

Volunteer Update



ISSUE 3

MARCH 2007/ JUNE 2007 ISSUE

From the Director of Volunteer and Education Services

Wow our 2007 fiscal year has ended and I am proud to say that together you, OAR Volunteers, have contributed over 13,000 hours! You never cease to amaze us all! The new fiscal year brings many exciting possibilities and events including the August Arlington County Fair! We are looking for OAR Volunteers to represent OAR at the fair booth. If you are interested please read the Events of Interest section.

These last few months I have been able to visit the detention centers frequently and have heard such great feedback on the work that OAR is doing. I have met more and more clients that are eager to attend your classes, are signed up for 3 or 4 at a time, and are so proud to show me the Certificates of Completion and Achievement that they received from your programs.

Every time I walk into the facili-

ties I am encouraged by the words of our incarcerated clients who are amazed by the dedication of our OAR Volunteers. You play a huge role in OAR's ability to provide services both inside and outside the detention centers. Just today I was reminded of the amount of clients on the wait list to attend OAR's Computer Skills courses in the Arlington facility. There are currently 85 clients signed up for this course. The lab only has six computers and can only hold eight clients at one time. Right now our Interns are the only ones facilitating the course so it is offered only four times a year. As you know we are always recruiting new volunteers and we would like to invite you to be a part of this as well. If you know of an organization or group we should be working with, or another way to advertise, please let us know.

I am excited to share with you that we have been awarded funding to hire an Assistant Volunteer and Education Services Coordinator. This person will work with me to serve You, our OAR Volunteers, and to ensure that all of your needs are being met, as well as the educational and vocational needs of our clients. The position description is ready and can be emailed out to anyone interested. Please contact me if you or anyone you know might be interested in applying.

I hope you enjoy this edition of the Volunteer Update.

Elizabeth



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Kayra Alhambra– Winner of OAR's Outstanding Volunteer of 2006

Congratulations to **Kayra Alhambra**, our 2007 recipient of the Ms. Elizabeth "Betty" Ahern Award for the Outstanding Volunteer of the Year! **Merideth**, our Volunteer Services Summer Intern, sat down with **Kayra** and asked her a few questions about her experiences with OAR. Here's what she had to say:

How does it feel to win the Betty Ahern award after all of your hard work?

"It is a great honor to have received the Betty Ahern award. There are so many people who volunteer their time doing great work with the OAR clients, so it was an



incredible surprise. I am very grateful to those on the OAR committee who nominated and awarded me this award and I am truly honored for receiving this distinction."

What inspired you to become a volunteer with OAR?

"I wanted to work with an organization that is serving a segment of society that needs support. I also saw this as a challenge that required me to make adjustments in working with groups, leading a program inside the jail is unlike facilitating groups anywhere else."

I see you've put in over 200 hours of service. What exactly does teaching the Hispanic Support Group entail?

"The program consists of a 20-hour

Kayra Alhambra– Outstanding Volunteer 2006

course which meets weekly and focuses on specific areas of clients needs including stress, time, and anger management, among others. The course also dedicates a substantial portion of time to emotional healing topics."

Do you feel yourself having an impact on the clients while teaching?

"I have learned much about the needs and concerns of the clients we serve. One of the main achievements is to assist the clients to get to know themselves better so

they develop a greater awareness of who they are as well as the impact of their actions."

OAR would like to thank **Kayra** and all of the OAR Volunteers for their contributions, dedication, and support!

Volunteering Produces Health Benefits

New Report Shows Helping Others Improves Your Wellbeing and Longevity

Washington, D.C. – Volunteers help themselves to better health while helping others, according to a study released today by the Corporation for National and Community Service that reviews a compelling collection of recent scientific research.

The Health Benefits of Volunteering: A Review of Recent Research has found a significant connection between volunteering and good health. The report shows that volunteers have greater longevity, higher functional ability, lower rates of depression and less incidence of heart disease. The report is available in the Research and Policy section of the Corporation's website at

http://www.nationalservice.gov/about/role_impact/performance_research.asp#HBR.

The Health Benefits of Volunteering documents major findings from more than 30 rigorous and longitudinal studies that reviewed the relationship between health and volunteering, with particular emphasis on studies that seek to determine the causal connection between the two factors. The studies, which were controlled for other factors, found that volunteering leads to improved physical and mental health.

"I commend the Corporation for National and Community Service for its timely focus on health and volunteerism. These findings complement the Administration on Aging's ongoing efforts to harness the

power of prevention and wellness for all older Americans. Volunteerism is an important tool in our strategy to promote health and prevent disease," said Josefina G. Carbonell, Assistant Secretary for Aging at the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

Research suggests that volunteering is particularly beneficial to the health of older adults and those serving 100 hours annually.

According to the report:

*A study of adults age 65 and older found that the positive effect of volunteering on physical and mental health is due to the personal sense of accomplishment an individual gains from his or her volunteer activities.

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Michael Anderson's Article Pick



Each month Michael Anderson, OAR Volunteer, researches and selects a news article that is featured here in the Volunteer Update. Enjoy!

Inmates Earn GEDs to Better Their Lives

By Charlee Burgess' count, she made two big mistakes before turning 16. One was dropping out of high school. The other was taking her first hit of meth. Now the Amarillo woman is turning to the books instead of the pipe. And she's doing so from behind bars.

Burgess is one in a growing list of Randall County Jail inmates signing up for classes to learn high school-level writing, reading and math. They're skills Burgess and her classmates blew off as teenagers. But now, as convicted car thieves, drug dealers and petty burglars, they claim to be more committed to learning, hanging on to instructor Herb Kunkel's every word.

Classes are four days a week in the jail's law library. There are no guards in the classroom during

courses - just Kunkel and his students, sometimes as many as 10 of them, all dressed in striped jail jumpsuits. "A lot of these individuals ... probably would not be in this position if they had finished their education years ago," said Kunkel, 74. The GED program has been around at the jail for years but was placed under the direction of the Texas Center for the Advancement of Literacy and Learning in 2003. The change allows inmates to transfer to any adult-education program in Texas, if they are released before finishing all their course work, said Leslie Boyd, adult basic education coordinator for TCALL. Giving inmates a path to a basic education helps cut down the chances they'd re-offend later, Randall County Sheriff Joel Richardson said.

Motivating minds Courses typically cost \$7,000 a year to run. Much of that money comes from state and federal adult-education grants. It covers Kunkel's part-time salary and costs for tests, worksheets and other learning materials. But Kunkel says he isn't in it for the money. The inmates' drive and resolve to improve keep him going.

"Outside, we make our kids go to school. We

educators end up having a tough time trying to motivate them," he said. "In here, these are students who want to learn, who want to improve themselves. "They may not want to be in jail, but they want to be here in this class. And that's the difference."

Burgess believes she'd probably still be using drugs and boosting other people's rides had she not gotten busted. She now excels in math and hopes becoming a student again can open opportunities for her later. "If I wasn't in here, I never would get my GED. I know that," said Burgess, who began taking the GED classes in February. "I know this will lead to something positive for me."

Last year, 20 Randall County inmates got GEDs. Twenty-one did in 2005. Burgess hopes to be among them one of these days. She plans to attend college when she gets out of jail. Only she doesn't know when that will be. She faces other charges in Potter County. "For every bad thing, you can make a good outcome," Burgess said. "Something good will come out of this. I know it will."

http://www.amarillo.com/stories/031607/new_6920245.shtml

Farewell and Thank you Spring 2007 OAR Interns

Every semester OAR has been fortunate to have the opportunity to work with talented young men and women that intern with us from several universities, with different majors, experiences, and goals. It is often very easy for OAR staff to say that “OAR has the best interns!” because as seen from previous semesters including the Spring 2007, it was true. OAR would like to bid farewell and to say thank you to a group of four women who worked hard to be OAR beacons to help break the cycle of crime. Together **Chauncia Jones, Jessye Pennington, Jessica Rinehart, and Rachel Sparico** contributed over 3000 hours to OAR’s mission. Each OAR department had the pleasure of working with each of them throughout their internships. One of

these amazing interns wrote in to comment on her experience. **Jessye Pennington** writes:

“My experience working as an intern for OAR has been insurmountable and invaluable. My first class in Arlington, Computer Skills, was more successful than I ever could have imagined. I never could have anticipated how hard-working and dedicated the students would be. Their attendance was near perfect, and each day they came in with a smile and were eager to learn and develop their skills. Initially, there were some students who could not turn on a computer. By the end of the class each student vastly improved, and acquired the skills to use Microsoft Office

programs. On the final course evaluation one student wrote ‘Upon entering this class I knew nothing. Now I feel very comfortable using the computer on my own’. I believe each student now has the ability to connect to a younger generation, and a more technologically savvy world.”

We know that these interns will accomplish great things and we are so glad that OAR was able to play a role in their learning and development through their Spring 2007 semester!



Classroom Tips– Developing Self-Esteem in Others

Suggestions for Developing Self-Esteem in Others

Adapting some principles of effective meeting leadership to the volunteer-offender relationship can go a long way toward developing positive self-esteem and a feeling of self worth.

- Participant's contributions must be needed and valued.
- Encourage and use contributions.
- Do not allow criticism until after understanding the idea and favorable reactions have been expressed – say what you like about an idea first.
- Refer back to contributions and recognize the contributor.
- Give time for participants to respond – the chairperson does not push own solutions.
- Mistakes are opportunities—”success” is

often a string of failed attempts to get it right.

These principles are quite adaptable to our one-to-one and group relationships. As the clients’ opinions and thoughts are expressed, listen actively. Find something positive in what is said and express those reactions first.



Events of Interest

The **Arlington County Fair** is here! Every year OAR is able to provide the participants with assistance at this exciting event. OAR also has a booth at the fair and we need our volunteers and board members to join us. We will be recruiting new volunteers, talking about the OAR services, and discussing experiences as OAR Volunteers helping to break the cycle of crime.



If you have 4 hours, 2 hours, 1 hour, or even 30 minutes, join us. Please RSVP to Elizabeth Jones Valderrama, at ejones@oaronline.org and select from the following times:

- Wednesday, August 15th between 3:30pm and 9:30pm
- Thursday, August 16th between 10:00am and 10:00pm
- Friday, August 17th between 11:00am and 9:00pm
- Saturday, August 18th between 10:00am and 9:30pm
- Sunday, August 19th between 11:00am and 9:30pm

See you then!

Security Orientations

Have you been waiting to attend the detention facilities’ Center Security Orientation? Do you need a refresher on the policies and procedures? Here are the dates when you can attend:

Alexandria Security Orientation will be held August 18th from 8am to 4:30pm at 2001 Mill Road in Alexandria.

Arlington Security Orientations will be held on September 8th, October 13th, and November 10th from 9am to 2pm in the Roll Call Room at ACDF. You can also attend Tuesday Security Orientations held on August 7th, September 4th, October 10th, November 7th and December 5th at the Sheriff’s Office (the Arlington Courthouse) on the 9th floor from 8:30am to 5pm.

You need to RSVP to attend any of these. In addition your application for the background check must be on file or submitted two weeks in advance. To attend any of these or for any questions please contact Elizabeth Jones Valderrama at 703-228-7030.

Please Welcome our New Volunteer Update Editor

Tanya Beauchamp is a new volunteer and is the new Volunteer Update Editor. **Tanya** moved to DC in 1996 to



attend the University of Maryland and recently earned her Masters Degree in Forensic Psychology from Marymount University. Before graduate school, **Tanya** taught GED prep classes at the Academy of Hope in DC. During graduate school, she worked with PreventionWorks!, the

District's needle exchange/ harm reduction program. She is very excited about working with OAR.

If you have articles or suggestions for Tanya email her at:

TanyaBeauchamp@yahoo.com

Volunteering Produces Health Benefits

Continued from Page 2

*Another study found that volunteering led to lower rates of depression in individuals 65 and older.

*A Duke study found that individuals who volunteered after experiencing heart attacks reported reductions in despair and depression – two factors that have been linked to mortality in post-coronary artery disease patients.

Two studies found that volunteering threshold is about 100 hours per year, or about two hours a week. Individuals who reached the threshold enjoyed significant health benefits, although there were not additional benefits beyond the 100-hour mark.

"This is good news for people who volunteer," said Robert Grimm, Director of the Corporation's Office of Research and Policy Development and Senior Counselor to the CEO. "This

research is particularly relevant to Baby Boomers, who are receiving as well as giving when they help others. Just two hours of volunteering a week can bring meaningful benefits to a person's body and mind."

Last month, the Corporation released *Volunteering in America: 2007 State Trends and Rankings in Civic Life*, a report that includes numerous measures on volunteering and civic engagement. The Health Benefits of Volunteering report builds on that by showing states with higher volunteer rates also have better health and that there is a significant statistical relationship between states with higher volunteer rates and lower incidents of mortality and heart disease.

"There is now a convergence of research leading to the conclusion that helping others makes people happier and healthier. So the word is out – it's good to be good. Science increasingly says so," said Dr. Stephen Post, a professor at the Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine and co-author of the forthcoming

book "Why Good Things Happen to Good People: The Exciting New Research That Proves the Link Between Doing Good and Living a Longer, Healthier, Happier Life."

"Civic Engagement and volunteering is the new hybrid health club for the 21st century that's free to join," added Thomas H. Sander, Executive Director of the Saguaro Seminar at Harvard University. Social capital research shows it miraculously improves both your health AND the community's through the work performed and the social ties built."

The Corporation for National and Community Service improves lives, strengthens communities, and fosters civic engagement through service and volunteering. Each year, the Corporation provides opportunities for more than 2 million Americans of all ages and backgrounds to serve their communities and country through Senior Corps, AmeriCorps and Learn and Serve America. For more information, visit <http://www.nationalservice.gov>.

Please Welcome our new Volunteer Services Interns

I am excited to introduce you to our Volunteer Services Interns for Summer 2007. **Merideth Newman** and **Krystle Altstaetter** will be with us until August 3rd. If you need to reach **Merideth** you may do so by emailing MNewman@oaronline.org or by calling 703-228-7132. To reach **Krystle** please call her at 703-228-7441 or email at KAltstatter@oaronline.org

Merideth Newman was born and raised in Oak Hill, Virginia. Upon graduation from Oakton High School in 2005, she went on to continue her education at Arizona State University where she is currently a third year undergraduate student. **Merideth** is now living in Scottsdale, Arizona and pursuing a degree in psychology as well as a minor in justice studies.

Merideth writes, "Growing up I always



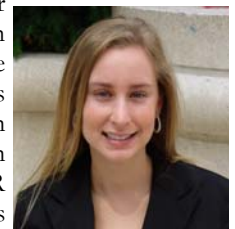
had a passion for non-profit organizations as well as a keen interest in the justice system. The combination of these two is what inspired me to join the OAR team.

During my internship with OAR I hope to gain valuable knowledge and skills needed for further advancement in this field, as well as contribute greatly to the overall goals of the organization. After receiving my undergraduate degree I plan on attending graduate school to obtain a Masters in Forensic Psychology.

Krystle Altstaetter was born and raised in Lima, Ohio. After graduating with Honors from Bath High School in 2004, she selected Eckerd College in St. Petersburg,

FL to pursue a B.A. of Arts. She is currently a senior double majoring in history and political science.

Krystle writes: "Over the past couple of years, I've had an ever growing interest in non-profits. After graduation, I plan on moving to the D.C. area. This summer has been an experiment and an experience. OAR has opened my eyes to what types of resources communities have available to them and what kinds of work non-profits do. I find OAR's mission and work inspirational, and I am proud to be a part of the team."



Please Welcome our new Programming Interns

Ciera Graham came to us from Seattle, Washington. She is currently pursuing a double major in Criminal Justice and Sociology from Washington State University.



Ciera writes, "My main career goal is to either become a family counselor or family lawyer that deals with domestic disputes, divorce and abuse. In my opinion, working at OAR will be a very thought-provoking and rewarding experience that will allow me the opportunity to work with offenders and provide them with the opportunity to become more responsible and productive citizens."

Katrina Jenkins is a senior at University of South Florida St. Petersburg. She will be graduating on August 11, 2007 with a major in Psychology.

Katrina writes, "I'm looking forward to the internship at OAR. I already feel right at home. During this internship I would like to gain as much



experience as possible so that in the future

I can open up my own non profit organization."

Dèsirée Mitchell is 20 years old and originally from Elk City, Oklahoma.



Desiree writes, "I have one little brother named Kelly and he's more important to me than anything in the world. I am a sociology major at Rogers State University. I'm really excited to work here at OAR and I think that the work is important and fulfilling so I know I'll get much out of working here!"

Catie Paradiso attends Marymount University where she is pursuing a Master's in Community Counseling. Originally from western New York, she has spent the past two years in the Northern Virginia area.

Catie writes, "I first became interested in working with OAR at my previous internship with Vanguard Services Unlimited Phoenix Program. There I was able to see that OAR is a wonderful organization that really makes a difference in the lives of those it serves. I



can not wait to begin my internship and to become one of those who will help make that difference. I am excited to be here, and I look forward to meeting everyone."

Marie Ramos is a recent graduate from Marymount University in Arlington, VA with a major in criminal justice.



Marie writes, "I just joined the OAR team as an intern for the summer of 07'. I have a strong interest in pursuing a career in law with an emphasis on offender rights. I feel that working with the OAR team will be a stepping stone in working with individuals in the criminal justice world."

Nicole Schunk is from Massachusetts where she attends Worcester State College and is pursuing a criminal justice major.

Nicole writes, "I look forward to working with OAR and working to help our clients as best I can. "You can do anything if you put your mind to it."



Another Reason to Spread the Word about Sage Flowers

Working with Former Inmates By Katie Crowther

People getting out of jail who want a fresh start may discover it's not as easy as they hoped. But some local ex-offenders find help from strangers when they need it most. America is known as the land of 2nd chances. So when the doors of prison unlock, the path ahead should lead to a better life. But that isn't usually the case. Two out of three former inmates end up in jail again within three years of their release. Former inmate Paul Johnson of Rockford says, "It wasn't the first 6 months in prison that were my hardest time. It was my first 6 months out of prison, trying to get reintegrated into soci-

ety. Freedom is a totally different experience for you, so when you get outside, it's like okay what do I do now." That's why so many ex-offenders end up back in prison. Johnson is a former meth addict who spent two years behind bars. "You have to burn old bridges and basically quit your old life to start a new one. But when you come back out you fall exactly into the same place you were before."

Some people hope to put an end to that revolving door by providing job opportunities. Inspired Heights business owner Tony Stratton says, "My company's called Inspired Heights. We work on church maintenance, repair and restoration. I exclusively hire people with a record. There are certainly benefits, even tax incentives for com-

panies that are willing to do this." Which gives ex-offenders like Paul hope "they really have a hard time getting over that one line in the application. It's getting your foot in the door that's the hardest part. I spent a lot of my younger years taking away from society and I actually get to give back now."

<http://www.wrex.com/News/index.php?ID=16945>

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OAR Offender Aid and Restoration

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Please take Note!

Reminders

- * Are you receiving our e-mails from Constant Contact? If not please let us know so that we can add you to the list.
- * **Don't forget: OAR Volunteers can not write letters to or on behalf of a client for any reason. This is against OAR and the detention centers policies.**
- * **Arlington Volunteers:** Has your ID expired? Please contact Ms. Jackie Burnette at 703-228-4291 to renew it.
- * Have you sent back your Volunteer Survey? If you need another copy please contact us ASAP and we'll get one to you.
- * We are always collecting donations to pay for postage for Project Christmas Angel. Tell a friend, colleague, family member, or an agency! Ask them to contact Kathy at 703-228-7030 to make their Tax-Deductible contribution.

OAR's Mission

OAR, a community-based restorative justice organization, blends compassion and accountability to assist offenders in leading productive and responsible lives, to the benefit of all.

History and Purpose

The OAR movement began in 1968 when a group of concerned Citizens led by Jay Worrall Jr. responded to a prison riot in Charlottesville, Virginia. These citizens envisioned an improved criminal justice system in which inmates are assisted by trained volunteers from the community. Through ongoing contact with community volunteers it was hoped that inmates would be empowered with information and encouraged to transform their experiences toward responsible and productive lives. The ultimate goal was to break the costly cycle of recidivism and create a more just system. OAR serving Arlington, Alexandria, and Falls Church, began in 1974.

Volunteer Opportunities

- * Spanish Speaking Volunteers are needed to facilitate courses with an established curriculum in the detention facilities and at the OAR office. Flexible times: Weekday, Evenings, and Weekends all available.
- * Facilitators are needed for Parenting, Impact of Crime, Personal Development, Women's Support Group, Men's Support Group, Conflict Resolution, and much more.
- * Computer class facilitators are desperately needed to work in the Arlington facility evenings or weekends. We currently have 85 clients on the wait list!

If you or anyone you know might be interested in Volunteering with OAR please have them contact Elizabeth, Director of Volunteer and Education Services, at 703-228-7031 or at ejones@oaronline.org

Calendar

August

3rd Last day of Summer Interns
7th Arlington facility Security Orientation 8:30am
15th to 19th Arlington County Fair- Volunteers needed
18th Alexandria Security Orientation 8am-4:30pm

September

4th Arlington facility Security Orientation 8:30am
8th Arlington facility Security Orientation 9:00am

October

13th Volunteer Training 2:30pm to 5:00pm