



Transformations

August 2012

“I’M A SURVIVOR”

Kevin was referred to OAR by his probation officer, who felt that he could benefit from emotional support as well as an organized employment search. Though charged with one misdemeanor, his conviction resulted in the loss of his job and created a dramatic upheaval in his family’s sense of security. Kevin was also facing jail time; he would begin serving the first of 15 weekends in Alexandria Detention Center the following Saturday; a prospect that terrified him. Kevin immediately began weekly sessions with both the Employment Advisor and Reentry Coach at OAR.

In his first coaching session, Kevin reported that he felt a complete loss of professional identity. He was remorseful and very disappointed with himself. “I’m frustrated that I can’t contribute.” Kevin also expressed anxiety over how his 13-year-old autistic son would cope with the change in routine. Through answering a series of questions based on Solution Focused Brief Therapy techniques, Kevin began to list ways in which he was currently contributing to his wife and son. “Well, I set up their breakfast every day,” he

began. “I cook dinner every night.” He explained the biggest change in him: he consciously thought about how his actions affected other people.

In subsequent sessions, Kevin began identifying coping strategies that help him deal with the stress of weekend incarceration. He continues to work with the Employment Advisor and is negotiating some contract work with a former business client. He also began writing again, a novel he hadn’t touched since before he was charged. “I don’t feel as bad about myself as I used to.” he admitted, surprised. “I guess I’m just a survivor.”

Advocacy and Leadership Program (ALP) members assisted with facilitating the leadership training on June 27th. One of the members that assisted commented “I really liked helping with the facilitation and I

want to help facilitate more of the ALP leadership training sessions as well as the public speaking training sessions. If we are really going to change things then we need to train a lot of people.”



OAR DASHBOARD

1,804

Instances of assistance from OAR with food, clothing, housing & transportation in FY 12

Americans currently on probation, on parole or incarcerated

1 in 32

\$814,048

The value of community service work completed by OAR clients last fiscal year

Number of OAR Job Readiness class participants from July 2011 through June 2012

186

526

OAR clients that received Educational or vocational assistance last fiscal year

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

“OAR is in the public safety business,” our Board Chair, Mondre’ Kornegay, told me recently. She should know. She is a Commander in the Alexandria Sheriff’s office, and has 32 years experience in corrections and law enforcement. “When we help people get housing, employment and the support services they need, we reduce their risk of committing another crime,” she said. “This means no more victims.”

Over the years we have talked about the humanitarian reasons to do what we do. It is simply the right thing to help men and women who need a second chance get back on their feet. We have also talked about the financial benefits of doing what we do. We spend less than an average of \$500 per person on those that come to us for reentry services. The cost of paying for someone’s room and board in jail or in prison regularly reaches into tens of thousands of dollars per person.

Public safety makes it personal. OAR is a part of the safety-net that makes Arlington and the cities of Alexandria and Falls Church safe places to live. We will continue to work on your behalf to keep you and your love ones safe – while providing the support that those coming out of incarceration need to put their lives back together.

Gail Small

ALP MEMBERS VISIT FAITH COMMUNITIES



On one of the hottest days of the year, OAR clients, staff, interns, and volunteers boarded a van, heading off to meet with representatives of nine faith communities in Arlington and Alexandria. As members of OAR’s **Advocacy and Leadership Program (ALP)**, they set out to enhance community awareness of obstacles that face ex-offenders reentering society from incarceration, and to invite others to join in fighting barriers to reentry. Throughout the day, clients told their stories and allowed their voices to be heard.

“My probation officer told me about this program when I got out two months ago.” M.S. recalls. “I didn’t want to come but OAR already got me a resume, helped me fill out financial aid. I didn’t know how to do any of that. Now I’m in school and I got a job. The whole nine yards. I’m think I’m gonna stay with the program.”

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Clients also spoke of the opportunity to meet with Delegate Patrick Hope at the Virginia State Assembly this spring and to attend local forums addressing issues concerning reentry. As with all forms of advocacy, there is strength in numbers.

Director of Reentry Services, Katy Steinbruck, outlined the many ways for members of the faith communities to get involved. “It would be wonderful if church members wanted to join us in speaking with local and state representatives,” she proposed. “Or if they wanted to use their experience and expertise to volunteer with a special event like a workshop or on a regular basis. We have room for all kinds of volunteer opportunities.”

After enjoying a welcome reception, the participants piled back into the van, exhausted but exhilarated. “It was encouraging to hear that a lot of people are concerned about the same issues, even if they aren’t ex-offenders,” one participant remarked. “This isn’t a fight that we have to face alone.”

Written by Jennie Altieri, Reentry Coach and Advocacy

NATIONAL NEWS

- Approximately 2.5 percent of the total U.S. voting age population – **1 of every 40 adults** – is disenfranchised due to a current or previous felony conviction. For more information, visit www.SentencingProject.org.
- On June 25, 2012, in a 5-4 decision, the Supreme Court ruled **state laws that mandatorily sentence juveniles convicted of murder to life in prison without parole are unconstitutional**. Life without parole for juveniles violates the Eighth Amendment's prohibition on cruel and unusual punishment. The ruling could affect nearly 2,500 juvenile prisoners.
- According to a report by the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, **black youth in Cook County, IL are detained at 46 times the rate of white youth**.
- In California, the Public Safety Realignment Bill passed in fall, 2011, allows non-violent, non-serious, and non sex offenders to serve their sentence in county jails instead of state prisons. However, counties can contract back with the State to house local offenders. This legislation follows the Supreme Court's ruling that the California prison system was not providing adequate care to about 33,000 inmates. It is not clear if other states will follow this example as an effort to reduce the cost of state prisons.



OUR VOLUNTEERS

Elizabeth "Betty" Ahern is starting her 15th consecutive year as a volunteer teaching Health Awareness in the Arlington County Detention Facility. "I love to talk to the men about their health and being a responsible sex partner," said Ms. Betty. "They seem to like these conversations coming from an old lady." We are so grateful to Ms. Betty and all of the OAR Volunteers making a difference in the lives of men and women facing daunting *challenges*.



Elizabeth Ahern (left) with OAR Chief Operating Officer Elizabeth Jones

CLIENT CORNER

Hi, Gail. You probably thought that I had fell off the side of the earth...well...surprise I am here alive, sober, and finally found a job in my profession! I am in title insurance in Annandale, Virginia – a 10-minute ride on the bus. I work 9 hours a day and love it. I am in a position to be able to donate \$20 (that would be 2 SmartTrip cards or whatever is needed).



Wish I could do more Gail, I just started working 3 weeks ago. Have a wonderful day and remember just 'cause I don't call or email doesn't mean your ears shouldn't be burning, as I am always talking up the good things that OAR Arlington does. As a matter of fact my 'adopted' son, if you will, is in Arlington till December 2012. He is in the ACT unit (for the 32nd time). He reminds me of me so very much as it took me not once but several times to get the message of sobriety and all the wonderful things that can follow. Well, have a great day Gail.

- Barbara



OAR receives an annual contribution from the Arlington Kiwanis Club. We are so grateful for all of the civic organizations that support OAR's work.



Strengthening Community Through Second Chances

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Designation # 8078



Designation # 26226

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.

OAR's BOARD

Mondre' Kornegay, Board Chair — *Alexandria Sheriff's Office*

Christina Biebesheimer — *World Bank*

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Dave Wiley — *Nonprofit Consultant*

Gail Arnall — *OAR Executive Director, ex-officio*

GET INVOLVED!

- **DONATE**
 - **Online** — **Network for Good:** bit.ly/PJaJXz
 - **Mail:** Make check payable to "OAR"
- **Host** a monthly supper at your club or congregation for clients or donate prepared food for one of our monthly Supper Clubs
- **Organize** a Gift Card Drive for OAR. Call us for the list of most needed cards.
- **Volunteer** your time and talents to OAR.
- **Bring** friends and attend a one hour OAR Tour.



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