



GOVERNOR CORZINE'S RE-ENTRY PLAN



Governor Jon S. Corzine presents his Re-Entry plan at Volunteers of America Delaware Valley's Hope Hall (above). Governor Corzine and Philadelphia Mayor Elect Michael Nutter discuss issues outside Hope Hall.



In a visit to Volunteers of America's Hope Hall in Camden NJ, Governor Jon S. Corzine unveiled the third part of his anti-crime program, "A Strategy for Safe Streets and Neighborhoods." This initiative is one of several to help prisoners transition back into communities and keep them there. Well attended, this event wrapped up Corzine's three day roll-out of policies intended to reinvent how New Jersey addresses the rising tide of repeat offenders.

The Governor reported that each year, about half the prison population is released. Within five years, two-thirds of those released or paroled in New Jersey are arrested

again. The Governor unveiled the Safe Streets and Neighborhoods plan in response to the need for a comprehensive approach to dealing with gangs, youth violence, and illegal guns. The plan intends to improve the delivery of the support and services that prevent our children from becoming delinquent; target and intensify law enforcement's focus on those who perpetrate gang and street-level violence; and work to keep those individuals released from prisons and detention centers from engaging in future criminal acts. The plans three pillars: enforcement, prevention, and re-entry are directly relevant to the work done in community

corrections programs throughout the State.

The Governor's Crime Plan calls for collaboration and coordination between multiple state agencies, levels of government and private partners. Accountability is called for from not only the ex-offender being served, but across all agencies and levels of government in utilizing limited resources. The re-entry plan includes recommendations to create a Re-entry Coordinating Council, launch a demonstration project for 1,300 offenders, increase opportunities for youth returning from the Juvenile Justice Commission,

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WE NEED YOUR SUPPORT!

- New Jersey is defying the trend! There has been a 14% reduction in prison inmates and this is directly related to implementation of graduated sanctions and the expansion of community corrections programs by the NJ State Parole Board.
- Ex-offenders who participate in community corrections programs are less likely to go back to prison.
- Community Programs cost less than prisons and manage the transition home more effectively.
- Budget cuts to community corrections programs is bad public policy and is counter-intuitive to the Governor's Crime Plan!

STEADY ON YOUR FEET

When you trip and fall, you often need a hand to help you stand again. Enrique Gonzalez needed a firm grip to steady him and thanks to an alert staff at Community Solutions, Incorporated's (CSI) New Jersey DRC program, Enrique got just that.

Enrique Gonzalez entered the program bitter, confused and afraid; believing that he would be judged based on his past mistakes and treated harshly. He was depressed and reluctant to seek any help. Familiar with the signs, CSI staff approached Mr. Gonzalez providing moral and emotional support, in addition to professional services.

Realizing the CSI staff was behind him, his fear slowly turned the corner to self-confidence and determination to change his



Enrique Gonzalez is seated with Community Solutions Inc.'s NJ DRC case worker, Jenith Maisonet.

situation and better his life.

Enrique has since completed the DRC's Cognitive Self Change group and participated in groups such as Anger Management and Life Skills, as well as Employment Readiness. Mr. Gonzales honed his interviewing skills and developed his resume while

CSI's teacher at the DRC prepared Mr. Gonzalez to take his college placement test. Enrique is now in school full-time at Hudson County Community College and employed there part-time.

CSI's DRC is a "safe haven" for him, with its open door policy and willingness to go that extra mile even for former clients. Mr. Gonzalez has been successfully discharged but continues to use DRC services, including tutoring. Mr. Gonzalez points out, "This place even helps me with my homework....and on the weekend."

Mr. Gonzalez has taken great strides in a short time and serves as a reminder to all of us who do this job daily, that through a community of concerned people, change is possible.

RESEARCH AT COMMUNITY EDUCATION CENTERS

In 1999, Community Education Centers (CEC) created a Research Department with the intent of gathering and analyzing data from its programs. Since that time, the CEC Research Department has developed into a unique unit within the larger organization. CEC recognizes that in order to develop and foster effective treatment programs, it is necessary to support long-term outcome and process research. CEC has recognized the intrinsic value of the university research community and the need for collaboration between academia and CEC to advance state-of-the-art correctional assessment and treatment.

Through ongoing dialogue with researchers in academia, CEC has gained important insights into improving its programs by independent analysis of its assessment and treatment processes. Researchers from the academic world have contributed significantly to the measured growth of CEC programs by assisting CEC in refining and strengthening its programs and research. University researchers have conducted process and outcome research that has provided valuable feedback to CEC about its program effectiveness.

Research into the effectiveness of the CEC continuum of care from the Assessment Center to the Resi-

dential Community Release Program has shown a positive association between the completion of the program and reduced recidivism. Studies have been conducted with both male and female offenders along with some recent analysis of female parole violators. The analyses indicate that evidence-based correctional treatment is positively associated with a reduction in rearrests, reconvictions, and reincarcerations in large samples from the New Jersey prison population. Recent research has found that recidivism can be cut in half when correctional treatment is properly implemented.

KINTOCK'S NEWEST PROGRAM - COLUMBUS HOUSE

“Operation Columbus House” is the name given to two mental health residential community release programs (one male, one female) operated on Kintock’s Newark campus. The project is a pilot, with a three-year contract, established by the New Jersey Department of Corrections, in which there is a strong collaborative effort to promote special needs residents’ success in transitioning to community living.

Kintock acts as the residential services provider, while clinicians from UCHC, a subsidiary of the University of Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey (UMDNJ), provide on-site medical and mental health services. Clients are seen regularly by members of both entities’ staffs, with Kintock providing its traditional array of residential services, and UCHC providing both standard and acute care.

Kintock and UCHC, along with a sizeable number of DOC officials work together closely and have maintained continuous communication to ensure that residents re-

ceive needed services and are participating in programming that optimizes their respective likelihood of living independently upon release.

A significant portion of the programming at Columbus House revolves around clients being connected with appropriate social services agencies in the communities where they will ultimately reside. This, in combination with employment training and placement, it allows for clients to move into community living in a seamless, comfortable manner.

Suitable release housing and reconnection with families also issues of great importance. Kintock has undertaken a concentrated effort to guide clients back into pro-social lifestyles while UCHC has provided the clinical expertise to address mental health issues that warrant attention.

Thus far, while the project is still relatively new, outcome evidence suggests that this is an appropriate and beneficial manner in which to

provide services to a special needs population. The Department of Corrections exercised great vision in fashioning the program around collaboration amongst agencies. That cooperative effort is producing solid, positive results.

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provide system-wide change to address the unique needs of offenders, and relieve some specific collateral sanctions.

In fiscal year 2007, community corrections providers in New Jersey served more than 11,000 ex-offenders through its array of residential community release programs and day reporting centers. More than 7,500 parolees and 3,600 inmates each year are being assisted by Coalition agencies in a variety of settings, in the hardest to serve communities. It has been demonstrated that inmates who enter half-way house programs have less than a 25% re-conviction rate in their first two years in the community. The success of the Governor’s Crime Plan should be built upon the success of Coalition programs. Building on the solid infrastructure of Coalition programs, the Governor’s Crime Plan has an established community partner to assist in the implementation of improved strategies supporting offender rehabilitation.

REHABILITATION AT WORK...

| PARTICIPANTS IN FY 2007 CONTRIBUTED... | |
|---|----------------|
| Gross Earning | \$7,239,467.48 |
| Federal Taxes | \$534,466.98 |
| State Taxes | \$150,706.68 |
| Fines/Restitution | \$592,894.74 |
| Child Support | \$235,999.10 |
| Maintenance Fees | \$1,849,895.16 |



GOVERNOR CORZINE'S RE-ENTRY PLAN INITIATIVES

DEMONSTRATION PROJECT FOR 1,300 OFFENDERS TO INCLUDE:

- ◆ Comprehensive re-entry services for offenders returning to Camden, Trenton, and Newark
- ◆ Assess individual risk and need to guide in-prison programming
- ◆ Increase preparedness throughout incarceration
- ◆ Job assistance and health care
- ◆ Ensure housing availability

MODIFIED BARRIERS TO RE-ENTRY:

- ◆ Address collateral consequences
- ◆ Expand eligibility for drug court
- ◆ Allow judicial discretion in imposing fines and penalties
- ◆ Modify expungement statute to promote employability

SYSTEM-WIDE CHANGES TO INCLUDE:

- ◆ Inmates leaving DOC with valid photo ID recognized by the MVC
- ◆ New STARS curriculum by DOC
- ◆ Revise vocational programs in DOC to reflect demand occupations

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The Coalition is a body of organizations that contract with the New Jersey Department of Corrections, New Jersey State Parole Board, and the Juvenile Justice Commission to provide community corrections programs such as assessment centers, residential work-release programs, substance abuse treatment programs, and day reporting centers for parolees. CCCPNJ collectively represents community corrections providers, addresses community corrections issues and advocates for rehabilitative services for offenders in New Jersey.