

# TRANSFORMATIONS

## From the Executive Director

The citizens and elected officials of the Cities of Alexandria and Falls Church and Arlington County deserve a lot of credit for being in the forefront of re-entry support for **jail** inmates.

For several years, there has been a lot of attention focused on the re-entry into society of about 650,000 inmates released from prisons annually. In contrast, there has been little attention paid to the **more than 9 million inmates** who are released from county and local **jails** each year. That is about to change. The Urban Institute is now conducting a nationwide survey of jail re-entry programs to identify the best practices for re-entry from jails.

They report that spending on jail-based re-entry programs is potentially highly cost-effective; "...such programs would only have to reduce recidivism by less than 2% to offset the additional costs imposed on jail systems. But, most of the benefit of jail re-entry programming accrues to the public from reduced victimization, not to jails from reduced costs. So, it is hard to show where money has been saved, even though the public is safer when inmates make a successful transition back into a community."

OAR is a great example of how a community-based non-profit organization can work effectively with county and city officials, jail-based administrators, other non-profit social service agencies in the community, and volunteers to provide much needed re-entry services and support for inmates returning to our community.

OAR works because of all the partnerships and volunteers we have supporting inmate re-entry. It is an honor to be working with you.

**Gail C. Arnall,**

Executive Director

Check our website for more information about this report.

## DECEMBER SETS A NEW MILESTONE: 56 INDIVIDUALS FIND JOBS

**Will Wilson**, Director of Re-entry and Outreach

During the month of December 2006, the OAR Re-entry staff helped 56 individuals succeed in finding employment. This is the highest employment rate for one month that we have seen in a long time, possibly ever! The month of January started with a bang too! In the first two weeks 10 clients got jobs. This takes a big effort on the part of the client as well as the case managers. We are very proud of our case managers.

How are OAR clients finding work and where are they working?

One by one. Staff is going with clients to interviews, and we are meeting with prospective employers to help them understand and value what our clients have to offer.

One major problem with prospective employers is the term *felony*. Most people do not know that in Virginia a person can get a felony for three DUIs in ten years, or a felony for just possessing an illegal substance. OAR staff is spending time helping to educate the business community about the law and penalties that are im-

posed. We need your help in getting the word out to employers about the different types of felonies that exist here in Virginia.

We are beginning to find that employers are willing to wait to make a judgment until they

know the circumstances of the felony. That's a big break for our clients.

Leo, an experienced carpenter, found work within two weeks working for one of the construction companies remodeling a nearby motel/hotel. This client was homeless, but never gave up even after he was arrested by mistake.

Bryan is working full time at a nearby grocery store as an Assistant Manager, and is eligible for benefits after three months.



**Will Wilson**, Director of Re-entry and Outreach, motivates clients minutes before their interviews with a large airline company.

Debbie was hired on the spot by an agency looking for someone with a good work ethic and office skills.

Equally impressive is the fact that out of the 45 who found employment in November, all but nine were still employed by the end of December.

I expect the number of those still employed after 90 days to improve every month. We

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## VOLUNTEERS INVITED TO SUNDAY BRUNCH: MARCH 25 AT TOSCANA GRILL

Our annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner is coming up soon. Be sure to save the date. All volunteers, potential volunteers, Board members, supporters and friends of OAR are invited to be our guests.

We will award the **Ms. Elizabeth "Betty" Ahern** Award of Excellence for the Volunteer of the Year, and



Volunteers and Partners celebrating during the 1st Annual Volunteer and Partnership Luncheon 2006

honor those deputies in the jails that have been especially helpful and supportive this year.

**Don't Forget: Sunday, March 25 from 1:00pm to 3:00pm**

If you do not receive an electronic invitation by March 5, 2007 please email **Elizabeth** at [ejones@oaronline.org](mailto:ejones@oaronline.org)

**OAR STAFF**

Gail C. Arnall, Executive Director  
 Maria Aponte, CSP Case Manager  
 Clarence Barner, CSP Case Manager  
 Sue Bell, Grants Manager  
 Charlyne Braxton, Receptionist  
 Denise Costley, WEC Program Coordinator  
 Juanita Deshazor, Alexandria Re-entry Advisor  
 Kathy Hollins, Administrative Services Coordinator  
 Christian Jones, MASTERS Program Coordinator  
 Elizabeth Jones Valderrama, Director of Volunteer and Education Services  
 Jeremy Rinker, Community Service Coordinator  
 Alexis Van Bevers, Arlington Re-entry Advisor  
 Will Wilson, Director of Re-entry and Outreach

**OAR BOARD**

Bruce Griffin, Chairman  
 Christina Biebesheimer  
 Bruce Blackman  
 Pamela Bulloch  
 Michael Carleton  
 Jennifer Christie  
 Bill Cleveland  
 John Pettiford  
 Robert Price  
 Elissa Rumsey  
 Nancy Swift  
 Gail Arnall

**INTERNS**

Chauncia Jones  
 Jessica Pennington  
 Jessica Rinehart  
 Rachel Sparico

**PROJECT CHRISTMAS ANGEL PROVIDES 1000 GIFTS**

What a wonderful sight to see. So many from the Arlington Community came out to St. Andrews Episcopal Church to wrap presents for children of those incarcerated in the Arlington County Detention Center.

Over 300 families received more than 1,000 gifts.

Did you know that Project Christmas Angel started out as an OAR Staff Christmas Party? The staff selected two families of inmates that they were working with inside the jail, and invited them to the staff party where they provided gifts for their children.

Years later, we have over 250 individuals from the community showing up to wrap gifts for all of the children of inmates in the

jail.

We are still working on paying the postage for mailing the gifts this year, so if you would like to make a contribution for the postage, please send it to OAR, care of **Kathy Hollins**.



Meanwhile, the mother of one family that received gifts wrote the following note:

*To the Staff and Volunteers:*

*I really appreciate the gifts that you sent to my children from their Dad. It really made them excited about Christmas. Until we received your packages, they did not want to celebrate Christmas. May God Bless you all! And may someone touch your life the way you have touched ours. Thank you.*

**MEXICAN CONSULATE MAKES NEW CURRICULUM A REALITY**

After a year of planning, we have finally received a curriculum from the Mexican Consulate which was specifically made for Spanish Speakers that are incarcerated in jails and prisons in the United States, as well as ex-offenders transitioning in the community.

This unique curriculum is composed of over 50 modules that have 85 short videos and educational materials to com-

plement them. The subjects include: Basic Literacy, Life Skills, Mexican History, Science, Computer Office Skills including viruses and maintenance of the PC, Personal Development, Health and Awareness, Parenting and Families, and much more.



Consul Enrique Escorza along with Consulate Outreach Coordinator, Ana Ochoa signing the agreement with Gail Arnall and Elizabeth Jones Valderrama

Volunteers and staff will be trained on how to facilitate this program by the Community Outreach Director at the Mexican Embassy and others from local non-profits that have attended trainings in Mexico.

We still need four Spanish-speaking volunteers to help with

this new program. Let us know if you are interested.

**56 INDIVIDUALS EMPLOYED**

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have promised our clients and the businesses where they work that OAR will be with them every step of the way.

For some, transitioning back into our community is easy - they have family and friends, and even a job waiting. For many, however, they have to find shelter and work, all within weeks of leaving jail. National statistics say that the first 60 days

are the most critical. That is why OAR plans to increase the number of services and educational programs we offer at the OAR Offices in the coming year. We will continue and hopefully expand our Men's Support Group for Ex-Offenders. We will also look for additional ways to work with businesses and social service agencies in our community to provide the kind of support we would want for our loved ones, if they were in a similar situation.

**Join us in Breaking the Cycle of Crime: Volunteer!**

Contact OAR's Director of Volunteer and Education Services, Elizabeth Jones Valderrama, at [ejones@oaronline.org](mailto:ejones@oaronline.org)

## NEWS FROM THE INSIDE

### Alexandria Detention Center

This fall, 17 men and women took a 16-hour ServSafe course required by Food Service Managers and recommended for Food Service Workers. By increasing the class hours from the normal 8 to 16, and holding classes on consecutive Fridays and Saturdays, we increased the pass rate from 25% to 61%. This professional certification course will be offered again in the spring. A special thanks to **Heather Greenwood**, from the Virginia Cooperative Extension, for her success in teaching this class.

Working World, a new course on entrepreneurship, was offered in December and January in the MASTERS unit. The course will be offered in the WEC unit in the early spring.

Project Christmas Angel: Over 300 families of inmates came to the Alexandria Detention Center to pick up toys for their children on December 13th. In what has become a wonderful tradition in Alexandria, the families are invited to come any time, all day long, to choose two to three toys for each child. OAR staff and Detention Center Staff are there to greet them and help them with their selections.

### Arlington County Detention Facility

Eight men and women graduated with their GEDs in November. OAR provides tutoring for GED students. Be sure to let **Elizabeth** know if you want to be a GED tutor.



As part of the OAR Volunteer Workshop Series, Restorative Justice Consultant **Phyllis Lawrence**, facilitated her ABCs of Restorative Justice for 27 participants including OAR Staff and Volunteers.

Our thanks to **Phyllis Lawrence** who facilitated an outstanding Restorative Justice training for 27 people on December 9th in the Roll Call room of the Arlington facility. This approach to counter the traditional “retribution” approach to justice is growing in applications around Virginia. Trainings for volunteers happen every other month; don’t miss them.

Arlington has a new GED Instructor, **Donna Vanderhoff**. We join others in thanking Volunteer **Susan Cavanaugh** for stepping in for over a year until the Detention Center could find a GED instructor. We will be working closely with **Ms. Vanderhoff** to provide GED tutors.

There are many ways to get involved!

## SAGE FLOWERS

### EXCEEDS EXPECTATIONS

OAR took a big leap last fall to open a flower shop in Springfield, Virginia, as a way to diversify income for OAR as well as to hire some of our clients.

SAGE Flowers, a wholly-owned company of OAR, is a full-service flower shop that provides flowers all around the DC Metro areas, as well as nationwide. It is affiliated with Teleflora, FTD, and 1-800 Flowers. The outstanding staff have already provided flowers for weddings, funerals, a host of Christmas parties, and special events.

**Katy Steinbruck**, formerly OAR’s Director of Volunteer Services, is the shop manager and chief designer. She has ten year’s experience in the floral industry, and has put together a winning staff: **Wayne Ryan**, **Luz Umama**, **Shannon Graves**, **Rueben Taylor**, **James Pennie**, and **Anastacia Carter**.

**Katy** is expecting an exceptionally large order from the wire services for Valentine’s Day, so if you or someone you know wants to deliver flowers on February 13th and 14th, or would like to help around the shop call **Katy** at 703-451-3021. What a great way to have fun while helping OAR!



Don’t forget: order your flowers from SAGE Flowers: [www.sageflowers.net](http://www.sageflowers.net).

## SUPPORTING OAR

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to support the good work of OAR. Visit [www.oaronline.org](http://www.oaronline.org) to make a secure online payment. You can send checks, made payable to OAR, to: 1400 N. Uhle St, Suite 704, Arlington, VA 22201.

## VOLUNTEER NEEDS...

We are always looking for volunteers so please talk about us and refer anyone interested to **Elizabeth Jones Valderrama** at 703-228-7031. We are especially looking for assistance in these areas and locations:

- Computer Lab Monitors
- Spanish Life Skills
- Stress Management– Arlington
- Literacy– Alexandria & OAR office
- GED
- Sage Flowers– Springfield
- Impact of Crime– Alexandria
- Personal Development

## OAR’S WISH LIST

- Yarn
- Educational Videos
- Financial contributions for Project Christmas Angel
- Holiday Wrapping Paper for Project Christmas Angel
- School Supplies
- Financial Contributions for any OAR Department

Join us in Breaking the Cycle of Crime: Volunteer!

Contact OAR’s Director of Volunteer and Education Services, **Elizabeth Jones Valderrama**, at [ejones@oaronline.org](mailto:ejones@oaronline.org)

# OAR Offender Aid and Restoration

Serving the County of Arlington and the Cities of  
Alexandria and Falls Church since 1974

Court Square West  
1400 North Uhle Street  
Suite 704  
Arlington Virginia 22201  
Phone: 703-228-7030  
Fax: 703-228-3981  
E-mail: [info@oaronline.org](mailto:info@oaronline.org)

**Don't Forget: We are still taking items to sell on E-Bay. Call us so that we can arrange your 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 Richmond, 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

Want to read more about our Spring 2007 Interns? What about Volunteer News? Go to the OAR website at [www.OARonline.org](http://www.OARonline.org) and visit the Volunteering page. Click on Volunteer Updates and read the January/ February 2007 edition!

## CALENDAR

### January

27th Arlington Facility Volunteer Training

### February

3rd OAR Staff Retreat

6th Arlington Facility Volunteer Training

10th Alexandria Facility Volunteer Training

### March

3rd Community Service Car Wash

6th GED Course for Ex-Offenders Begins

25th Volunteer and Partnership Luncheon

For more information about these events and much more please  
contact us at 703-228-7030

## THANK YOU SUPPORTERS

OAR would like to thank our kind supporters for their contributions to restorative justice. We are grateful to all of them for contributing to us over the years. Thank You for allowing us to carry out our mission!

- Verizon Foundation
- United Way Community Impact Fund
- Arlington Interfaith Council
- Virginia Law Foundation
- Arlington County
- City of Falls Church
- Alexandria Sheriff's Office
- Weissberg Foundation
- Shrewsbury Foundation
- Eugene and Agnes E. Meyer Foundation
- Gannett Foundation
- Kiwanis Club
- AMEN

**Join us in Breaking the Cycle of Crime: Volunteer!**

Contact OAR's Director of Volunteer and Education Services, [Elizabeth Jones Valderrama](mailto:ejones@oaronline.org), at [ejones@oaronline.org](mailto:ejones@oaronline.org)