Contra Costa Reentry

# OICE

Summer 2018

# REENTRY PROFILE



Roosevelt Terry was serving a life sentence when he noticed a trend and decided to take a detour:

"It is said that 'man is the sum of his environment and his experience.' I say, 'Man is the sum of his heart's desire.' If the first were true, I would have had to settle for being a petty hustler, drug addict, and convict because that was my environment and the experiences in life.

"After 40 years of going down the same street and falling into the same hole, I finally decided to take a detour. I was serving a life sentence and noticed a trend: young men were coming into the institution, who could not read, write, or express how they felt in a non-violent way. I associated that with the high murder rate of young men in my community in the Bay Area. After much thought, I volunteered to teach Laubach Literacy (a way of teaching reading and writing through the use of images), where I was able to assist in the enlightenment of quite a few young men.

"Upon my release from prison, I had made up my mind to be an asset to my community. I was fortunate enough to connect with Contra Costa County Public Defender Robin Lipetzky, who connected me to the CEO of a nonprofit organization, who then connected me to the Antioch City Council and some esteemed members of the community. Through those connections, I went to a Reentry Solutions Group meeting where I asked three people for a job.

"One person, in particular, was the director of Rubicon Programs. While he did not offer me a

job, he did offer me training—training I really didn't know I needed, like how to be in a crowded room filled with people, financial responsibility, and job readiness. All of it led to opportunities: job opportunities, board and committee opportunities, and other forms

"I, a man from project housing in Richmond, with a criminal background, was becoming a productive citizen in society. Wow. And all of the connections I

made led me to Rubicon Programs, where I work as an impact coach, helping other people turn their lives around.

"Today I can say, 'This man is the sum of his heart's desire,' which is to be a servant of the people."





## **EDITORS' NOTES**

We apologize for the delay of our summer issue. If you've been following us since the beginning, the reason is that the Reentry Success Center underwent a leadership transition.

Nicholas Alexander, the Center's director since it opened, decided to move closer to family, who live out of state. At his farewell, Nic received lots of heartfelt gratitude for his work in building a solid foundation for the Center.

Pat Mims, the incoming director, opens the door to new and exciting poissiblities. Look forward to reading more about Pat, and his leadership guiding the direction of the Center and the VOICE, in the months ahead.

The stories in this issue are all about second chances—to make changes for the better. To learn how to read and write. To find work that has value and meaning. To add one's voice through voting. To join circles of understanding. Because making positive life changes is hard work. It requires practice. We're honored for the opportunity to share these resources with you.

Pat Mims **Reentry Success Center**  Patrice Guillory The Reentry Network

P.S. Not on our mailing list? Write and let us know where to send our newsletters to you. If you are a family member or caregiver of someone who's locked up, contact the Reentry Success Center to get a reentry plan started.

# REENTRY PROFILE



Darryl Moore reflects on his reentry journey, which was assisted by the Reentry Success Center: "My name is Darryl C. Moore Jr., and I am 42 years old. I am a resident of Richmond, California. I currently work at the Nutrition Center for West Contra Costa Unified School District.

"I found out about the Reentry Success Center in early 2017 while sitting in Contra Costa County Jail, serving a two-week sentence with no bail. I had failed to comply with completing my anger management course, which I could not afford. This caused me to lose my job. Being a proud father of a beautiful 2-year-old daughter, this was devastating to me. I walked into the Reentry Success Center not knowing what to expect, and I was able to get a meeting with Mr. King (the center's reentry coach) on the spot.

"At the time, I had no I.D. or Social Security Card, no job prospects, and my self-esteem was at an all-time low. Mr. King immediately addressed my I.D. and transportation situation, and even counseled me with personal problems I was having at home. It's a subject that can be very taboo in the male community. That subject is male victims of domestic violence.

"Within a month I had landed a job as an

Environmental Services worker at Charles Chocolates, where I kept the facility sanitized, and assisted with everything from shipping and receiving to preparing chocolate. I worked there for three months. Then I showed up one Friday and my supervisor had my payment, gave me a handshake, and told me the company had decided it needed only one Environmental

It hurts to be treated like a criminal, when you only want to be a good person and feed your family.

Services worker. The other worker had seniority. Bam! Back to square one, devastated. And I really thought they liked my work.

"So I go back to Mr. King and back to the drawing board. I had expressed my cooking background and also my love for cooking to Mr. King. He not only suggested that I get my food handlers certificate, but he also provided the tools I needed to get it. I was always CONTINUES ON BACK PAGE



# **Project Second Chance:** Focused on Learning

What if you couldn't read a job application, your bills, or the instructions on your medication? What if you couldn't read a story to your child, the articles on the newspaper, or the propositions on the voting ballot?

Learning how to read is important, and knowing how to read unlocks the doors to better opportunities. Reading promotes finding better jobs, financial and physical health, and the confidence to move beyond the limits of low-level literacy. Since 1984, Contra Costa County Library's Project Second Chance has been offering free, confidential, one-on-one literacy instruction

# Reading unlocks the doors to better opportunities.

to men and women who struggle with reading, writing, and spelling. The program has helped close to 6,000 adults reach their goals, some of which include being able to read to their children, advance in their career, and vote.

Project Second Chance's volunteers are all adults, 21 years and older, who are willing to meet with a student for 90-minute sessions twice a week. They must complete a 14-hour training program and commit to volunteering for at least one year. Students, on the other hand, must have time for tutoring twice a week, with each session lasting 90 minutes. They also must commit to attending for at least six months.

For more information on Project Second Chance, please call (510) 527-7558 in West County; (925) 927-3250 in Central County; or (925) 927-3250 in East County.

# **PROGRAMS**

# Centerforce: Grounded in Time-Tested Reentry Programs

Contra Costa County has a new reentry provider. It's called Centerforce.

Centerforce was founded in 1977 to offer housing to people visiting loved ones at San Quentin State Prison. Now, it provides many services during incarceration, reentry, and after release. For over 40 years, Centerforce has offered timetested programs that use reentry best practices.

Centerforce's thinking is simple: When a member of the community is incarcerated, the

entire community suffers. The community works to improve the lives of its members affected by incarceration, and their families, because it's the right thing to do.

Centerforce works with jails and prisons, probation departments, nonprofit groups, and research groups to create programs that support their thinking. Centerforce is one of few community-based providers that offer services pre- and post-release, and its staff know how to work inside both jails and prisons.

In Contra Costa County, Centerforce has partnered with The Reentry Network at HealthRIGHT 360 to offer case management for women returning home from prison. Centerforce

has also partnered with Rubicon Programs to provide family reunification support and parenting classes. Centerforce also offers:

- Gender Responsive Reentry
- Culture of Corrections Training for Service Providers
- Prisoner Peer Health Education Training
- HIV and HCV Education and Treatment Advocacy
- Substance Use Disorder Counseling
- Centerforce Youth Court—Diversion Program

For more information on Centerforce's services, please call (415) 300-5983, Monday to Friday, between the hours of 9 am and 4 pm.



# **Register to Vote**

Change happens on so many levels. People change. They form positive habits. They find support. What once were destructive habits can and do change over time. The same goes for society. Voting is how change happens.

One of the most important campaigns of the civil rights movement of the 1960s was to end racial discrimination in voting. The result was the Voting Rights Act of 1965, which gave all Americans the right to vote. In many states, that includes those in our community who are spending time in jail or who have done time in prison.

In California, if you are spending time in jail, you can register to vote if you are:

- in county jail serving a misdemeanor sentence
- in county jail because jail time is a condition of probation (misdemeanor or felony)
- on probation
- on mandatory supervision

Photo courtesy of Lauren Shiple &

- on post-release community supervision
- on federal supervised release
- a person with a juvenile wardship adjudication





# **Begin Restorative Practices**

The culture we see often embraces punishment. People seek and get revenge, but they rarely get what they need. What they need is to be listened to without being interrupted. What they need is to be valued despite the mistakes they have made. What they need—what we all need--is to be seen as redeemable, as the good people we want to be. Nobody likes to be judged or misunderstood. Yet the culture of punishment feeds off of such negativity.

Restorative practices are different. They are about listening, welcoming, and feeling a sense of belonging. For those who have been incarcerated, addicted, or otherwise "been through it," being respected or listened to is not a common experience. Yet there's wisdom from having been through it, as well as a deep understanding of what is needed for redemption to happen.

Circle is a restorative practice that takes the

knowledge we already have and guides us to an understanding that we are the answers we have been waiting for. Circle participants learn the value of coming together. They also learn that sharing stories, experiences, challenges, and victories help to rebuild oneself and each other. Everyone takes turns talking, no one gets interrupted, and no one is in charge. Everyone is equal. Circle is an opportunity to see one's own self and others differently. It's also an opportunity practice empathy, trust, connection, emotional agreement and expression, and active listening.

Ultimately, Circle is a practice of healing that begins with oneself, followed by one's relationships with others. When one heals, they and all the people around them also heal.

The Reentry Success Center in Richmond and HealthRIGHT360 in Antioch both offer Restorative Justice Circles and programming at no cost. If you are interested to learn more about restorative practices and incorporate those skills into your life, please join us at the following locations:

Date/Time	Location	Address		
Mondays, 2-4pm	St. Ignatius Church	3351 Contra Loma Blvd, Antioch		
Mondays, 5:30pm – 8pm	Reentry Success Center	912 MacDonald Avenue, Richmond		
Mondays, 6-8pm	Antioch Public Library	501 W. 18th Street, Antioch		
Tuesdays, 10am-12pm	Rubicon Programs	418 W. 4th Street, Antioch		
Wednesdays, 9am – 12pm	Reentry Success Center	912 MacDonald Avenue, Richmond		
Wednesdays, 7-8pm	Delta Bay Church of Christ	913 Sunset Drive, Antioch		
Thursdays, 6-8pm	Rubicon Programs	418 W. 4th Street, Antioch		
Saturdays, 11am — 1pm	HealthRIGHT 360	5119 Lone Tree Way, Antioch		

For more information about Circle, please write us at The Reentry Network @ HealthRIGHT360, 5119 Lone Tree Way, Antioch, CA 94531 or the Reentry Success Center, 912 MacDonald Avenue, Richmond, CA 94801.



that reads: "I do not have a street."

If you are under a government protection program, there's also a box where you can mark that.

You have the option to choose a political party. But it's not required. You also have the option to choose the one the reads: "No, I do not want to disclose a political party preference."

#### STEP 3: MAIL THE COMPLETED FORM

No postage is required. If you filled out the form by mobile phone or computer, click "Submit."

Assuming your completed form is postmarked or submitted 15 days prior to an upcoming election, you're now ready to vote.





# Marijuana Convictions Are Being Reviewed

In 2016, California legalized marijuana use by adults. The bill, known as Proposition 64 on the state ballot, passed with the majority of Californians voting in favor of legalizing marijuana use.

The question being debated across the state is how to clear conviction records that are tied to marijuana use. The process can be legally difficult and expensive, but many efforts are underway to simplify and speed things up.

One bill that recently cleared its first vote is Assembly Bill 1793 by Assemblymember Rob Bonta (D-Alameda). If it becomes law, Assembly Bill 1793 would require city and county courts to erase the criminal records of Californians who were convicted of offenses that are now legal under Proposition 64.

Under Proposition 64, adults can now possess up to one ounce of marijuana and grow up to six plants for personal use. Assembly Bill 1793 would also resentence individuals, whose crimes were selling marijuana, from felonies to misdemeanors.

While Assembly Bill 1793 passed by a margin of 6-to-1 in its first committee, it faces more challenges on the road to becoming law. Assembly Bill 1793 will need a two-thirds vote of the California Legislature and support from law enforcement groups. If passed, it would go into effect by July 2019.

Those eligible for reclassification include men and women who were convicted of marijuana possession or growing marijuana. Both are now legal in California.

#### CLEAR MY RECORD

A number of California counties, including Contra Costa County, are working with a local nonprofit to simplify an important task: finding felony marijuana convictions that are eligible to be reclassified. Those eligible for reclassification include men and women who were convicted of marijuana possession or growing marijuana. Both are now legal in California.

The nonprofit Code for America developed a computer program to search the felony cases in select counties and identify which individuals can have their cases automatically reduced. The computer program, called Clear My Record, completes all the necessary paperwork to have the charge reduced. Afterwards, the paperwork is sent off to the courts.

Participating counties hope the program will minimize the teams of people who would otherwise have to pull the cases and review them one by one.

Jennifer Pahlka, Code for America's executive director, hopes Clear My Record will "help government clear all eligible criminal records, starting with convictions under Prop. 64."

For more information about Clear My Record, please send an inmate request through the Adult School to meet with Janna, or drop in to the Reentry Success Center. If you have access to a mobile phone or computer, visit www.clearmyrecord.org.

## **EVENTS**

#### **MONDAYS (ONGOING)**

### Bridges to Work

9-11am, job-readiness services, open to men and women in East and Central County, Goodwill Industries, 3350 Clayton Road, Suite 100, Concord

#### **TUESDAYS (ONGOING)**

#### Women's Support Group/Girl Talk

5:30-7:30pm, Rubicon Programs, 418 West 4th Street, Antioch

#### WEDNESDAYS (ONGOING)

#### Men's Support Group 🚱

5:30-7:30pm, Rubicon Programs, 418 West 4th Street, Antioch

#### THURSDAYS (ONGOING)

#### LGBT Wellness Recovery Action Plan

1-2:15pm, free community workshop to develop skills to manage anxiety and stress, Rainbow Community Center, 2118 Willow Pass Road, Suite 500, Concord

#### REMEDY Support Group 🚱

5-7:30pm, women and men, 18 and over, at risk for chronic illness; first and third Thursdays at West County Health Clinic, 13601 San Pablo Ave, San Pablo; second and fourth Thursdays at Pittsburg Health Center, 2311 Loveridge Road, Pittsburg

#### FIRST & THIRD TUESDAY (ONGOING)

#### HIV/AIDS East County Support Group 🚱

Men and women, 18 and over, Community Presbyterian Church, 200 East Leland Road, Pittsburg

#### FIRST & THIRD TUESDAY (ONGOING)

# Reentry Orientation 🖾 🕡 😌



10am-12pm, employment, housing, health and other assistance, Reentry Success Center, 912 Macdonald Ave, Richmond

#### FIRST & THIRD FRIDAY (ONGOING)

## Debtor's Rights Clinic 🔇 💿



9:30am-1pm, debt collection lawsuit and harassment support, (first Friday) SparkPoint-Contra Costa West, 1000 Macdonald Ave, Richmond and (third Friday) SparkPoint-Contra Costa East, 3105 Willow Pass Road, Bay Point

#### LAST THURSDAY (ONGOING)

"Reentry: The BIGGER Picture" Workshop 6-8:30pm, hosted by Ronell Ellis; call (844) 819-9840, or write to addresses below, for details

#### DARRYL MOORE, CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

welcome to use the computer lab. I don't have internet at home, so my job search was done there.

"I got an interview with the school district. They immediately expressed interest when they found out I had my food handlers certificate. The school district had recently laid off a number of employees for not being able to pass the exam. I have been working there for three months now, and I have already been promoted to Cook (Level) 1.

"I really thank the Reentry Success Center for being a light in a dark place. It hurts to be treated like a criminal, when you only want to be a good person and feed your family. There are so many people being left out in the cold, but the Reentry Success Center is holding our hands. And everyone needs a hand sometimes."

## **EXPLORATIONS**

We want to promote your artwork, photography, and poetry. Please write us at one of the mailing addresses below. Be sure to reference "Reentry Newsletter Explorations" in your letter.

#### **POETRY**

A poem by Octavia Butler

#### **EARTHSEED**

Here we are—Energy,

Mass,

Life,

Shaping life,

Mind,

Shaping Mind

God,

Shaping God.

Consider— We are born

Not with purpose, But with potential. All that you touch You Change.

All that you Change Changes you.

The only lasting truth

Is Change.

God Is Change.

#### GAMES

Fill in the blank squares, so each row, each column, and each block contain all digits 1 thru 9. Answers will be in the next issue.

#### **CURRENT ISSUE**

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#### ANSWERS TO THE PREVIOUS ISSUE

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Contra Costa Reentry VOICE is published quarterly by the following organizations:



Reentry Success Center 912 Macdonald Avenue Richmond, CA 94801 reentrysuccess.org



Reentry Network at HealthRight 360 5119 Lone Tree Way Antioch, CA 94531 healthRIGHT36o.org



Contra Costa County 30 Muir Road Martinez, CA 94553 co.contra-costa.ca.us The following icons are included in the sections and next to specific events as a visual aid, for readers who prefer to scan our content. We hope you find them useful.



Housing



Family

Health



Financial



Benefits

Education





**Employment**