

# VOICE

Issue 27 / 2025

## REENTRY PROFILE

After years of getting into and out of jail, Annette Corriveau turned her life around, first as a client, then as a program manager, at Centerforce. Until it closed permanently this summer, Annette managed its Women Empowered for Successful Transition (WEST) program. During her interview, she said she hates it “when people ask me to tell them about myself.” After a brief pause, however, she said, “I’m Annette. I am a confident, empathetic human being. I’m very much into taking care of myself. I’m very much into working out and working on my recovery. I’m kind. And you know what? I’m somebody who will fight for others. I’m somebody who will help others. I’m a mother of an autistic son, who’s 26 years old and who I’d had the joy of raising. He’s amazing, and I wouldn’t want him any other way. I am patient. I’m a fierce advocate for change. And I’m also a black belt in Tae Kwon Do. I didn’t get that until I was 42.

“I had to learn to forgive myself. That’s because, in my crimes, there are no faces. I don’t know who they were. I don’t know who they are. It’s about making amends, probably, for the rest of my life. I’ve done my time—I cannot let the past dictate who I am today. When I got clean and sober, and got out of jail, I beat myself up and I felt really, really bad. But me giving back is me making a change. I had an addiction. But in October, I’ll be eight years clean and sober.

“I’m motivated to change other people’s lives and help others understand that there is another way to moving forward. ‘Motivated’ for me is a motivation that I can help light a fire under others when I walk into jail. I remember when I met the women I worked with and I said, ‘I was sitting in jail over seven years ago, and now I’m almost eight years sober. If I can do this, so can you.’ They teared up and asked if they can do this. And I said, ‘Yes, yes you can.’ They just didn’t know how to change.

“When you have trust issues, you’re so used to people who don’t show up for you. The way I ran my program and worked with clients is the way that Cynthia [Zabala, Centerforce’s lead program manager for family reunification services, who led the organization until it closed its doors] worked with me. When I said I was going to do something, I did it. When I said I was going to be there, I was there. I did my case managing just as she did it with me, and it worked. Just showing up is the number one thing, because when you say you’re going to do something, it’s important that you’re there. I used to have nobody to show up with. Cynthia showing up for me was huge.

“With me being in and out of jail over half my life, I didn’t know how to change. At that point,

I had a 30-year meth addiction. I was so tired of losing everything, and I was coming out with just the shirt on my back, homeless. I eventually got a referral. Cynthia came and saw me. I didn’t know who she was. My trust wasn’t there, and I wasn’t sure what Centerforce was all about. I just learned to say yes if somebody was going to try to help me.

“Cynthia gained my trust because she has a similar background. She made me feel like I was understood where I always felt misunderstood. She walked beside me, went and found out what my needs were, and would send referrals. The most important part for me was that I felt I had an advocate walking alongside me. Somebody who would call me on my crap. Someone who would hold me accountable, which I didn’t like, but kept holding me accountable and kept me moving forward. Someone who pulled me back when I wanted to go back and do drugs. It’s that all-or-nothing thinking that I wanted, but she taught me it’s okay to start from the beginning and keep moving forward.

“I didn’t know where my life was going to take me, but she would slow me down and help me with my self-care and make sure that I was doing what I was supposed to be doing for my recovery. After six months in recovery, I had another case, not from doing the crime while I was in recovery, but from my past, **CONTINUES ON PAGE 4**



## EDITORS’ NOTES

Dear readers,  
 During one of our planning meetings we learned that Centerforce, a reentry partner organization and regional mainstay, had permanently closed its doors. It had served the reentry community for close to 50 years. That’s not something we could overlook. We know that filling the service gaps that Centerforce offered, and the way its dedicated staff served the community, won’t be easy. We also didn’t see any news outlets covering the closure. So we decided to celebrate Centerforce throughout this issue. You’ll read about Annette, whose reentry journey led her to Centerforce. You’ll also learn about the programs that Centerforce offered, as well as take in highlights from other news sources throughout the years.

As always, please let us know what stories you would like us to write about in the future.

Charmaine Hoggatt  
 The Reentry Network

Pat Mims  
 Reentry Success Center

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

## In Memoriam: Centerforce's Time-Tested Reentry Programs

Centerforce was founded in 1977 to offer housing to family, caregivers, and advocates visiting loved ones at San Quentin State Prison. Over the course of its close to 50-year history, however, it had expanded to serve individuals not just when they were inside, but also when they were on their reentry journey. Centerforce's founding principle was simple: When a member of the community is incarcerated, the entire community suffers. The community, therefore, is tasked with improving the lives of members and their families who have been impacted by incarceration, because it's the right thing to do.

Centerforce worked with jails and prisons, probation departments, nonprofit groups, and research groups in Alameda and Contra Costa counties to create programs that supported their thinking. It was one of few community-based providers that offered services pre- and post-release, and its staff knew how to work inside both jails and prisons. In Contra Costa County, Centerforce partnered with The Reentry Network at Health-RIGHT 360 to offer case management for women returning home from prison. It also partnered with Rubicon Programs to provide family reunification support and parenting classes.

This summer, however, Centerforce permanently closed its doors. At the time of publication, many of Centerforce's programs have been absorbed by other county reentry partners and providers.

Cynthia Zabala, program manager of Centerforce Contra Costa County, and Annette Corriveau, manager of Centerforce's Women Empowered to Succeed Together (WEST) program (spotlighted in this issue), stayed on until the very end.

Zabala recalled how she got started. "Dolores Lyles (Centerforce's executive director until 2020) hired me as a case manager," she said. "I started

to work in the Antioch office, and I case managed for about five years in the community."

"What that looked like," she continued, "was helping individuals go through our curriculum: how to communicate with their family and how to understand their family has gone through a lot when they were absent. They had feelings around the fact that they had been absent or they had no relationship with their kids. Sometimes, folks just needed to find out where their family was. Or they needed child support modification or help with family court, because they had lost their children or their children were in the system. Or they needed to file for visitation.

"I would go with them to the courthouse. I would help them figure out how to get records from their last court case or any other documents. The last thing folks want to do when they walk out of jail or prison is to walk back into another courthouse. I was there to hold their hand to help them stay on the path of having a relationship with their families. A lot of times, it was just talking them into going into the courthouse and sitting there and waiting for the judge to address them. That can be very scary. My job was to make it less scary, support them, and tell them they were doing a great job."

Zabala served in that role for five years. At the end of 2019, she was promoted to program manager for Contra Costa County programs. Zabala's colleague, Abayomi Brame, was promoted to program manager for Alameda County programs. (Brame was contacted for an interview, but did not respond.) Shortly after, Lyles retired. Then the pandemic hit.

"I went right into that situation and was able to continue to provide services, as well as keep my staff safe," Zabala said. "We immediately went into virtual [meetings]. We were there for a year, or perhaps a year and a half, before we said, 'We have to start seeing people [in-person] because most of them coming out do not have access to phones or computers.' We've always known that the intervention is the relationship and the relationship is the intervention. We weren't going to

build the rapport that's necessary to build trust, for them to trust us, and for us to help them with their family [without seeing them]. So we started seeing them again in-person, face-to-face, while still offering virtual."

Earlier this year, however, Centerforce's board voted to close permanently due to funding challenges.

"Everybody was devastated," Zabala said.

A silver lining for Centerforce staff came from the Contra Costa County Office of Reentry and Justice, which prepared what it calls a site monitoring summary in May of this year. According to Zabala, the 33-page report "validated our team."

The report's findings highlight Centerforce's strengths: "Centerforce is committed to meeting participants where they are—both literally and figuratively." "Centerforce maintains a discreet, unmarked office space...where participants can meet privately with staff when needed." "The WEST (Women Empowered to Succeed Together) program...is rooted in dignity, respect, and a deep understanding of the challenges participants face—ensuring that services are not only effective and also empowering and person-centered."

"The team did a great job," Zabala said. "They were very passionate about the work they had been doing and the results they were getting. Our job was to help make sure [justice-impacted individuals] were safe and that we got them help. We gave them referrals, but there was so much trauma that my staff...knew exactly what to do, and they helped so many people. There's no other program that I know of that created a safe space for this community, the community where people don't trust."

"Relationship is everything," she reflected. "If you don't have the relationship, you won't and can't succeed. It's also way more joyous when you cross the finish line together. What I've learned is everything comes to an end. What am I going to do from here forward? I know it's such a huge loss, but I've been able to have some lightness of spirit. I'm joyful and grateful for the opportunity."

### CENTERFORCE: NEWS HIGHLIGHTS



Centerforce's programs extended well beyond its Women Empowered to Succeed Together (WEST). Former Executive Director Dolores Lyles pointed out that they also included the following:

- **Peer Health Education** operated at San Quentin State Prison, Central California Women's Facility, and Valley State Prison for Women. Trained peer health educators inside those sites worked to raise awareness, provide education, and serve as a resource on a wide range of health issues.
- **Healthy Relationships** ran out of the California Medical Facility. A small-group intervention program for justice-impacted individuals living with HIV/AIDS,

it focused on developing skills, building self-confidence, and making decisions about relationships.

- **Project START** was a six-session individual-level intervention for people soon to be released from prison. It incorporated features of prevention, case management, motivational interviewing, and risk reduction.
- **Positive Connections**, in partnership with San Francisco State University, provided transitional case management services for men living with HIV who were exiting from San Quentin State Prison and the California Medical Facility and returning to Alameda or San Francisco county.
- **Maximizing Opportunities for Mothers**

**to Succeed (MOMS)** provided individual-level case management services to pregnant and parenting mothers transitioning from Santa Rita County Jail to communities in Alameda County. It was offered in partnership with Alameda County Behavioral Health Services and Alameda County Sheriff's Office.

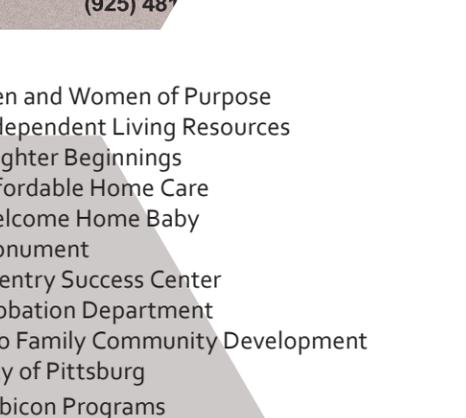
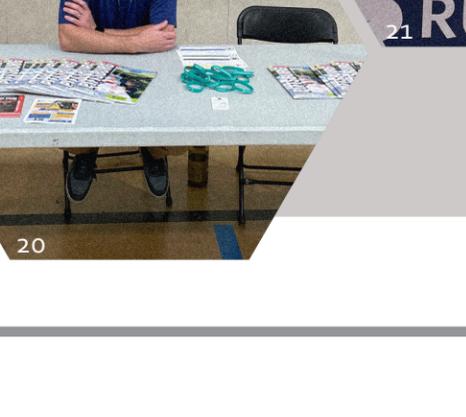
- **Safe Transitions** provided transitional case management and referrals for African American men, 18 years and older, who being released from and returning to Alameda County.
- **Youth Court** diverted first-time offenders from the juvenile justice system through a court comprised of peers, with dual goals of restitution and restorative justice.

**PROGRAMS** 

**Restoring Hope & Community Resource Fair: Making New Connections**

Presented by HealthRIGHT 360 and the Contra Costa County Office of Reentry and Justice, this year's fair took place at the Pittsburg Youth Development Center. Over 150 people attended to be connected, feel empowered, get informed, and leave with hope.

1. Front Porch
2. Cal Fresh
3. Family Justice Center
4. HealthRIGHT 360
5. One Day at a Time
6. 4 Our Families
7. Public Defender's Office
8. Dialectical Behavioral Therapy
9. Safelink Wireless
10. Opportunity Junction



11. Men and Women of Purpose
12. Independent Living Resources
13. Brighter Beginnings
14. Affordable Home Care
15. Welcome Home Baby
16. Monument
17. Reentry Success Center
18. Probation Department
19. Lao Family Community Development
20. City of Pittsburg
21. Rubicon Programs

# EVENTS

## MONDAYS (ONGOING)

### Women's Group

5:30-7:30pm, open to women interested in conversations related to everyday life, in-person at the Reentry Success Center and on the Zoom videoconferencing app, <https://rubiconprograms.zoom.us> (Call 800-816-4453 for details)

## TUESDAYS (ONGOING)

### Life Skills Group

11:00am-12:30pm, focusing on substance use disorder relapse prevention, drug counseling, and related supports, in-person at Reentry Network at HealthRIGHT 360 (Call 925-732-1357 for details)

## WEDNESDAYS (ONGOING)

### Restorative Practices: Arts Class

5:30-7:30pm, open to community, members and drop-ins, in-person at the Reentry Success Center and on the Zoom videoconferencing app, <https://rubiconprograms.zoom.us> (Call 800-816-4453 for details)

## THURSDAYS (ONGOING)

### Restorative Circles

5:30-7:30pm, open to community, members, and drop-ins, in-person at the Reentry Success Center and on the Zoom videoconferencing app, <https://rubiconprograms.zoom.us> (Call 800-816-4453 for details)

## FRIDAYS (ONGOING)

### Forward Thinking Men's Group

5:30-7:30pm, open to men interested in conversations related to everyday life, in-person at the Reentry Success Center and on the Zoom videoconferencing app, <https://rubiconprograms.zoom.us> (Call 800-816-4453 for details)

## OTHER

### "Reentry: The BIGGER Picture" Workshop

6:00-8:00pm, conversations related to everyday life, every last Wednesday of the month, in-person at Reentry Network at HealthRIGHT 360 (Call 925-732-1357 for details)

### Community Green Space Clean-Up

10:00am-2:00pm, open to all, every third Saturday of the month, in-person across the street from the Reentry Success Center

### Mobile Resource App

Listing of support services accessible on a smartphone through the following QR Code:



**ANNETTE, CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE**  
the wreckage of my past. She's the first one I called. She went to court with me. She advocated for me. She showed me that I could do this clean and sober. I could go to court, be responsible, and do what I'm supposed to be doing. Whatever the outcome—whether it be jail or not going to jail—that's okay. Because if you do go to jail, maybe there's somebody in there that needs to hear what you have to say. That wasn't something obvious that I wanted to hear, but I started understanding from her point of view. I started getting away from my criminal-thinking behaviors and wanted to do the right thing. As time progressed, she always walked beside me.

"Eventually, I became a substance abuse counselor. After I successfully completed my program, Cynthia was still a strong part of my recovery, a strong part of my life. I also let her know that I wanted to come work for Centerforce sometime, someday. (That day came when she was encouraged to apply for a job opening to manage the women's program.)

"Centerforce closing broke my heart. I don't know of any other women's program like Centerforce that is boots-on-the-ground involved in making sure that people don't fall through the cracks. The hard part was me having to let my clients know because they were very attached to me. A lot of them have abandonment issues. So it took me talking to them and helping them process that we're closing and trying to do warm handoffs to other programs.

"I wavered back and forth on self-care. Cynthia would always tell me, when I've had clients who'd overdosed and died, to take time off. Now I talk to people. My self-care is working out, slowing down, and practicing gratitude. I am in Alcoholics Anonymous and working with a sponsor. I eat

healthy. I work out six days a week when I first get up. I have a cup of coffee. I go sit on my stairs outside and feel the cold air on my face, and just listen to the crickets and stuff. I also make sure I have a proper amount of sleep, and I'm mindful not to put too much on my plate. Those are huge for me. With clients, I've talked to them about that. As addicts and alcoholics, we're so busy pushing forward, and we're so busy wanting to get things done, because we've been incarcerated and in our addiction for so long. When we're clean and sober, we put too much stuff on our plate and eventually crash and burn. Everybody's self-care is personal. When I go to the gym, I go by myself. I work out. I'm in my own zone.

"Work with the reentry people inside the jail. Game Plan for Success can help you navigate the waters and develop a plan and help you stick to it. Because when you get out or you're about to get out, if you have a substance abuse problem, your anxiety is very high and probably your cravings and your triggers are also very high. You've got to have that positive plan so you can implement it when you get out.

"Make sure you have a program that meets you at the gates when you are released, so they can take you to the bank or to treatment. There's something about that bridge. You need that bridge because that part—right there in between you getting released and getting to your planned destination—is important. That's where you're going to relapse. We always think, 'Oh, I can do it myself.' Maybe you can. Those who can, more power to 'em. But I bet 75 or 80 percent of people who are released and don't have a plan are going to go back again. It takes a village. Change is possible. If you have a plan, you can change. I did it with the help of people and programs that are out there to support you. You are worth it."

## EXPLORATIONS

### 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

		7	1				4	
9			2	3		8	5	
		5					1	2
4		2	6		5			7
6			7		3			4
7			4		8	2		1
2	3					4		
	7	6		4	2			9
	8				9	6		

© 2013 KrazyDad.com

#### ANSWERS TO THE PREVIOUS ISSUE

6	3	2	9	5	7	1	8	4
9	5	8	1	3	4	6	7	2
4	7	1	6	2	8	3	9	5
7	2	6	3	9	5	4	1	8
5	1	4	7	8	6	2	3	9
8	9	3	2	4	1	7	5	6
2	6	9	5	7	3	8	4	1
1	8	7	4	6	9	5	2	3
3	4	5	8	1	2	9	6	7

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



Reentry Success Center  
912 Macdonald Avenue  
Richmond, CA 94801  
[reentrysuccess.org](http://reentrysuccess.org)



Reentry Network at HealthRIGHT 360  
5119 Lone Tree Way  
Antioch, CA 94531  
[healthRIGHT360.org](http://healthRIGHT360.org)



Contra Costa County  
30 Muir Road  
Martinez, CA 94553  
[co.contra-costa.ca.us](http://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