

TRANSFORMATIONS

From the Executive Director

Over the past few months I have received several blessings from our clients.

Kat, a wonderful artist, let us use her artwork for a Holiday Card we enclosed in our last newsletter mailing. Several OAR Board Members bought some of the cards. When I called **Kat** to tell her that I had \$38 for her, she said: "Please keep the money and spend it on yarn for the women to have in the WEC Unit." What a generous gift.

Several women in the WEC Unit encouraged me to ask the Alexandria Sheriff for permission to have SAGE Flowers offer inmates the chance to order Valentine's Day flowers.

Sheriff Lawhorne gave his permission and 11 inmates ordered from a choice of three specially-priced arrangements, paying through their inmate accounts in the jail.

At our recent Job Fair inside the Alexandria Detention Center we heard from two young men who had previously been incarcerated and had turned their lives around and had their own businesses. Their testimonies were very inspirational to inmates and staff alike.

I feel so privileged to work with staff, volunteers and clients at OAR. Thank you for your continued support.

Don't forget to book your travel online at www.OARTravel.com we receive a small commission every time you do.

Gail C. Arnall

A SPECIAL THANKS TO ARLINGTON TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

We are especially thankful for over 100 men and women in the Arlington Department of Technology Services for a wonderful collection of Christmas gifts that they donated this year. The spirit of giving was so very apparent at their Holiday party. They collectively donated \$170 worth of gift cards and \$65 worth of metro cards, plus a host of clothes, hair dryers, shoes and other things our clients need. Here is what their gifts of clothing, metro cards, gift cards and money meant to our clients:

- William starts a job on Monday. He needs a pair of slacks and a shirt. He used your gift cards to get the clothing he needs for his new job at Safeway.
- Teresa had no money for toys for her three children. She does now!
- John has a job as of last Monday, but does not get paid for another week. Your metro cards will help him get to and from work until his first payday.
- Al has a job interview next Tuesday. He needs clothing to

wear and a metro card to get to the interview. You have made that possible.

- Marie has been working for several weeks, but still does not have enough money to buy a winter coat. You gave her one.

Sophie came by this afternoon totally dejected. She can't find work. She is living at a shelter and wants desperately to move into transitional housing. We told her of your generosity and encouraged her not to give up. We reminded her that there are many folks who are pulling for her. "Keep showing up," we said. "We will show up if you show up."

We are able to help Sophie and others because of your support and all of those who contribute to OAR. We feel honored to be able to work at OAR each day to help those less fortunate get back on their feet. We feel even more honored to be working on behalf of all of you in Arlington, Alexandria and Falls Church to help sustain the caring community that we are creating in Northern Virginia.



OAR's **Gail Arnall** and **Will Wilson** with **Caroline Ault**, **Rose Previte**, and **Douglas Haynes** members of the Charity Branch of the DTS Holiday Party Planning Committee.

- Two clients are still not working and need food for their families. You have provided the food they need for the next two weeks.

76 CLIENTS FIND EMPLOYMENT OVER THE LAST THREE MONTHS

The Reentry Team has helped 76 men and women find employment between October and December 2007. This brings the total so far for the 2008 fiscal year to 202 clients who are now working.

"We continue to find employers who have never hired a person with a criminal record, but are willing to take a chance," said **Will Wilson**, Director of Reentry and Outreach. "Increasingly businesses are seeing that the clients we refer to them are hard working and committed to doing a good job. We help busi-

nesses hire qualified people to do the job."

OAR is a unique type of employment agency. We offer employers carefully screened applicants who are ready to work. We work to match the qualifications you specify. And, when you hire the person, you do not pay us anything - unlike other employment agencies. You will not owe us a month's pay, or 10% of the person's annual salary.

You will owe us nothing.

Furthermore, we will stay connected - to you and to your new employee. We want to support you and your new employee for at least the initial three months.

Contact **Will Wilson** directly at wwilson@oaronline.org; 703-228-0071, with your employment needs and he will act quickly to see if we have a qualified applicant for you to consider.

OAR STAFF

Gail C. Arnall, Executive Director
 Erica Bishop, Re-entry Advisor
 Denise Costley, Women Empowered for Change Program Coordinator
 Juanita DeShazior, Re-entry advisor
 Kathy Hollins, Administrative Coordinator
 Odalis Jimenez, Administrative Assistant
 Susan Jiofack, Co-Director of Community Service
 Christian Jones, MASTERS Men's Educational Unit Coordinator
 Elizabeth Jones Valderrama, Dir. of Volunteer and Education Services
 Priscilla Keys, Coord. of Special Projects
 Catie Paradiso, Assist. Coord. of Volunteer and Education Services
 Jenna-Lyn Ryckebusch, Re-entry Advisor
 Rachel Sparico, Co-Director of Community Service
 Nicholas Tar, Re-entry Advisor
 Will Wilson, Director of Re-entry and Outreach

OAR BOARD

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

NEW PERSONNEL JOIN OAR

Erica Bishop: Reentry Advisor



Erica just finished her Masters of Forensic Psychology degree. As an intern she worked in the Montgomery County Police Department and the Owosso Police Department in Michigan, conducting interviews

with victims and offenders, and assisting officers with their investigations. She will become the resident expert in Housing, Food Stamps and Child Support issues –for all jurisdictions. She will work as much as half time helping clients in Alexandria

Priscilla Keys: Coordinator of Special Projects

Priscilla is a former 2nd Grade Teacher and Vol-



unteer Program Coordinator for C.H.O.I.C.E., working with teens in DC. She will oversee grant writing, coordinate the Faith-Based Initiative, edit the quarterly newsletter, and serve as the key staff member for the new Cable TV show we hope to have ready to air in April.

Jenna-Lyn Ryckebusch : Reentry Advisor

Jenna just finished her Masters of Forensic Psychology degree. She formerly worked for an energy company and a Law Firm and was an OAR volunteer. She also served as an intern in the Naval Criminal Investigative Service in DC. She will focus on Arlington clients.



WISH YOU COULD TAKE A COURSE?

When you look at the list of courses being offered this winter session in the Arlington County and Alexandria Detention Centers, you may wish you could take one of them!

Thanks to our wonderful volunteers, we are able to offer well developed curricula for our classes.

The following classes will be offered from January to May 2008:

- Health Awareness
- Substance Abuse Education
- Stress Management (2 classes)
- Parenting
- Anger Management
- Employability Readiness (twice a week)
- Impact of Crime

- Computer Skills
- Houses of Healing
- Life Skills for Spanish Speakers
- ESL
- Self Awareness through Cinema
- Parenting
- On Common Ground
- Team Building
- Money Management

Please contact **Elizabeth Jones Valderrama** to discuss your interest in facilitating a course in either facility or to volunteer with OAR in other ways by email ejones@oaronline.org or call 703-228-7031.

VALENTINE'S DAY A BIG SUCCESS

A big Thank You goes to the 16 volunteers and interns that helped out at SAGE Flowers the week of Valentine's Day. We had experienced designers, customer service helpers, wrappers and deliverers, all working toward a common purpose. It was lots of fun!

This year for the first time, inmates in the Alexandria Detention Center were given the opportunity to order flowers for their love ones at a reduced price, paid for out of their canteen money.

Eleven inmates selected from three flower arrangements for this special offer.

The Sheriff has approved our making the special arrangement for Easter and Mother's Day too!

If you would like to volunteer to help out at SAGE for Easter or Mother's Day, please call **Katy Steinbruck** at the Shop 703-451-3021.



SAGE flowers
wisdom grows.

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

A CHANCE TO MINISTER

Taking care of the "least of these" is a commandment in all religious traditions. So it is common sense to believe that those who are active in their faith communities might be interested and able to help those who are returning from prison.

In this new initiative, we are matching an OAR client/ex-offender with a Volunteer Team of at least three people from a faith-based community. For six months the Team serves as a source of support and guidance for the client and also helps to leverage resources from their faith community that can aid the client in successful reentry. Ex-

offenders need support as they hone their life skills in securing employment, housing and developing new relationships. Faith communities will be trained by OAR staff in how best to work with formerly incarcerated adults, including possible agenda items for the meetings.

We are thrilled to announce that the Unitarian Universalist Church of Arlington is our first Team. They were trained on January 5th and have already selected their client. So, we are off and running. Copies of a brochure about the Faith-Based Initiative spell out the requirements and expecta-

tions. Call or email us for copies to hand out in your community.

"The first 60 days are the most critical," said **Will Wilson**, OAR Director of Reentry and Outreach. "We will screen the applicants to make sure that the person you select from our list of applicants is ready to make the life changes necessary to succeed. And, we will be with both the client and the faith-based committee every step of the way. Call or email us for copies of the brochure or to arrange an informational meeting. Contact **Gail Arnall** by email at garnall@oaronline.org or by phone at 703-228-7437.

HELP US SPREAD THE WORD:

FREE GED CLASSES OFFERED FOR OAR CLIENTS

Beginning January 31, 2008, OAR and Arlington Public Schools (APS) started a weekly FREE Pre-GED/GED course at the Arlington Department of Human Services (DHS), located at 3033 Wilson Blvd. OAR provides food for the clients throughout the 12 week course.

This particular Thursday course will have a rolling enrollment, which means that clients can enroll in the course at any time they come to us.

To attend the OAR FREE Pre-GED/GED course clients need to be at least 18 and fit in to one of the following categories:

- Pre-GED level under 6th grade/ Level 2

and under (determined from the Test of Adult Basic Education [TABE] conducted by APS)

- Attending a GED (level above 6th grade or Level 3 and Level 4) course through APS and need assistance with assignments or a specific topic
- Waiting for the next set of Level 3 and 4 courses to start with APS (if client comes in after the APS courses have started)

John Pettiford, OAR Board Member and Employment Specialist with the Arlington Employment Center, will be teaching this course.

GED Level 3 and Level 4 Courses

Through our partnership with APS, OAR clients that test at Level 3 and Level 4 on the TABE can enroll in the standard three-days-a-week courses offered at the Clarendon Education Center or Wakefield High School. There is a fee for this course but with scholarship money and the assistance of APS, we can cover most of the costs (registration fee, books, GED tests) if the client meets certain criteria.

The dates for the GED Level 3 and Level 4 courses can be found at www.arlingtonadulthood.org or in their catalog. Potential students should contact **Ms. Jones Valderrama** directly at ejones@oaronline.org or 703-228-7031.

VOLUNTEERS DELIVERED CHRISTMAS PRESENTS TO OVER 300 FAMILIES IN VA AND DC

A BIG Thank You goes to the many volunteers who not only came to the Project Christmas Wrapping Party in Arlington on December 11th, but then took presents home with them to deliver directly to families of those incarcerated. We have calculated that OAR saved about \$2,000 in postage by having volunteers make the local deliveries rather than mailing the toys. This is a huge savings.

Here are some notes from those who delivered presents:

"Just a quick email to let you know that delivering the presents for the Project Christmas Angel went well. I delivered to four different families and it all went smoothly with no problems. The families were all appreciative and were easy to work with for times of delivery, etc. Thanks for doing all of this for these children and I

would love to help again next year. Have a wonderful New Year." **Karen & Mackenzie**



Project Christmas Angel Wrapping Party 2007

"I recently volunteered to assist in the toy delivery for OAR. I have delivered toys (Christmas gifts) to three homes. Peggy's delivery went very well; they answered the

door without my even needing to knock. Very nice and the kids were so excited they were jumping up and down. Jennifer is an elderly woman who answered the door and was very pleasant and gracious, thanking me profusely. Marlene invited me in and was exceptionally nice - introduced me to Ryan who had just woken up from a nap. Darling apartment and very nice woman; very grateful for the gifts. It was a pleasure doing this and I hope I can help out again." **Suzanne Porter**

"We delivered gifts to a total of six children. All the deliveries went just fine. The children were all so excited to see their gifts! The only issue we had was calling and scheduling the drop offs, because of the language barrier...a couple of people didn't speak English so we just hoped they understood we were coming by. But everyone was home and happy to see us, so it worked out great." **Kelly and John**

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

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
Www.OARonline.org
E-mail: info@oaronline.org

Remember to designate OAR

This year during your Workplace United Way or CFC campaign Designation numbers United Way # 8078 CFC # 26226

OAR 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.

VOLUNTEER NEEDS

- Computer Lab Monitors
- Spanish Life Skills Instructors
- Stress Management Facilitators
- Expressive Arts Instructors
- Critical/ Life Skills Instructors
- Anger Management Facilitators
- ESL Facilitators
- Key Train Facilitators
- Why Try? Facilitators
- Researchers
- OAR TV Show Crew
- Volunteer Library Administrator

OAR'S WISH LIST

- Yarn for WEC Baby Blankets
- Educational Materials: Dry erase & over head markers, Whiteboard erasers, Transparency paper
- Holiday Wrapping Paper
- 2 Small or Medium Shredders
- Standard Xerox Copy Paper
- School Supplies: #2 pencils, manila & pocket folders, composition & 1 subject notebooks, color pencils
- \$5 Fast Food Restaurant Cards
- \$5 Metro Cards & Bus passes
- Ivory Resume paper

SUPPORTING OAR

Please consider making a tax-deductible donation to support the good work of OAR. Visit 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.

"BABY J" GIVES THANKS TO THE WOMEN IN THE WEC PROGRAM



"Baby J" sent her picture along with a Thank You note to the women in the Women Empowered for Change (WEC) program in Alexandria, thanking them for the beautiful blanket, cap and booties that the women crocheted. WEC women create 20 or more blankets each quarter, which are taken to the Alexandria Hospital and other community programs for new born babies who

need them. "This is a community service activity that has been a vital part of WEC for many years," said **Denise Costley**, WEC Coordinator. We are always looking for yarn donations to continue making these wonderful baby blankets. Please contact us if you are interested in making a donation or if you would like to find out more about this project.

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