

VOICE

Summer 2019

REENTRY STORIES

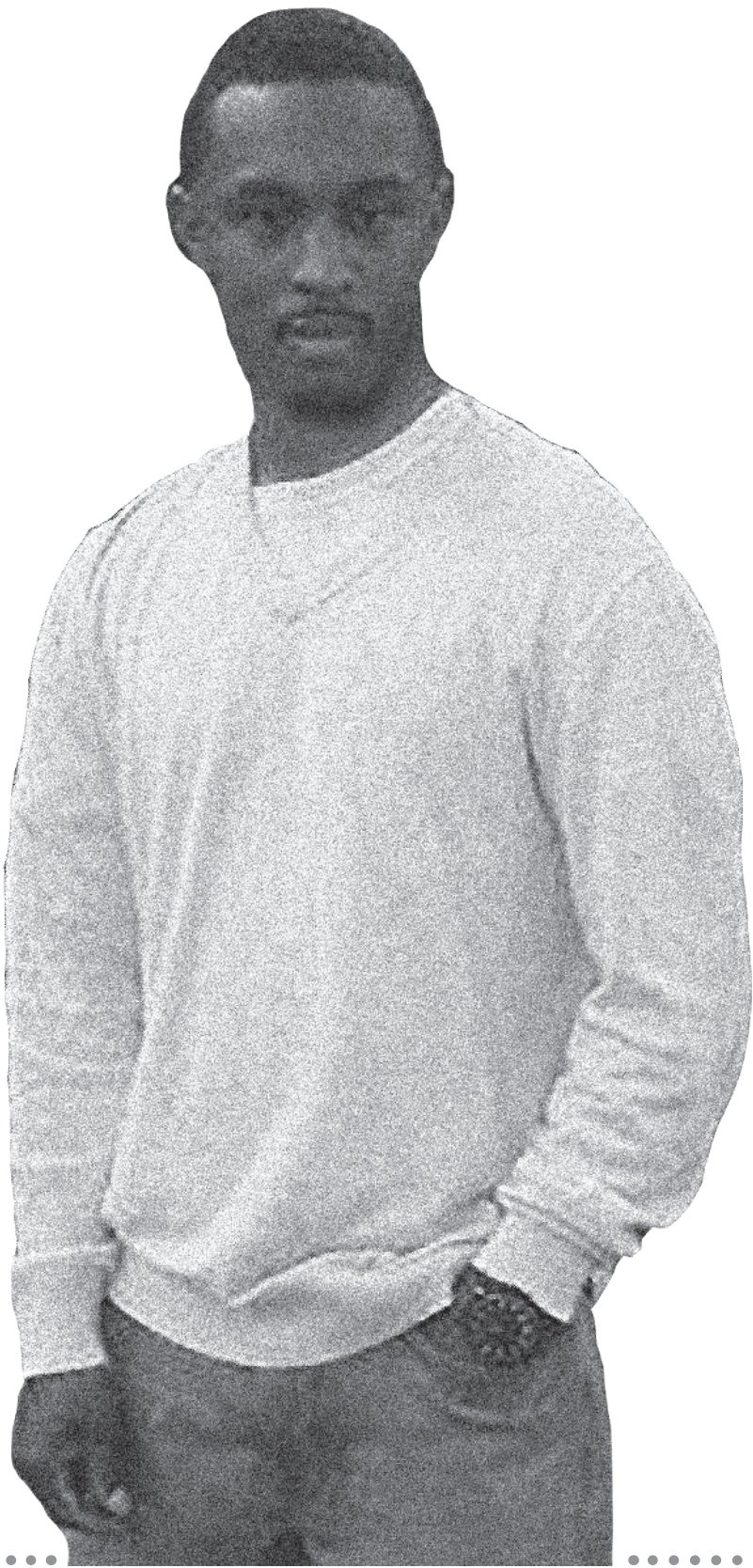


Sedric Mitchell

Sedric arrived at the Reentry Success Center looking for a job and to get back on his feet. He wanted to be a contributing member of society. He also knew that he was starting fresh and, also, expecting to become a father. With support from the Reentry Success Center, Sedric attended an orientation for Cypress Mandela Program in Oakland. He decided to go through it. Although Sedric’s housing and financial situation weren’t as stable as he would have liked, he made the effort to show up and do the work. Sedric checked in regularly with his parole officer, who jumped through hoops to assist him through the program. After learning new carpentry skills, Sedric ended up joining the Plasterers & Cement Masons, Local 300, and secured not just a job, but also a career. Sedric remains involved with the Reentry Success Center. He joined the center’s mentorship program and feels grateful that he has someone to run ideas across, share his challenges, and witness his successes.

Crystal Holloway

Crystal came to the Reentry Success Center shortly after she was released from incarceration. She went in seeking support to obtain a California ID, learn employable skills, and build her résumé. She wanted to get back on her feet and help support her children and mother. Despite Crystal’s lack of experience with computers, she persevered and submitted housing and employment applications online. She asked for help from staff to complete the online applications, locate the resources she needed, and set goals and action plans. Crystal received everything she asked for, including employment secured with support from her reentry coach and mentor at the Reentry Success Center. She now has a full-time job, her own vehicle, and is near the top of a waiting list for housing. She’s expecting a baby and remains connected to the Reentry Success Center’s mentorship program and other support systems.



Victoria Pope

Victoria Pope became a member of the Reentry Success Center in May. She arrived seeking assistance in finding employment, as she had been unemployed for a few months and wanted assistance to get back on her feet. Victoria had a history of incarceration and faced many barriers. Some of those barriers stemmed from insecurities caused by trauma while incarcerated. They limited her ability to show up fully in the job search. They also affected her ability to maintain the job once she got it. With support from the Reentry Success Center and her reentry coach, Victoria received a transportation card and assistance when filling out job applications. Shortly after, she received a job offer and started working. Through the coaching staff at the Reentry Success Center, Victoria was able to open her eyes to the many opportunities available to those with a criminal background. She was able to reach her goal of finding employment.

SERVICES UPDATE

Centerforce provides family reunification services throughout the county, taking over the work previously done by the Center for Human Development. Centerforce is one of the few community-based providers that offer pre- and post-release services, and its staff know how to work inside both jails and prisons. Rubicon Programs offers county-wide employment services and resources. Rubicon Programs, whose mission is to transform East Bay communities by equipping people to break the cycle of poverty, has taken over the work previously done by Goodwill Industries of the Greater East Bay. For more information on family reunification services, please call Centerforce, (415) 300-5983, Monday to Friday, between the hours of 9 am and 4 pm. For more information on employment services and related resources, please call Rubicon Programs, (510) 235-1516.

EDITORS’ NOTES

Dear readers,

Positive changes at our respective reentry points are either happening or coming soon. When we began this publication two years ago, we wanted to support you in making healthy and positive choices, in order to achieve success. As you know, the road to success is not easy. But, we told you then and we recommit to our goal now: We are here and ready to walk down that road with you. This issue offers what you’ve come to expect from us: stories of hope and possibility, and news about services and useful resources. Also included is a supplemental worksheet: a reentry planner to help you plan your future. We know your greatness is possible. We know you can succeed. Are you ready to forge that path?

Pat Mims
Reentry Success Center

Patrice Guillory
The Reentry Network

P.S. Not on our mailing list? Write us, and let us know where to send our newsletters to you.

Clean Slate Project: Clearing Convictions

Last year, we wrote about a computer program called Clear My Record, which searches felony cases in select counties and identifies which individuals can have their cases automatically reduced. Since then, Contra Costa Public Defenders started the Clean Slate Project, which uses Clear My Record as a tool to remove barriers in the re-entry process. Such barriers affect employment,

housing, public benefits, and family reunification. The Clean Slate Project’s attorneys and advocates provide assistance in getting convictions dismissed (also known as expungement; see the sidebar for the definition and related information). They also provide assistance in getting arrest records sealed (see the sidebar for more information) and felonies reduced to misdemeanors, when applicable.

Both Proposition 47 (passed by California voters in November 2014) and Proposition 64

(passed by California voters in November 2016) have possible ramifications for those with prior convictions. The best way to determine eligibility is to contact Contra Costa Public Defenders. Their attorneys and advocates also provide legal advice regarding voting rights and jury service rights after conviction.

For more information on the Clean Slate Project and Clear My Record, please contact Contra Costa Public Defenders at (925) 335-8150. Spanish translation is available (Se habla Español).

WHAT IS AN EXPUNGEMENT?

The word, expunge, means to have something cleared, erased, sealed, or destroyed. There is, however, no such thing as true expungement in the State of California. Convictions that are dismissed are not removed from your record. Your record will simply show that your conviction has been dismissed.

How does expungement affect job applications? It all depends on the type of employer.

For private employers, such as Target, Walgreens, and Food Co, you are legally permitted to state that you have no convictions.

For public employers (or any job where you are fingerprinted), you do not have to disclose any dismissed convictions; however, dismissed convictions will still appear on background checks.

For all job applications, Contra Costa Public Defenders recommends that you read the question carefully and provide only the information being requested.

WHAT IS A SEALING OF ARREST?

Arrests and convictions become public record, and anyone can access them. A sealing of arrest makes this record inaccessible without a court order.

What’s eligible for a sealing of arrest? Most arrests which did not result in a conviction, including:

- Arrests for which charges were never filed;
- Cases for which charges were filed but later dismissed;
- Cases for which the conviction was made legally void, overturned on appeal, or successfully diverted;
- Cases which resulted in an acquittal or a not guilty verdict.

Some arrests and convictions can’t be sealed. They include:

- Arrests for which the statute of limitations hasn’t run its term;
- Felony charges that do not carry a statute of limitations;
- Cases that resulted in a conviction.

PROPOSITION 47 (REDUCED PENALTIES FOR SOME CRIMES INITIATIVE)

Passed by California voters in November 2014, Proposition 47 classified non-serious, nonviolent crimes as misdemeanors instead of felonies, unless the defendant had prior convictions for murder, rape, certain sex offenses or certain gun crimes. It permitted re-sentencing for those currently serving a prison sentence for any of the offenses that the initiative reduces to misdemeanors.

PROPOSITION 64 (MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION INITIATIVE)

Passed by California voters in November 2016, Proposition 64 legalized the possession, cultivation, and use of marijuana for personal use. It also allows for the sale and taxation of recreational marijuana. Individuals who had been serving criminal sentences for activities made legal under Prop. 64 became eligible for resentencing. (Sources: Contra Costa Public Defenders and Ballotpedia.com)



Alpha Program Graduates, Family, Supporters, and Members

H3 and CORE: Striving to Meet Housing Needs

Finding housing during reentry is critical to health and well-being. It's also a daunting challenge, especially in the Bay Area.

For people living in the streets, Contra Costa County's Coordinated Outreach, Referral, and Engagement (CORE) program can serve as an important safety net. CORE is a program of Contra Costa County Health, Housing, and Homeless Services (H3, a division of the county's Health Services department). It's one of three coordinated entry points for county residents.

CORE provides general health services and basic necessities. It also offers guidance toward finding permanent housing. CORE works with two temporary shelters for adults: Concord Adult Homeless Shelter and Brookside Shelter.

Brookside Shelter accepts adults, 18 and over, who are referred by CORE. It does not take drop-ins. Intake hours are Monday-Friday, 8 am to 4 pm. No documents are required. Services there include case management, housing search, job search and placement, legal services, counseling, and health needs.

CORE also works with Calli House, a shelter and drop-in center for homeless youth, 21 and under.

COCO Lead Plus, a point-of-arrest diversion program, partially funds one of CORE's 11 teams. According to CORE Program Manager Michael Fischer, that team diverts low-level offenders arrested in the City of Antioch from the justice

WHAT IS COORDINATED ENTRY?

Think of coordinated entry as you would the front door of a house or an office. You walk through the front door, and the room you find yourself in is where services are available.

Contra Costa County has three coordinated entry points. The first is "211." Residents are encouraged to call "211" from any phone, to learn about the services they could qualify for. The second is CORE. The third is the Greater Richmond Interfaith Program (GRIP), Concord Adult Homeless Shelter, and Trinity Center in

Walnut Creek.

GRIP, Concord Adult Homeless Shelter, and Trinity Center are Contra Costa County's day-time shelters. Services available there include mail, laundry, showers, and meals. Drop-ins are welcome, from 8 am to 4 pm.

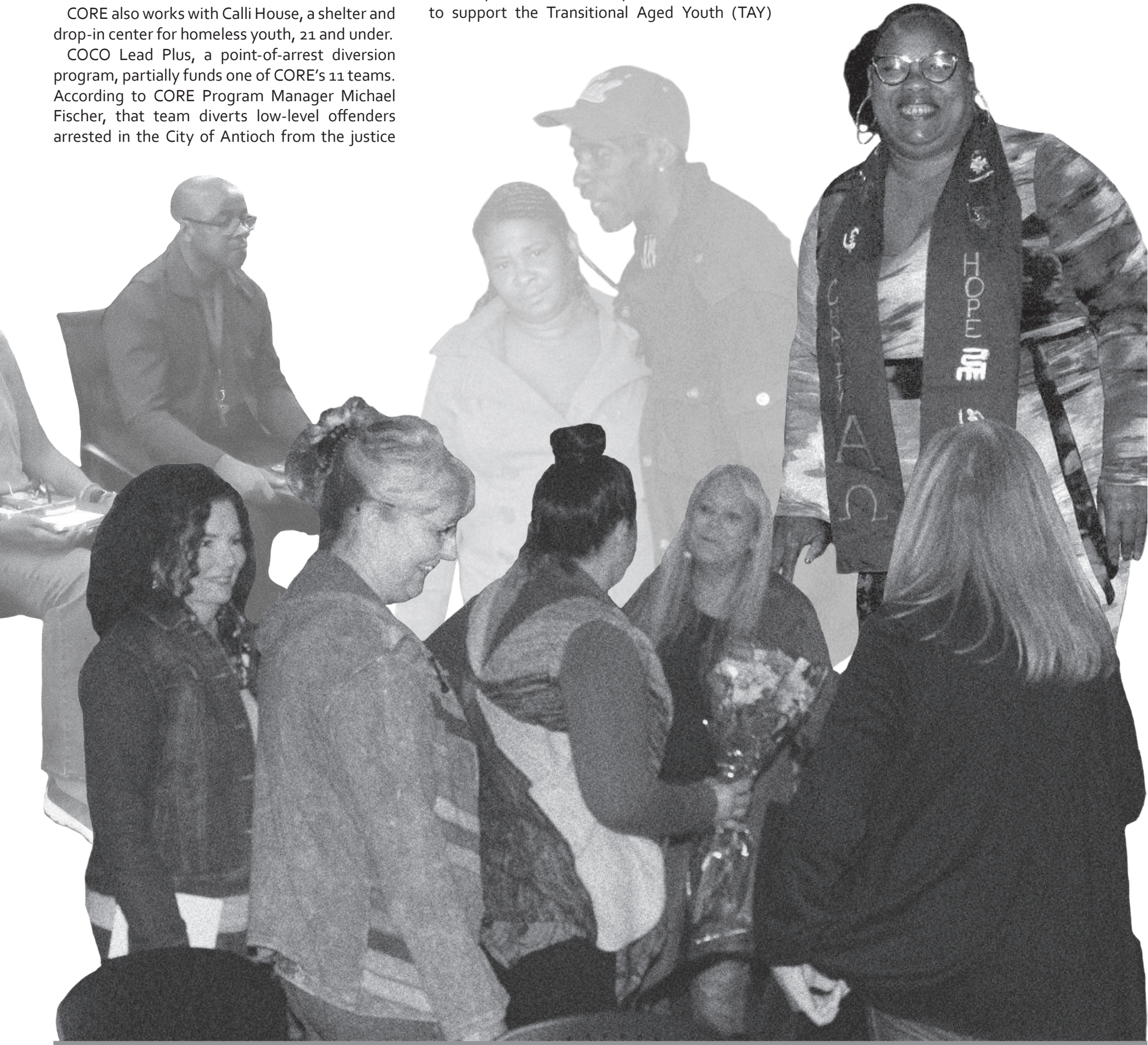
Accessing services may require completing an initial intake form and assessment. This process helps county workers identify areas where support could be beneficial, and connects individuals to resources.

system. Antioch Police Department reviews arrests for eligibility and provides referrals. CORE reaches out to those referred and assists them with transportation and connects them to services, including access to emergency shelter.

Beginning August 2019, a team partially funded by the reentry SMART grant will add another layer of support to the reentry community. This team will work in collaboration with the Office of Reentry and Justice (ORJ), Office of Education, and Bay Area Community Resources (BACR) to support the Transitional Aged Youth (TAY)


reentry population. CORE will manage referrals into this program.

"The CORE program works with The Reentry Network (at HealthRight 360) and Reentry (Success) Center on a regular basis," said Fischer. "Reentry work continues to be part of our everyday work. We look forward to strengthening our partnership and working collaboratively to better help the people accessing these services."




EVENTS


SEPTEMBER 23

Recovery Game Night 
6:00-8:00pm, Reentry Success Center, 912 Macdonald Ave, Richmond


OCTOBER 4

Traffic Clinic 
10:00-1:00pm, free legal support on California licenses, DUI, and fines, Reentry Success Center, 912 Macdonald Ave, Richmond


MONDAYS (ONGOING)


Men’s Support Group 
5:30-7:30pm, Rubicon Programs, 101 Broadway Street, Richmond

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

Restorative Circles 
5:30-7:30pm, community, members, and drop-ins welcome, Reentry Success Center, 912 Macdonald Ave, Richmond


THURSDAYS (ONGOING)

LGBT Wellness Recovery Action Plan 
1:00-2:15pm, free community workshop to develop skills to manage anxiety and stress, Rainbow Community Center, 2118 Willow Pass Road, Suite 500, Concord




REMEDY Support Group 
5:00-7:30pm, 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

Men’s Support Group 
5:30-7:30pm, Reentry Success Center, 912 Macdonald Ave, Richmond

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   
10:00am-12:00pm, employment, housing, health and other assistance, Reentry Success Center, 912 Macdonald Ave, Richmond

FIRST & THIRD FRIDAY (ONGOING)

Debtor’s Rights Clinic  
9:30am-1:00pm, 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)

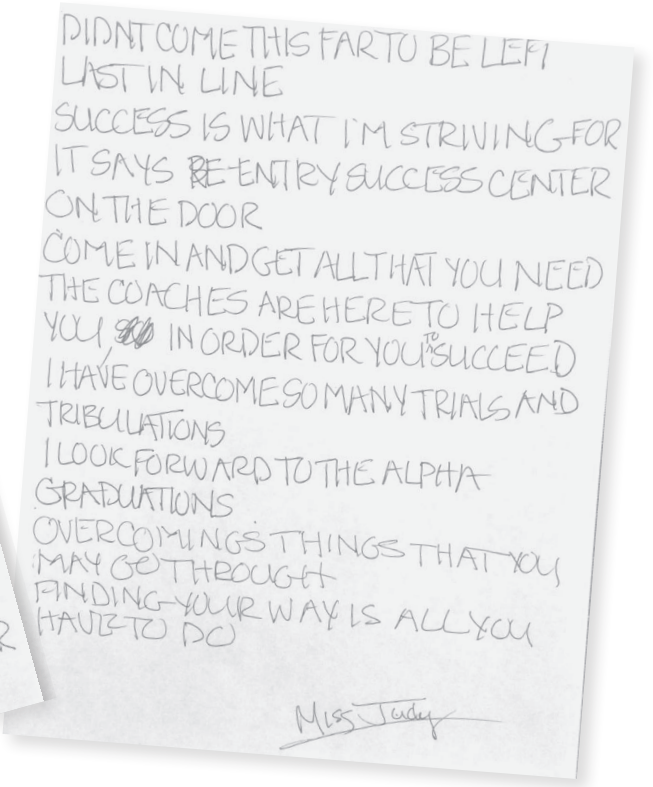
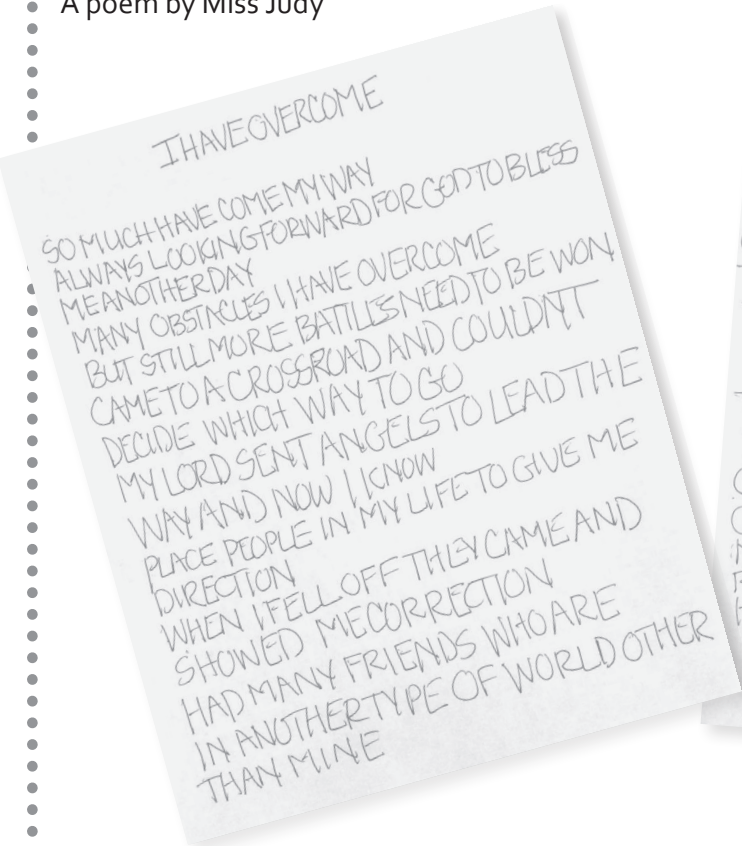
“Reentry: The BIGGER Picture” Workshop 
6:00-8:00pm, hosted by the Reentry Network at HealthRight 360, 5119 Lone Tree Way, Antioch

EXPLORATIONS

We want to promote your artwork, photography, and poetry. Please write us at one of the mailing addresses below. Be sure to include “Reentry Newsletter Explorations” in the subject line.

POETRY

A poem by Miss Judy



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
healthRIGHT360.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



Financial



Education



Health



Employment



Benefits



Legal