



Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign

www.reentrymediaoutreach.org

E-Newsletter
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1. Outreach Extensions is offering community and faith-based organizations a **pre-screening opportunity** to explore reentry issues particularly related to restorative justice. The Web resource, Restorative Justice Online (www.restorativejustice.org), defines restorative justice as *a systematic response to wrongdoing that emphasizes healing the wounds of victims, offenders and communities caused or revealed by the criminal behavior*. Restorative Justice as a practice is only about 20 years old, but its influence is felt throughout the world. Many RJ programs seek to restore power and peace to victims of crime by allowing them to participate in the civil and criminal justice responses to crime. Strategies can include victim-offender dialogue, family conferencing, or community circles of law enforcement professionals, offenders, victims, faith leaders, and other community stakeholders.

Two films in the Reentry Campaign pipeline are being offered to organizations that submit a short proposal and follow-up report. **Free** copies of A JUSTICE THAT HEALS and an encore distribution of MANHOOD AND VIOLENCE: FATAL PERIL are available to up to 50 organizations that wish to conduct screening events, panel discussions and forums, or other activities.

The most creative events, with the most meaningful impact, will be featured in the bimonthly Reentry e-newsletter and reported to the project funder, The Annie E. Casey Foundation. This is a terrific opportunity to showcase the work of your organization and to provide others with new approaches to solving reentry challenges.

Community organizations have used Reentry documentaries in some very interesting settings. A few examples include:

Department of Juvenile Services, Baltimore, MD

The Department of Juvenile Services used EVERY CHILD IS BORN A POET and MANHOOD AND VIOLENCE: FATAL PERIL as workshop material for corrections and administrative staff. The films were used to create additional awareness about the challenges facing reentering formerly incarcerated men and women, and to stimulate new strategies for the prevention of young people entering the criminal justice system in the first place.

Pennsylvania Prison Society, Philadelphia, PA

The programs at the Pennsylvania Prison Society include several inmate family service programs, including a parenting program in Pennsylvania state prisons. EVERY CHILD IS BORN A POET and

MANHOOD AND VIOLENCE: FATAL PERIL were shown to students of incarcerated parents in their SKIP (Support to Kids of Incarcerated Parents) Program at several schools in Philadelphia. Working with teachers and counselors at the schools provided the Prison Society with opportunities to offer follow-up sessions to their established 12-week curriculum-based program. The films were also used at Temple University's Pan African Studies Community Education Program with an audience of volunteer instructors who work with youth and dedicate their lives to community revitalization through the arts, education, and mentoring.

The Mankind Project, San Diego, CA

A worldwide nonprofit men's organization, The Mankind Project International was formed in 1986 to offer educational and experiential men's personal growth training. The local affiliate used MANHOOD AND VIOLENCE: FATAL PERIL in four community meetings – to encourage discussion of processes for prison group work with men, and to recruit men to plan support groups within local jails and prisons.

The application form for either film can be accessed in .pdf or Microsoft Word format on the Reentry Web site (http://www.reentrymediaoutreach.org/activity_screenform.htm). **Please HURRY! The deadline for this special opportunity is Monday, June 28, 2004!**

A JUSTICE THAT HEALS

Previously broadcast on PBS, April 2000

A JUSTICE THAT HEALS is a story of murder and forgiveness.

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 and, in many ways, it was nothing unusual – an 18-year-old gang member shoots and kills a 19-year-old male on a street corner in broad daylight. 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 type of justice that would heal all concerned.

A JUSTICE THAT HEALS is accompanied by resource guides for youth and adults. Both guides can be accessed at the Reentry Web site: (http://www.reentrymediaoutreach.org/jth_org.htm).

MANHOOD AND VIOLENCE: FATAL PERIL

Offered to public television stations for broadcast on May 2, 2004 by American Public Television (APT)

Hudson River Film & Video's documentary presents a violence prevention project in the San Francisco County Jail where 80 percent of its graduates did not return to jail after only four months of intense immersion. Twelve hours a day, six days a week, men convicted of violent offenses are involved in what is said to be the first restorative justice project of its kind --

RSVP: Resolve to Stop the Violence Project. The film 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.



MANHOOD AND VIOLENCE: FATAL PERIL has an accompanying resource guide that can be printed and distributed to local audiences. The resource guide, plus additional information on the film, can be found on the Reentry Web site (<http://www.reentrymediaoutreach.org/mvfp.htm>).

2. On April 28, 2004, Outreach Extensions was pleased to present an overview of the Reentry National Media Outreach Campaign at the **U.S. Conference of Mayors'** (USCM) *Leadership Forum on Faith-Based Approaches to Societal Re-Integration of Ex-Offenders.*" The half-day forum included more than 20 mayors, mayoral staff, and heads of community and governmental organization for dialogue on the dramatic increase of formerly incarcerated men and women who are reentering communities after their release from prison.

According to the organization's press release, the meeting was the first in a series of forums focused on coordinating the efforts of the faith community with city officials and community leaders to assist ex-offenders. Recommendations from the Summit will be brought before the full body of the Conference of Mayors for policy consideration at its 72nd Annual Meeting in Boston in June.

"Because of their ties to the community, it makes sense to reach out to faith and community-based organizations to create opportunities for ex-offenders," said USCM Executive Tom Cochran.

The USCM launched the new Mayors Center for Faith-Based Initiatives at its January 2004 Winter Meeting. The purpose of the Center is to inform, educate, and train mayors, city-designated faith-based liaisons, and other public servants on how to engage the faith community for more effective partnerships and service.

Outreach Extensions plans to offer Reentry documentaries to local municipalities represented at the forum for broadcast on their local employee networks. In addition, selected works will be translated for Spanish-speaking audiences. Learn more about this effort and other local campaign activity on the Reentry Web site (<http://www.reentrymediaoutreach.org/activity.htm>).

3. Outreach Extensions has continued to **grow the Reentry campaign** with the addition of new productions to the pipeline. Please continue to visit the Reentry Web site (www.reentrymediaoutreach.org) for notes from the producers, core results, video clips, and companion guides for each film. Stay tuned for new tape distribution opportunities for community screenings!

GETTING OUT

The documentary GETTING OUT premiered on MSNBC on December 28, 2003

Veronica Flournoy, Ray Diaz, and Jasper Kelly are three of the 600,000 men and women who are released from prison each year. Each of them is on parole in New York City, and only a missed curfew or a dirty urine test away from landing back in a cell. None of them has lived a tranquil, stable life before prison, and they are not returning to a structured world set to propel them into constructive citizenship. Two of the three are addicted to cocaine. Two of them don't even have homes to return to – and the other only has a home because of his girlfriend. These are once volatile lives interrupted by a term in prison. Now they are back on the streets, where that volatility is institutionalized through parole and homelessness.



Veronica's daughter Keyshawna was born while she was incarcerated. Her mother assumed responsibility for taking care of her children. The film follows Veronica as she learns how to rear her children and allows her mother to be just a grandmother again.

Most former prisoners end up back in prison. Ray fits the average profile: drug problems, homeless, and practically no support. We see what he does and how his family responds when he has nowhere to turn.

In a "tough on crime" environment, we have virtually destroyed the one thing we know

works. Jasper tried to get an education while he was inside, but the program ended prematurely. In the film, Jasper transforms, incrementally, sometimes uncomfortably, from street thug to citizen – even achieving some measure of success as an artist and producer along the way.

GETTING OUT has humanized a segment of the population that is arguably one of the most beleaguered of all – convicted felons. It's a phrase that evokes little sympathy, yet this film leaves viewers challenging every presumption they've ever brought to it. Each of these characters wants what we all want – stability, love, opportunity...fairness. Through the choices the characters make, the hardships they face, and the support they do or do not have, GETTING OUT offers three perspectives on regaining freedom after paying for it.

ONE DOWN

ONE DOWN is a drama presentation, airing only on Detroit Public Television, June 21, 2004

ONE DOWN is the gripping story of a family in crisis. After serving a five-year prison sentence, the Kensey's favorite son Marshall (David Elliott) returns home to find out which family member turned him in. Marshall's return strains the already thin fabric of this family unit, which has been held together by the threads of Southern civility. Ultimately, he is able to reveal each person's part in his abduction and incarceration. "This family drama will grab hold of you and won't let go 'til the end," writes Mike Hughes of the *Lansing State Journal*.



The 90-minute drama, written and directed by Quan-Linh Phillips, was adapted from a two-act play of the same name by Mark McNease. Producer Josan Wright says, "Of all the scripts we reviewed, this story was a stand-out because of its compelling, yet disturbing quality. It confronts evergreen issues such as the existence and cover-up of damaging family secrets," agrees Phillips. At the same time ONE DOWN casts a particular look at the family issues that can surface when a formerly incarcerated member returns to the community. (Tapes available to organizations outside of Michigan.)

4. This issue's reentry program profile is **OUR PLACE** in Washington, DC. Our Place is a private, nonprofit organization created in 1999 to meet the needs of women in Washington, DC who have been involved with the criminal justice system. The organization also supports the children of these women and the children's caregivers. Since its inception five years ago, Our Place has assisted more than 1600 women. It is the only organization in the DC area that is dedicated to supporting this population of women.

Our Place's comprehensive services are available at the drop-in center in Washington, DC as well as in the local jail, halfway houses, and several federal prisons that house DC women. This variety of locations for service provision was chosen so that women could access services during their incarceration, immediately afterward, and on a continual basis thereafter. Since the organization values the wisdom of women in guiding their futures, the determination of which services should be offered is based on participants' perceptions of their own needs. The following programs have been developed as a result:

- Pre-Release Classes provide participants in federal prisons with information about what to expect when they return to the community and which resources are available to them upon their release.
- Legal Services offer advocacy and support on issues ranging from health to housing.
- Drop-in Center supplies women with items to meet their basic needs for clothing, toiletries, identification, access to public transportation, housing, and employment.
- HIV/AIDS Prevention and Education Services equips incarcerated women with the information they need to stay healthy regardless of whether they are living with HIV or AIDS.
- Women's Support Group provides weekly support for formerly incarcerated women.

- Our Kids offers activities for children whose mothers are incarcerated and provides respite to their caregivers two Saturdays each month.
- Family Transportation Program carries children and their caregivers each month to one of the federal prisons in which women are incarcerated.
- *Finding Our Place* is a quarterly newsletter published by Our Place that includes success stories of women who have returned home, as well as legal, social, and medical information especially for women who are currently incarcerated.

Our Place plans to use the Reentry Campaign materials to conduct screening and discussion opportunities for its staff and community partners, and the women and their children who participate in their programs. For more information, contact Susan Galbraith, Executive Director, or Michelle Linzy, Program Director, Our Place, 1236 Pennsylvania Avenue, SE, Washington, DC 20003, Tel. 202-548-2400, Fax: 202-548-2403, or visit the Web site at www.ourplacedc.org.

5. Small Bites – Reentry Issues Around the Nation

The Annie E. Casey Foundation features several articles about reentry issues in its latest issue of Casey Connects, the foundation's quarterly newsletter (http://www.aecf.org/publications/data/connects_winter04.pdf). You can learn more about the work of Atlanta's Aid to Imprisoned Mothers, also featured in the *Outside the Walls* resource guide. You'll also meet Lateefah Simon, the executive director of the Center for Young Women's Development, featured in the Reentry Campaign documentary, GIRL TROUBLE (<http://www.reentrymediaoutreach.org/gt.htm>)

The American Printing House for the Blind in Louisville, Kentucky, has an interesting approach to helping formerly incarcerated individuals make an easier transition back to work. Currently, approximately 25 Braille production facilities operate in state and federal prisons across the country. These programs:

- Address a critical national shortage of Braille transcription professionals.
- Produce Braille materials, especially student textbooks, for blind people throughout the U.S.
- Offer educational and vocational opportunities for inmates - which will hopefully lead to employment on the outside following parole.
- Provide inmates with an opportunity to "give back" to society for the crimes they have committed.

The programs are proving to have a very positive effect on participating inmates, and are well received by the prisons in which they are housed. Anecdotal information indicates that few parolees who have participated in prison Braille programs return to prison. However, one of the challenges with formerly incarcerated adults who participate in prison Braille programs and are paroled is that most do not continue to work as Braille transcribers on the outside. They are finding employment, since they have acquired many job skills while also learning Braille (computer skills, basic literacy skills, time management, teamwork, project planning and scheduling), but the field of blindness is losing these very skilled transcribers to other work.

Braille transcription can easily be a cottage industry and is therefore ideal for many inmates who need to remain in a specific area of the country. Project Director Nancy Lacewell wants to partner with parole and probation professionals around the country to establish programs through which qualified paroled Braille transcribers can continue working in this field once they're released. To reach her, please contact Nancy Lacewell, Director of Government and Community Affairs, American Printing House for the Blind, Inc., 1839 Frankfort Avenue, Louisville, KY 40206, Phone (502) 895-2405 ext. 339, Fax (502) 899-2363, e-mail: nlacewell@aph.org, Web site: www.aph.org.

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. **Please let us know how we're doing through the feedback form on the Reentry Web site (<http://www.reentrymediaoutreach.org/contactus.htm>).**

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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