

# Reentry Advocate

*"Focused on Reducing Recidivism"*



## *Providing shelter from the storm*

*They opened their  
home and their hearts*



### **PLUS:**

#### **Stopping the madness:**

A new reentry system  
for juvenile corrections

#### **Education from the inside out**

A plea for prison  
education

#### **Formerly incarcerated take on new roles**

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two former felons applying for  
the same job ...

which one do you think he'll hire,  
the one who's registered to vote  
or the one who's not?

# FROM THE PUBLISHERS

## "Creating family"



**W**hen we initially started this publication, we had to search far and wide to find positive stories regarding prisoner reentry ... there just were not that many of them out there. However, that reality has changed. We can now easily find two to three times as many great stories as we have room for in each issue — and more are always on the way.

While a lot of very bright and concerned people from all over the country are putting serious thought and effort into solving the plight of those returning home, one thing becomes more clear for us: Family, re-creating a sense of family for those lacking one, is the most important (indeed sometimes critical) factor for success for many individuals.

A friend of ours conducted an informal interview poll: She asked men in a local homeless shelter if they could pinpoint when their lives began to fall apart,

and most replied, "When my momma died." Loss of family did them in.

But more and more folks, like the couple on the cover, are going to begin creating that sense of family for those returning home. What prisoners have to do is polish up those social skills ... practice using words like "please" "thank you" and "excuse me." While social graces might not mean all that much behind bars, out here they count for quite a bit, trust us on that count.

**MANSFIELD FRAZIER**  
a formerly incarcerated person

**BRENDA W. FRAZIER**  
MSW, LISW, ACSW

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## Reentry Advocate

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# Education from the inside out:

## A plea for prison education



By Baz Dreisinger

In a decade of teaching, I have approached many a semester's end wistfully: another goodbye to students I have, week after week, intellectually bonded with. But this semester, wistful feels more like the blues.

I am soon to be exiled from pedagogical heaven: an English 101 class so academically voracious, they rendered my job effortless. My students not only read the material and took extensive notes on it, they read material weeks before I'd assigned it. They arrived armed with studied opinions about each text and page numbers containing relevant passages to shore up these opinions; they begged me for additional grammar worksheets and requested feedback on work they'd assigned themselves. When we read one particular Ralph Ellison essay, they groaned about how many times the piece had driven them to the dictionary, and I held back tears of joy: Oh for a roomful of students who studiously look up words they don't understand!

The blues run deeper, though. Students like those in my English 101 class are few and far between — because they're incarcerated at Otisville Correctional Facility, the first class in a program I launched at John Jay College of Criminal Justice: the Prison-to-College Pipeline. The pilot program has a simple goal — maximize the number of incarcerated and formerly incarcerated people who go to college and succeed there

— and it was prompted by a question posed by John Jay's President, Jeremy Travis, who has written extensively about prisoner re-entry: "If over 700,000 people are leaving our prisons, how should the nation's educational institutions be organized to help them make a successful transition to free society?"

The Pipeline is designed with reentry in mind, offering for-credit classes, skills workshops and college

and re-entry planning to a small pool of men within five years of release. The aim is to funnel them into the CUNY system, where they are guaranteed a slot. We take advantage of educational timing: The three to five years prior to release — ripe moments for educational intervention — are perhaps more likely to produce a re-entering community that avails itself of higher educational opportunities.

Via monthly learning exchanges during which John Jay students visit the prison and en-

gage in classes alongside the incarcerated students, the program achieves two additional aims. We acculturate the incarcerated students to the college community of which they will, upon release, be a part. At the same time we acculturate, in a humanizing context, the John Jay students to the incarcerated population — thereby impacting the way they undertake their future jobs as progressive leaders in the criminal justice and social service arenas.

I have watched the men in my class morph from

*If we care about equitable prisoner re-entry and about reducing America's absurdly high recidivism rate, we should care about prison education.*

EDUCATION CONTINUED ON PAGE 16



# Formerly incarcerated take on new roles

By Andrea Shea | WBUR (reprinted with permission)

**Actors from left to right: ex-offender Mark Gibson, ex-offender Latanya Jones, ex-offender Michael Yebba, Lonnie Famer**

BOSTON — A New England nonprofit hosted a unique fundraiser at Babson College. The centerpiece was a performance that featured former felons who have become actors to raise awareness — and money — for other convicts about to finish their prison sentences.

The actors took on roles in “The Castle,” a series of autobiographical monologues written and originally performed off-Broadway by four other ex-offenders. At a rehearsal the actors said the roles they play remind them of their own experiences, and they’re willing to share them.

“You can replace anything in life except for time,” Mark Gibson reflected.

“Do I want to be the poster child for prison reform? No!” Latanya Jones replied emphatically, adding, “I want to move forward in my life.”

“Even though I’ve been out of jail for 10 years now I still get the crooked eye, and they still don’t want to deal with you,” Michael Yebba said.

The fact is their true life stories helped win them their

roles. “It’s my story, and it’s real, and it is what it is, but it’s just pitiful in some senses because it’s just so wasted, all this time just wasted!” Jones said.

Jones was incarcerated for fraud and looks far younger than her hard-lived 50 years. “I think back and it was like, ugh, this is disgusting!” she said. “I feel sometimes like a cat. You know, cats have a litter, and then they leave the litter, they leave the kittens? That’s how nasty it is, that’s how nasty addiction and crime is. You know, I was a mother with three children, who dropped them like a litter.”

Jones and the rest of the cast sat around a long table at the Piano Factory Theatre in Boston’s South End. Jones delivers the words of Vilma, one of the four characters in the piece.

“I began using more than ever, but that didn’t even matter then, because it was the drugs that made me feel good. It made me feel important. Like I was somebody

**ACTORS CONTINUED ON PAGE 8**



# REENTRY NEWS

## FROM AROUND THE GLOBE

### **California**

The Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department Compton Station has joined the community to create two successful programs. The department has partnered with Faith Inspirational Baptist Church to initiate "Project Restoration." The program serves men and women currently on parole in the City of Compton. The twelve-week program provides instruction on leadership, relationships, parenting, and employment. Participants gain new skills as they spend three weeks in each of the above mentioned courses. The classes are designed to give each student a new outlook on these topics, which are taught with the belief that if the mind can change, thoughts can change, and the actions will change. Over 20 men and women have graduated from the program to date.

### **Canada**

Redemption Inc. is a prime-time Canadian Broadcasting Company series in which a group of ex-offenders are given the opportunity of a lifetime — a chance to set up their own business under the guidance of multi-millionaire businessman Kevin O'Leary. Kevin

believes that certain criminals have all the skills to succeed as legitimate businessmen and that society may be discarding ex-offenders too quickly. He wants to find a former prisoner with real entrepreneurial talent and back that person with his own money. But Kevin's personal investment must be earned - this is not a handout or charity scheme, this is business. The eight-part series will follow the former prisoners through a series of tough and revealing challenges and tasks. They will face personal tests, be given an opportunity to demonstrate and improve their natural abilities, expose their character flaws, and gradually move them away from their illegal past and ever-closer to a legal enterprise of their own. Over this transformative eight-part series a single candidate will emerge who is judged most likely to succeed in running their own entrepreneurial business. Their future will receive an extraordinary jumpstart with investment money to launch their own dream business venture.

### **Ohio**

Ohio lawmakers are looking for ways to ease the hundreds of

restrictions blocking felons released from prison from obtaining jobs. They are called "collateral sanctions," the 800 or so stipulations written into Ohio's constitution, laws, administrative codes and court rules that keep many former prisoners from qualifying for a myriad of jobs. Depending on their crime, some felons cannot obtain a driver's license or a professional license to hold jobs requiring even minimal education, such as cutting hair and driving trucks. And they could be blocked from dozens of other professions, too, from banking to insurance sales to athletic training or being a pawn broker. The administration has reviewed a report, "Collateral consequences of criminal conviction in Ohio." The report surveyed hundreds of Ohio judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys and parole officers who generally agreed that it was time for the state's criminal justice system to address the unintended impact of some collateral sanctions. "This is evidenced by considerable agreement that some collateral consequences should be repealed, consequences should

REENTRY NEWS CONTINUED ON PAGE 14



# STOPPING THE MADNESS:

## A New Reentry System for Juvenile Corrections

PART ONE OF A THREE-PART SERIES

By Scott P. Sells, Ph.D

**A** post-discharge interview with 16-year-old John provides clues as to why our reentry system is failing and what kind of reform is needed:

*“Look, this was my second commitment and here’s the problem. I went from this totally structured environment for eight long months back to a totally unstructured home with no real plan before I left [residential]. I am going back to the same home [life] that I left in the first place. Nothing changed, except me. And if you want to know the truth, I am actually healthier than my family is right now. While I was locked up, I did all this work getting my (expletive) together while my mom and step dad did nothing. All this time, they could have been doing something with my counselors, anything... Is it any wonder that nothing changes and I will likely end up back on the streets again within weeks or months of going home?”*

*(John A, Interview: February 10, 2010)*

MADNESS CONTINUED ON PAGE 9

and that everyone wanted to be around me. Like I was finally the star then. Me, I'm the star now."

When she finished, Jones admitted she sees parts of herself in Vilma. It's not a perfect comparison, but there are parallels.

"She had two incarcerations, and I had two incarcerations," Jones said. "I've just recently been released from federal custody and I served four years. When I left my daughter she was a little 9-year-old girl." Then she pauses, with tears in her eyes, and said, "Now she's a 14-year-old trying to find her way."

Jones is finding her way, too. She's a busy youth advocate and a

novelist. Her emotional connection to the monologues struck producer Karin Trachtenberg, who works for Venturing Out, the non-profit behind the fundraising event. After posting a casting call for "The Castle" in October, Trachtenberg said a long line of accomplished actresses tried out for the part of Vilma.

"But it just didn't ring true," Trachtenberg said. "It's just the thing about this piece is you have to 100 percent believe what these actors are saying, that they are these people. You know, Latanya came in and auditioned we were like, 'Ah! I believe this, I totally believe this!'"

For Trachtenberg, "The Castle" is powerful because it tells harrowing stories about crime, redemption

and rehabilitation that she said aren't often told.

Programming the work for this fundraiser humanizes Venturing Out's mission to teach incarcerated men and women how to be entrepreneurs when they get out of prison. The organization's course is currently taught in four Massachusetts facilities, including the Suffolk County House of Correction in Boston, Massachusetts the Northeastern Correctional Center for men in Concord, the South Middlesex Correctional Center for women in Framingham, and the Middlesex County House of Correction for men in Billerica.

"Some people call them inmates,

ACTORS CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

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Reentry programs are re-integrative services that prepare juveniles in correctional facilities for transition back into their community. Ideally, reentry starts after sentencing, continues through incarceration, and on into discharge back within the community which is commonly called “aftercare.” The primary goals are for the juvenile to live a crime-free life with increased skills and a changed family to become a productive crime-free citizen.

Yet, as John reports, something has gone terribly wrong. Studies tracking youth released from juvenile correctional facilities have consistently reported sky high rates of recidivism. Rates of juvenile re-offending after commitment have been as high as 66 percent when measuring recidivism by rearrest and 33 percent when measuring re-offending by reconvications within a few years of release.

In addition, recent studies have revealed that longer stays in residential custody do not reduce future offending. The analysis found essentially no difference in future offending for youth held 3–6 months vs. 6–9 months, 9–12 months, or more than 12 months. Instead, “maintaining gains after discharge appeared to be associated with the three key factors of: (1) the extent that the youth’s family is involved in the treatment process

before discharge (for example, in family therapy); (2) the stability of the place where the child or adolescent lives after discharge; and (3) the availability of aftercare support for the youth and his/her family post-discharge.”

Research has consistently demonstrated that any gains made by juvenile offenders in correctional facilities quickly evaporate following release due to release back to disorganized communities where it is easy to slip back into the old habits that resulted in arrest in the first place.

The field of juvenile corrections is therefore faced with two important questions: (1) What are the top reasons that the current reentry system fails? and (2) What are concrete solutions to solve this problem?

While the pendulum is swinging away from juvenile incarceration to community-based alternatives to commitment, the reality is there will still be some juveniles who commit serious crimes resulting in an out-of-home placement. Looking to the future, the momentum toward closing youth facilities must be paired with a planned and comprehensive approach to reforming reentry.

### **One Potential Solution: A New Reentry Operating System**

An effective reentry system

## **Kentucky frees nearly 1000 prisoners early**

Posted by Brittany Wooley  
(KTVQ Billings)

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (WHAS11) — In early January the State of Kentucky released nearly 1,000 convicted felons before their sentences were up in an effort to save \$400 million over ten years. But what happens to these ex-convicts when it comes to jobs and contributing to society? Many of those ex-convicts will be relying on a program to help get them back into society and to stop a life of crime.

There’s a lot of stigma attached to ex-offenders re-entering the workforce. Not many places want to hire them. But it could be more costly to taxpayers if they don’t find a job or end up back in prison. Many of these men and women served time for burglaries, kidnappings and armed robberies. Released early from prison, they’re jobless and some are homeless.

Torey Christian, one of the released, wants a new life. “They ain’t got no financial help on the outside. Some family members

but I call them students,” said Trachtenberg, who volunteers with the program.

“They have to want to take it; they are pre-screened so they have to be really motivated, they must have a G.E.D. and be within nine months of release so it’s not theoretical, and they come out with a business plan because they want to support their families. Ninety percent of incarcerated people have children under the age of 18.”

“We do change,” 42-year-old Mark Gibson said during the rehearsal.

Gibson is a graduate of Venturing Out’s in-prison program and today has his own marketing and public relations company. In “The Castle,” Gibson is playing the part of Ken.

“Ken was an A-student, and so was I. And he was also arrested for non-violent, drug-related crimes,” Gibson said.

Gibson said, all together, he spent 18 months in prison. Now he said he focuses on giving back by mentoring at-risk young people.

Yebba, 37, is playing the part of Cas in the fundraiser.

“I wish I knew of a program like this when I got out of jail,” he said.

Yebba got out 10 years ago and said the multiple violent felonies on his record are seen as indelible “black marks” by potential employers. This has made his real, post-prison life extremely tough. But he’s forged his own path and works



The actors go over the scripts for their performance.

*“Some people call them inmates, I call them students.”*

– Karin Trachtenberg, Venturing Out

hard as an actor, screenwriter and producer.

“I have five children — and there’s a saying that someone used to say: ‘When Christmastime rolls around and your kid wants that Xbox or PlayStation, it takes a real man to go out and work 80 extra hours a week to buy it versus, you know, standing on a corner for a half an hour where you can make it real quick,’” he said. “And it always rang true to me. I’d rather work.”

And he does.

“I mean, I barely sleep anymore,” Yebba said.

The one actor here who isn’t an ex-con is 55-year-old Lonnie Farmer. He plays Angel.

“Any sentient being can relate to other people’s pain. And if you’re an actor and you can’t do that, maybe you shouldn’t be acting,” Farmer said.

Even though Farmer’s never been an inmate, he’s intimate with the correction system’s harsh realities. In his “real life,” Farmer is a social worker for the Department of Children and Families.

“Many of the parents with whom I work are ex-offenders, some are current offenders, I have no doubt that some will be future offenders,” he said.

Farmer is inspired by the three other actors sitting around the table with him.

According the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 67 percent of offenders will be re-arrested within three years of release. The good news is studies show education and employment help keep ex-cons from going back to jail. That’s what Venturing Out, and the people breathing life into this production of “The Castle,” want to see. RA

# Facing up to child support

From the Internet

“He’s in compliance,” an attorney with the Oklahoma Department of Human Services (DHS) said to the judge in the Tulsa courtroom, and the brief hearing was over.

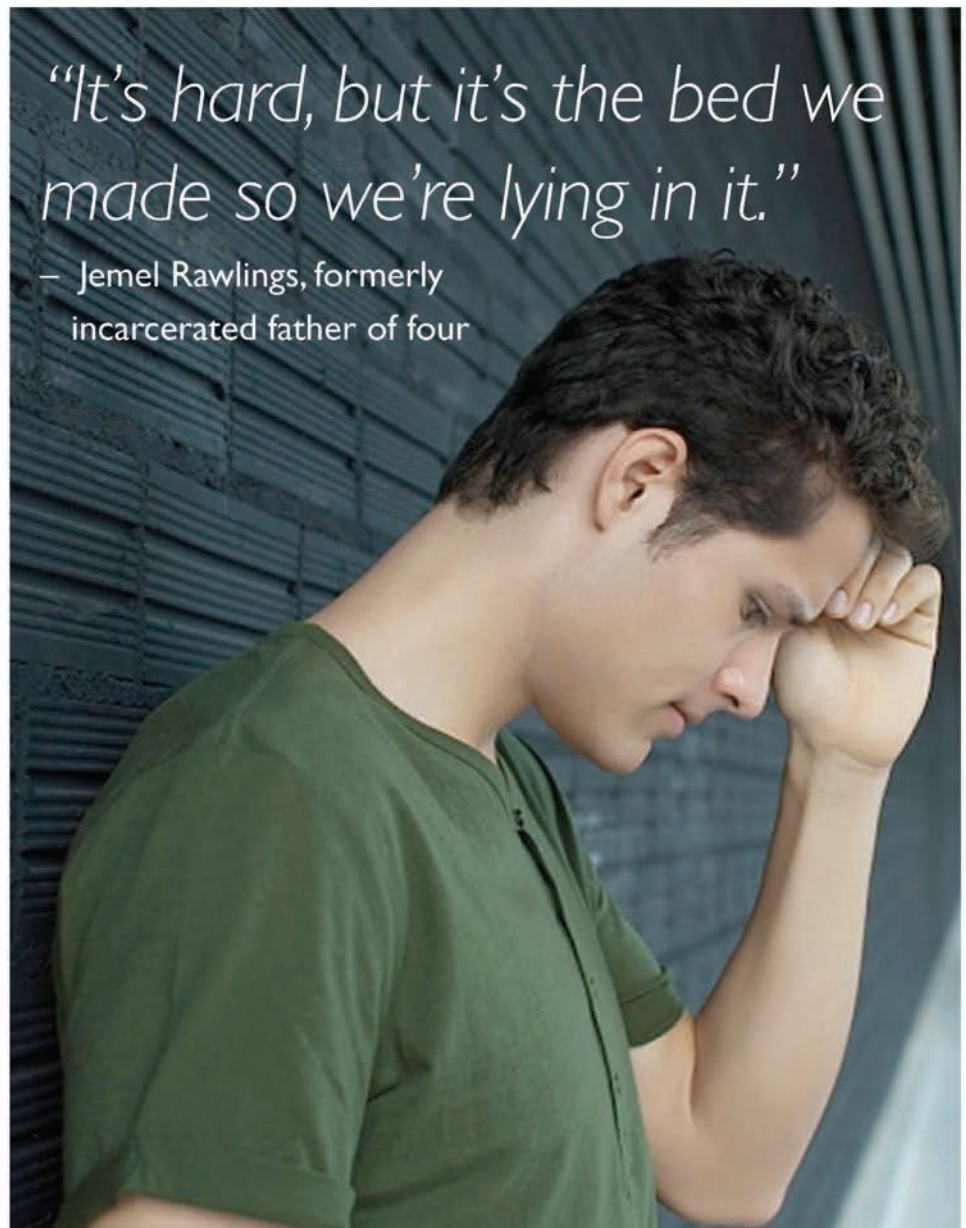
Jemel Rawlings smiled in relief as he headed back to his new job. “The less time you’re in there, the better things are going,” he said.

Rawlings spent two years in prison on a drug trafficking conviction, was released in 2009 and is completing his parole this month. Even though he swore off drugs and his once wild lifestyle, he was at risk of more incarceration because he was not paying child support.

“When you come out of prison, you are facing a lot of issues like housing and transportation,” he said. “Plus, you’re a felon, and it’s hard to find work. And you’ve got to pay child support and the court fees you owe.”

Rawlings found minimum-wage work at labor jobs but kept falling behind and missing payments. He has four children with different mothers. “It’s hard, but it’s the bed we made so we’re lying in it,” he said. “It felt bad when I didn’t have a job and couldn’t provide for them. It was really bad.”

After spending a weekend in jail in January 2010 for contempt, the judge referred Rawlings to a DHS court liaison. Rawlings owes thou-



sands in back support. DHS started adding court liaisons to its child support enforcement divisions about four years ago to help clients with community resources for landing a job. The liaison can also review the case for possible modification recommendations. There are 17 liaisons statewide.

Tulsa County’s liaison also serves as the case manager for the Prison Re-entry Initiative, which is offered to inmates who are being released in the county. The federal grant is \$100,000 a year for three years, set to expire next year. In Tulsa County,

CHILD SUPPORT CONTINUED ON PAGE 17



# *Providing shelter from the storm*

By Mansfield Frazier

**R**oger and Carrie Freeman didn't set out to design a "real" halfway house — one that's in a real home instead of a crowded and noisy commercial building — all they intended to do was put into practice their deeply held faith by providing shelter to a former prisoner in need. However, they accomplished quite a bit more and now they're encouraging others to follow their lead.

"I initially got involved with prison ministry through my church, and my acquaintance with Charles See," said Roger Freeman. See, the long-time director of Cleveland Community Reentry (a project of Lutheran Metropolitan Ministries), is considered by many to be the dean of the national reentry movement, and over the years he has inspired dozens — if not hundreds — to take up the challenge of assisting those returning home from periods of incarceration.

Roger began going into Grafton Correctional Institution in 2008, and it wasn't long before his wife Carrie began accompanying him on his trips to the institution. "At first, like most people, I was just curious about what life was like behind bars," said Carrie. "But it wasn't long before I was getting the same sense of fulfillment from helping others that Roger was getting."

Married for 46 years, Roger, a retired union electrician and Carrie, who spent her working career assisting the sight-impaired as a low vision specialist at the Cleveland Sight Center, are living a good, full life. They're the proud parents of two children, Brandon, a firefighter in Cincinnati, and Eileen, a juvenile probation officer in San Mateo County, California. With their children long gone from home they had a couple of spare bedrooms in their lovely home in Shaker Heights, OH (just outside Cleveland), so when one of the men they'd been visiting and mentoring in prison happened to be in need of shelter they took the bold and unprecedented move of inviting the former felon into their home.

Damian Calvert [see the Sept.-Oct. 2011 issue of Reentry Advocate], had recently been released from Grafton after serving 18 years (he went in as an 18-year-old on a drug-related murder), and was attempting to continue with his education at

Cleveland State University to obtain his degree in non-profit management. However, similar to many other men, upon exiting prison he moved too fast and hooked up with a woman in what was proving to be a toxic relationship.

"I was afraid the woman, who appeared to be a drama queen, would keep pushing Damian's buttons in an attempt to control

## We see our houses as ports in a storm ...

temporary shelter.

Our role is to continue  
to mentor and help  
them make the  
right choices ...

— Carrie Freeman

him," said Carrie. Both she and Roger feared that the quickly souring relationship between Damian and the woman could land the recently released man back behind bars so they decided to allow him to move into one of their spare bedrooms.

After a natural period of adjustment things settled down in the household, and then, a few months later, one of Calvert's best friends

was scheduled to be released after serving 21 years ... but due to a paperwork mix up, placement in a halfway house was proving problematic. Knowing how disappointed the man would be if his release was delayed, Carrie and Roger again opened their home to a man fresh out of prison. "I really wasn't all that thrilled about it," said Carrie, "but I really didn't want this man to be disappointed after all the years he'd served."

However, personalities being what they are, this time it wasn't working out so well. The new man brought some issues home with him — anger management, lack of patience, an inability to stay focused — that the host couple found troubling. But Roger had a plan.

"We owned a couple of rental properties," said Roger, "and in the back of my mind was the idea to move these guys, and others coming home in need of a stable environment, into one of the homes." The problem was, after the last tenants moved out "strip-pers" had broken into the houses and done fairly extensive damage as they removed copper plumbing and wiring.

The answer was simple: Roger had the skills to repair the homes and with the help of the two men who were residing with him the damage to the houses was repaired and both men moved in. There

**SHELTER CONTINUED ON PAGE 19**

not last forever or be made any more troublesome, and defendants should have a chance to restore their rights,” the report concluded.

### **Singapore**

Nearly 1,300 prisoners sought help from the Singapore Corporation of Rehabilitative Enterprises (SCORE) in securing jobs last year and nine in 10 of them successfully landed jobs, Minister of State for Home Affairs Masagos Zulkifli recently said. SCORE provided job coaching for 1,292 inmates last year, including topics such as interview and communication skills, and 1,170 of these inmates found jobs. SCORE’s Employment Assistance Unit also helped 345 released offenders last year, with more than three in five securing jobs.

### **Indiana**

With the help of Marjorie Fink of South Bend, prisoners in the PLUS program at Wabash Valley Correctional Facility in Carlisle honored the veterans housed at the Robert L. Miller Sr. Veteran’s Center for the Homeless, located in South Bend. PLUS stands for Purposeful Living Units Served, a faith and character based prisoner reentry initiative that offers participants alternatives for rehabilitation. The PLUS Unit is nationally known for its quilting, and has been making quilts for families of Indiana soldiers who made the ultimate sac-

rifice in Iraq and Afghanistan. The group expanded its quilting skills to donate specialty quilts to local schools, organizations and churches for fundraising events and quilts for the homeless. Late last year 25 quilts were delivered to the center for the veterans.

### **Virginia**

The Virginia Department of Corrections announced last year the completion of the construction of the Green Heating Ventilation and Air Conditioning (HVAC) Vocational Program at Indian Creek Correctional Center in Chesapeake, Va., setting the stage for the curriculum to begin this year. The learning lab there will train prisoners on green jobs skills so they re-enter society as productive members of the work force with marketable skills. “Green” HVAC technology aims to reduce the emissions of synthetic materials that are commonly used as refrigerants, solvents and insulating foams that harm the ozone layer. According to Kimberley Lipp, the department’s chief of architectural and emergency services, the program should have long-term benefits for Virginia. Johnson Controls helped the government develop the HVAC vocational program. “We were thinking, how to tie an energy project to our primary mission of [inmate] re-entry?” Lipp said. “Brainstorming with Johnson Controls, Inc. this idea [emerged] of building some-

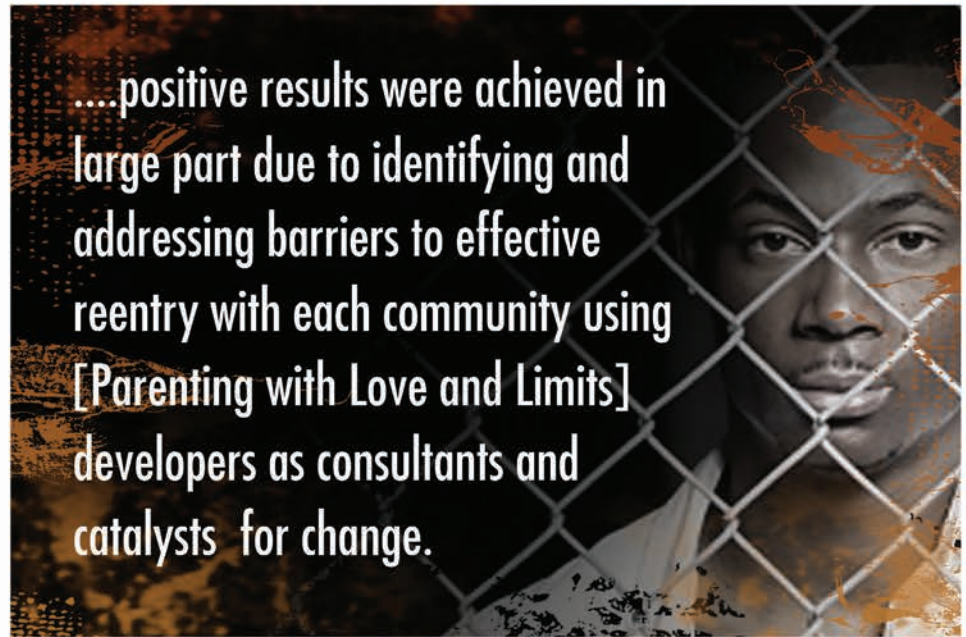
thing and then training inmates how to use it — and maybe how to get a related job.”

### **Illinois**

To battle the devastating effects of incarceration on loved ones Chicago’s Westside Health Authority’s Community Support Advisory Council is offering re-entry and employment program services such as career training and case management for the formerly incarcerated. There’s also family recovery coaching and mentoring available to the ex-prisoner’s loved ones, including children, during the monthly meetings. “The relationships are truly strained,” said program director Dara Lewis. The family meetings, which take place on the third Monday of every month, usually attract 11 to 13 families seeking re-unification resources and counseling. “If (relationships) are already fragile, putting prison on top of that makes it easy for people to give up. We’re trying to minimize the impact incarceration has on families,” she said. The Family Connection and Awareness Program holds open meetings the third Monday of every month at 5816 W. Division Street Organizers encourage involvement from relatives of incarcerated individuals serving time in any location. For more information, contact Lewis (773) 633-1503 or [dlewis1@luc.edu](mailto:dlewis1@luc.edu).

differs significantly from standard probation and community-based models (i.e., (FFT) Functional Family Therapy, (MST) Multisystemic Therapy) aimed at preventing residential placement. There are often more systems to consider: the judicial system, residential facility, probation system, transitional aftercare system, community health system, case management system, vocational training, and school systems. The residential facility is often hundreds of miles from the youth's home community making reentry with the parents prior to discharge extremely challenging. There is also a traditional separation of treatment between what the youth receives in the facility versus services received in the community following discharge. The two systems are mutually exclusive and rarely synchronize with one another.

In response to these challenges, juvenile justice system stakeholders and policymakers partnered with an evidence-based model known as PLL (Parenting with Love and Limits). Local communities in seven states (Alaska, Florida, Rhode Island, Wyoming, Indiana, Michigan, and Texas) worked with PLL to co-create a new model of providing reentry services to juvenile offenders. PLL is not a service provider but took the role of consultant to train and supervise therapists within the local community mental health center to



deliver the PLL Reentry curriculum that included parenting groups along with individual, family therapy, and case management utilizing a wraparound philosophy.

Initial results from a quasi-experimental program evaluation of the PLL Reentry Model conducted by the Justice Research Center revealed promising results. The sample consisted of 220 youth in total; 110 juveniles completed PLL reentry services following residential commitment and were matched, using propensity score matching, to 110 comparison youth who completed standard reentry programming in the study site. **Highlights from the study included:**

- Lower re-arrest rates for PLL (30 percent) versus the comparison group (44 percent)
- Lower rates of re-adjudication and felony re-adjudication for PLL (21 percent

and 9 percent, respectively) versus the comparison group (28 percent and 19 percent, respectively)

- Shorter average lengths of stay in commitment and reentry overall (425 days for comparison group versus 354 days for PLL; 71-day difference)
- At an average cost of \$250 per day, immediate cost savings were \$17,750 per youth or \$1.95 million dollars [110 youth x \$250 per day x 71 days].

### Community-Level Collaboration

These positive results were achieved in large part due to identifying and addressing barriers to effective reentry with each

“inmate” to “college student” — a profound process with tangible increments: Eventually they stopped writing their DIN numbers on assignments, and grew accustomed to being called by their first names again (prison is a last-name-only milieu). Some are taking on college as part of a “let’s-do-this-together” pact with their children, enrolled on the outside. Others return to a path foiled by missteps the last time around: One of my students was enrolled at John Jay 20 years ago, and looks forward to his triumphant return, credits under his belt.

But back to the blues: Programs like the Prison-to-College Pipe-

line — shown time and again to be vastly valuable, in both public safety and prisoner re-entry contexts — are scarce. There are precious few publicly funded post-secondary degree programs in American correctional facilities; the bulk of the some three dozen or so that do exist, including John Jay’s, are privately funded and at constant risk of going broke. The result? Approximately 11 percent of state prison inmates have a college degree, compared to 48 percent of the general population. A 2004 survey found that post-secondary correctional education was available to only about 5 percent of the overall prison population.

This was not always so. In 1970,

a century after the American Correctional Association Congress endorsed education behind bars, the New York State Corrections Law required New York’s Department of Correctional Services to “provide each inmate with a program of education which seems most likely to further the process of socialization and rehabilitation.” A year later, the Attica rebels demanded that America’s prisons live up to this claim; over the next two decades, higher education in prison flourished, to the tune of some 700 degree-granting prison programs nationally. Federal support for these programs meant that incarcerated individuals

EDUCATION CONTINUED ON PAGE 18

# Return of a Classic!

Reentry Advocate’s co-publisher Mansfield Frazier’s ground-breaking book is again available in hardback

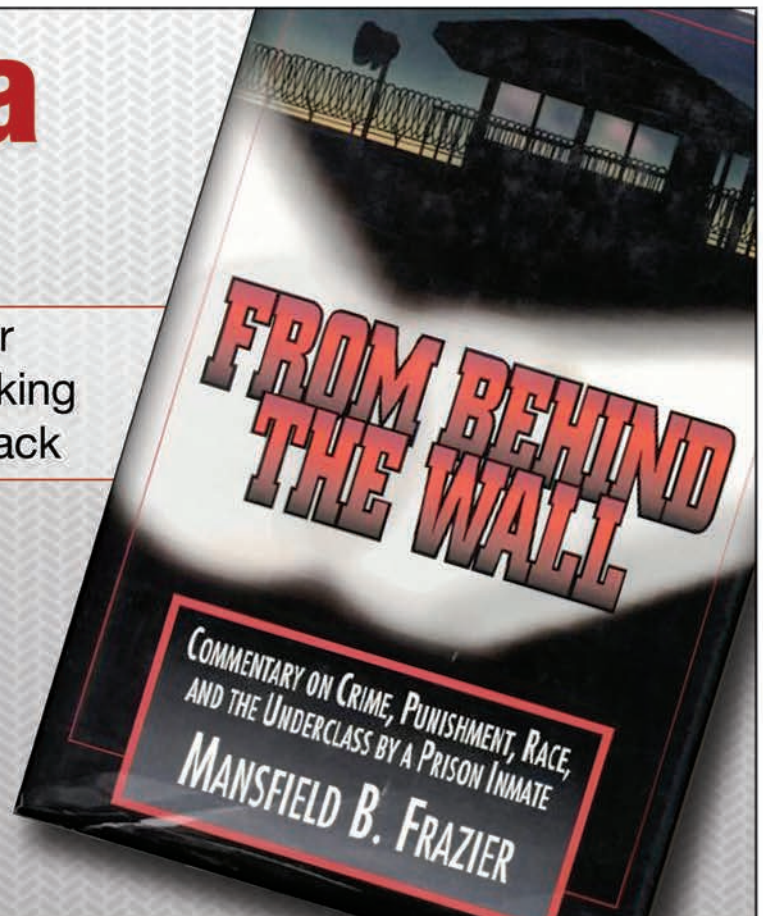
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**CHILD SUPPORT CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11**

14 former inmates are participating in the prison re-entry program.

Rawlings qualified for the re-entry initiative and completed a job training program with Goodwill Industries. He went from earning about \$8 an hour to \$12 an hour in a billing department for a law firm. "It's the best job I've ever had," he said. "Without this program, without a doubt I'd be in jail for not paying child support. I always felt like DHS was about taking anything we get. But with the court liaison, I feel like I have a friend in the courtroom. I like knowing there is someone on the inside who is helping me out."

DHS managing attorney John M. Sharp said child support has undergone a transformation in the past

few years, moving to a customer service model and creating partnerships with judges and other state agencies. "This is not your grandfather's child support," Sharp said. "The approach and attitude has changed to help the parties. We don't represent the custodial or non-custodial parent. We represent the child."

An emphasis on child support collections began in the mid-1990s as part of welfare reform - more collections means less reliance on government benefits. Until 2009, the state steadily increased collections, setting a record each year. With a slight dip in fiscal year 2010, collections hit an all-time high last fiscal year, which ended in June, with \$318 million - up from \$96 million in 1998. Oklahoma ranks third in the nation in child-support collec-

tions growth in the past decade. But with this stepped-up enforcement came some fear and push-back from people owing support.

Robyn Tollefson, Tulsa County's court liaison, said non-custodial parents are skeptical when they first hear of the prisoner re-entry and court liaison programs. "So many think it's a trap, and we have to explain we really are here to help," Tollefson said.

The DHS role is to arrange for the establishment of paternity, find parents who owe support and serve as a clearinghouse for payments, which provides a record. The agency can revoke state licenses and intercept money from sources such as income tax refunds and worker's

**CHILD SUPPORT CONTINUED ON PAGE 20**

**MADNESS CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15**

community using PLL developers as consultants and catalysts for change. This collaboration was initiated in response to studies pinpointing numerous challenges at a local level that prevented the implementation of evidence-based practices, and how communities were not using these practices as intended. This is called "transportability," or the ease with which a community can take the concepts of an evidence-based model and integrate them into the local community with real families.

At the local level, the PLL Reentry Model was used as an

overlay blueprint to organize and bring the various reentry systems together. Different solutions using PLL were presented (e.g., early discharge, video conferencing, wraparound teams, etc). However, it was up to the key stakeholders to customize these concepts for their particular community without compromising the model's integrity. Once the blueprint was developed, the local service provider was trained in the model and provided with bi-monthly supervision from PLL to maintain model fidelity. An ad hoc implementation task force was also initiated that included one representative from each reentry

system for the first three months and then quarterly thereafter to address any barriers and to make adjustments accordingly.

In Florida, Judge Irene Sullivan from Pinellas County supported the concept of early residential discharge, but wanted quantitative evidence that change was occurring in both the youth and the family. Florida uses the R-PACT risk assessment to measure change in a youth while in residential commitment, but does not simultaneously measure change in the youth's family. As an outgrowth of discus-

**MADNESS CONTINUED ON PAGE 20**

were eligible for Pell Grants, needs-based college funds for qualifying low-income students, and, in New York, Tuition Assistance Program (TAP) grants, as well.

But a shift in government spending between 1988 and 1998 turned the tide. During those years in New York, for instance, the operating budget for the public university system was slashed by 29 percent while state spending on prisons rose by 76 percent. In 1994, for the first time in history, New York State spent more on prisons than on universities. And shortly thereafter, the big blow came: Congress eliminated inmate eligibility for Pell Grants — even though such education accounted for a mere one-tenth of 1 percent of the Pell Grants’ annual budget. The results were dramatic. Within three years the national number of prison higher education programs dropped from 350 to 8.

This is a prodigious loss. The literal and metaphorical value of a college education — to incarcerated men and their communities — is colossal. For one, numerous studies have shown that the higher the educational attainment, the higher the reduction of recidivism; in one such study, inmates who possessed at least two years of college were rearrested at a rate of 10 percent, as compared to a general rate of 60 percent. That, of course, adds up to money saved. One study suggested that for every dollar spent on educa-

tion, two dollars are saved by ducking the cost of re-incarceration. If we care about equitable prisoner re-entry and about reducing America’s absurdly high recidivism rate, we should care about prison education.

The value of higher education behind bars transcends dollars and cents. Considering the fact that 1 out of every 100 Americans — and more than 3 out of every 100 black men — are in prison, truly increasing access to education demands that we take college to prison. If we are genuinely committed, too, to a criminal justice system that is not about punishment or revenge but rehabilitation and justice, higher education should be our friend. Studies have shown that it engages students in reading, analyzing, writing and mentoring, not to mention assessing choices and being persistent in the face of obstacles — critical character traits that are more than just academic. Higher education also bolsters community commitment. One study found that after participation in college, prisoners and former prisoners were far more likely to offer advocacy, social supports, and services to other prisoners, their children and families.

All of this adds up to a very practical agenda, currently being promoted by groups like the New York-based Education from the Inside Out Coalition [<http://www.eiocoalition.org>] and the Pell Grants for Public Safety Initiative, led by Dallas Pell, daughter of Senator Claiborne Pell, for whom the

Pell Grants were named. First, we should restore inmates’ eligibility for Pell Grants and TAP. As EIO points out, such a step would cost the government some \$5 to \$10 million but would result in mid- to long-term benefits — in terms of reduced recidivism, an increased number of tax-paying citizens, and fewer dependents on public assistance — that outweigh the short-term cost.

Second, states should intensify appropriations for post-secondary correctional education programs and ensure that public colleges and universities receive state formula funding for serving incarcerated students. State and institutional policies can also encourage experiments with distance education methods and provide funding for corrections staff to participate in the college courses offered at correctional facilities.

In a recent report, 94 percent of state and federal inmates interviewed prior to release named one thing as their most pressing re-entry need — over and above financial assistance, housing, employment and drug treatment. What did they demand? More education. For their and our community’s sakes, let’s give them — including my soon-to-be former English 101 students — what they want. RA

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*Baz Dreisinger is an associate professor of English at John Jay College of Criminal Justice in New York.*

## SHELTER CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

even was a third bedroom for someone else returning home in need of shelter.

“We have to be careful,” said Carrie, “while we want to allow them to be comfortable and secure enough to get back into society and begin moving on with their lives, we don’t want them to become too comfortable. We see our houses as ports in a storm ... temporary shelter. Our role is to continue to mentor and help them

make the right choices ... and sometimes that can be hard when someone has been locked up for so long.”

Roger, however, puts his faith and trust in God. “There are many other people all across this country that are in the same situation my wife and I are in ... we are blessed enough to have something to give back, and I guess I’m challenging others to do likewise,” he said. “Just taking the word of God into institutions alone may not be enough ... I think as Christians

were called on to do more if we can. While the roof we provide is not permanent, it’s still a port in a critically stormy time in their lives ... and for some men and women this is exactly what they need to help them get on their feet — shelter from the storm.” RA

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[Author’s note: I’ve known Roger Freeman for over 50 years ... we attended the same high school back in the day and were good friends.]

## KENTUCKY CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

or somebody that’s willing to help give them a job or something like that,” Christian said.

Another inmate said he thinks the inmates should be given a new opportunity.

“I think they should start letting people out,” Decarlo Robeson, “and give people a second chance.”

Christian and Robeson were two out of nearly 1,000 now former prisoners released. One hundred and fifty returned by the busload to the Louisville Greyhound Terminal. It costs roughly \$60 a day to keep them locked up or tens of thousands of dollars a year to taxpayers if they don’t find work because of health insurance, food stamps and indigent care.

But the job front looks bleak. “Lots of the key employers in our

region can’t hire people with a serious criminal record. UPS isn’t allowed to because of Federal rules at airports. Hospitals can’t because of security,” Michael Gritton, KentuckianaWorks Executive director, said. “We really struggle because there’s no designated federal or state funding streams to try and help ex-offenders find a job.”

With a jobless rate at 9 percent, businesses are less likely to take a risk and hire ex-offenders.

They’re competing against 60,000 already unemployed. But Goodwill Industries in Kentucky has a program called Re-entry by Design. “It gives people a second chance,” Chris Parker, Workforce Development Specialist at Goodwill Industries, said.

Funded by KentuckianaWorks it is a two week certified class that helped 120 people last year. Con-

victed felons must be on parole and have a letter from their officer. The organization’s goals are re-integration, anger management, life skills and resume help.

Ex-offenders must pass a 90 day work test. “There’s a workforce tax credit and a Federal bond that employers can get which I think is a huge insurance policy for them to be able to hire an ex-offender,” Parker said. Many end up working in the food service industry, warehouses and landscaping.

Walter Haggard served 13 years for robbery and burglary and was released last year.

A graduate of the program, he does production work at Independent Industries and spends time with his daughters. He explained how he was adjusting to life outside of prison. “Well, I’m paying taxes and I’ve never done that before,” Haggard said. RA

sions in Florida, PLL implemented the Family Functioning Survey to measure pre and post changes in family protective factors and overall functioning.

From this work, we coined the term “earned release.” In other words, the family and the youth co-jointly had to meet clearly established goals in addition to dropping pre and post risk levels to have any hope of an earned release or discharge (e.g., full attendance of six parenting education groups in the community, full participation in family therapy, establishment of a clear aftercare plan, and sufficient progress residential level system, etc). In other words, the youth and family had to “earn” an early discharge and the judge had to sign off on these recommendations.

In this way, the community co-created a new reentry operating system that actively involved the entire family and the entire treatment system (probation, judicial, residential, service provider, evidence-based curriculum). A good analogy was that PLL was the Apple software and the community was the Verizon network that implemented the PLL evidence-based software. The two became synchronized together to co-create a new reentry system of care. RA

***NEXT ISSUE: A summary of reentry delivery system changes***

compensation. Judges issue orders setting the amounts and can order jail time.

By adding more social workers, non-custodial parents can find resources at DHS when they fall on hard economic times. “We don’t want to put anyone in jail or use the enforcement tools at our disposal,” Sharp said. By taking care of the money disagreements, more focus can be placed on building parent-child relationships.

“I’d love to see more reunification with kids,” Sharp said. “We have too many kids out there without a father and mother in their lives. We want them to re-establish contact with their children.” Rawlings said he was close to his family, went into the military after graduating from high school and attended nearly two years of college on the GI bill.

But, at age 33, he had his first child and got into the party life. “I had some wild years there,” he said. “But this is my responsibility, I understand that.” He is looking at buying a house through a military assistance program and is planning to start his own business. Rawlings said money has been a wedge in relationships with his former girlfriends.

“Child support can be bad on relationships. It’s not about having issues with the children, it’s about having issues with the mothers,” he said. “We all love our children, that’s why we show up to court. And

when I look at my paycheck now, I think ‘Hey, it’s done. The payment’s made.’ I love that.”

He wants his children to learn from the lessons he is living. “My kids are young, but I’ll be open and honest with them and be an example,” he said. “Some things I did great, and some things I did wrong. But I want them to understand there are repercussions and consequences behind our actions.” Even though child support takes about 60 percent of his paycheck, Rawlings said it’s worth it.

“My life is less stressful because there is a way to help get a better job,” he said. “There might not be much left after I get paid, but I’m taking care of my kids now. I feel good about being able to do that.” RA

## Tulsa County Prisoner Re-entry Initiative

### Who is eligible?

- Former inmates owing child support
- Released in Tulsa County
- Released in the past 12 months
- Nonviolent offender
- No sex-related convictions

### What services are provided?

- Initiates a review of the child support case for modifications or judgment payment
- Teaches job search skills
- Refers to job readiness and training programs
- Matches participants with possible employers
- Finds any other community resources needed
- Assists with driver’s license reinstatement

### What are the requirements?

- Keep in weekly contact with the court liaison
- Complete the job search or training outlined by the liaison

## Florida

Life has just got more regimented for about seven dozen inmates at Sumter Correctional Institution in Bushnell. And they all volunteered for it. In the latest re-entry program for the Florida Department of Corrections, about 85 military veterans at the Bushnell prison have started living the military life. Simply called the "Veteran's Dormitories," the program was instituted four months ago at five Florida prisons, including those at Lowell in Marion County and Martin, Gulf and Santa Rosa counties. Participating inmates are required to conduct a daily flag raising, abide by military standards, refrain from profanity and participate in other military-like duties. There's even a color guard where prisoners must have polished boots and tidy prison attire. Their dormitories are set

up almost as replicas of military boot camp housing -- with their bunk beds neatly made up and footlockers beside them. An American flag is painted on a wall, and flags are posted outside the dorm. Inside, military creeds from various branches of the service are posted throughout the dorms. "A lot of dignity and pride is coming back to these guys," said Paulette Julien, assistant warden of programs at the Sumter prison. On a recent sunny day, members of the prison's color guard could be seen practicing their marching. They were led by Andre Lewis, a United States Marine Corps veteran who is completing a prison bid on a sex-crime conviction. Only inmate veterans with three years or fewer remaining on their prison sentences can volunteer to participate in the program. The program also provides inmates the opportunity to participate in specialized pre-release services such as cognitive

thinking training, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) counseling and improved access to Veteran's Affairs Benefits. "It's a good way to make sure that once they are released, they can stay out," said prison Sgt. Gerald Vanderham, who runs the program at the prison.

## New Jersey

Offenders would have an easier time getting their records expunged under a bill discussed last year in the New Jersey Assembly Judiciary Committee. The committee mulled over the bill, which was first introduced in 2005, but did not hold a vote on it in part because the state's outdated court computer system would make it virtually impossible to implement. The measure (A1060) would automatically expunge records for those convicted of disorderly

REENTRY NEWS CONTINUED ON PAGE 22



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person offenses after three years. Currently, those convicted of disorderly conduct have to petition for expungement after five years. For more serious indictable offenses, ex-convicts would have their record expunged automatically after seven years. Currently, they can petition for expungement after 10 years. “Expungement processes are generally a way for many small offenders to get a fresh start,” said Assemblyman Reed Gusciora (D-Mercer), the bill’s sponsor. The bill would also eliminate a required \$30 fee. Under current law, those convicted of minor offenses can get their records expunged if they do not commit any other crimes. If an expungement is granted, the crime is “considered not to have occurred,” according to the New Jersey Judiciary’s website.

### **Alabama**

Farmers all across the state of Alabama say they are facing a shortage of workers, and some say it’s because of the new immigration law. So in a recent meeting the Alabama Agriculture Department suggested farmers hire ex-felons to help fill the void. The meeting was run by a panel with a wide range of backgrounds. There were officials in the agriculture business, people involved in guest worker programs and even a law enforcement official. The Alabama Agriculture Commissioner said many

farmers in the state are in a crunch. Immigrants have made up a large part of their labor force, and under Alabama’s new illegal immigration law, they’re leaving in droves, and leaving the fields empty. Woerner grows corn and watermelons, but he’s probably more known for his turf. He sells turf grass across the county, and a lot of it is used in football stadiums. He needs employees, so he went to the meeting to explore his options, including hiring former prison inmates. Farmers can receive tax credits if they provide jobs for them. U.S. Attorney Kenyen Brown spoke about the program. “We’re talking about the ‘ag’ business, and arguably, it’s not for everybody,” said Brown. “Not every offender will be interested or successful at it, but there are a lot of ex-offenders who are interested and will work in the agriculture business.”

### **California**

Michael Hennessey has served as San Francisco’s sheriff for half of his life, the longest such career in California history — and by all accounts the most progressive. Since taking office in 1980, Hennessey has been an island of liberal enlightenment in a political climate and law enforcement culture where tough-talking conservatism has been ascendant.

Yet in that era, Hennessey pioneered the creation of innovative programs to compassionately deal with drug abuse, violence,

recidivism, and lack of education among jail inmates. He proactively brought unprecedented numbers of minorities, women, LGBT employees, and ex-convicts onto his staff. And he sometimes resisted carrying out evictions or honoring federal immigration hold orders, bold and risky social-justice stands.

His stances drew scorn from the local law enforcement community, which never endorsed him in contested elections, and criticism from political moderates and national media outlets. But San Francisco voters reelected him again and again, until he finally decided to retire as his current term ends next month.

He credits his success and longevity to the people of San Francisco, who have also bucked the harsh national attitude toward criminals and the poor. “San Francisco is still largely a liberal voting town,” he told us in his well-worn office at City Hall, “and not many liberals run for sheriff.”

That logic held up in this year’s election when progressive Sup. Ross Mirkarimi — Hennessey’s hand-picked successor — was elected to the post. Mirkarimi, who led a tribute to Hennessey at the Dec. 13 Board of Supervisors meeting, said he’s honored to be able to continue the legacy of someone he called “the most innovative sheriff in the United States.” Hennessey said, “I certainly never expected to be sheriff for 32 years.” RA

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## MASSACHUSETTS

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United Way's Mass 2-1-1 Helpline  
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## MICHIGAN BATTLE CREEK AREA

United Way of Greater  
Battle Creek, Inc.  
269-962-9538

### DETROIT AREA

United Way for Southeastern Michigan  
313-226-9200

### JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Crossroads East Learning Center  
313-822-1660

Detroit Public Library Career  
& Employment Cntr.  
313-832-4251

Detroit Urban League  
313-832-4600

FOCUS: Hope Skilled Machinist  
Institute

313-494-4300  
Woman A.R.I.S.E.  
313-331-1800

### EAST LANSING AREA

Capital Area United Way, Inc.  
517-203-5000

### FLINT AREA

United Way of Genesee County  
810 232-8121

### JOB OPPORTUNITIES

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for Employment)  
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Jobs Central  
810-233-5627

### GRAND RAPIDS AREA

Heart of West Michigan United Way  
616-459-6281

### JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Women's Resource Center  
616-458-5443

### HIGHLAND PARK AREA

### JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Career Works  
313-867-3500 ext. 215

### KALAMAZOO AREA

Greater Kalamazoo United Way  
269-343-2524

# REENTRY RESOURCES

### LANSING AREA

Michigan Association of United Ways  
517-371-4360

### SAGINAW AREA

United Way of Saginaw County  
989-755-0505

### NEW YORK

United Way of New York  
Helpline 3-1-1;  
Outside of New York 212-962-4795

### OHIO

#### CINCINNATI AREA

United Way 211  
513-721-7900  
Citizen Circle c/o Jamie Gee  
513-821-4804

### JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Cincinnati Works  
513-744-9675

Goodwill  
513-771-4800

Jobs & Family Services  
513-946-1000

Senior Employment Center  
513-924-9100

Super Jobs  
513-731-9800

Talbert House  
513-961-3292

Urban League  
513-281-9955

#### CLEVELAND AREA

Cleveland Community Reentry  
216-696-2717

United Way of Greater Cleveland  
216-436-2100

### CITIZEN CIRCLES

Euclid Avenue/Kathleen Farkas  
216-421-0482 ext. 282

Mt. Pleasant — Murtis Taylor Center/  
Diane Coats  
216-751-1085

CEOGC - North Star Resource Center  
216-751-1382

### CLOTHING

City Mission  
216-431-3510

Dress For Success  
216-391-2301

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216-252-7780

### FOOD

Lakewood County Services Center  
216-226-6466

Cleveland Food Bank  
216-738-2265

Hunger Network of Greater Cleveland  
216-619-8155

### HEALTH CLINICS

Free Clinic  
216-721-4010

Moms First  
216-664-4194

Community Advocacy Program (CAP)  
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216-957-1734 or 216-861-5292

NE Ohio Neighborhood Health Services  
(NEON)

216-231-7700

Tremont Health Center  
216-334-2800

### JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Cuyahoga Co. Employment & Family Srvc.  
216-987-7000

Job Training Partnership ACT (JTPA)  
216-987-8503

Downtown Employment Connection  
216-781-5872

Towards Employment  
216-696-5750

### COLUMBUS AREA

United Way of Central Ohio  
614-227-2700

Citizen Circle c/o Lisa Morgan  
614-995-3771

### JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Build the Bridge  
614-251-2225

Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation  
614-466-9364

Central Ohio Workforce Investment Corp.  
614-559-5052

Columbus Urban League  
614-257-6300

Columbus Works  
614-220-4030

Community Correction for Ohio  
Offenders

614-252-0660  
Goodwill Columbus

614-294-5181

New Directions Career Center  
614-849-0028

### DAYTON AREA

HELPLINK 2-1-1  
937-225-3000

Citizen Circle c/o Jamie Gee  
513-821-4804

### JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Jobs & Family Services  
937-225-6347

The Job Center  
937-469-6920

### TOLEDO AREA

United Way 2-1-1  
419-246-4636

Citizen Circle c/o Chris Stewart  
419-295-1348

### JOB OPPORTUNITIES

Bureau of Vocational Rehabilitation  
419-866-5811

Cherry Street Mission Ministries  
419-242-5141

FOCUS family Outreach Community  
United Services

419-244-2175  
Greater Toledo Urban League

419-243-3343  
Goodwill

419-255-0070  
Jobs & Family Employment Services

419-213-5627  
One-Stop Shop/The Source

419-213- JOBS

### VIRGINIA

OAR of Fairfax  
703-246-3033

Step-Up, Inc.  
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Virginia Department of Veterans Services  
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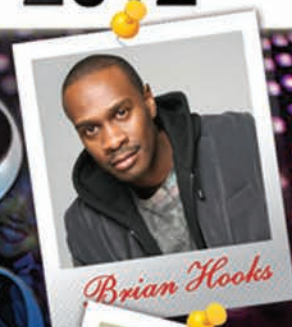
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