism. Today the ministry includes up to 20 or more volunteers from seven area churches. These volunteers, who are laypeople, are trained to be "aftercare ministers" who help inmates at the Montgomery County Correctional Facility (MCCF) build more constructive lives after their release from prison. There are approximately 700 inmates at the MCCF, both men and women. Most are serving sentences of 18 months or fewer. Those serving longer sentences usually go to state or federal prisons. To be selected for the program, an inmate must indicate a desire to participate and must be recommended by the chaplain or a counselor.

The program is modeled after the Stephen Ministry, a national organization with a well-structured peer support network that trains Christian laypeople in caregiving and crisis counseling. Aftercare ministers must complete the intensive training program—nine evening classes and one weekend retreat incorporating religious exercise and instruction in the needs of former inmates. Volunteers, who commit to two years of service, are matched with inmates at the MCCF and meet weekly while the inmates still have three or four months

to serve. After the inmates' release, weekly meetings continue for up to six months or longer.

The weekly meetings establish a relationship of trust. The volunteer encourages the inmate to make plans for after his or her release. Volunteers are trained to be good listeners and to understand the challenges faced by inmates with alcohol or drug addiction. They can provide helpful information on treatment options in the community and advice about sources of aid in finding a job, the importance of meeting parole requirements, etc.

Aftercare ministers also attend two-hour continuing education meetings twice a month. One hour is spent in peer counseling and one hour in listening to a guest speaker such as a probation officer, an alcohol or drug rehabilitation counselor, or the warden or another staff member from the MCCF.

**ROLE OF FAITH** Faith is important to this ministry. The program is church based and rooted in the Christian tradition. All the volunteers are Christians who believe that helping others is an important part of their faith. Operating costs, which are minimal, are provided by the supporting churches. The training and continuing education meetings are held in church buildings, and the churches also contribute office supplies and clerical work when needed.

After the inmate leaves prison, the weekly meetings continue. Eventually the volunteer will suggest that the ex-offender consider attending church, and he or she will invite the person to visit the volunteer's church some Sunday. Mainly, however, volunteers encourage ex-offenders to visit churches on their own.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** Corrections officers were skeptical at first but became supportive and cooperative when they saw that the volunteers were dependable and were primarily interested in helping inmates rather than converting them. The program also benefited from a Montgomery County correctional culture that emphasizes rehabilitation and the reduction of recidivism. The aftercare ministry has the support of the Montgomery County director of corrections and rehabilitation and the corrections staff at both the county jail and the county prerelease center. Volunteers are issued permanent visitor badges so that they can go directly to the inmate's cell, rather than visiting through a window.

Drug and alcohol addiction is a significant obstacle for some ex-offenders as they try to rebuild their lives. Volunteers are trained to understand the powerful pull of alcohol and drugs and the importance of attendance at Alcoholics Anonymous or Narcotics Anonymous meetings, and they urge an addicted person to attend these meetings. Volunteers often will offer to drive people to the first meeting. Volunteers are taught that relapse is a common experience on the road to recovery and that an ex-offender who slips back into addiction is not beyond recovery.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** The St. James' Aftercare Ministry has trained 35 volunteers who have mentored close to a hundred or more ex-offenders since 1993.

St. James' has also developed publications and videos on three aspects of the aftercare program: the importance of aftercare ministry, how to be a good listener, and how to counsel ex-offenders dealing with substance abuse. Each video comes with a booklet of course notes. These training materials were developed by St. James' with financial assistance from the Ruth Gregory Soper Memorial Fund of the Episcopal Diocese of Washington, DC. For more information about these training materials, contact [www.edow.org/stjamespotomac](http://www.edow.org/stjamespotomac), or call the number listed below.

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## **Circles of Support and Accountability for Sex Offenders**

**A microcommunity of service providers, clergy, and volunteers from the faith community supervise sex offenders when they are released from prison.**

**PROBLEM** Many states require sex offenders to serve their entire sentence in prison and also place their names on the sex offender registry. Consequently, former sex offenders are often released from prison with neither supervision nor community support and are immediately identified by angry community members and the media. They may also be barred from public housing and the traditional support systems available to others. This increases the possibility of recidivism.

**PROGRAM** In 1994, in response to community concerns, a grassroots movement was initiated by an inner-city pastor in Ontario to bring together volunteers from area congregations to form a small community to supervise and assist ex-offenders when they are released. This primarily volunteer-driven initiative is supported by the chaplaincy branch of the Correctional Service of Canada (CSC). Professionals from a wide background help train community members to form these networks of supervision and support.

Participants may request entry into the program or they may be referred by parole or probation officers, law enforcement, institutional chaplains, community chaplains, family members, or other concerned citizens.

Sponsoring congregations and community organizations bring together lay volunteers to be part of a Circle of Support and Accountability (COSA). Each local initiative has a coordinator, often a leader from the faith community, who will provide aspects of the training. Most projects require at least one part-time

coordinator to administer the program. The approximately 40-hour training course also serves as a screening process. Volunteers can drop out at any time during the training process, but they are asked to make a one-year commitment once they start working with an ex-offender, who is called the “core member.” Once the circle group is formed and trained, a core member is assigned.

Circles of Support and Accountability meet weekly and begin with prayer if the group chooses to do so. Each group member provides an update of happenings in terms of his or her relationship with the core member, and the core member talks about the week’s activities and frustrations. Members praise successes, challenge where challenge is needed, offer guidance when necessary, and determine further courses of action. A calendar of activities is developed around the core member’s needs. In addition, volunteers spend time with the core member, inviting him or her to participate in family activities and church functions if they feel comfortable doing so and if the activities are within the plan of action. The volunteers provide a relationship with the core member that includes “covenanting, meeting, and walking one-on-one daily.”

Community partners reapply for funding annually from the CSC.

**ROLE OF FAITH** This strategy builds on existing social outreach projects of religious groups. “A unique feature of [COSAs] is that they are community-‘owned’ initiatives driven by community-based volunteers. . . . Faith groups often have a natural supply of volunteers: their volunteers represent a broad skill-base and have experience working with marginalized people. Having offenders experience this caring community is vital to the success of [COSA].”<sup>57</sup>

Although COSAs for the most part are faith based, they are not necessarily religious or driven by religious groups. Churches sometimes sponsor these groups as an extension of their ministry in a community, and sometimes faith-based agencies, such as the Salvation Army or the Mennonite Central Committee, sponsor the work. When a faith-based agency is the sponsor, it is not connected with a single congregation.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** There may be considerable community opposition if the program is perceived as being solely for the benefit of sex offenders as there is strong feeling about this particular type of crime. The community is more likely to be supportive if the program is presented as a way to protect the community by preventing these offenders from repeating their crimes. Some volunteers may feel that they are unable to participate in this particular program while others believe that their faith teaches that no one is beyond redemption.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** The program’s goal is to prevent the ex-offender from causing more harm to the community, and a person who is rehabilitated and accepted into the community is less likely to re-offend. Through the leadership of Rev. David Molzahn, the program has been instituted nationally. There are several ongoing evaluations that indicate very promising results with one of the studies indicating that participation in COSAs reduces recidivism by these ex-offenders by as much as 70 percent.<sup>58</sup>

*Probation, Parole, and Reentry*

*Contact Information*

**Circles of Support and Accountability**

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# 5

## Support for Victims

**S**upport for victims of crime and their families remains a top priority for communities and neighborhoods around the country. Battered women and victims of rape and assault have suffered substantial harm, and their families are also impacted by these crimes. The needs of these victims range from basic shelter and legal and financial assistance to recovery counseling.

Faith-based organizations can assist victims and their families by welcoming them into the community and providing a nurturing environment for them. Many communities of faith have always seen this as an important part of their mission, and many have also considered it essential to extend a helping hand in substantive ways—from feeding programs to shelters and legal clinics. Collaboration with criminal justice agencies extends these services and enhances their impact.

### Bodyguards for Domestic Violence Victims

**Men are recruited from congregations to serve as bodyguards to escort domestic abuse survivors to criminal justice-related activities.**

**PROBLEM** Women who leave their batterers are at a substantially higher risk of being killed by their abusers than those who stay. Abusers often tell their partners that they will kill them if they leave, and these threats are serious.<sup>59</sup> The Milwaukee Police Department responds to more than 1,200 domestic violence calls each month. In Wisconsin, 65 to 70 percent of the domestic violence victims are African American women.<sup>60</sup>

**PROGRAM** Brothers Against Domestic Violence (BADV) provides bodyguard escorts for women who are victims of domestic violence and who have restrain-

ing orders signed by a judge. BADV operates under the umbrella of Asha Family Services (formerly the Women of Color Project), which was founded by Antonia Vann in 1989 in response to the need for victim and batterer services for Milwaukee's African American women. Asha is a spiritually based family violence prevention and intervention agency that draws its staff, volunteers, and resources from the population it serves and from the historically black churches and mosques in the city.

The Brothers Against Domestic Violence are African American men from local churches and mosques who are committed to ensuring the safety of women and children. They are bodybuilders with backgrounds in the military, martial arts, and protective services, and they are on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Their message is clear: "Not all men are abusers" and "Men must hold other men accountable for violence against women and children."

BADV volunteers are trained in the dynamics of domestic abuse. After an initial training of 150 hours, training is ongoing for all agency personnel. The bodyguards accompany the victims as they obtain restraining orders, and they work with the sheriff's department to make sure the batterers are served with the order. The bodyguards call the police at once if the abuser shows up, and they are trained to defend the victim with nonviolent techniques. Bodyguards also repair damages the abuser caused to the home. In many cases, the perpetrators are referred by the courts and probation and parole to Ujima, Asha's non-traditional abuser treatment program for African American men.

The state department of justice or the police department provides criminal background checks on potential candidates for bodyguards. Advocates call their clients daily, and the bodyguards escort the women to all criminal justice-related activities as well as to the store, doctors' visits, and social events.

**ROLE OF FAITH** The bodyguards come from local churches and mosques. Asha operates on faith-based principles and is affiliated with the Nation of Islam and several historically black congregations in Milwaukee.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** "An initial challenge was negative history between service systems," says Antonia Vann. "Communities of color have not shared a history of friendship with the criminal justice system," and funding is a challenge. "Funding sources are either for official law enforcement personnel or for victim services." BADV members themselves contribute monthly to a fund for the escort activity. Asha provides domestic abuse and abuser treatment training, office space, telephone, support staff, office supplies, copy machine, computer, and fax. The volunteers also visit local churches to ask for special offerings for the program.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** BADV volunteers lighten the load for police officers. As a longtime provider of domestic abuse services in the city and county of Milwaukee, Asha and the Brothers Against Domestic Violence have a well-established relationship with the criminal justice system and among historically black churches and community groups.

### *Support for Victims*

Asha and BADV are regular faces in the domestic violence courts and at domestic violence committee meetings. Asha Family Services reaches more than a thousand clients annually with crime prevention and victim assistance programs. It provides a culturally relevant response to domestic violence, which was previously lacking in Milwaukee where the population is 37.3 percent African American. BADV leaders were invited to Washington, DC, to work with Senator Joseph Biden on the Violence Against Women Act.

### *Contact Information*

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## **Support for Family and Friends of Homicide Victims**

### **Volunteers from a faith-based organization provide emotional, spiritual, and practical support to those grieving for homicide victims.**

**PROBLEM** According to the FBI's Uniform Crime Report, an estimated 16,204 murders were committed in the United States in 2002.<sup>61</sup> "Homicide survivors" (relatives, significant others, friends, neighbors—all who grieve for the victim) may find their grief complicated by factors related to the homicide, such as police interrogations and intrusions by the media.

**PROGRAM** Victims to Victory provides faith-based support services to homicide survivors. A Tennessee pastoral counselor established the organization because she had been unable to find such services for the surviving family members of young murder victims in her congregation.

Victims to Victory's close relationship with the Memphis Homicide Department and the District Attorney's office gives it access to timely contact information for families of victims. In the immediate aftermath of a murder, most survivors are too traumatized to seek help. The homicide department notifies Victims to Victory that a homicide has occurred, and the group sends a letter to the victim's family offering the free services. Volunteers make follow-up calls and a home visit. Victims to Victory also employs two full-time homicide assistance specialists to provide crisis counseling when needed. The faith community establishes a grief support group for the survivors in collaboration with state-funded programs in the area and offers workshops and weekend retreats.

## LEGAL ASSISTANCE FOR SURVIVORS OF TORTURE

Among asylum seekers, survivors of torture are probably the least equipped to cope with the process of gaining refugee status in the United States. They often arrive in this country by illegal means, are unable to speak English, and lack financial resources or identification documents. If they arrive illegally, they are placed in detention and are in danger of being returned to their native country if they are unable to present their case to an immigration official.

The Liberty Center for Survivors of Torture is a project of the Lutheran Children and Family Service (LCFS) of Eastern Pennsylvania, a faith-based network that provides community services in Pennsylvania and Delaware. The center, which is funded by the U.S. Department of Health and

Human Services, provides case management services for survivors, giving them expert guidance in the legal process of obtaining asylum. The center collaborates with local law schools, volunteer lawyers, and five faith-based and non-profit legal service agencies that specialize in immigration issues. It also assists survivors in areas such as housing, interpretation, transportation, and medical and mental healthcare. LCFS provides the link to the faith community including congregational appeals for volunteers, supplies, and donors. Volunteers visit, befriend, and support the survivors, helping them deal with the emotional trauma of their experiences. For more information, visit [www.lcfsinpa.org/main/survivortortur.htm](http://www.lcfsinpa.org/main/survivortortur.htm). See also "Spiritual Care for Detainees and Asylum Seekers" on page 20.

Staff of Victims to Victory serve on the city's Fatality Review Team and the Faith Outreach Committee of the local Domestic Violence Council. They partner with the county victim assistance agency to host an annual remembrance retreat for survivors.

**ROLE OF FAITH** Through Victims to Victory, local churches reach out to the community in a new way, offering practical assistance and emotional and spiritual support "to help victims of crime move from crisis to comfort through Christ." Although volunteers pray with the survivors at their request, survivors do not need to make a profession of faith to receive support from the program.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** Providing support for people who are grieving is difficult, even for those who have been professionally trained. It is necessary to provide support and empathy and yet maintain some emotional distance. Volunteers must go through intensive training in grief counseling to learn how to avoid burnout. Finding volunteers willing to make such a commitment can be difficult.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** Victims to Victory serves up to 200 homicide survivors each year. It is the only faith-based agency serving homicide victim families in the Memphis area. The agency's Homicide Co-victims Program was cited among promising faith-based practices in *New Directions From the Field: Victims' Rights and Services for the 21st Century*, published by the Office for Victims of Crime of the U.S. Department of Justice.<sup>62</sup>

### Contact Information

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# Crime Prevention and Community Policing

**C**rime prevention is everyone's business. To be effective, crime prevention requires cooperation by all elements of the community. When neighbors work together, crime prevention can improve the quality of life for every community and its residents.

Communities of faith have a common interest with law enforcement and criminal justice agencies: to keep neighborhoods safe and free from violence and crime. Unfortunately law enforcement is often seen as “the enemy,” and communities of faith are sometimes out of touch with the community surrounding their buildings. Partnerships require understanding, and sometimes they require learning about a different culture or religion; they require sensitivity to the concerns of other partners; and most of all they require patience and hard work. And when they are successful, when real partnerships are formed between law enforcement and faith-based communities, people work together to create safer and more caring communities.

## Town Hall Faith and Justice Meetings

**Leaders representing religious minority groups and local law enforcement hold town hall meetings to defuse community tensions.**

**PROBLEM** After September 11, 2001, many minority ethnic and religious groups reported being singled out by law enforcement and new government policies. The Council on American-Islamic Relations (CAIR) reported that incidents of anti-Muslim violence, discrimination, and harassment increased 15 percent in the United States from 2002 to 2003.<sup>63</sup>

**PROGRAM** To educate Muslims in the region about their rights and to improve relationships between Muslims and non-Muslims, the St. Louis, MO, chapter of

CAIR met with local FBI agents, police officers, and the U.S. Attorney's Office to organize a town hall-style meeting to discuss the USA PATRIOT Act, which gave the government new powers of surveillance after September 11, 2001.

The town hall meeting was held at a local mosque. Muslim leaders from CAIR moderated the discussion, which addressed anti-Muslim hate crime, surveillance of Muslim-Americans by law enforcement, and concerns about fair application of the PATRIOT Act. Representatives from the FBI, the U.S. Attorney's Office, and the Joint Counterterrorism Task Force took questions from the audience and attempted to address apprehensions about the new laws. This meeting created a framework for discussing community problems and working toward solutions. It demonstrated the commitment of law enforcement executives and city leaders to deal with these sensitive issues. CAIR-St. Louis also hosted a town hall-style meeting on "Know Your Rights." Local Muslim leaders heard from representatives of the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission and the American Civil Liberties Union on civil rights, discrimination, detention, racial profiling, and the proposed Domestic Security Enhancement Act.

**ROLE OF FAITH** CAIR is funded primarily by donations from local mosques that are committed to social justice.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** Many Americans do not understand a faith outside of the Christian mainstream. The events of September 11 has exacerbated suspicion and distrust between the Muslim community and law enforcement. Establishing trust is the first and most essential step for this strategy to work.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** Town hall-style meetings have been so successful at diffusing tensions between Muslims and law enforcement that they have been replicated by almost every chapter of CAIR in cities across the country. Through media campaigns, conferences and seminars, publications, and action alerts, CAIR has

## STUDY CIRCLES ADDRESS RACIAL PROFILING

The Buffalo, NY, Police Department partnered with United Neighborhoods, a local community action organization, to develop a cooperative project to reduce racial profiling. The project was funded by a grant from the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services, U.S. Department of Justice. The partners decided to use the study circle, a gathering of a dozen people from different ethnic backgrounds and professions to discuss the problem with help from a facilitator. One of the circles brought together Muslim business owners with African American youth in the neighborhood. The business owners were concerned about youth loitering in front of corner stores, and leaders

in the African American community cited a long-standing problem with illegal activities that took place at some of the stores. After four sessions of the study circle, the participants agreed to work together to develop recommendations. One of the recommendations was that more police officers should take a training in Muslim culture that was offered by the Erie County Central Police Services Training Academy in conjunction with a local leader in the Muslim community. Follow-up surveys indicated that the study circles increased participants' understanding of the attitudes and beliefs of other groups and improved their ability to communicate with people of different beliefs.

promoted goodwill between law enforcement and Muslims living in the United States. In 2002 CAIR published *Law Enforcement Efficacies' Guide to the Muslim Community*, which provides basic information about Islamic beliefs.

*Contact Information*

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## Race and Reconciliation Summit

### **A community-wide event brings together leaders in law enforcement, business, faith, government agencies, and social service agencies to improve race relations.**

*“Where justice is denied, where poverty is enforced, where ignorance prevails, and where any one class is made to feel that society is an organized conspiracy to oppress, rob and degrade them, neither persons nor property will be safe.”*

—Frederick Douglass

**PROBLEM** In King County, WA, there were nine police officer-involved shootings of people of color in as many years. When each shooting was ruled justified, minority leaders in the community raised questions of bias, institutional racism, and racial insensitivity within law enforcement.

**PROGRAM** County law enforcement and faith leaders worked together to address long-standing racial tensions through a community-wide summit. King County Sheriff Dave Reichert and Rev. Donovan Rivers of the Apostolic Clergy Advisory Council invited the National Crime Prevention Council to design a summit meeting that would produce specific actions to encourage reconciliation.

NCPC interviewed 180 people from civil rights groups, the faith community, the police officers' union, refugee and immigrant groups from the large Southeast Asian and African communities in King County, and local nonprofit and advocacy groups. Interviewers encouraged each group to discuss their concerns in dealing with law enforcement or with community-based organizations. The summit was designed to address these concerns.

At the summit, community members and law enforcement officers shared stories and strategies around four themes: reconciliation, trust, leadership and service, and justice. Participants developed a list of recommended strategies for the community. After the summit, participants ranked the recommendations according to importance and feasibility. NCPC staff returned to Seattle and convened a small working group to implement the solutions.

**ROLE OF FAITH** Rev. Donovan Rivers, pastor of the Mount Calvary of Faith Apostolic Church and founder of the Apostolic Clergy Advisory Council, was at the center of this effort. As a respected spiritual leader in the African American community, Rev. Rivers encouraged local congregations to participate.

## LESSONS FROM THE HOLOCAUST

Since 1999 the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum and the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) have been offering training models for recruit, in-service, and command-level law enforcement officers and federal judges. Developed in collaboration with the FBI, the Metropolitan Police Department of the District of Columbia, the Federal Judicial Center, and Prince George's County Police Department, these programs examine the history of the Holocaust and encourage law enforcement officials to reflect upon their personal and professional responsibilities in a pluralistic society. The programs have served more than 14,000 officers from nine local police agencies in the Washington, DC, region and have gained national recognition from the International

Association of Chiefs of Police and the U.S. Department of Justice.

Each training model includes three components:

- A guided tour of the museum's permanent exhibition, which traces the history of the Holocaust from the Nazi rise to power through the end of the Second World War and its aftermath
- An interactive discussion, led by museum historians and educators, on the abuse of power under the Nazis and the role of police within the Nazi state
- An interactive examination, led by ADL educators, of the difficult role of police in American society today

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** Many churches in urban neighborhoods have no positive contact with the police. It is necessary that faith leaders believe in this effort and encourage other faith-based groups and congregations to participate. Law enforcement officers may also feel defensive and unwilling to participate, so it is important that everyone understands that the goal of the summit is to work toward solutions rather than to place blame.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** The summit established dialog and working relationships, and the group began implementing the recommendations.

### *Contact Information*

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## Community Crime Prevention Festival

### **Law enforcement agencies and a faith-based group cosponsor community safety events on Halloween.**

**PROBLEM** Child safety during Halloween is a national concern. As children go door-to-door trick-or-treating, they are potential targets for crimes of opportu-

nity. Homeowners may also be at risk when older teens or even adults put on costumes and use the opportunity for petty theft or vandalism.

**PROGRAM** In collaboration with the Alabama Crime Prevention Clearinghouse and the Montgomery (AL) Police Department (MPD), the Morningview Baptist Church hosts a citywide Halloween Safety Festival every year. Hundreds of church volunteers spend two days setting up numerous games and information booths, a preschool area, and a food court in a carnival atmosphere. Event organizers partner with local schools to notify students about the festival.

The annual festival was developed by the church as a community outreach project. It is financed by the church, receives no city money, and depends on volunteers from the church and the MPD. Church volunteers scour the community for donations and seek sponsors for special equipment and activities, such as a McGruff® vehicle, photo booth, or petting zoo.

The Alabama Crime Prevention Clearinghouse at Auburn University Montgomery, in conjunction with the MPD, operates a McGruff Crime Prevention Display with child safety information such as McGruff fingerprint kits, crime prevention coloring books, pencils, McGruff badges, and other materials. McGruff makes regular appearances and even had his own 20th birthday celebration at the festival in 2000. Children come dressed in their Halloween costumes and receive candy from each game and booth. They go home with crime prevention materials and information about the church as well as bags of candy.

**ROLE OF FAITH** The festival is part of the social ministry of this Southern Baptist congregation. The church members appreciate the opportunity to meet other community residents and to introduce them to the church. Some law enforcement officers are also members of the congregation. After the festival, the lay leaders make home visits to those who have left their names and contact information. They use the opportunity to connect families to social welfare services if appropriate.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** This event requires an enormous commitment of time, resources, and planning. Four hundred people participate in festival planning, preparation, execution, and follow-up. Financial and in-kind support from throughout the community is important. The cooperation of local law enforcement is essential.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** More than 6,000 area families enjoy the safe Halloween activities at the festival. The annual event has created a sustainable partnership between the church and the police department, and it enables the church to extend its ministry to the community, which in turn respects the church for its outreach. Staff report an exponential rise in number of festival participants each year. With a large congregation as the event sponsor, the festival benefits from a huge pool of volunteers. The festival helps build a sense of community.

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## **Crisis Response Teams**

### **Congregations collaborate with law enforcement to plan and implement emergency preparedness and homeland security activities appropriate to the needs of ethnic and religious minorities.**

**PROBLEM** After the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001, cities and communities were called on to develop emergency preparedness and disaster response plans. Pine Bluff, AR, has the nation's largest stockpile of chemical weapons, which makes homeland security and emergency preparedness important concerns.

**PROGRAM** In 2003 a Pine Bluff religious leader and director of the Pine Bluff Weed and Seed (a federal program designed to "weed" crime and criminal activity from a community and "seed" human services in the neighborhood) convened a public meeting to develop a coordinated homeland security effort that was also sensitive to the needs of ethnic and religious minorities. Law enforcement officers, Neighborhood Watch organizations, fire department officials, faith groups, and the local emergency management organization participated. The team worked with the local emergency planning committee, distributed emergency preparedness information, and secured a commitment from ten churches to provide shelter, food, and clothing in an emergency. Training was provided to help local pastors organize their congregants to provide a variety of services during emergencies.

Using the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday as a backdrop, Pine Bluff Weed and Seed and a group called the Interested Citizens for Voter Registration brought together Jews, Christians, and Muslims to discuss culture, religion, and

homeland security concerns. They hosted the KingFest Celebration and encouraged faith leaders to help their congregations understand people of different backgrounds and religions.

**ROLE OF FAITH** This interfaith program involves spiritual leaders from diverse faiths who help initiate cross-cultural meetings and develop relationships with people of other ethnic and religious backgrounds.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** In an area where there are many diverse ethnic and cultural groups, tension and suspicion may be difficult to overcome. An honest airing of disagreements and grievances is necessary to establish trust so that the different groups can work together to protect the community.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** The program reduced community fear by promoting emergency preparedness and providing faith-based victim assistance services. The collaboration built the community's capacity for crime prevention by bringing together faith leaders, criminal justice professionals, and emergency management officials in a coordinated response. The KingFest Celebration helped break down ethnic and racial barriers. The Local Emergency Planning Committee created a formal mechanism for partner groups to come together to coordinate efforts.

*Contact Information*

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## Pastors on Patrol

### Clergy accompany police officers on patrol and provide support at crime scenes.

**PROBLEM** Community residents are often uninformed about services provided by local law enforcement. This lack of information can lead to apathy and even hostility between residents and law enforcement.

**PROGRAM** The Fernandina Beach (FL) Police Department tapped the local Ministerial Alliance to recruit religious leaders for a ride-along program. Thirty pastors are matched with patrol officers each week. The clergy wear Pastors on Patrol uniforms and serve as mediators at crime scenes.

The Pastors on Patrol program was initiated by the chief of police in partnership with the law enforcement chaplain. The chaplain is affiliated with a local

Presbyterian church and serves the police department without pay. He is on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and does frequent ride-alongs in uniform. He manages the ride-along program and recruits community faith leaders to participate. Both the police chief and the chaplain attend the Fernandina Beach Ministerial Alliance meetings to build support between the faith community and the police.

Currently all volunteers to the program are Christian, with representatives from both historically African American and white denominations. Pastors sign a waiver releasing the city from liability. They usually sign up for three of an officer's 12 shifts and ride about six hours per trip. Police and clergy make their own matches, and most develop a bond with their partners. Almost 30 churches participate. The Ministerial Alliance, which includes African American and white religious leaders in the community, provides donations for the Pastors on Patrol hats and uniforms. Many of the participating pastors get together for peer support and coffee once a week.

**ROLE OF FAITH** Seeing respected religious leaders patrolling the neighborhood with officers encourages positive behavior by residents and reduces fear. Confrontations are less volatile, and people are less likely to react with anger when a pastor is present. The strategy reduces tensions between the neighborhood and the police, especially if the program is multiethnic and multiracial. It also provides an opportunity for pastors to conduct a social ministry in the neighborhood.

**POTENTIAL OBSTACLES** It's important that members of all faiths feel welcomed to this project. The makeup of the Pastors on Patrol program reflects the demographics of the community. Officers may be reluctant to participate if they feel they will be monitored or judged. And civilians in patrol cars can be a safety and liability risk for the city if they aren't well prepared.

**SIGNS OF SUCCESS** The strategy has worked for the Fernandina Beach Police Department in part because of the leadership of Police Chaplain Don McFadyen who stresses the importance of working with schools, the faith community, and the government.

Fernandina Beach's Pastors on Patrol program was modeled after a successful initiative in Shreveport, LA, and there are similar programs across the country. The program has greatly increased trust between the community and the police department and has given the pastors a better understanding of police officers' responsibilities as well as a different view of their community. Pastors on Patrol was endorsed by the Fernandina Beach Anti-Crime Coalition.

#### *Contact Information*

##### **Pastors on Patrol Program**

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# 7

## Working Together

This section is designed to provide guidelines for faith communities and criminal justice agencies that plan to work together. As in any collaboration, the partners need to be sensitive to different perspectives and aware that there are different ways of addressing a problem or issue. Misunderstanding and miscommunication may be unavoidable, but they will be resolved more easily if both partners approach them with an open mind and a focus on the common goal. We hope these tips will help.

### Tips for Working With Law Enforcement

**Here are some suggestions for collaborating with law enforcement:**

- Be sure to invite everyone who will be affected by your program to participate in planning, implementing, and evaluating your program.
- Remember that a faith-based organization and law enforcement have a common goal—to create and maintain a safe and caring community.
- You and your organization are a valuable resource for law enforcement. Explain to police officers how your program will make their job easier. Be specific.
- Respect the police department's hierarchy and chain of command.
- Know that law enforcement officers are there to help you.
- Remember that police officers, like everyone else, are busy people. For many, working on your program must be done in addition to their regular work and often on their own time.

*“A lot of people are waiting for Martin Luther King or Mahatma Gandhi to come back—but they are gone. We are it. It is up to us. It is up to you.”*

—Marian Wright Edelman

Adapted from *Powerful Partnerships: Twenty Crime Prevention Strategies That Work for Refugees, Law Enforcement, and Communities* (Washington, DC: National Crime Prevention Council, 1998), 124.

## Tips for Working With Faith-based Organizations

### Here are some guidelines for working with faith-based organizations:

- **Find common ground.** You and many of the faith-based groups in your community share purposes. You may find that you agree on many of the goals although you may have different ways of getting there. Work together on those elements where you find common ground, and respect those where you don't.
- **Establish clear guidelines** on the nature and extent of your collaboration. If the group will be working with prisoners, make it clear what the requirements are for entering the prison. If volunteers are working with ex-offenders, they should be familiar with parole and probation requirements.
- **See the faith community and the faith-based group as a full partner**—a natural partner of unexpected allies, such as the police department, the courts, or the correctional system. A faith-based group within the community may take on one or more roles at various times. Volunteers from a church, synagogue, or mosque may be deeply motivated by their faith and yet eager to extend services to persons of different faith or of no faith. It is important to understand the context in which faith acts to move and shape the community.
- **Demand accountability.** Treat faith-based groups as you would any partner. Agree on outcomes and timelines. Be clear about legal boundaries and constitutional issues. (The White House Office of Faith-Based and Community Initiatives has published *Guidance to Faith-Based and Community Organizations on Partnering with the Federal Government*, a comprehensive look that includes FAQs on the legal aspects of these partnerships. It's available online at [www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci/guidance/index.html](http://www.whitehouse.gov/government/fbci/guidance/index.html).)
- **Stay in there for the long haul.** It may take a long time for change to happen. Be sure to give programs a chance to work.
- **Keep in mind research, track records, and plausibility** when assessing what faith-based organizations are offering. Faith-based organizations may not always take the same approach to problems as government agencies, but the energy and determination they bring to the project may make even unusual approaches succeed.

Adapted from National Crime Prevention Council, *Philanthropy and Faith: An Introduction* (Washington, DC: NCPC: 2003), 17–18.

## Using “Due Diligence” To Comply With Government Regulations

The Faith and Service Technical Education Network (FASTEN) offers faith-based organizations helpful tips on collaboration, based on interviews with hundreds of faith leaders who have received government funding for their programs.<sup>64</sup>

- **Be transparent about your religious character.** Commit yourself to open, straightforward, clear, consistent communication about your religious identity to your volunteers, service beneficiaries, donors, and government. Make it your goal to allow potential program participants and government partners to make choices about involvement with your organization on the basis of full and accurate information about your program content, ethos, goals, and methodology.
- **Separate your public funds from your private donations.** Maintain separate accounts and do not commingle funds. You will need to be able to show auditors how every dime of your government contract/grant was spent.
- **Hold explicitly religious programs at different times or in different locations than the publicly funded services.** Receiving government funding does not mean you must stop holding worship services or prayer meetings. It does mean that you must conduct those activities in a way that makes them clearly distinct from the social services you are offering that are paid for by public dollars. . . .
- **Clearly communicate that client participation in explicitly religious activities is voluntary and optional.** Feel free to inform participants in your government-funded program about the various religious services your organization may sponsor, just be sure that they understand that their attendance is not mandatory. . . .
- **Be intentional, deliberate, specific, and public about articulating to clients what their rights are.** Consider posting a sheet that lists clients' rights in a prominent, public part of your facility.
- **Have a client's grievance procedure in place.** . . . Have an intentional, published process that indicates what steps a disgruntled client can take. . . .
- **Provide specialized training for staff and volunteers about the rules governing the government grant or contract, so that everyone knows what activities are permissible.** This training should be formal and documented.
- **Have a brief, written policy about how to respond to spiritual inquiries from clients, and inform all staff and volunteers involved in the government-funded program of this policy.** One good approach is to train staff and volunteers that if a query is raised . . . during the government-funded program, they should respond briefly and politely and then invite that person to have a more in-depth conversation with them at a time outside the . . . times of the government-funded program. . . .
- **If your organization has required behavioral standards for paid staff, be sure that your written literature (e.g., personnel policy manual) and verbal communication about those standards links them explicitly to your character as [a faith-based organization].** You may assume the link between your religious beliefs and certain behavioral practices, but for those outside your creed, the connection may not be readily understandable. . . . Be sure that your personnel policies make it explicit that the required behaviors (or impermissible behaviors) are rooted in the religious beliefs of the organization. . . .

Excerpted from Amy L. Sherman, "Due Diligence Tips," Hudson Institute, 2004.

# Faith and Service Technical Education Network (FASTEN)

The Faith and Service Technical Education Network (FASTEN) offers informational resources and networking opportunities to faith-based practitioners, private philanthropies, and public administrators who seek to collaborate effectively to renew urban communities. An initiative of The Pew Charitable Trusts, FASTEN identifies best practices in faith-based services and multi-sector collaboration and produces and disseminates educational materials for practitioners in the public and private sectors.

FASTEN seeks to meet the needs of faith-based organizations (FBOs) by building their capacity to address community challenges. FASTEN equips FBOs by providing

- Resources, advice, and information from and pertaining to a faith-based audience
- Connections to experts in the fields of practice supported by FASTEN
- Practical tools (e.g., how-to guides, model profiles, curricula)
- A peer-to-peer learning community
- Broadly disseminated information on best practices based on original research produced by the FASTEN partner organizations

Private and corporate philanthropic foundations, as well as government agencies at federal, state, and local levels, sometimes look to FBOs as partners in the provision of social services. FBOs are close to the people they serve and are often rooted physically in the same community. They also often enjoy a high level of trust. Yet FBOs are not a cure-all for the ills of any neighborhood or community. Private foundations, recognizing both the assets and limitations of FBOs, have questions as they explore new or expanded partnerships. Moreover, recent national attention to the role of FBOs has produced new policy initiatives for expanding government collaboration with them. Along with these “faith-based initiatives” have come new regulations and expectations about how public agencies should interact with faith communities. As a result, FBOs,

*FASTEN*

public administrators, and private philanthropies have questions about how to create effective collaborations—about what works and what does not. All three target audiences are looking for guidance, proven models, and deeper understanding.

By providing a highly navigable website filled with practical, relevant information and tools, as well as offering training, technical assistance, and networking, FASTEN equips FBOs, private foundations, and public administrators for more and better partnership. As a result, the services of FBOs can be expanded and enhanced. Ultimately, we aim to see better outcomes for people in need, as FBOs increase their reach and effectiveness.

FASTEN is a collaborative initiative of The Pew Charitable Trusts and includes Indiana University, Baylor University, Harvard University, Sagamore Institute, National Crime Prevention Council, United States Conference of Mayors, and Nueva Esperanza.

**[www.fastennetwork.org](http://www.fastennetwork.org)**

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