

# Volunteer Update

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## From the Volunteer Services Coordinator

I'm celebrating my first year as OAR's Volunteer Services Coordinator. It has been an amazing experience for me because of the staff, the clients, but specially you: the OAR Volunteers. For me it is a pleasure to work with such dedicated Volunteers who are truly impacting our community and the lives of many.

There have been some changes in our Volunteer Services Program that have and will allow us to better serve you. We have established new Volunteer Training Workshops that provide Volunteers with information on many different topics, as well as a

time to share with other OAR Volunteers. We are in the process of updating the Volunteer Handbook. And, we are coming up with new ways of recognizing, recruiting, and connecting with our Volunteers.

The Volunteer Update is one of the ways that we will continue our contact with Volunteers. In the Volunteer Updates you will read inspirational stories, some tips on how to become better facilitators and teachers, special events, changes in courses, schedules, policies, and procedures, reminders, and other important information. The

Volunteer Update will be posted on the OAR website on a monthly basis, I encourage you to send submissions of articles, stories, and tips of your own to share with your colleagues.

I am looking forward to being part of the continued success of OAR's Volunteer Services Program and to experiencing the impact of such amazingly talented individuals: OAR's Volunteer Corps!

Elizabeth Jones Valderrama



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## From One Teacher To Another

By Gail Arnall, OAR Executive Director

I just finished reading a journal article in *What Works and Why: Effective Approaches to Reentry* that is going to change some of the ways I teach my OAR Class in the Alexandria Detention Center.

The author, Frank Porporino says that it is not the one thing that we can do to offenders that will change them, nor the one program or intervention we can deliver. Rather, it is how the offenders end up reacting, and the resources and capabilities they believe they have acquired, that will help them change. If you have taught for long in a detention center, that statement is not particularly newsworthy. You know that. But Porporino goes on:

"It is questionable whether the scope of

service delivery that offenders can access, in and of itself, is at all consequential for them. What criminal justice practitioners have to learn to accept is that:

- Effort toward change for offenders, as for people generally, does not occur without a self-perceived need for change.
- Most offenders have not developed any well conceptualized (or very insightful) "case" for change.
- Any approach that relies on persuading, convincing, shaming, confronting, or coercing will not work (even when it deceptively seems to be working in the short-term)....

What seems to lead to both less program attrition and better impact on reoffending outcomes is a facilitator's demeanor that shows sensitivity and understanding of the offender's perspective (without collusion), encourages active participation and rehearsal of previously learned skills and concepts, and keeps control (but not rigid authoritarian control) over the group process so that relevant material is covered."

What we all are striving for is the offender who says: "I've known for a long time that my life was sh.., but until I took this program, I always thought it was all just because of bad luck."

## OAR Volunteers Nominated

Two of our wonderful OAR Volunteers were nominated to the Alexandria Volunteer Bureau for their contribution, dedication, and achievement. Both of the awards are given to volunteers who contribute their time in Alexandria Virginia, who are dedicated, caring, committed, and just outstanding.

**Ben Perchik**, eight year OAR Volunteer, was nominated for the Marian Van Landingham Volunteer Service Award. During



those years Mr. Perchik has been volunteering with OAR in various ways. He has mentored, tutored, facilitated courses for men and women that are incarcerated, and created curriculum. Mr. Ben Perchik

has contributed so much to OAR, our staff, our clients, and our community. He has done so by volunteering his time to create, believe, revive, and to change attitudes, resources, skills, clients, and lives. It would be impossible to measure how many lives have been positively impacted by his contribution. It is only fair to say that without him our clients, staff, and community would not be as remarkable as they are today.

**James Lightfoot**, three year OAR Volunteer, was nominated for the Joan White Grass Roots Volunteer Service Award. Mr. Lightfoot has been facilitating Computer Skills classes for incarcerated men since he began volunteering with OAR. He works closely with the Computer Skills

Facilitators Team to modify and update the course's curriculum to meet the changing needs of his students. He also assists with different OAR projects. Mr. James Lightfoot is a role model to our clients; he is patient, consistent, dependable, and committed. He makes a real difference in the lives of our clients and guides them to achieve skills that will allow them to be productive citizens. What Mr. James Lightfoot does is share knowledge, raise self esteem, and teach critical skills. Overall, his contribution impacts our community greatly.



## Volunteer Stories

"I have been volunteering with OAR for one year as a mentor and it has been a rewarding experience. As a citizen of the community I always wanted to be of service to others. Working with the ladies in the Women's Support Group at Arlington County Detention Facility (ACDF) gave me a chance to learn a lot about myself. For me it opened up the possibility that one person can make a difference and that we all need each other. My experience has been nothing but positive and interacting with them have brought me tremendous fulfillment". Rajaa Muhammad

"Sometimes when I go out to do my OAR book group in the Women Empowered for Change Unit (WEC) in the Alexandria Detention Center (ADC), I'm often fatigued and thinking, 'One more thing to do...' (sigh). Invariably my spirits begin to rise as I get closer to the facility. This group is a precious opportunity to spend time with women who have been through and are in the process of overcoming horrendous challenges in their lives. We affirm and honor one another, laugh together, and become as one: a community of women standing up to life's challenges". Pamela Bulloch

"My time with OAR and the Arlington Facility is a rewarding one. All offices can use 'an extra hand' and I'm glad to help OAR with a finger or two. Tutoring in the Arlington Facility, I have allowed many to gain confidence in their learning skills and achieve that 'can do' attitude. At first the clients are timid or think that they're not going 'to get it'. But after a few sessions, they are completing the work and participating in class more. They come to class with more confidence." Dennis R. Jackson



## National Capital Area United Way Campaign– 8078

The Capital Area United Way Campaign is under way. Join OAR and Donate Now by visiting the National Capital Area United Way (UWNCA) site at:

<http://www.unitedwaynca.org/website/index.cfm?c=donate/.online.start>

Choose to designate your donation to a Nonprofit Agency/ Nonprofit Partner.



OAR's UWNCA Campaign code is **8078**. The campaign began on September 19th and ends December 31st so please don't wait.

Remember:

- \$5 a pay check will help a client get the transportation vouchers they need to get to job interviews.
- \$10 a pay check will help us pay for four individuals to get their IDs (social security numbers) so they can get employed.

- \$25 a pay check will help us pay for at least four individuals to secure a certificate in safe food handling, required in most restaurants and hotels.

**Don't forget:**

**Designate OAR's code**

**8078**

**on your next Donation!**

## Changes, Updates, Reminders, and Important Information

### Changes

#### *Class Attendance Roster:*

Effective November 16, 2006 OAR and Arlington County Facility will be implementing a new class attendance roster system. This will affect all programs in the Arlington Facility except one-on-one tutors and mentors. Please refer to Melissa Rea's email and contact her if you have any questions at 703-228-3085 or at [mrea@oaronline.org](mailto:mrea@oaronline.org).

#### *Reporting of Volunteer Hours:*

To more effectively track your hours we will be sending out an email every Monday of each week asking all Volunteers to



reply with the hours that you have spent preparing for courses or meetings for OAR, facilitating or teaching, traveling to trainings, meetings, and to

the facilities, attending training, orientations, and clearance sessions, doing and compiling research, administrative work, and any other time Volunteered to OAR. Thank you for taking the time to provide us with this information.

### Updates

#### *Volunteer Trainings:*

If you missed our Volunteer Training Workshops on Working with Inmates and the Ex-Offender Panel and you would like to see the DVD we recorded please let us know. We have a few available that can be checked out for a couple of weeks. If you have any questions regarding this please contact me.

### Reminders

#### *Alexandria Volunteers*

Don't forget to track and send your attendance for your classes to us. You are wel-

come to send the information by email or give it to a coordinator of the program.

#### *Arlington Volunteers*

Please don't forget to sign in and out on the note cards at Inmate Services on the 2nd floor.

#### *Arlington Badges:*

Please check you ACDF Badges to see when they expire. To renew your badge you must turn it in to Ms. Jacqueline Burnette at the facility with two weeks in advance for her to recreate one for you. Please plan ahead so that the badge does not expire during one of your courses or visits. Please contact Ms. Jacqueline Burnette at 703-228-4291 or email her at [Jburnette@arlingtonva.us](mailto:Jburnette@arlingtonva.us) to coordinate the renewal of your badge with her. Most badges expire annually.

## Classroom Tips

**Situation:** Ms. James is being disrespectful to other group members.

**Possible Solution** – This situation is one that requires immediate attention because her behavior clearly violates a group rule and threatens the group process. However, it is still necessary to have her see and become responsible for this behavior without being threatening or controlling, and without arguing the issue. Stop the group and restate the standard for respectful communications skills in relation to the established standard. Also have participants evaluate their degree of respect for each of the other group members. If

the behavior continues, confront it directly in the group setting being as objective and respectful as possible. If necessary, remove the offending member from the group, being careful to convey respect when you do it.

**Situation:** Mr. Owens challenges everything you present, often questioning everything that comes up in the group.

**Possible Solution** – This is a problem that may be important, depending in the effect that his skeptical behavior has on his ability to internalize or absorb the information being covered. If his skeptical stance also

causes him to screen out important information, ask him to suspend judgment on the information. He needs to be able to see the destructiveness of what he is doing and the potential benefit of being more open to information. Given that he is very defensive (being skeptical is a defensive stance), talk to him and ask him to reflect on why he is so skeptical. Ask him to do a special project listing all the benefits of being open minded. Once he does this, review it with him, supporting his list and making further suggestions about the potential benefits of being open minded.

## Events of Interest

**Prison Gallery of Art:** The new Prison Gallery of Art features the art of incarcerated men and women across America. All art is for sale, with proceeds divided between prison artists (where permitted) and the Prisons Foundation, which supports the arts and education in prison and alternatives to incarceration. The Prison Art Gallery is located at 1600 K Street NW, Suite 501, Washington DC. They are open Monday through Friday 9:30am to 5:30pm. We have been able to coordinate a special day for OAR Volunteers

to visit the gallery. On Sunday, January 28, 2007 at 2:00pm the gallery will open just for us! Space is limited to 25 please RSVP early. The location is metro accessible by the Orange Line McPherson Square stop. Visit their website to view more works at [www.PrisonsFoundation.org](http://www.PrisonsFoundation.org)



"We Sing to America"

**White House Tours:** One of our very own OAR Volunteers and Board Member has provided us with the opportunity to tour the White House. OAR Volunteers and staff will be able to schedule 2 tours in February. We will have a Friday morning available and a Sunday afternoon. If you are interested in taking a tour please contact me ASAP. Space is limited and we need to have all of your information in to the Presidential Office far in advance.

# OAR Offender Aid and Restoration

Court Square West Phone: 703-228-7030  
1400 North Uhle Street Fax: 703-228-3981  
Suit 704 E-mail:  
Arlington Virginia 22201 info@oaronline.org

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## 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. This nationally recognized model program was incorporated as OAR/USA in 1973 and currently has affiliated but autonomous offices in four states. OAR serving Arlington, Alexandria, and Falls Church, began in 1974.

## Volunteer Opportunities

\*Do you love flea markets? Have you always wanted to participate in them but just didn't know what to sell? Well, come sell flowers at the Courthouse Flea Market, for Sage Flower's, OAR's first subsidiary, and make a huge contribution to OAR.

\*Would you like to share your skills, talents, experiences, and ideas with our clients? Have you ever thought about becoming a Guest Speaker? We are

looking for Volunteers to speak about a variety of topics ranging from politics to how to purchase a home. Contact us for more information and to share your ideas.

\*We are also looking for Literacy Tutors to work with our clients at various locations.

\*Facilitators for our Computer Courses are needed to assist clients in learning new skills, completing their



homework, and practicing at the Arlington County Detention Center.

\*Day time Weekday Volunteers are also needed for a variety of courses in the Alexandria Detention Center and at the OAR office.

If you or anyone you know might be interested in Volunteering with OAR please don't hesitate to have them contact Elizabeth, Volunteer Services Coordinator, at 703-228-7031 or at ejones@oaronline.org

WOULD YOU OR YOUR ORGANIZATION LIKE TO SPONSOR PROJECT CHRISTMAS ANGEL?

START A COIN DRIVE AND ASSIST WITH POSTAGE!

## Calendar

### November

23 OAR will be closed for the Holiday  
24 OAR will be closed for the Holiday

### December

9 Volunteer Training Workshop  
12 Project Christmas Angel Wrapping Party  
25 OAR will be closed for the Holiday

### January

1 OAR will be closed for the Holiday  
28 Prison Gallery of Art Visit

### February

TBA White House Tours  
10 Volunteer Training Workshop