



# MINNEAPOLIS Community Justice Mentor Connection

Summer 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

May 15, 2010

September 11, 2010

December 4, 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.**

## State Program

By: Kerrie Holschbach (DOC)

As the Medical Release Planner for the Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC), I provide release planning to offenders with chronic or significant medical conditions. Conditions include cancer, recent surgery, paralysis, chronic respiratory problems, traumatic brain injuries, HIV, and an array of other conditions. My goal is to ensure continuous care for their medical issues and a successful transition to the community. Partnering with Community Justice Project (CJP) mentors has been an important piece of this puzzle for 10 offenders on my caseload. To date, CJP mentors have visited the correctional facilities at Lino Lakes, Red Wing, Oak Park Heights, Shakopee, and Stillwater to meet with mentees.

The DOC is well equipped to care for offenders with serious medical conditions. In addition to onsite medical clinics, the DOC operates a transitional care/hospital unit as well as a unit that provides services similar to a nursing home.

Facing a chronic medical condition can be stressful for anyone. Add to that the difficulties of obtaining health insurance to cover preexisting conditions and a history of felony convictions. Combined, these issues may jeopardize a successful release into the community. It's easy to get frustrated and be tempted to give up and not follow through with requests for verifications, appeals, applications, and multiple medical appointments.

Mentors, however, offer hope. They help mentees by walking beside them, helping to break tasks into smaller parts so they don't seem so daunting. Mentors serve as a sounding board, resource, and positive person with whom to problem solve. Mentors offer solutions that may not occur to someone who has led a different life. They offer support and encouragement when the mentee may be ready to give up and stop trying to make positive changes.

Thank you for your compassion, dedication, and donation of time and talent to make a positive impact in someone's life!

## Chances

By: Carl Hubbard (CJP Donator)

My story is about loss, grief, drugs, alcohol, and change. Most of all it's about me abandoning God and how he never left me. This past March Hillary Freeman spoke at a religious forum at the prison. I paid close attention because she spoke about chances; chances that are given over and over in life, and yet we choose the wrong path. This spoke to me: I was going to make better choices and a better life.

My poor choices began at 18. I'm a bi-racial male and back then I was trying to fit into a suburban lifestyle in Burnsville. I was escaping name calling and racist remarks by immersing myself in alcohol, marijuana, and cocaine. In fall of 2003 I went to prison for sexually assaulting a teenage girl. In 1999 I was charged with third degree sexual assault. I was given probation, violated it, and was sent back to prison. In 2005 I was released, violated again, and returned to prison. Did I turn to God? No!

Here I am, 2010, writing from prison. I never understood the thinking that caused me to commit all my crimes until recently when I made the decision to take my treatment program at Lino Lakes seriously and to stop being a criminal. For once I made a decision for the right reason. God never left me.

With the help of others I am discovering ways to accept who I am and how to have healthy relationship. I'm even learning to talk about my feelings. As Hillary said, chances are given to use over and over in our life. As I approach my 40s I'm finally realizing those chances and making choices that will help me be stronger in mind and soul; choices that will keep me out of prison and with my children, family, and God forever.

## Mentor Submissions

### My Goals and Dreams

By: Elaine Ellis Brown (CJP Mentee)

There is no doubt that it is around the family and the home that the greatest virtues, the

Most dominating virtues of

Human societies are created, strengthened and maintained

The greatest dividing line between success and failure

Can be expressed in five words: I did not have time.

And the best thing to spend on my children is my time

The purpose of life, after all, is to live it, to taste

Experience to the utmost, to reach out eagerly and

Without fear for newer richer experiences

My maturity begins to grow when I can sense my

Concerns for others outweighing my concern for myself

Love doesn't make the world go round

Love is what makes the world worthwhile

Lost time is never found again

I'm going to surround myself with people who respect me

And treat me well

Life is a blend of laughter and tears, a combination of rain and sunshine.

To fully enjoy life, to derive its greatest meaning and

Beauty.

One needs to enter into it with not only the look of

Involvement and happiness, but the spirit of the

Involvement as well

Truth is only safe ground to stand upon

I'm going to keep away from people who try to belittle my

Ambitions, small people always try to do that, but the really great

Great thing is I too can become great.

Kindness is synonymous with happiness

One of the most courageous things I can do is identify

Myself, know who I am, what I believe in, and where I

Want to go in life

Nothing much happens without a dream for something

Really great to happen, it takes a really great dream

### I am a New Mentor

By: Joe Pulice (CJP Mentor)

I am a new mentor. I've been meeting weekly with my mentee for the past two months as he finishes his sentence at the correctional facility. He is a 26 year old from Chicago. I'm amazed that this young man has never had a positive role model in his life. He has been on the streets since he was 9 years old.

For him, life has been about survival. Hopefully, through our relationship, I can expose him to the idea that life is more than just surviving. Through our talks we have developed a mutual trust and we are excited to spend some time doing fun things together once he is released. I've found the mentor program to be extremely rewarding in the short time I've been participating.

## Future Events

### Mentor Support Group

The next meeting of the mentor support group will be on Wednesday, May 12<sup>th</sup> from 7-8:30 pm at Edina Community Lutheran Church. The group will feature small group conversation about mentoring. The church is located at 4113 West 54<sup>th</sup> Street in Edina. Parking is available in the lot on the west and south sides of the church. Please meet in the Fellowship Hall on the main floor of the church To RSVP please contact Carol Mork by email [cmork@gmcc.org](mailto:cmork@gmcc.org) or leave a voicemail at (612) 721-8687, ext 301.



### Mentor-Mentee Family Picnic

Save the date! Our 2<sup>nd</sup> annual mentor-mentee family picnic will be on Saturday, June 19<sup>th</sup> at Boom Island. Like always the picnic will include great friends, food, and fun. Watch for more details to come 😊

## Mentor/Mentee Resources

### Google Group

Members of the mentor support group came up with an idea to start a Google group where mentors can discuss mentoring, ask other mentors questions, and receive mentor/mentee resources online. The website for this group is: <http://groups.google.com/group/communityjusticeproject>. There you can post and view files, join in on discussions, and also create your own page!

Don't forget about the other web resources for mentors to connect! We have a group called "Community Justice Project" on facebook.com. You can also follow us on twitter.com @CommunityJustic. If you need any help accessing these resources please contact Jennifer Edel at [jedel@gmcc.org](mailto:jedel@gmcc.org) or (612) 721-8687, ext 318.

## Simple Rules

By: Billy Secord (CJP Mentor)

When I was initially asked to write a few words for this newsletter, about what I've learned from my involvement in this program, as well as how it's impacted my life, the first thing I did was call mentee Jerome to ask him this simple question: "Why have we had such a successful match?" His response was just as simple: "Because of the few simple 'ground rules' you set when we first met."

Below are the bullets Jerome rattled off in less than a minute, and I think others might find this informative/useful, too:

1. Create a calendar, and ensure there are never two-hour or more blocks of time without anything to do. If so, schedule something... anything!
2. Try to avoid TV as much as possible – as it's an excuse to really living life.
3. When bored, or when there's nothing to do, go to the library (find topics of interest, explore new places via DVDs, books, etc.).
4. Go for walks – spend time outside... the sunlight does the body good.
5. Keep track of goals – set, both, big and little goals.
6. Ask for help – people genuinely like to help others, but if you don't express a need, most won't offer to help.

Jerome, whom I consider a true friend, is now enrolled at MCTC. With a 3.61 GPA, Jerome was just named Vice President of Service for MCTC's Phi Theta Kappa (honor society). I'm very proud of Jerome and I for all our accomplishments and life lessons learned over the past 18 months.

## The Journey to Becoming a Mentor

By: Katherine Fink (CJP Mentor)

I think we are all on a spiritual journey whether we think we are or not! I certainly didn't think I was 20 years ago. In fact I would have been highly offended if you had so much as inferred that. I was totally self sufficient. I didn't need anybody. Just get out of my way while I conquer the world! Thus began my own awakening, my own hard won long spiritual quest. "When the student is ready the teacher will appear."

Part of my spiritual journey was realizing that although I had a very tough childhood I was able to "pull myself up by the boot straps" and become very successful. "To whom much is given, much is expected."

I wanted to give back. I'd volunteered at an inner city school and a nursing home and felt wonderfully rewarded! Then April 2009 I read about the Community Justice Program. Due to conflicting schedules I was not able to complete the training until March 2010. I now feel ready as a mother, as a grandmother, as a former executive/sales person, and as a "wise elder" to just be there in whatever capacity works for the two of us. We each may stumble and fall on our individual journeys, but I trust that we shall reach across our pathways and lend each other a helping hand to get right up. Maybe even spend a minute giggling (or crying down there in the grass), but we WILL get right up and continue on that journey forward together, be it two steps forward and one step back!

## Past Mentor Event

### Support Group Meeting

On Tuesday, March 16<sup>th</sup> the mentor support group met to share with each other tips about mentoring. The group was held at the Edina Community Lutheran Church from 7-8:30 pm and about 20 mentors attended. The key points of the meeting were these:

- Be faithful, don't worry about "success"
- Keep good boundaries
- Be a good listener
- Be a cheerleader
- Manage your own expectations
- Stay hopeful – mentees carry so much baggage and release puts them back into the environment that got them there the first time

Don't forget to attend the next mentor support group on May 12<sup>th</sup>! Details can be found in the future mentor events section.

## 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](mailto: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 about mentoring that you would like to have included in an issue of Mentor Connection please contact editor/writer Jennifer Edel at [jedel@gmcc.org](mailto:jedel@gmcc.org) or (612) 721-8687, ext 318.

## Past Mentor Events

### March Training

On March 13<sup>th</sup> the Community Justice Project held a training for new mentors at the Hennepin County Adult Correctional Facility. A total of about 20 potential mentors attended this training. The training included information about boundaries, tips on how to mentor, and how to work with probation.



Mentors and mentees also spoke in a panel about their experiences being in the program and answered questions asked by the training participants.

If you or someone you know would be interesting 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](mailto:jedel@gmcc.org) or by phone at (612) 721-8687, ext 318.



### Mentor Support Dinner

On April 16<sup>th</sup> Community Justice held its most recent mentor support dinner at the Edina Community Lutheran Church. About 50 new and experienced mentors came for the fabulous Greek gyros, salad, and pastries from Gardens of Salonica. Speaker Ray Cole from Freedom Works gave a very interesting presentation on employment.

Here are some of his main points:

- It's all about the choices we make. Good choices are like planting seeds, hard work on the front end will produce fruit.
- Guilt is about behavior, it reminds us that we are out of bounds. Shame is about self, it makes us feel bad about who we are.
- Be real, be honest, and be supportive without enabling.
- If they put the time into getting their resumes done, fill out applications, and get them out to employers it will eventually pay off.
- Be supportive. Job rejection doesn't mean they are inadequate or deficient. They are children of God and therefore they are loved, and have value and worth.



Thanks to everyone who came and participated in this wonderful event!