



MINNEAPOLIS Community Justice Mentor Connection

Spring 2010

Thank you for your faithfulness as a volunteer mentor for the Community Justice program. Sometimes you may feel alone out there in your work, so we want to keep you informed, updated, encouraged and supported.

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Mentor Training Dates

March 13, 2010

May 15, 2010

September 11, 2010

Our volunteer mentors are the backbone of the Community Justice program!

The Mentor Connection is a publication of the Minneapolis Police Department and the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches.

Mentor Submissions

Change of Mind

By: Joan Clarno (CJP Mentor)

How many times a DWI?
How many times to sit and cry?
Repeating, repeating, until
You or I die?

Habits good or bad lodge in our brain.
Why hang on to habits of pain?
Community Justice Mentor Connection
Can help you change your total perception!

A visit from you mentor can be
The only way to help us see-
You can be relieved from strife,
And help you to a brand new life!

Mentoring and Black Nativity

By: Rick Cousins (CJP Mentor)

Always a heartwarming production, the Penumbra Theater's annual holiday show Black Nativity is refreshed on a yearly basis, but the musical is based on the Christmas time gathering of a middle class African-American family. I imagined that my mentee, Theotis, and his family would not normally have access to a live performance like this, and I invited them to join me and my family on the night the Community Justice Project attended the show in December. As the production began, and Theotis and his family had not arrived, it seemed that this evening would be a missed opportunity. They came in from the frigid night about fifteen minutes late due to a flat tire on their aging vehicle. Such are the challenges of poverty in our society.

I feel fortunate that I am still connected to Theotis six months after his release from the ACF. I had met him and visited him close to every week for about seven months before his release. Our visits usually lasted about an hour, and we got to know each other during this time. I could sense a basic goodness in his heart, despite his criminal history. Theotis is an African-American now nearing forty years old, and was open to a relationship with this middle-aged white guy as he was searching for ways to change.

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Year of 2010

By: Sybil Lang (CJP Mentor)

Thus wherever ten is found this completeness of order is also seen. Ten implies completeness of order, nothing lacking and nothing over. It signifies that the cycle is complete and that everything is in its proper order. Thus ten represents the perfection of divine order. Let this year 2010 be a year for all of us lacking nothing and bringing nothing over that were negative or depressing from the previous years. Selah!

Future Events

Mentor Support Dinner

Our next mentor



support dinner will be held on Friday, February 26th from 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. at the Edina Community Lutheran Church. Our guest speaker will be Deb Woods, who does rule 25 assessing and Telesis for women at the Hennepin County Adult Correctional Facility. She will be there to discuss chemical dependency, the process for rule 25 accessing, and Telesis which is an in-house treatment program. Food will be catered by Marino's Deli and will include Italian meat casserole, Italian veggie casserole, tossed salad, fresh veggies, bread, and cookies! The church is located at 4113 West 54th Street in Edina. Parking is available in the lot on the west and south sides of the church.

Please RSVP as soon as possible, even if you are unable to attend. Also let us know if you plan to bring a guest. To RSVP contact Jennifer Edel by email at jedel@gmcc.org or by phone at 612-721-8687, ext 318.

Mentor Support Group

The mentor support will meet next on Tuesday, March 16th at Edina Community Lutheran Church. This meeting will include discussion on typical obstacles in mentoring followed by small groups sharing techniques to predict and overcome these obstacles. The church is located at 4113 West 54th Street in Edina. Parking is available in the lot on the west and south sides of the church. To RSVP please contact Carol Mork by email cmork@gmcc.org or leave a voicemail at 612-721-8687, ext 301.

Mentoring and Black Nativity continued from page 1.

It was becoming clear to him that the gangster lifestyle would lead him back to prison, an early grave, or both. Theotis' challenges after his release were apparent to me: his work-history was limited as, consequently, were his skills; he had not graduated from high school, and the felonies on his record would be a roadblock that couldn't be avoided.

His advantages, however, only became apparent to me as I got to know his wife and family after he was released. I met Chiquita at the Justice Project's picnic last summer, and was struck by her devotion to Theotis. With a few visits to their home, I learned that she was the anchor of that home, which includes four children and a grandchild. They are originally from Chicago, and are all currently in various schools. Chiquita is adept at taking good advantage of the social services that make this state a land of opportunity. I am grateful for my friends Theotis and his family, and the opportunity to get to know them. I am hopeful that I can provide support for him in his search for work this spring. I became involved with the Community Justice Project because I would like to be a part of positive changes in the criminal justice system. I've found that the role of a mentor requires patience and persistence, and the rewards can be measured by the reduced criminal behavior in our society, and from the pleasure of the friendships that evolve.

Enduring Hope

By: V. Wayne Sorge (CJP Mentor)

I am new to the Community Justice Project and just beginning to learn about the good things volunteer mentors are doing here. But I come to the task with some experience and observations as a journalist for four decades.

I am impressed with the work mentors are doing and can do in Hennepin County and I believe it is a good vehicle for people of faith to witness that faith with their actions, without pushing their particular brand of being religious.

Although I was a journalist for most of my life, I was also sometimes the subject of other journalists as I witnessed capital punishment. I was once the subject of a tabloid newspaper that made it appear that I had said that I had witnessed, at that time, 111 killers getting what they deserved. The tabloid did not put quotation marks around those words but the words haunt me to this day since I do not believe punishment is based on what anyone truly deserves.

We could debate the concept of original sin or simply think of the times most of us let our foot get heavy on the accelerator and don't get caught. My view is that most of us get by without all the punishment we may deserve but the Creator I worship is a God of Grace. A God who is depicted in the Hebrew Scripture as one who dictated in the first recorded murder that Cain was protected from retaliation for the crime of killing his brother.

I believe that was an early sign for humankind of the importance of hope. Hope is based on what we can do in the future and not what failures or wrongs we have in our past. That's the message of mentoring.

Future Events

continued

Save the Date:

The 9th Annual National Prisoner Reentry Conference will be in Milwaukee, Wisconsin October 7-10, 2010. For more information go to their web site: www.capaassociation.org.

Mentor/Mentee Resources

Let's Talk About It

As many of you already know Rachel Campbell is the mentor coordinator for Community Justice. What you may not know is that she also does a support group for women at the Hennepin County Adult Correctional Facility. The group is called "Let's Talk about It" and takes place every other Saturday.

On average 35 women gather to talk about different life issues that they are facing. Rachel explains that they work on letting go of past issues and concentrate on moving in a more positive direction to reach their hopes and dreams. Rachel also has speakers come in and talk about different resources for school funding, domestic abuse advocacy, sex education, drug treatment, and housing.

During the holiday season the women also have a party where they showcase different talents, read poetry, sing, dance, and do skits. Many of the women that we mentor learn about the Community Justice Project through Rachel who talks about it during her group. To learn more about "Let's Talk about It" you can contact Rachel at 612-721-8687, ext 328 or rcampbell@gmcc.org.

Past Mentor Events

Best Practices Training

On Saturday morning, November 21st about 25 mentors met for a two hour training on best practices when working with offenders. Jim McAllister, a corrections supervisor at the Hennepin County Correctional Facility, talked about motivational interviewing, stages of change, LSIR, and effective case management.



For those of you who missed the training the five principles of motivational interviewing are: express empathy, develop discrepancy, avoid arguing, roll with resistance, and support self efficacy. A good way to find out what your mentee expects from you is to ask them to describe a person from their past that mentored him/her.

The stages of change include precontemplation (when a mentee is not ready to change), contemplation (he/she is not sure if they want to change), preparation (making a plan to change and setting goals), action (making the change), maintenance (preventing relapse), and relapse (going back to his/her old ways). The stages are circular and mentees can go in and out of each stage.

The LSIR is an assessment tool that the correctional facility uses to determine an offenders risk for reoffending. The ECM is a tool that probation officers use when working with clients. The steps include map (raise doubt and awareness), find the hook (tip the balance), move forward



(increase offender commitment), and review and support (monitor progress and reinforce small changes). You can discuss the use of each of these tools with your mentee's probation officer.

Mentor Support Group

On Wednesday night, November 11th 21 mentors met at the Edina Community Lutheran Church for the first meeting of the mentor support group. Mentors discussed how to stay connected once their mentees are released. It is very important to visit your mentee when you say you will. As a mentor you might be the only reliable person in your mentee's life. Being reliable will help facilitate trust in the mentor-mentee relationship.

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Mentor/Mentee Resources

continued

Community Justice on the Web

Facebook- Search "Community Justice Project" to find our group on facebook. Join the group to connect with other mentors, read group posts, and learn about mentor events.

Twitter- Follow us on twitter and read Community Justice updates at [CommunityJustic](#)

GMCC- Learn more information about the program, read newsletters, and find training dates on the Community Justice Project page on the Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches website at communityjusticeproject.gmcc.org.

Community Outreach

If you are a part of an organization, faith-based or otherwise, that is interested in giving back to your community by mentoring adult offenders please contact Hillary Freeman by email at hfreeman@gmcc.org or by phone at (612)-721-8687, ext. 332.

Newsletter Submissions

If you are a mentor or mentee with Community Justice that has written a piece that you would like to have included in an issue of Mentor Connection please contact editor/writer Jennifer Edel at jedel@gmcc.org or 612-721-8687 ext 318.

Mentoring Support Group continued from page 3.

On Wednesday, January 13th the mentor support group met for a second time. This time the group had a guest speaker, C. J. Schiffer, a psychologist at Minnesota Correctional Facility-Faribault. Mr. Schiffer discussed mental illness and how it relates to mentoring offenders. Topics included a definition of what is mental illness, different types of illnesses, symptoms of mental illness, and techniques that can be used when working with offenders with mental illness.

Winter Event

On Sunday evening, December 13th mentors were invited to attend one of two different performances as a thank you to our mentors. About a total of 60 mentors gathered together to attend these two shows at different locations.

One performance was Black Nativity at the Penumbra Theatre. The story focused on family, love, and belonging. The performance included no words, but many different African American Gospel songs performed. This is the 3rd year that mentors have gone to Black Nativity.

This was the first year that mentors were given the choice of two shows. The second performance was La Natividad at Heart of the Beast Puppet and Mask Theatre. This performance told the nativity story and included words and songs in both English and Spanish. Puppets, masks, and costumes were also used in the performance.

This was just one event in which we chose to thank our mentors for their service. We really appreciate the great work that you do and we wouldn't be here without you!

January Training

The first new mentor training of the year was held on Saturday, January 30th at the Hennepin County Adult Correctional Facility. A total of about 20 potential mentors attended this training.



Information was given to potential mentors about the purpose of mentoring, how to mentor, boundaries, and working with probation. A panel of current mentors and mentees talked about their experiences mentoring and answered

questions that the training participants had. The training also included a tour of the correctional facility and lunch.

If you or someone you know would be interested in attending one of these trainings, as either a potential mentor or as an observer, please contact Jennifer Edel by email at jedel@gmcc.org or by phone at 612-721-8687, ext 318.