



# Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign

**E-Newsletter**  
**Premiere Issue – October 1, 2003**

Greetings Colleagues:

Welcome to the inaugural issue of the official E-Newsletter of the Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign – an exciting media outreach effort in association with public television programming that focuses on the reintegration of men and women leaving prison and returning to our communities.

The impetus for this campaign is clear – more people are leaving prisons across the country to return to their families and communities than at any other time in our history. Nationally, over 600,000 individuals will be released from state and federal prisons this year, a fourfold increase over the past two decades. From a number of perspectives, the issue of how people fare after they exit the prison gates has received renewed attention. Many will have difficulty managing the most basic ingredients for successful reintegration – reconnecting with jobs, housing, and their families, and accessing needed substance abuse and health care treatment.

**The Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign** will expand public awareness and dialogue, provide media-based resources to accompany the broadcast of national public television productions, and work in partnership with key organizations engaged in local initiatives to strengthen families and neighborhoods. The campaign will be designed to facilitate discussion and decision making about solution-based reentry programs that foster public safety and support healthy communities. Critical to the success of the campaign will be its focus on issues that are of primary concern to policy leaders, faith- and community-based organizations, and public television stations; and that can lead to desired local outcomes.

Campaign issues were defined through conversations with strategic partners and advisors, including the Urban Institute (research), the Council of State Government's Reentry Policy Council, The Annie E. Casey Foundation, and the campaign's Faith Advisory Committee; public television stations and producers; as well as other key stakeholders. The following issues/themes will be highlighted in the outreach campaign and productions: **education/ employment, health, housing, public safety, family, and faith**. The moment of release (the critical hours, days, and weeks following release from prison) will be integrated within the other issues. Additional partners with expertise in these key areas will advise the campaign and develop resource materials in relation to the various television productions.

We look forward to informing you about the progress of the campaign, new television productions and resources, and ways you can participate, especially through utilizing campaign resources in your organizations and communities. We're almost ready to launch the Reentry Web site and will let you know when you can access it. We look forward to hearing how you're using the resources locally and plan to share what you're doing in future e-newsletters.

## **In this issue:**

- [Announcement of Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign!](#)
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The [Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign](#) is preparing to release its premiere companion resources – a guide and videotape – ***Outside the Walls: A National Snapshot of Community-Based Reentry Programs***. Together, they assist the work of faith- and community-based organizations, as well as policy leaders, who seek to engage in dialogue and create solutions that support the process of reentry and make their communities safer for all families. These major campaign materials are designed for a long shelf life and will be available throughout the two- to three-year national campaign.

To create *Outside the Walls*, the Urban Institute conducted a review of sample reentry programs from across the country that are addressing the needs and challenges facing returning prisoners, their families, and communities. The guide is not meant to be an exhaustive search resulting in a fully comprehensive list of reentry programs. Nor is it a compendium of best practices or model programs that have been proven to work. We have included even new endeavors in order to illustrate some of the exciting ways that jurisdictions are beginning to think, work, and collaborate around the pressing issue of prisoner reentry. With that aim in mind, the resource guide and videotape will provide descriptions of a broad array of reentry activity.

As part of its research, Urban Institute identified over 100 programs to learn more about their organizations, the services they provide to former prisoners and their families, and any outcomes of their work. Programs are organized into the following categories:

- Education and Employment
- Health
- Housing
- Public Safety
- Family
- Faith

Many of the programs overlap these categories. For instance, a program may provide job training and placement to former prisoners with the ultimate aim of getting their clients into stable jobs to reduce the likelihood of a return to crime. Or, some of the organizations provide an array of services covering most, if not all, of these categories. Urban Institute attempted to classify programs into the category that best captured their primary service focus.

### ***Outside the Walls: A National Snapshot of Community-Based Prisoner Reentry Programs Resource Guide***

The guide's primary purpose is to facilitate discussion and action planning by policy leaders, community, and faith groups. Through briefing papers and organizational profiles, the guide will help readers understand the issues surrounding reentry, the relevance to policy, as well as learn about and replicate effective practices. The guide will be available on the Reentry Web site, launching this fall.

### ***Outside the Walls: Reentry Outreach Videotape***

The outreach videotape highlights selected reentry programs in the Resource Guide, providing a snapshot of the services they provide and outcomes of their work. Interviews include service providers (including rehabilitated former prisoners), reentry clients, victims, and public officials. Structured to present the six themes in separate modules, the videotape facilitates discussion, problem solving, and decision making by faith and community audiences, as well as policy leaders. The 2.5-hour outreach videotape will be available from Outreach Extensions in fall 2003; it can be previewed on the Reentry Web site. A 20-minute "executive summary" videotape will be produced for policymakers.

### ***Reentry Media Outreach Web Site***

All of the outreach materials developed for the Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign, including those described in this newsletter, will be housed on the campaign's Web site. Content on 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 will also suggest how these materials relate to the Foundation's Core Results. The Web site will also report on national and local campaign activities. The launch date will be announced shortly.

*A related resource ...*

#### **Council of State Governments/Re-Entry Policy Council Brochure:**

Targeting policy leaders and key decision makers within its constituencies, the Council of State Governments' Re-Entry Policy Council will develop a 12-page brochure that will summarize CSG/RPC's report on its own investigations on reentry and review the Council's recommendations. The brochure will also explain how policy leaders can use the report and Outside the Wall resource guide and video to effect change in their respective jurisdictions.

#### **P20 (Passport to Opportunity)**

As a special resource for youth ministry settings and other youth-serving groups, faith workshop participants will also receive P2O, a CD-ROM that encourages positive choices, good judgment, and decision making. P20 is an interactive educational tool that provides a personal experience for youth on what it takes to turn their lives around, how to make the right choices, and what role their communities can play. The CD covers four areas: *Look Inside Yourself*, *Discover Your Community*, *Challenge the System*, and *Explore Your Resources*.

#### **Public Television Documentaries**

The Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign pipeline currently features the following **public television documentaries**; additional films may be added as the campaign progresses. Customized materials to support discussion in community and faith-based settings are being developed to accompany each documentary as it nears its broadcast date. Materials are currently available for: GOD AND THE INNER CITY, A JUSTICE THAT HEALS, MANHOOD AND VIOLENCE: FATAL PERIL, and PRISON LULLABIES.

#### **AIMEE'S CROSSING / 2005**

Female juvenile offenders have the fastest growing rates of incarceration. Yet, media access is extremely limited because they are minors. However, Governor Rod Blagojevich, of Illinois, has granted Academy Award® nominated and national Emmy award-winning filmmaker Tod Lending (Ethno Pictures) unprecedented access to a female juvenile detention center (prison) in Illinois in order to tell this story. In this provocative and very personal feature documentary, Lending will focus on juvenile offender Aimee Myers, and her family, through her first year of incarceration and a year after her release. Lending will film her therapy sessions and examine how the juvenile justice system contends with her history of domestic and sexual abuse, substance abuse, and mental health issues (she is diagnosed as bi-polar). After Aimee's release, the film will examine what support she requires from her family, the justice system, and her community in order to change her negative behaviors and become a productive citizen.

#### **FINDING THE SOUL OF A TEENAGER / 2005**

"The key to changing kids' lives is love," says John Bess, founder and chief executive officer of The Valley, a nonprofit comprehensive youth services agency, whose primary goal is to empower young people to become self-sufficient and responsible adults. The Valley's numerous programs are presented at satellite locations all over New York City. Focusing on the success of The Valley's programs, this documentary will show the transformation in the lives of these kids as they participate in workshops in violence reduction, conflict resolution, neighborhood youth projects and other activities. The film will also show the daily routines of these young men and women as they interact with friends and families and struggle with the difficult conflicts and challenges that life sometimes presents. The documentary will also feature interviews with staff and other experts in the field,

including James Gilligan, Carol Gilligan, Michael Thompson, James Garbarino, and Deborah Prothrow-Stith. Hudson River Film & Video.

#### **GIRL TROUBLE / 2004**

Currently in production, GIRL TROUBLE chronicles four years in the lives of a group of 13 – 23 year-olds who have built the first youth run organization for girls in trouble, the Center for Young Women's Development in San Francisco. These young women are living very adult lives with adult responsibilities. The film follows them as they negotiate a myriad of complex issues in the courts, continuation schools, hospitals, and social service agencies. The girls at the Center are fighting for the human rights of their peers, challenging the system. Through their words and daily struggles, they reveal just how badly the system is failing girls, while offering more effective alternatives to it. Producer/directors are Lexi Leban and Lidia Szajko; KQED and ITVS are co-presenters.

#### **GOD AND THE INNER CITY / PBS Broadcast June 2003**

This timely and compelling story relates the battle for the souls of our cities and our youth being waged by faith-based groups in America's most troubled neighborhoods. Produced by Manifold Productions, this one-hour documentary features three moving stories about the leaders of faith-based groups that work hand in hand with local crime enforcement, social workers, and welfare bureaucrats to save youth and others from jail, drug dependence, and unemployment. GOD AND THE INNER CITY zeroes in on the people these programs are trying to help in three different cities: Boston (The Ella J. Baker House), Philadelphia (Amachi mentoring program), and Washington, DC (Teen Challenge). Some believe that these groups form a new social movement.

#### **A HARD STRAIGHT / 2004**

A Hard Straight by filmmakers Gora Toshima and Lindsay Sablosky chronicles the lives of convicted criminals facing what may prove to be their biggest challenge—re-entering society after years of incarceration. Beginning on the day of their release from prison, this one-hour documentary follows three former prisoners as they enjoy their newly regained freedom while negotiating the difficulties of returning to an uncaring and sometimes hostile society. Of the five hundred thousand prisoners who are released from jail every year, fifty percent of them will return there, the majority within 90 days. The film exposes the truth behind the statistics and sheds an unblinking light on the profound experience of doing time and trying to go straight.

#### **A JUSTICE THAT HEALS (Already broadcast)**

On June 9, 1996, Mario Ramos graduated from high school. The next day, he murdered Andrew Young. It was one of 90 homicides in Chicago that month. The events that followed were anything but typical. The murderer was a parishioner at a nearby church; his victim lived in the neighborhood. The parish priest and members of the community rallied around the murderer and his family – not to defend what he had done, but to defend his *humanity*. They also reached out to the victim's family, determined to arrive at a form of justice that would heal all concerned. Their extraordinary story offers an approach to justice that moves beyond confrontation – and attempts to restore harmony to the lives shattered by a terrible crime. Produced by Jay Shefsky, this one-hour documentary originally aired on WTTW in Chicago in April 2000.

#### **MANHOOD AND VIOLENCE: FATAL PERIL / 2004**

Hudson River Film & Video is producing a documentary about a violence prevention project in the San Francisco County Jail where 80% of its graduates did not return to jail after only four months of intense immersion. Twelve hours a day, six days a week, men who are violent offenders are involved in what is said to be the first restorative justice project of its kind -- RSVP: Resolve to Stop the Violence Project. The documentary focuses on nine men of diverse ethnicities as they engage one another in deeply emotional encounter groups, including one following a Victim Impact session, and then follows the men when they return to their communities.

### **PRISON LULLABIES / TBD**

Filmed at Taconic, a medium security correctional facility located in the heart of Westchester County, New York, PRISON LULLABIES follows four women over a period of 16 months, from their time in prison, through their release, and to their reintegration into society. Pregnant at the time of their arrest for drug-related offenses, the women were given the rare opportunity to keep their babies with them while serving their sentences. They live with their babies on the nursery floor, separated from other inmates. PRISON LULLABIES is the first documentary to take an in-depth look at a nursery program and its long-term effects on the women who participate. Produced and directed by Odile Isralson and Lina Matta, Brown Hats Productions.

### **REDEMPTION / 2005**

Academy Award® nominated and national Emmy award-winning filmmaker Tod Lending (Ethno Pictures) will create a feature documentary that will explore the web of social and economic barriers that low-income African-American men face in the context of incarceration and release. To span over three years, the film will examine existing support structures, and those that are needed, to help these formerly incarcerated men successfully re-enter their families and neighborhoods. This compelling and highly personal film will challenge the public's perceptions, and reveal the individual, family, and community pathways that can lead to social change.

### **ROAD TO RETURN (Current PBS Plus offering through 2005)**

Narrated by actor/director Tim Robbins, ROAD TO RETURN tells an emotional story of what happens when untreated and unskilled former prisoners are returned to society. The film looks at New Orleans' Project Return, a 90-day program that helps individuals who were formerly incarcerated to become self-reliant, law-abiding citizens. Offering group therapy, job training, and placement, Project Return was created by Tulane professor Dr. Bob Roberts and Nelson Marks, a former offender who served twelve years for bank robbery. Successful program outcomes include a lower than 6% recidivism rate for graduates. The one-hour film is written, produced, and directed by Leslie Neale and distributed by Chance Films. WYES/New Orleans was the entry station for its PBS broadcast.

### **WHAT I WANT MY WORDS TO DO TO YOU / PBS Broadcast December 16, 2003**

Part of public television's acclaimed P.O.V. series, this documentary offers an unprecedented look into the minds and hearts of women inmates of New York's Bedford Hills Correctional Facility. The film goes inside a writing workshop led by playwright Eve Ensler, consisting of fifteen women, most of who were convicted of murder. Through a series of exercises and discussions, the women, including former Weather Underground Members Kathy Boudin and Judith Clark, delve into and expose the most terrifying places in themselves, as they grapple with the nature of their crimes and their own culpability. The film intersperses an emotionally charged prison performance of the women's writings by acclaimed actresses Glenn Close, Marisa Tomei, Rosie Perez, Hazelle Goodman, and Mary Alice. The film was created/produced by Madeleine Gavin, Judith Katz, and Gary Sunshine for P.O.V.

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 a monthly 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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