



## DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION AND REHABILITATION

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### PRRS Community Advisory Committee Quarterly Meeting Minutes Thursday, September 11, 2014 @7:30am

#### ***Meeting Focus: "Healthy Reentry: Healthy Relationships"***

Attendance: Over 30 individuals including Tom Manion, Sheriff's Office's Family Justice Center; HHS Child Welfare Services Edward Powell and Fred Evans; Joy Newheart, Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery Count; Amy Bransford, Maryland State Parole and Probation; Nancy Newton and James Sean Fay, Montgomery College; Paul Meyer, community resident and White Flint Public Safety Committee; Stevens Brown, Department of Housing and Community Affairs; Fred Chandler, Catholic Charities; Kara Davis, Tyrone Alexander, Stefan LoBuglio, Ben Stevenson, and Shannon Murphy, PRRS; Carlton Mayer, NAACP; Marybeth Ayres, State Attorney's Office; Dan Hoffman, County's Chief Innovation Officer; Allan Shedlin, Reel Fathers; Sue Jeweler and Judi Goozh, Mommies and Daddies in Jail; Cornelia Skipton, HHS Abused Persons Program; Marie Douville, Drug Court; Reverend Elwood Grey, National Coalition of Prison Ministries; Lisa Mandel-Trupp and Zac Trupp, County Council; Thomas DeGonia II, Esq. and Dr. Diane Scott-Jones, Community Advisory Committee Co-Chairs; four PRRS Residents.

#### **1. Welcome and Introductions**

Community Advisory Committee Co-chairs Dr. Diane Scott-Jones and Mr. Thomas DeGonia II, Esq. convened the meeting at 7:35 am. They welcomed attendees, introduced the topic of the meeting on healthy relationships as part of the year-long them of CAC meetings focused on "Healthy Reentry." After introducing themselves, they asked that all in attendance to do the same.

#### **2. PRRS Chief's Report Highlights/Updates**

Division Chief Stefan LoBuglio presented an 8-page "Chief's" report which details the activities and accomplishments of the program since the previous CAC meeting in June. He discussed in greater detail several items including: job and education fairs held at the Pre-Release Center July 29 & 30 which led to the immediate hire of 12 residents and the enrollment of several residents in Montgomery College programs; the participation of PRRS staff in a White House hosted event on reentry and employment; a newly introduced Cognitive Behavioral Program that is provided to all incoming Residents; the recent successful audit report from the Federal Bureau of Prisons, and PRRS' efforts to implement fully the 46 standards of the Prison Rape Elimination Act. For further detail, please see accompanying "Chief's Report."

#### **3. Healthy Relationships**

The Co-Chairs asked the attendees to respond to the following questions: first, how do "healthy" relationships with peers, partners, parents, progeny and others affect post-release reentry success; second, how does PRRS assist clients develop "healthy relationships" both with services offered onsite and those offered in the community; third, how does PRRS assist clients make the determination to end or reconfigure "unhealthy" relationships while maintaining their adult responsibilities to children and aging parents?; and fourth, how are the rights and safety of clients' victims respected and their safety protected by PRRS?

PRRS Case Manager Kara Davis kicked-off the discussion by detailing the importance PRRS attaches to involving family members in all aspects of reentry planning and the great value that fostering healthy relationships provides for their success. She described that case managers reach out to family members within the first week of their arrival and invite them to participate in reentry planning. Reentry Services Manager Tyrone Alexander added that the program offers support classes for them at night to educate them

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#### Pre-Release and Reentry Services Division

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about how they can best assist their loved ones in the program, and allows family members to visit seven days a week. For those without strong family support, PRRS offers a mentoring program run by Catholic Charities called Welcome Home. Its coordinator, Fred Chandler, shared that Welcome Home matches PRRS Residents with community volunteers who commit to a year-long mentoring relationship and weekly contact in person and by phone.

PRRS also works closely with other community-based providers to foster healthy relationships. HHS's Ed Powell runs fatherhood and parenting programs that PRRS residents can attend. Under a previous grant program, he had run a program called "Healthy Relationships" at PRC which invited partners to participate in the classes along with the Residents. Allan Shedlin of Reel Fathers explained that his program uses classic movies to illustrate important lesson of Fatherhood. He shared the insight that often fathers know the type of parent that they do not want to be more than then the parent that they should be. Ms. Joy Newheart of Conflict Resolution Center of Montgomery County and Carlton Mayer II of the NAACP (and previously with CRCMC) described how they have used mediation services to address conflict by improving communication. As they described, this proves useful for both for parties who are in committed relationships and for parties who have children in common. Assistant State Attorney Mary Beth Ayres emphasized this latter point on the importance of improving co- parenting relationships. Ms. Newheart emphasized the importance of having mediators who can engender the trust of the parties. Sue Jeweler and Judi Goozh shared that they have developed publications for children of the incarcerated to help incarcerated parents assure their children that they are safe and will return to care for them. Montgomery College's Nancy Newton also commented that they have welcomed family members to join in on GED classes. Finally, County Council staff member Lisa Mandel-Trupp described the county's efforts to promote healthy relationships within the context of teen dating.

In response to the two questions posed concerning relationships involving victims and domestic violence, PRRS employs sophisticated electronic GPS monitoring and maintains strict accountability procedures to ensure victims' rights and safety are kept as the highest priority. When victims do contact PRRS, the program may refer them to the Family Justice Center run by the Sheriff's Office and the police department's victim's unit. FJC's Tom Manion described how the center provides extensive victim services to assist them through the legal processes, helps address their immediate living needs, and also arranges safe and supervised visits with children of parents who are prohibited from meeting due to a protective order. He explained that FJC has been operating for five years and is based on an evidenced-based model begun in San Diego. PRRS will also seek assistance from the police's victims unit run by Ellen Alexander which has been helpful in counseling victims about their rights and access to resources. Further, Cornelia Skipton of HHS's Abused Persons Program explained that her programs offer 6 and 16 week programs for abusers, as well as support for victims of domestic violence and victims of sexual assault. Her agency oversees the placement of victims and their children in the Betty Krahnke Center.

Some of the most challenging cases involve victims who seek reconciliation with their abusers, and PRRS relies on the talents of its staff and its community partners to navigate these situations carefully on a case by case basis. Where a protective order is in place, PRRS will not allow any contact. However, if there is no active order but a history of past abuse, PRRS will develop a plan to carefully supervise any contact should both parties indicate their plans to be together after release.

At the meeting, several Residents spoke about the important role that the program has played in allowing them to reconnect with their family members. One federal resident described that the strict structure of PRRS is daunting but has proved extremely helpful in reconnecting him with his family. A second FBOP resident thanked the program for allowing him to visit his sick father.

#### **4. Adjournment (9:00am)**