

TRANSFORMATIONS

From the Executive Director

Our Faith-Based Initiative is off to a great start. We now have six support teams of 3 to 4 people from five faith communities:

- Alexandria Presbyterian Church
- Arlington Unitarian Church Universal
- Praise Covenant Christian Center, Springfield
- St. Charles Catholic Church, Arlington
- St. Mary's Episcopal Church, Arlington

Each of the 19 participant team members have participated in a four hour training to learn how to effectively and appropriately support someone who has previously been incarcerated. Several team members elected to take a tour of the Arlington County Detention Center in order to become more knowledgeable about what the inside of a facility looks and feels like.

We are learning together. The clients are learning what it is they can depend on from their support team. The members of the support teams are learning how generous they can be without it being detrimental. OAR staff is learning what types of support are needed for the teams as well as the clients as they form these new relationships. All of us are learning how difficult it is to come out of incarceration and try to pick up your life - to find housing, a job and new friends.

There is a wonderful spirit among the teams and their clients. All are trying to find ways to develop helpful positive relationships. The generosity of the individual team members has been a blessing to all of us involved in this important work.

Let us know if you would like to talk about forming a support team at your church, synagogue or place of work. We can fill you in on the details.

Gail C. Arnall

FORMER GANG MEMBER NOW OAR SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENT

This summer, Joel will continue his studies at George Mason University, with help from the Catherine P. Schnittker OAR Educational Scholarship Fund. This is his story:

Prison lacks the wall-piercing machine gun fire that made me, as a toddler, sleep under a bamboo bed during El Salvador's civil war. Prison lacks the presence of my abusive stepfather and the struggle to pay rent or buy food that my mother had while raising me.

The environment in which I was born and raised, along with my drive for acceptance and appreciation among peers, eventually led me to join a gang just before finishing high school which shortly led me to my incarceration. I am now 27 years old and know that there is no excuse for gang-affiliation; I deeply regret not having been mature enough to say no to crime.

Prison gave me more than enough time to consider my life and the opportunity to become a leader improving the lives of many, who like myself, had gone astray.

Throughout my incarceration I spread love and hope to other gang-members encouraging them to change and abandon their bad ways of thinking. In the prison ministry programs I participated in many constructive activities such as leading and guiding various Bible study and Prayer circle groups. I also received awards in academia that have made me a very open minded and well-rounded person. In 2005, I received a Certificate in an occupational-technical program as a Graphics Designer from the state of VA and an Accounting Certificate from Stratford Career Institute.

Achieving my AA&S in General Studies and completing many

courses toward my AA&S in Business Administration rooted me with enough educational experience to be a positive contributor to society. Now I am pursuing a Bachelors in IT which would not only make me a great asset in a highly competitive business world, but it would also enable me to be a greater asset to society by leading through example. There are many people who live in the streets, who are gang-members or who are in prisons, who need hope. I can be an example to them and show them that someone who was in their position made the American dream; why not them?

I want to thank OAR for allowing me the opportunity to go forward with my education. I want to participate and be a part of OAR helping make a difference in our society.

-Joel

HIGHLIGHTS: MAY 2008 CONGRESIONAL FORUM ON REENTRY AND LOCAL JAILS

Highlights from a congressional Forum on the Impact of Reentry from Local Jails, held on May 7, 2008, provided some stark information that communities around the country must face. For example:

- 700,000 people are released from prison every year vs. 9,000,000 from local jails. (Locally, about 14,000 incarcerated each year in Alexandria and Arlington detention centers; in the Arlington facility about 78% are released within 30 days.)
- 80% of inmates released from prison have a Probation Officer and a transition plan vs.

inmates from local jails that in most cases have neither a PO nor a transition plan.

- 85% of Domestic Violence offenders go through jails rather than prisons, even though their charge is violent.
- Local jails are becoming the Mental Health/Substance Abuse centers of last resort.
- 1 out of every 9 African Americans is currently in jail.



Congressman **Bobby Scott** from the Third Congressional District of Virginia spoke at Virginia Reentry Conference in May.

Continues on Page 2

OAR STAFF

Gail C. Arnall, Executive Director
 Erica Bishop, Re-entry Advisor
 Denise Costley, Women Empowered for Change Program Coordinator
 Rudy Curtis, Community Service Case Manager
 Kathy Hollins, Administrative Coordinator
 Odalis Jimenez, Administrative Assistant
 Susan Jiofack, Coordinator of Community Service
 Elizabeth Jones Valderrama, Director of Marketing and Special Projects
 Jenna-Lyn Ryckebusch, Re-entry Advisor
 Rachel Sparico, Director of Volunteer and Education Services
 Nicholas Tar, Re-entry Advisor
 Will Wilson, Director of Re-entry and Outreach

OAR BOARD

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 Elissa Rumsey
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 Tom Ward
 Gail Arnall

NEW STAFF ASSIGNMENTS

Rudy Curtis has re-joined the OAR staff as a Community Service Case Manager.

Susan Jiofack moves to the position of Coordinator of Community Services.

Elizabeth Jones Valderrama has assumed a brand new position within OAR: Director of Marketing and Special Projects.

Rachel Sparico is our new Director of Volunteer and Education Services.

CLIENT STORIES

OAR was the first place that **Sam** turned to when looking for a job and he was very determined to find gainful employment. Living in a shelter with limited resources and a felony charge it was going to be a struggle, but **Sam** had a very positive and determined attitude. He possessed all the skills necessary for a maintenance position. For two and a half months we had been unsuccessful. He had put in numerous applications and had been on three interviews. OAR had helped **Sam** obtain his ID and provided him with new clothes for his interviews, numerous job leads, and transportation, **Sam** continued to put forth a great effort by meeting with employers and going to employment centers on a regular basis with no luck.

Sam came to us very down and looked like he was ready to give up. We did our best to raise his spirits with a pep-talk about how persistence pays off and that he was sure to get a break soon. **Sam** left the office still feeling defeated, but he promised that he would keep at it. The following week we received a phone call from **Sam** letting us know that he found a job with an Alexandria Hotel where he had applied when he first began his search. When we asked **Sam** why the manager had changed his mind, he told us that the manager had observed him getting off the metro every day looking for a job, and he was impressed with his persistence. **Sam** is ecstatic about his new job and not only does he have a job, but he has a job he can turn into a career.

Continues on Page 4

SAGE FLOWERS MAKES WEDDINGS SPECIAL

Dear **Katy** (Sage Manager):

The response to the floral decorations was outstanding. So many people stopped to tell me that they had never seen a wedding done with a different flower on each table and that the colors were beautiful. I gave



SAGE flowers
wisdom grows.

some away at the end of the night and saved the rest for the centerpieces for Sunday Brunch. At the end of that, I gave the rest away to local people with a speech about how terrific you were to work with. Thank you for all of your advice. Each flower arrangement was beautiful and I thank you so very much. The Chuppah was lovely and the green organza, a lovely addition. Thank you so much again and again!

-A Grateful Mother of the Bride

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REENTRY FORUM

Continues from Page 1

- There is a “drop-out crisis” nationwide; 1/3 of students do not finish high school; 1/2 of African American students do not finish high school.

Characteristics of the jail population:

- 60% did not graduate from high school.
- 16% suffer from mental illness
- 68% have a substance abuse problem
- 14% were homeless in the previous year

OAR, with the help of many volunteers provides life skill courses inside the detention centers and reentry services when folks return from jail. We are increasingly seeing clients who are coming to us from state prisons also – many of whom have been incarcerated ten or more years. We know from experience that the first sixty days are critical – thus the need to work with local detention centers as well as state prisons is essential to helping people make a successful transition.

Rhiana Kohl, a coauthor of a recent study on recidivism in Massachusetts concluded: “Even the best of intentions among inmates and effective prison programming need a bridge to community-based services and inmate accountability to sustain a successful transition home.”

Years ago Arlington County and the cities of Alexandria and Falls Church made this bridge a reality through OAR.

Join us in Breaking the Cycle of Crime: Volunteer!

Contact OAR’s Director of Volunteer and Education Services, **Rachel Sparico**, at rsparico@oaronline.org

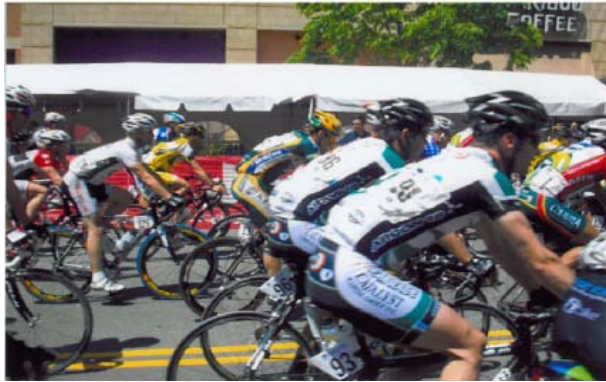
COMMUNITY SERVICE CLIENTS PROVIDE VALUE OF OVER \$220,000 TO OUR COMMUNITY

By *Susan Jiofack and Rachel Sparico*

The participants in many of the programs offered by OAR are voluntary; clients make a choice to seek OAR services. However, one program is mandated by the courts: Community Service. Judges in the Arlington and Falls Church courts sometimes assign defendants Community Service hours instead of incarceration. That means they must come to OAR, where we help them locate an appropriate service placement and keep track of the hours, reporting back to the courts when the hours are completed.

Judges will assign defendants from 20 to 200 hours of Community Service, to be served usually within six to 12 months. OAR has about 700 Community Service clients each year; about half are juvenile. Many are highly educated, competent and skilled individuals that make a wonderful contribution to their placement sites.

OAR Community Service staff assist clients in finding placement sites that match their needs and interests so that the clients, the organization, and the community benefit from the placements.



Community Service Clients set up and assisted during the U.S. Air Force Cycling Classic in Arlington, Virginia.

Many community organizations, churches and government agencies request Community Service workers for specific events. For example, last year Community Service clients helped with Clarendon Day, Kiwanis Oyster Feast and Pig Roast, Arlington Food Assistance Center's Boy Scout Food Drive, Monthly Car Washes for Arlington County cars, the Arlington County Fair, OAR's Project Christmas Angel where we

wrap about 1,000 presents for children of incarcerated parents, the Crystal City Classic Bike Race, Oktoberfest/Mardi Gras/St. Patrick's Day Party at St. Charles Catholic Church, CSC Invitational, and Race for the Cure.

In a few cases, some of the Community Service clients have continued as volunteers with their placement sites, and two clients last year actually found job opportunities at their sites.

OAR staff strongly supports the notion of Community Service as an alternate sentencing strategy. It is a way for the client and the community to benefit from a negative event. In the last ten months, Community Service clients have provided over 18,486 hours of service. At \$12 an hour, that represents a value of just over \$220,000. If your organization would like to have the services of a Community Service client, please call **Susan Jiofack** at 703-228-7435.

OAR RECOGNIZES VOLUNTEERS AND PARTNERS AT ANNUAL APPRECIATION EVENT

About 75 volunteers, deputies, partners, funders/donors, Board members and OAR staff gathered on May 3, 2008, to recognize the outstanding achievement of volunteers and partners over the past year.

David Connell received the **Elizabeth (Betty) Ahern** Award for Outstanding Volunteer of the year. He has been a volunteer with OAR since 1998, teaching Stress Management. "Many times my Thursday evenings inside the Arlington County Detention Facility are the highlight of my week," he said. "I get far more than I give."

Three new volunteers were recognized for their outstanding effort in putting together a three-level computer class schedule based on level of competence: **Andrea Beley**, **Tanya Beauchamp**, and **Bill Stuard**.

Seventeen deputies and staff members from the Alexandria Detention Center were named as outstanding by OAR volun-

teers and staff who work in that facility. They are: **Deputy Sheriff Anderson**, **Deputy Baldwin**, **Deputy Hentman**, **Deputy Hopson**, **Deputy Sheriff Lisa James**, **Patricia Johnson**, **Cindy Kapetanis**, **Deputy Moore**, **Deputy Morgan**, **Sgt. McCray-Brown**, **Deputy Perez**, **Deputy Sheriff Pierre**, **Deputy Pitman**, **Deputy Resseguie**, **Sgt. Mavis Thomas**, **Deputy Viney**, and **Deputy Washington**.



OAR Staff and Volunteers recognized Captains, Sergeants, Deputies, and Staff from the Alexandria Detention Center and the Arlington County Detention Facility during the Annual Volunteer and Partnership Appreciation Event.

Ten deputies and staff members from the Arlington County Detention Facility were rec-

ognized as outstanding by the OAR volunteers and staff who nominated them. They are: **Jenna Adams**, **Kristen Cane**, **Deputy D. Chisholm**, **Deputy C. Hunsaker**, **Deputy A.E. Morris**, **Gina Perea**, **Deputy R. Perez**, **Deputy A. Pitts**, **Deputy R. Proctor**, and **Deputy M. Wanzer**.

Door prizes were awarded this year, provided by **Mr. Greg Godbout** from the Arlington Cinema 'n Draffthouse, **Brenda Silka** and **Heather Silka** from Solarus Salon, and **Tom Ward**, OAR Board Member. A special thanks to these businesses and contributors for their support of our volunteers.

OAR's new Director of Volunteer and Education Services, **Rachel Sparico**, was introduced and moderated the event along with **Elizabeth Jones Valderrama**, Director of Marketing and Special Projects. Congratulations to all of those who received recognition this year and thank you to all of you for your support and dedication to restorative justice.

OAR Offender Aid and Restoration

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

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Phone: 703-228-7030
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Www.OARonline.org
E-mail: info@oaronline.org



United Way
of the National Capital Area

Designation # 8078



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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 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.

CLIENT STORIES

Continued from Page 2

Darin came to OAR looking for help finding a job. He lost his previous job after breaking his hand in a car accident. His job was dependent of use of both hands. Since he did not have health insurance, he could not go to the doctor to have it looked at or fixed.

OAR was able to refer **Darin** to the Arlington Crisis Assistance Bureau who sent him to the doctor. Within one month of coming to OAR, **Darin** was able to improve his health and has secured a job at a coffee house *with* health insurance.

Jenny, who had never been to OAR before, called us one morning frantic about her housing situation. **Jenny** and her fiancé were paying \$2000 a month to live in a motel. The couple had applied to several apartments, but was denied because of no credit and bad credit. **Jenny** had begun to look for an apartment to relieve the financial stress, but was not having much luck. OAR was able to help **Jenny** and her fiancé find a basement apartment for rent, and with the help of community based organizations raised \$500 for the couple to move in. **Jenny** and her fiancé are ecstatic about their new living arrangements because it is only \$1000 a month, half of what they were previously paying.

VOLUNTEER NEEDS

- Computer Lab Monitors
- Spanish Life Skills Instructors
- Stress Management Facilitators
- GED Tutors
- 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

- Educational Materials: Dry erase & over head markers, Whiteboard erasers, Transparency paper
- Holiday Wrapping Paper
- 2 Small or Medium Shredders
- Standard Xerox Copy Paper
- Backpacks and travel sacks
- School Supplies: #2 pencils, manila & pocket folders, composition & 1 subject notebooks, color pencils
- \$10 Fast Food Restaurant Cards
- \$5.50 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.

Join us in Breaking the Cycle of Crime: Volunteer!

Contact OAR's Director of Volunteer and Education Services, **Rachel Sparico**, at rsparico@oaronline.org