

Mercer County Reentry Task Force

Meeting Date: Wednesday, November 7, 2012

Location: 218 N. Broad Street, 2nd Floor, Trenton NJ

****Next meeting date is on January 9, 2013 at 218 N. Broad Street (2nd Floor), Trenton, NJ @1:30PM****

In Attendance

Herb Levine-Mercer Alliance to End Homelessness, **Stacie McGeehan**-Mercer County Department of Human Services, **Linda Rogers**- Mercer County, **Darren Ivey**-Community Education Centers, **Lorna Colligan**-Mercer Board of Social Services, **Denise Higgins**-Catholic Charities, **Wendi Kornberg**-DOC Office of Drug Programs, **Paul McIntyre**-NJ Parole Board, Veteran's Affairs, **Lt. James Dickerson**-NJ Parole Board, and **Craig Morris**- Mercer County Community College

Staff: Michelle Daniels- AmeriCorps VISTA at Bonner Center- recorded minutes.

Stacie handed out the Agenda, 2013 Meeting Dates, and September 5, 2012 Minutes.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Meeting commenced at 1:40PM. Prior meeting minutes were approved. Herb shared on the untimely loss of 53 year old Scott Fairman. He mentioned one of his accomplishments called the Homeless ID project, which will be named after him. The Task force took a moment of silence. A memorial service for homeless who died in the past year will be held on December 20th. Scott will be remembered there.

Herb Levine asked members to introduce themselves...

2. Agency Updates

Craig Morris – Mercer Community College - spoke about the new brochures for CTI (Certificate Training Institute) 30-week programs in Culinary and Administrative Professional. The two brochures were distributed.

Paul McIntyre – NJ Parole Board, Veteran's Affairs -mentioned that the job fair for vets, which was previously held, had a large turnout.

Denise Higgins – Catholic Charities- mentioned that a client of hers had participated in the Fresh Opportunity program, started by Scott Fairman, designed to remove municipal warrants from people who are in recovery programs.

Darren Ivey– Community Education Centers - Darren will be working for the Alumni, dealing with their aftercare and vocational treatment. He also mentioned about that housing is the main problem for those with drug distribution charges.

Herb Levine – Alliance to End Homelessness- spoke about the Reentry Summit he attended in East Orange. The Mercer task force is good at networking, etc. but there is a need to “beef-up” the community component of the task force. Rev. Greg Williams wants to mobilize the community, especially the church. Making Rev. Williams co-chair of the Task Force would allow him to take the lead in the area of mobilizing the community. He will receive support from Herb in this effort.

3. Strategic Discussion- The First 30 Days Campaign

Herb announced that he met with Rev. Greg Williams and Michelle Daniels and would like to use the First 30 Days as a campaign slogan. The following three slogans resulted from the meeting:

- 1) Let’s embrace our family members and neighbors returning to the community
- 2) Caring and connection can keep people from returning to prison
- 3) These efforts will build leadership in our communities

Herb introduced the idea of getting others involved. He would like to consider changing the meeting to 5:00PM or 5:30PM–making it accessible to others who cannot make the 1:30PM meetings. Herb requested feedback on the following:

- 1) Changing the meeting time and making it accessible to others who are unable to make the 1:30PM meetings.
- 2) Speaking to a group of Alumni to see what worked for them and to get a richer and fuller way to communicate this message.

Paul spoke about having group meeting alternatives. This was supported by Craig. The consensus was to keep our meeting time and hold a community group meeting on alternate months at the after work hour.

Herb posed the following question to the group: How many have church connections that could be useful in this effort? Linda has connections with UJIMA and Denise has the Trenton Cathedral. Greg is connected to both Turning Point Methodist and Shiloh.

Herb mentioned that he would like to first meet with Pat and then go to churches next. Greg will lead this (meeting with churches) and would receive support from Herb and Michelle.

Herb asked Darren what he needed in the first month after his release. Darren said any support is helpful. He mentioned that he had made up his mind, when he was released in 2001, that he would do something different. He reiterated that support is the best help. Darren also mentioned barriers with obtaining work for his Alumni and that support from faith-based is good help and they always need that. Herb recommended that Darren get to know Vernon Long (Opportunities for All) and Perry Shaw (A Better Way).

Lt. James Dickerson-NJ Parole Board- spoke on mentoring programs that come from the institution and out, and the greater ease of beginning the relationship while they are still inside.

Linda Rogers-Mercer County Corrections- mentioned that Helping Arms has had a good program and agrees that providing service from the inside out is a good way.

Darren mentioned the need of going into prison facilities, establishing relationships and keeping those relationships, and giving out contact details for people to get assistance.

Old Business

Herb mentioned that he has a meeting next week with the Justice Alliance Steering Committee, which he has been trying to get involved. His interest is in advocating lifting the drug felony charge.

Herb mentioned that the changes to the Smart Book will only be available on the online version. It was too late to get the changes in for the paper copy.

New Business

Denise wants to know what's going on with Mercer County United Way. Herb mentioned that they defunded programs. They didn't have enough cash and that agencies were caught off guard. Denise said the Suicide Prevention group didn't get money that was donated previously. Herb said he is the wrong person to ask for the specific, that he only has info he read in the paper.

Herb asked if there were any losses in the storm. Wendi mentioned that her brother and friends lost housing in the Highlands by Sandy Hook.

Meeting adjourned at 2:19PM