



Brevard County Reentry Task Force (BCRTF)

Meeting Minutes

Meeting Date: Wednesday, December 2, 2015 2-4pm
 Location: Viera Government Center, Florida Room
 2725 Judge Fran Jamieson Way, Bld. C
 Viera, FL 32940

ATTENDANCE:

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| Terri Alexander | Chaplain | Good News Jail Ministries |
| Esthermari Alvarez | Probation & Parole Officer | Florida Department of Corrections |
| Paul Biecker | Director | Bridges of America Work Release Program |
| Donna Bolton | Probation & Parole Officer | Florida Department of Corrections |
| Mark Broms | Interim Executive Director | Brevard Homeless Coalition |
| Douglas Conniff | CEO, President | Welcome Lafuels Co., Inc. |
| Louann Creasy | Inmate Programs Specialist | Brevard County Sheriff's Office (Jail) |
| Vanessa Diaz | Veterans Justice Outreach Specialist | VA Medical Center, Orlando |
| Doreen Gonzalez-Toro | Senior Probation Officer | Judicial Correction Services |
| Angie Griffin | Site Coordinator | Goodwill Rockledge Job Connection Center |
| Steve Hart | Pastor | Grace United Methodist Church Merritt Island |
| David Jeczala | Circuit 18 Community Liaison | Dept. of Children and Families |
| Isa Kennedy | Jail Population Management Coordinator | Brevard County Community Corrections |
| Don Lenox | Director | New Beginnings Outreach Ministry |
| John Mandala | Establishing Director | Breathing Space Associates |
| Erin Miller | Intern | Brevard County Jail Inmate Programs |
| Jeanette Murdock | Program Supervisor | S.T.E.P.S. |
| Nichola Ogunlari | Probation Officer | Florida Department of Corrections |
| Kimberly Oliver | Counselor | North Brevard Charities Sharing Center |
| Alice Parzek | CEO | Sara's House |
| Carolyn Ramsey | Probation Officer | Brevard County Community Corrections |
| Lisa Smith | Vocational Rehab Tech. | State of Florida Vocational Rehab |
| Sherri Somers | Corporal | Brevard County Sheriff's Office (Jail) |
| Barbie Thrower | Executive Director | Community Treatment Center |
| Jarvis Wash | Pastor and Executive Director | R.E.A.L. Church and My Community Cares |

I. Co-chair Steve Hart called the meeting to order at 2:03 pm.

- The invocation was provided by Chaplain Terri Alexander of Good News Jail Ministries at the Brevard County Jail.
- All those present introduced themselves. A list of those who were in attendance is provided above.

II. Review and approval of minutes from the September 9, 2015 meeting:

- Don Lenox made a correction to minutes: Page Three, Subheading, “Reentry Case Management and Assessment” – the acronym REACH should read that it stands for Reentry Alternative Choices Hub.
- Angie Griffin motioned to approve the minutes and John Mandala seconded the motion. Passed

III. Update on the progress for a reenter center

- Isa Kennedy provided an update on leasing the facility across the street from the County Jail to My Community Cares.
- Corporal Sherri Somers spoke about the BAM program (Brevard Attitude Modification). This program is designed to show juveniles what it is like to be in jail. It is a day-long program for teens 13-17 years of age.

IV. There were no updates from the Workgroups

- Substance Abuse/MH
- Housing
- Employment
- Assessment/Case Management
- Advocacy

V. Membership Form

- Pastor Hart initiated a discussion concerning a membership form for the Reentry Task Force. Some of the reasons for having this form include:
 - o Using this as an opportunity to inform anyone on active probation that probation officers regularly attend these meetings, so they should be aware that what they share may have to be reported to the probationer’s supervising officer.
 - o Keeping Reentry Task Force membership current
 - o (Discussion ensued)
 - o Don Lenox motioned, and the motion was seconded to approve the membership form. Passed
 - o Angie Griffin shared a success story with the group.
 - o Corporal Sherri Somers spoke about the reentry program at the jail.
 - o Probation Officer Donna Bolton shared a success story about an individual who was helped by Walk About Ministries.

VI. Announcements

- Pastor Hart asked about a Celebrate Recovery Program. He asked if anyone present was interested in starting a program in the Merritt Island area to get with him.
- Kimberly Oliver mentioned that the Project Maybe house at North Brevard Charities Sharing Center is being worked on, so it is not up and running, yet.

- Jeanette Murdock provided information about specific programs at S.T.E.P.S. She mentioned that she takes the information she gets from the Reentry Task Force meetings back to the staff at S.T.E.P.S.
- Vanessa Diaz mentioned that they are working with the jail to reach veterans in custody. Beginning in January (2016), the VA in Viera is going to begin offering a sort of “employment boot camp”, where participants will be enrolled in an intensive, three-day employment program and at the end receive a certificate of completion.
- Alice Parzek, who runs Sara’s House, a transitional home for women in Merritt Island, mentioned that they provide a Celebrate Recovery Program for their residents. Additionally, they are bringing a similar program to the Cocoa area called Celebrate Freedom. This is a group meeting that allows women an opportunity to share about the issues they experience during their recovery.
- Chaplain Terri Alexander mentioned that she is one of two full-time chaplains at the jail and that, along with nearly 100 volunteers, they provide classes and counseling to the inmates. They have ten female inmates signed up to earn baby bucks through the Alternative Pregnancy Center in Merritt Island. They can earn as much as \$90 in baby bucks, while in custody, by completing homework assignments. That same agency will continue to work with them after their release.
- David Jeczela with the Dept. of Children and Families mentioned that F.I.T. did a study and showed that having an EBT card will help reduce recidivism. Having access to food helped to keep individuals from reoffending. He works with the jail to make sure those who begin the process of applying for food stamps while in jail continue to see the process through after being released. David also announced that the waiver that was put in place in 2009, allowing requirements for food stamps to be removed, will be lifted beginning January 1, 2016. This means that able bodied adults, between the ages of 18 and 49, who have no dependents and meet other requirements, will be required to participate in a work register program with CareerSource in order to qualify to receive food stamps. Additionally, the receptionist at CareerSource will not allow individuals who are not following the proper dress code to enter – this is becoming a barrier for many potential participants.

Kimberly Oliver mentioned that North Brevard Charities (NBC) is providing interviewing attire for those who bring a referral from CareerSource.

- Douglas Conniff is a volunteer social worker who works at the street level. He mentioned that, in Titusville at Sandpoint Park on Sundays at 1:30 pm, a marine consultant and his daughter provide music, a good meal, and minister to those in need. Additionally, under the bridge on Garden Street at 6 pm on Monday nights another meal is also put on for those in need – blankets are provided.
- Don Lenox made some suggestions for the reentry center when it’s up and running.
- John Mandala announced that Breathing Space partnered with PETA family and gave out 565 meals at Thanksgiving. He reminded everyone that they meet Sunday mornings at 9:00 am: 3150 Friendship Place, Rockledge.
- Corporal Somers invited everyone to the Reentry Conference that will be held on January 13th, 9am – 4pm, at the Posey Conference Center in Viera.
- Doreen Gonzalez-Toro announced that Professional Probation Services will be taking over misdemeanor probation services on February 1, 2016. Doreen sends all she gets from these meetings back to her agency.

- Cindy Short announced that the point-in-time count will take place on Monday January 25th and that anyone interesting in helping can contact her.
- Mark Broms announced that the Brevard Homeless Coalition has been awarded a challenge grant through DCF that will allow them the ability to fill gaps, such as having a real homeless hotline. Beginning January 1, 2016, 2-1-1 will have a homeless hotline. There will be four assessment locations in the county to assist those who cannot be helped by telephone. The BHC's Advisory committee meets the first Thursday of every month in the Commission Room, Building C of the Viera Government Complex. Also, on Friday (December 4th) at 4pm North Brevard Charities Sharing Center (NBCSC) will host Keith Heiny and Mark so they can share with others. A week from tomorrow (December 10th) Dr. Robert Marvet from Texas, a noted consultant on issues of homelessness, will visit Melbourne City Hall at 10:00 am. Lastly, Mark suggested that mental health issues be addressed in a more systematic way.
- Lisa Smith mentioned that they assist individuals with a disability, emotional or physical. They ask those in Titusville to arrive Mondays at 9:45 am. Counselors will listen to each individual talk about how the disability is keeping them from working. Counselors try to help individuals get stabilized and can assist with medications. Also, they are working with high schools to reach individuals as young as 15 years of age to prepare them for future employment.
- Paul Biecker announced that Bridges of America was founded 35 years ago (anniversary of foundation) and now they are all over the country and in Canada. December 19th is Christmas family day at Bridges' Work Release Center, 10am – 2pm. This is when inmates are provided an opportunity to spend holiday time with their children/families.

VII. Adjournment

- The meeting adjourned at 4:04 p.m.
- The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, February 3, 2016, 2-4 pm, and will be held at the Viera Government Complex.