



Family ReEntry

*Empowering Individuals and Strengthening Families
to Reduce Violence, Crime, Abuse, and Neglect*

Mentors Help Unseen Victims of Incarceration



The Spring Mentor Training Class for Champions: (center) Jill Spineti, Director of CMP; (second from right) Keri Roper, Champions Program Manager; (front right) Pam Moore, Champions Program Coordinator.

Children of prisoners are the unseen victims of a parent's incarceration. No one is exactly sure how many children have a parent in prison. This information is rarely tracked. However, based on national estimates, approximately 2 million children nationally and 3000 in Bridgeport have one or both parents in prison. At some time in their lives, as many as 10 million children in the U.S. will experience parental incarceration.

These special children suffer silently from the loss and stigma of having a parent in prison. "The impact

of parental loss on children, particularly when it results from incarceration, combined with a multitude of other risk factors such as poverty, can become difficult challenges for these children." says Steve Lanza, Executive Director of Family ReEntry. Most startling is that children of prisoners are SIX TIMES MORE LIKELY to be incarcerated themselves in their lifetime.

Family ReEntry, in partnership with The Governor's Prevention Partnership (GPP), recently launched The Champions Mentoring Program, a new Bridgeport initiative designed to bring a more positive outlook to children of prisoners. Champions provides supportive relationships for those who have a parent currently in a Connecticut prison. According to Mr. Lanza, "This program can help reduce risk and enhance resilience for these children

and their families." Family ReEntry's involvement in this groundbreaking initiative brings unique expertise in reentry issues, parenting, family therapy and management to the overall program.

Through Champions, these children receive weekly, one-on-one attention from a caring adult volunteer mentor. The program provides them with a safe environment where they can share their feelings and concerns, improve their coping skills and enhance their resiliency. Mentors, the children and their families

(Continued on page 2)

We Need Champions Mentors!

If you are interested in mentoring a child in Bridgeport,

Call Keri Loper at 203-382-1190

Music Is in the Air for the 6th Annual Garden Cabaret at Bydale

Family ReEntry is gearing up for our 6th Annual Garden Cabaret Fundraiser, scheduled for Sunday, September 19, 2004. This annual fundraiser, held at the historic Bydale home of Mrs. Joan Warburg, is a wonderful afternoon of great music, food, wine, and goodwill for a good cause. Last year's Garden Cabaret was a rousing success and raised over \$100,000 for Family ReEntry's much-needed services.

This year's Cabaret will celebrate the 20th anniversary of Family ReEntry. Our featured performer is the multitalented Karen Mason, a veteran of the New York stage who is best known for her original role as Tanya in Broadway's smash hit, MAMMA MIA! She's also performed the leading roles of "Norma Desmond" in Sunset Boulevard and "Rosalie" in CAR-NIVAL. An acclaimed vocalist, Karen has headlined Carnegie Hall, the Russian Tea Room, Rainbow & Stars, the Algonquin, Eighty Eights, Arci's Place, The Supper Club and The Ballroom in New York City. Karen has also produced several CDs, including "When the Sun Comes Out," which earned her the MAC Award for Major Female Recording of the Year in 2002.

Mark your calendars for this wonderful and worthy outdoor event on September 19th. More details will come in your mailbox later this summer.



2004 Garden Cabaret Planning Committee: (left to right) Diane Jones, Susan Ness, Sally Schenk, Joan Warburg.



Family ReEntry

is a regional, non-profit human services agency with services throughout Connecticut. We provide rehabilitative psychotherapy, counseling and educational programs to over 1800 clients annually who are referred by the criminal justice system.

Executive Director

Stephen Lanza, MA, LMFT, DAPA

President, Board of Directors and Fundraising

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Financial Manager

Todd Couchman, CPA

Program Manager, Bridgeport

Trina Barnes, MA

Grant Development and Communications

Sondra Bradford-Jennings, MHA

Website: www.familyreentry.org

OFFICES

Norwalk Administrative Office

Management, Fundraising, Grants, Donations and Services

9 Mott Avenue, Suite 104, Norwalk CT 06850

Phone 203-838-0496 • Fax 203-866-9291

e-mail: info@familyreentry.org

Bridgeport Community ReEntry Center

Local Services and Client Referrals for Services Agency-Wide

126 Washington Avenue, 3rd Floor, Bridgeport CT 06604

Phone 203-576-6924 • Fax 203-576-6943

Outside Bridgeport 1-866-302-8030

e-mail: trinabarnes@familyreentry.org

Champions Mentoring Program

Recruitment, Referrals, Training and Programs for Champions

At the Bridgeport Center on the 2nd floor

Phone 203-382-1190 • Fax 203-382-1197

e-mail: keriloper@familyreentry.org

(Continued from page 1)

have access to staff at all times for problem solving, questions, and help accessing resources.

The program provides three levels of mentoring and supportive services. The children assessed to be at the highest risk and with the most needs will be serviced through the Family ReEntry-based level, which adds the option of additional therapeutic and counseling services for the child and family as needed.

The Champions Mentoring Program is primarily funded through a three-year federal grant. The grant is from the Administration for Children and Families, a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. We continue to seek additional funding from private foundations and donors.

If you are interested in becoming a Champions mentor, call Keri Loper or Pam Moore at 203-382-1190 or e-mail Champions at keriloper@familyreentry.org.

Hope Springs Alive for the Women of Prison Mentoring Program

During an enlightening visit to the York Correctional Institution, in Niantic, a group of incarcerated young women and their volunteer mentors sat down to share their positive experience with Family ReEntry's Transitions: Youthful Offender Mentoring Program.

"This is the first time we have brought a group of mentors and mentees together at York" said Robin Canter, the women's program coordinator for Transitions. "The girls were excited to meet with their mentor in a more relaxed setting." Also in attendance was Sally Schenk, President of the Board for Family ReEntry, and special guest Jackie Smaga, Executive Director of the Michael Bolton Charities (MBC), the program's largest private foundation supporting the program.

From the moment the security doors shut and the group entered the prison's school area, you could feel the high level of energy in the room. The young women lit up at the sight of their mentors. As each person spoke in the group, they shared heartfelt and emotional insight into the impact the Transitions Mentoring Program is having on all of them. Here are comments from one inmate and her mentor:

Kathy: "Sherry has been my mentor for two years. I don't know what I would do without her. Before Sherry, I was very depressed and felt like there was no hope. The prison even had me on meds because I was so down. After Sherry became my mentor, my view on life completely turned around. I felt more hopeful and positive about my life in the future. Recently, after failing my GED test several times, I decided to give up on getting my diploma. Then I had my mentor meeting with Sherry and she was ADAMANT that I keep trying. Well, I did try and just days ago I got the notice that I had passed! Sometimes, you just need that extra push, that extra bit of encouragement like Sherry gives me to hang in there." Kathy beamed as she held up her GED certifi-

cate for the group to see while everyone clapped.

Sherry: "I think being a mentor is as beneficial to me as it may be to Kathy. When I became a mentor, I learned a lot about tolerance—a lot about how challenging it must be to have so many restrictions, as Kathy does in prison. Kathy has so much going for her that I just want to give her as much support and guidance as I can, much as I would my own daughter."



Mentors (first name only) and guests that attended session at York: (left to right) Lynn, Laura, Sally Schenk, Family ReEntry, Robin Cantor, Family ReEntry, Jessie, Jackie Smaga, The Michael Bolton Charities, and Jill; (not shown) Sondra Jennings, Family ReEntry, and Sherry.

As this tearful session came to a close, the mentors spent their last minutes talking with their young mentees—strengthening their bond and encouraging these hopeful young women to stay focused on a positive, crime-free future when they finally leave prison.

The Transitions: Youthful Offender Mentoring Program was a 2003 Winner of the Mentor Coordinator of the Year Award from The Connecticut Mentoring Partnership, a program of The Governor's Prevention Partnership. This program is partially funded by a grant from the Department of Correction, with the balance of funding from the Michael Bolton Charities and other generous donors.

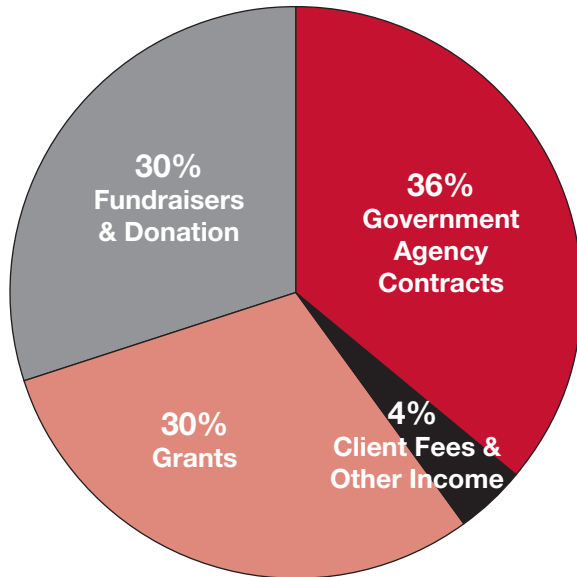
A Report from the Board of Directors

This has been a year highlighted by strong demand for our programs, a forceful strategic effort to create a new solution to reverse the spiraling human and financial costs of incarceration, and the initiation of our first program, *Champions*, to be funded by a federal grant. Our Transitions mentoring program for youthful offenders in prison continues to flourish and is marked by the

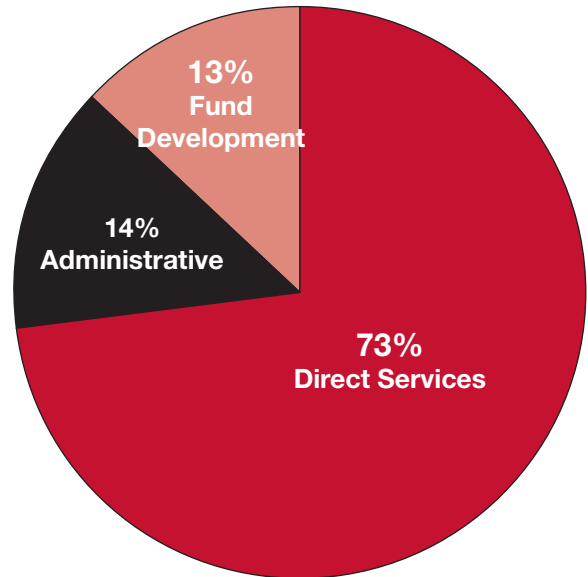
devoted and creative efforts of our volunteer mentors.

Financially, we project that our June 30 year-end will be somewhat stronger than the previous year and are grateful to the private funders who continue to provide a high percentage of total funds as noted below. We are also proud of our efficient operations with 73% of funds marked for programs.

Family ReEntry Sources of Revenue



Family ReEntry Expense Distribution



Highlights of the 2003/2004 Activities

Strategic Effort Yields a Concrete Plan and Real Hope for New Public Policy

Family ReEntry has taken the lead in proposing that the State of Connecticut adopt a creative and cost-effective new solution to the spiraling human and financial costs of incarceration. We now incarcerate people at nearly seven times the rate per capita than we did some 25 years ago. As a result of this trend, Connecticut releases 12,000 per year from prison, with recidivism rates hovering at a staggering 70%. The news does not get better. We know that Connecticut ranks among the worst in the country when it comes to racial disparity in incarceration: blacks are 9% of our state population but 44% of the prison population. If we were to incarcerate blacks at the same rate as whites, our state prison population would drop from nearly 20,000 to under 7,000.

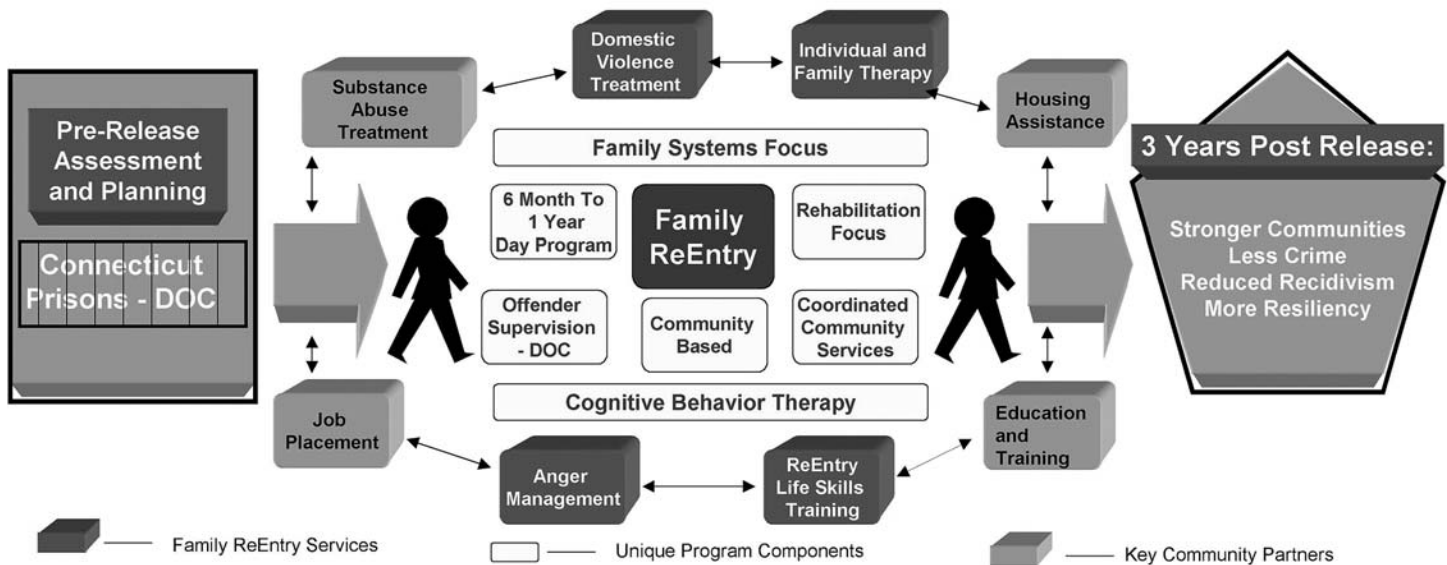
Family ReEntry knows that better solutions are available. As part of an energetic strategic effort this year, we have taken the initiative to review the best

research in the field, speak to nationally known experts and visit successful programs. The result is our proposal for a state-of-the-art pilot project in Bridgeport that we believe can reduce recidivism by up to 30%. Offenders would participate in our tailored day program for about 9 months beginning at pre-release. Research compellingly demonstrates that with the right combination of intensive and coordinated services, this group will have much higher success rates.

We believe this proposal has real benefits for the state because the primary gap in effectively reducing recidivism is in the community where there are no comprehensive programs available. We agree with Department of Correction Commissioner Lantz who stated in a public hearing, "Reentry programming is vital to public safety. Offenders need to be discharged to something. I'm all in favor of building community support for reentry." Because our proposal is much less costly than either residential treatment or carcera-

Community ReEntry Center Pilot Concept

“Comprehensive and Intensive Reentry Services Targeting 4 to 6 Criminogenic Factors”



tion, it ultimately has the potential to provide significant cost savings for the state.

Family ReEntry is working to build support for our proposal. We have consulted with the Department of Correction, established a Bridgeport Criminal Justice Working Group, and have spoken with key U.S. representatives from Connecticut – Senators Dodd and Lieberman and Congressman Shays. We have the support and endorsement of leading experts in the field of criminal justice. Our goal is to fund and launch the three-year pilot project by the end of 2004, with evaluation results available within one year.

Stronger Relationships Are Forged in Bridgeport

As part of our strategic effort, we have formed a working alliance with community providers and other stakeholders to rethink the solutions to challenges within the criminal justice system and with reentry. In addition, we are talking with the local state legislators, community leaders and interested citizens with an eye on becoming more fully integrated in the community. The Board has a goal to add new directors from the Bridgeport community as well.

Family ReEntry Programs Are in High Demand

We believe that the thoughtful, compassionate and highly trained staff of Family ReEntry is the key to the quality of our results. Their efforts have been recognized and appreciated in a most concrete way by the

recent request from CSSD to increase our services in substance abuse in Bridgeport. Substance abuse is an important underlying issue for many of our clients and we are eager to expand the depth of our services in this arena. We have also expanded our efforts in Stamford by serving more clients through a federal Community Development Block Grant. Special funding from the United Way of Stamford has allowed Family ReEntry to expand services to clients at the Alternative Incarceration Center in Stamford.

Extraordinary Efforts of Volunteer Mentors Build Life-Changing Connections

As a natural result of forming the warm relationships that support our youthful offenders life-changing plans, many of our volunteers become deeply dedicated to the process. They are adding their own inventive energy in an attempt to continue to improve our efforts. One committed mentor, Patrick Rodriguez, has recently volunteered to develop a database of graduated mentees so that more effective post-release support can be organized in the community. He firmly believes that volunteers can do more. “All the mentors have such huge hearts and are devoted to their mentees” says Patrick. In addition he has volunteered to co-facilitate a group to help the mentees conceive of a more positive and productive future.

–Sally Schenk
President, Board of Directors

Thank You Supporters!

Through the generosity of our many supporters and the hard work of our dedicated volunteers, Family ReEntry has achieved many accomplishments this year. We want to thank all of our volunteers, individual donors and the following organizations:



Steve Lanza,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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Norwalk Woman's Club
Darien United Way
United Way of New Canaan
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United Way of Stamford
Westport Sunrise Rotary Club
Westport Young Women's League
Wilton Woman's Club



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Special thanks go out to Christ Church of Greenwich, First Presbyterian Church of New Canaan and Unitarian Church of Westport for so generously contributing Christmas gifts to clients and their children.

Additional thanks go to the First Baptist Church of Bridgeport for allowing Family ReEntry to use its sanctuary, the Curtis Room and other meeting space for our many events and programs.

Other News About Family ReEntry

Staff Size Grows to Meet the Overwhelming Client Demand. The number of full and part-time staff at Family ReEntry has grown by 50% to reduce our waiting list and provide more services for our clients. Nearly 80% of the staff provides direct client services.

New Directions Program Shows Positive Results. In the first year of New Directions, an intensive therapy program for youthful offenders on probation, recidivism rates were 14% twelve months post-arrest, versus 44% twelve months post-arrest nationally. This program is primarily funded by the Tow Foundation.

Generous In-Kind Donation Sets Up Champions. The Law Office of Regina Flaherty donated several office desks, chairs, file cabinets, type writers and other essential office items that helped Family ReEntry set up the new office space for The Champions Mentoring Program.

Clients and Kids Received Baskets, Games and Books. St. Saviour's Episcopal Church of Old Greenwich donated baskets of personal care items, games and children's books to our agency. The baskets will be distributed to Champions children attending Camp Hope this summer and other clients in need. The games and children's books will be used in the Champions Mentoring Program.

New Foundations Award Funding to Family ReEntry. Family ReEntry was awarded first-time grants this year from The Michael Bolton Charities, The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (federal grant), The City of Stamford's Community Development Block Grant, The United Way of Stamford's Priority Needs Fund and The United Way of Norwalk & Wilton's Special Program Fund.

Client Emergency Fund Gets Boost From Local Business. Bob's Discount Furniture's Charitable Foundation recently donated \$500 in store certificates to Family ReEntry to help one of our clients and her young children get furniture for their apartment.

Director Gives Testimony To the State Legislature. Steve Lanza, Family ReEntry's Executive Director, gave testimony to the Subcommittee on Prison Overcrowding, State of Connecticut Legislature in early 2004. During the testimony, Steve discussed our

reentry center pilot project concept for reducing recidivism in the state.

Family ReEntry Visits Capitol Hill. Sally Schenk, Family ReEntry's Board President, met with the Washington D.C. staffs of Senators Christopher Dodd and Senator Joe Lieberman, and Congressman Chris Shays to brief them on our ReEntry Center Pilot Project concept.



Young men during recent group session for New Directions.

Board Member heads Catholic Charities. Al Barber, Vice President of the Board for Family ReEntry, was recently named Executive Director of Catholic Charities of Fairfield County.

Supporters of New Program Featured in Article. Beth and Prescott Bush, Greenwich residents and long-time supporters of Family ReEntry, were featured in a Connecticut Post article discussing the importance of Family ReEntry and its new program, Champions Mentoring Program for children of prisoners.

Agency Featured in Radio Interview on Prison Overcrowding. Steve Lanza was interviewed on New York City's WKYS 98.7 FM. He discussed the Champions Mentoring Program for children of prisoners.

Program Manager Presents to Norwalk Community Group. Trina Barnes, Program Manager for the Bridgeport Community ReEntry Center, spoke to the Norwalk Domestic Violence Crisis Center. The focus was on our Domestic Violence Treatment and Family Violence Education Programs.



Family ReEntry

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Empowering Individuals and Strengthening Families to Reduce Violence, Crime, Abuse, and Neglect

Save the Date!

*Family ReEntry's 6th Annual
Garden Cabaret*

Sunday September 19th, 3:00PM

*at Bydale, the Home of
Mrs. Joan Warburg of Greenwich*