



# Newport News Reentry Newsletter

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## Community Partnerships

The word is getting out about Basecamp. This trendy online project management tool is being utilized by the Sheriff's Office and community partners to enhance communications. It is an efficient way to communicate to assist returning citizens with basic needs such as employment, housing, education, mentoring, faith-based and non-profit support.



**Basecamp**<sup>®</sup>

The site is user-friendly and available to anyone who has access to the Internet. Participants are reminded that its intended use is for reentry efforts. It is not used as a social networking site or general advertising. Collaboration and tracking are made easy by the use of to-do lists, file sharing, chatting, messages, and calendars. The entire system is managed online which means the software or data does not reside on the user's computer. If you are a Reentry Council member you probably are familiar with Basecamp and you were invited to join. If you reside on a reentry subcommittee, please contact your co-chair to be added to Basecamp. You can also contact [phoward@nngov.com](mailto:phoward@nngov.com) for more information and assistance. Please stay tuned for more updates on this project and we welcome you to Basecamp!

## Transition from Jail to Community Visit

Community partners and the Newport News Sheriff's Office visited Davidson County

Sheriff's Office in Nashville, Tennessee, to view the National Institute of Correction's Transition from Jail to Community (TJC) Reentry Project. The site visit enabled a visual of a successful reentry program that displays an integrated, system-wide approach to delivering services to offenders pre- and post-release. Businesses participate in conducting training at the jail which gives both parties an opportunity to form good working relationships. This often leads to legitimate employment once the person is released from incarceration. The TJC trip was helpful in viewing a successful community whose collaborative efforts were to involve community stakeholders who work together to strengthen families and homes by reducing recidivism and building safer communities. Basecamp was introduced to the group during this visit and has been replicated in the Newport News community.

## Newport News Jail Launches SNAP Site

Share Network Access Points (SNAP) opened a site at the Newport News City Jail Annex on October 15, 2012. The Jail



Annex's SNAP site is a career-focused lab where trained staffs assess and provide inmates with an array of job-searching services prior to discharge. Once released, individuals can opt to continue these services in the post-

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release program or are referred to Peninsula WorkLink's One-Stop Career Center. Many components are covered in the SNAP Lab to include resume-building, mock interviews, job searches, career and educational exploration, skill-assessments, and the reviewing of employment applications. Due to the successfulness of the SNAP class, an Advanced SNAP course has been developed which incorporates a resume-writing software, complete with a virtual interviewer to further prep individuals before discharge.

## Obtaining Education While Incarcerated

Education is an important aspect when reintegrating ex-offenders. For the 2013 Calendar Year, the Newport News City Jail has graduated eight inmates with a GED. All inmates who have tested, also passed giving the pass-rate of 100% thus far.



## New Pre-Release Programs

The Newport News City Jail is now offering two new programs for inmates: Emerge Batterer's Intervention Program and InsideOut Dad Fatherhood Program. The Emerge Batterer's Program is a new program designed to eliminate violence in intimate relationships. Emerge seeks to educate individual abusers, prevent young people from learning to accept violence in their relationships, improve institutional responses to domestic violence, and increase public awareness about the causes and solutions to partner violence. This program is taught by certified counselors from the Center for Child and Family Services.

InsideOut Dad (IoD), an evidence-based parenting program specifically designed for incarcerated fathers, is the only research based Fatherhood program in the country. The Office of Human Services provides this training

over a period of six weeks, offering two classes per week. While all the classes are helpful, especially important is the focus on ways the Dads can form and maintain connections with their children while incarcerated. A Fathering Plan is created to help guide how and the frequency of forming and maintaining contact. The plan is designed to help Dads become an expert on their children's interests, dreams, hopes, and fears so that they can have more meaningful contact and communication with them.

## Ex-Offender Success Stories

Story of Mr. J

As a one time resident, but now a "returning citizen" to the community from the Newport News City Jail, and successfully completing the Fresh Start Ex-Offender Mentoring Re-Entry program, Mr. J has been equipped and empowered to confront another milestone in his life, "starting over again with nothing."

After connecting with the Fresh Start Program for post-release follow-up services, he was receptive to considering a change in his strategy for securing employment. His prior experience in the workforce as a Fork Lift Operator and Warehouse employee in shipping and receiving departments would be excellent skills if an employer could look beyond his criminal convictions. He was coached on how to appropriately and honestly express his past, market his skills and talents, as well as sell his tangible benefits which an employer could qualify for simply by hiring an offender. He would need to know how and when to include this information during his job search interviews.

Evidence of an internal change manifested itself during his second follow-up session. He honestly discussed the pain of rejection, coupled with self-resentment and anger at his former choices. A temporary setback in the form of rejection came on January 8, 2013. This, however, did not throw him off focus, as he looked for a learning opportunity in growing

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through rejection, and using the “no” as inspiration to work more diligently for the “yes.” With this positive approach an offer of employment was given by temporary to permanent employment company on March 13, 2013. He is currently working in a warehouse at an hourly wage of over \$13/hr. with the company anticipating full-time permanent status soon. In reporting this account, he joyously told Fresh Start staff his feelings of being offered a job. He has since offered to become more involved in helping others returning to the community in his personal best goal of giving back.

*Center for Child and Family Services’ Fresh Start Program success story.*

## Story of Ms. M P

Ms. M P began as a student in the Newport News City Jail’s first SNAP class. After six-weeks of career-readiness training, Ms. M P was released the day following the course’s mock-interview class. With the City Jail’s recent effort to enhance post-release services, the Sheriff’s Office Reentry Division maintained communication with her and assisted with job searches post-release. After a few weeks, she found employment with a staffing agency working weekends only. Ms. M P expressed the need for more income and still pursued various employment and educational avenues. Her persistence and efforts paid off. She is now working seven days a week at a restaurant.

*Newport News City Jail’s SNAP student success story.*

## Story of Mr. L E

After serving twenty years in federal prison, Mr. L E came to Our Daughters and Sons Network in October of last year with a serious need to find employment. Mr. L E had impressive experience with jobs he held while doing time. With the information, a marketable resume was created for him online. Follow-ups were made over the course of several weeks about job leads. In January, Mr. L E reported with a bubbly smile and eager to share his good news

that he landed employment in Smithfield, Virginia. Mr. L E shared how in the interview he admitted his courage to share the truth about his conviction and it was one of the deciding factors that landed him the job.

*Our Daughters and Sons Network’s success story.*

## Community Highlights



Reentry Site Visit to Davidson County Sheriff's Office



Newport News Jail Volunteer Appreciation Ceremony



SNAP Lab Grand Opening