



Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign

**E-Newsletter
Volume II, Issue I – February 2004**

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THE REENTRY NATIONAL MEDIA OUTREACH CAMPAIGN HAS ITS PUBLIC LAUNCH!

Despite inclement winter weather, a near capacity audience showed up on January 27, 2004 when the Urban Institute hosted a formal presentation for policymakers, law enforcement and corrections professionals, and community leaders working on issues related to the reentry of men and women who were formerly incarcerated. Held at UI's Washington, DC office, the launch event featured welcoming remarks by its president, Robert Reischauer. The Annie E. Casey Foundation was represented by Senior Fellow Bonnie Howard, who talked about the Foundation's role as funder of this important effort to strengthen families and communities.

Denise Blake, Reentry project director at Outreach Extensions, presented an overview of the Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign and introduced video clips that showcased the pipeline of documentaries centered on the theme of reentry. She also described the cornerstone resources (videotape and resource guide) of the campaign, ***Outside the Walls: A National Snapshot of Community-Based Prisoner Reentry Programs***. UI was a strategic research partner and advisor on the development of *Outside the Walls*.

The **resource guide** offers background research papers on the project's six reentry themes: **education and employment, health, housing, family, public safety, and faith**. It also provides snapshots of 100 organizations and activities that illustrate some of the exciting ways that jurisdictions are beginning to think, work, and collaborate around the pressing issue of prisoner reentry. The **companion videotape** brings 23 of these programs to life. Spokespersons on the tape include staff and clients of community- and faith-based organizations, criminal justice representatives, crime victims and advocates, and policy leaders. They present diverse perspectives, underscore the complexity of reentry, and inspire effective action.

A distinguished panel of experts, moderated by Urban Institute senior fellow Jeremy Travis, a former director of the federal National Institute of Justice, then discussed how individuals and institutions can help former prisoners lead successful lives outside the prison walls. The panelists were:

- Andrea J. Cabral, Sheriff, Suffolk County, Massachusetts
- Thomasina (Tomi) Hiers, Executive Assistant to the Deputy Secretary for Operations, Maryland Department of Public Safety and Correctional Services
- Pat Nolan, President, Justice Fellowship

- Edward Rosario, Life Skills Trainer/Re-entry Specialist, The Developing Justice in South Brooklyn Project, Fifth Avenue Committee
- Carol Shapiro, Executive Director, Family Justice, Inc./La Bodega de la Familia
- A.T. Wall, Director, Rhode Island Department of Corrections

Following the panel discussion, a Q&A session allowed members of the audience to ask questions of the presenters. To view this informative panel discussion, please visit the Campaign Activity section of the Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign web site: (http://www.reentrymediaoutreach.org/activity_winter04.htm)

REENTRY CAMPAIGN WEB SITE GOES LIVE (www.reentrymediaoutreach.org)

The Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign Web site expands opportunities for public access to the outreach campaign. The site provides an overview of the national campaign as well as information on national/local campaign activities and events. All of the outreach materials developed for the campaign, including those described in each e-newsletter, are now housed on the Web site. Content for each television documentary includes a 3 – 5 minute preview clip, producer comments, and customized viewer/discussion guides. For The Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Making Connections* communities, information is also included to suggest how these materials relate to the Foundation's Core Results.

Outside the Walls: A National Snapshot of Community-Based Prisoner Reentry Programs is also featured on the Web site. Both the resource guide and companion videotape are segmented into the six reentry themes/modules referenced above for easier browser facilitation. A DVD version of the videotape will be available at a later date.

Future additions to the Web site will include a user feedback form and newly profiled community-based prisoner reentry programs collected from around the nation. To submit your reentry program for consideration, please send a one-paragraph synopsis of your work to DeniseBlake1@aol.com.

EVERY CHILD IS BORN A POET: The Life & Work of Piri Thomas

Produced and directed by Jonathan Robinson, When in Doubt Productions, Inc., in association with the Independent Television Service (ITVS) and Latino Public Broadcasting (LPB), with major funding provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB).

The next Reentry campaign production will air **on PBS on April 6, 2004**. A mix of documentary, poetry, storytelling, drama, and performance, EVERY CHILD IS BORN A POET explores the life and work of Piri Thomas (b. 1928), the Afro-Cuban-Puerto Rican author of the classic autobiographical novel *Down These Mean Streets* (1967). The hour-long film traces Thomas' path from childhood to manhood in New York City's Spanish Harlem, *El Barrio*, from the 1930's through the 1960's. It explores his parents' immigrant experience, home life during the Great Depression, membership in *barrio* youth gangs, his struggle to come to terms with his mixed-racial identity, travels as a teenage merchant marine, his heroin addiction, notorious armed robbery of a Greenwich Village nightclub and six years spent in prison, his emergence as a writer, and his on-going work of forty-five years as an educator and activist empowering marginalized and incarcerated youths.

Today, Piri Thomas lives in Berkeley, California with his wife and two daughters. He is working on a sequel to *Down These Mean Streets* entitled *A Matter of Dignity*. He continues to write in various styles – poetry, plays, and film. At 76, Piri continues to speak to students and community groups throughout the nation.

To support the film's use in community settings, a discussion guide has been developed and is housed on the campaign's Web site (<http://www.reentrymediaoutreach.org/ec.htm>). The guide is especially designed to help adults use EVERY CHILD IS BORN A POET to engage youth who are facing challenges related to incarceration. It suggests ways to help young people think more deeply about the issues raised in the film ... and to think more deeply about their own lives.

Please check your local PBS listings for broadcast date and time of **EVERY CHILD IS BORN A POET: The Life & Work of Piri Thomas**.

THIS ISSUE'S REENTRY PROGRAM PROFILE IS Montgomery County Pre-Release Services

The Montgomery County Pre-Release Services Division is a key component of the Montgomery County, MD comprehensive correctional system. Residential and non-residential programs provide treatment, supervision, and monitoring of offenders returning to live in the community. Reintegration is accomplished through identification of problems, programming to address those problems and the needs of the offender, coupled with intensive community accountability and safety. Misdemeanant and felony offenders who are within six months of release are eligible to participate. Local, state, and federal offenders are served.

The Pre-Release Center (PRC) is a residential work-release facility with four units housing a total of up to 155 male and female offenders. The Center offers a variety of comprehensive services designed to assist offenders with addressing problems and making positive changes in their lives as they work toward their reentry into the community. The Community Accountability and Reintegration and Treatment (CART) Program is a non-residential pre-release program that offers intensive supervision of offenders in their homes with the assistance of electronic monitoring equipment. CART staff work closely with offenders and their families to initiate treatment interventions and provide counseling services and support.

Montgomery County began offering work release for inmates in the late 1960s out of the Detention Center. During the 1970s, the Pre-Release Center was operated from a rented facility in the community. In 1978 the program moved to a building designed and constructed for use as a Pre-Release Center for 92 offenders. Today that facility has been expanded and houses up to 155 male and female offenders with another 45 in CART.

In 2003, Pre-Release Services programs provided services to approximately 580 offenders, with a successful program completion rate of 90 percent. Residents completed over 4,200 hours of community service. 92 percent of all residents were placed into employment in the community, earning an average wage of \$10.02 per hour. Residents pay 20 percent of their salaries for room and board, which generates over \$250,000 annually for the County. Residents are released back into the community with a job, housing, cash savings, a community-based treatment program, and greater coping skills.

For more information, contact James Shannon or Jane Sachs at 11651 Nebel Street, Rockville,

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The Annie E. Casey Foundation (AECF) is supporting the **Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign** as part of the Making Connections Media Outreach Initiative (MCMOI), which is designed and managed by Outreach Extensions. The purpose of this vital outreach effort is to link public television stations to local stakeholders, which serve various constituencies, as a means to strengthen youth and families and build effective communities.



The Annie E. Casey Foundation

The [Making Connections Media Outreach Initiative](#) offers media support to local coalitions that are part of AECF's *Making Connections*, a multi-faceted, long-term effort to improve the life chances of vulnerable children by helping to strengthen their families and neighborhoods. The Foundation's intent is to stimulate and support a local movement that engages residents, civic groups, political leaders, grassroots groups, public and private sector leadership, and faith-based organizations in an effort to help transform tough neighborhoods into family-supportive environments.

[This E-Newsletter](#) is an electronic publication intended to keep you informed about news and events relating to the Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign. For more information, please contact:

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We welcome the names/e-mail addresses of your colleagues so that we can send copies of this E-Newsletter to them as well.



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