



# Newport News Reentry Newsletter

VOLUME 2, ISSUE 2

AUGUST 2013

## Pastors' Council Resource Fair

By Peggy Howard, Newport News Sheriff's Office

The Peninsula Pastors' Council, Inc., which represents 36 churches, sponsored a resource fair for ex-offenders. The event was in two parts; the first was Saturday, March 16, known as "Preparation Day." Over 300 participants attended workshops that consisted of Resume Preparation, Interviewing Skills, and Dress for Success. The Department of Motor Vehicles provided a mobile unit, equipped to issue state identifications and information regarding reinstating one's driver's license. The second part held Saturday, April 13,



was designated as the "Employer's Day" and was intended to connect participants with actual employers. A few employers were onsite; however, next year's event planners

will focus on ideas to get more employer participation.

## St. Brides Resource Fair

By Peggy Howard, Newport News Sheriff's Office

The Newport News Sheriff's Office and a host of other vendors participated in the St. Brides Correctional Center Resource Fair held in April. Although it was about providing information to the population of individuals soon to be released, it was also a wonderful opportunity for vendors to network with each other and returning citizens. Close to 200 returning citizens, in groups of 50 at a time, greeted vendors. The time left on their sentences were within 18 months or less. Some were due to be

released from custody the very next day. While everyone enjoyed the nice lunch that was prepared, entertainment in the form of "St. Brides Got Craft Skill's Bingo Showdown" was provided, complete with prizes made by some of the facility's gifted artists! Events such as this give us an opportunity to educate our returning citizens about services in their communities before they are released. An individual soon to be released and returning to Newport News spoke of a family member that happened to be employed by the Newport News Sheriff's Office. While we spoke on the importance of family reunification, he was encouraged to reach out to this family member to assist in his successful reintegration into society.

## Reentry Town Hall Meetings

By Evaundra Timas, Newport News Sheriff's Office

The Newport News Reentry Council has hosted four successful Coming Home Town Hall Meetings. These events are used to inform communities,



concerned citizens, and City leadership on the various collaborative efforts going on locally and regionally. With the most recent event on June 6, 2013, a panel of experts discussed the many exciting reentry initiatives that are on-going, to include the passing of "Automatic Restoration of Voting and Civil Rights for Non-violent Felons" passed by Governor McDonnell, effective July 15. The Council will continue to host town hall meetings to educate the community on various reentry efforts, and on legislative victories.

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## GED Graduation Rates Continue to Rise

By Katina Richardson, Newport News Sheriff's Office

On April 20<sup>th</sup>, there was another graduation ceremony at the City Jail Annex where six students earned their GED. The test pass-rate at the Newport News City Jail continues to be 100%.



## Enhanced Post-Release Services Offered

By Peggy Howard, Newport News Sheriff's Office

Beginning at sentencing (pre-release) and extending beyond release (post-release), Newport News Sheriff's Office Reentry Division staffs assess and link inmates with services specific to their needs.

At least 90 days prior to release, inmates are asked if they would like to participate in the post-release reentry. Participation is strictly voluntary. Although, the work begins while they are still incarcerated, post-release ensures continuity of services in the community which is important to ex-offenders' success. Participants are in the program because they want to succeed in reintegrating into society. Reentry staff conducts post-release interviews and maintains case management files to keep track of each person's progress. Resume preparation, job search training, employment referrals, housing referrals, and transportation assistance are some of the services provided. At least two clients were successful in attaining employment and they continue to keep in touch as required. In addition to the Sheriff's Office Reentry Division, service providers such as Center for Child and Family Services, Step-Up Incorporated, and Our Daughters and Sons Network provide post-release services. If you are a service provider interested in serving the post-release population, please contact reentry staff, Lorrene Crowell, 926-6930, to be placed on the referral list. Anyone interested in post-release services can contact Lorrene Crowell, or Peggy Howard, 926-8086.

## Youth Civic Engagement

By Evaundra Timas, Newport News Sheriff's Office

Research has shown that the active participation of young people in their communities, known as youth civic engagement, is linked to a variety of beneficial outcomes such as a greater sense of community

ethos, higher self-esteem, and lower crime rates. Getting youth involved by creating opportunities to gain work experience, acquire new skills, and to learn responsibility and accountability—all while contributing to the good of their communities, is a step in the right direction when attempting to decrease the likelihood of young adults entering correctional institutions. The Newport News Sheriff's Office is engaging youth in the community through its Youth Law Enforcement Career Exploring Program. It is a structured program that offers hands-on training that helps youth gain insight on various aspects in the field of



law enforcement. Young men and women are offered experiential learning with lots of fun-filled, hands-on activities that promote the growth and development of adolescent youth. The age requirements are 14 to 20 years old. Program highlights include: Positive alternative to negative youth activities, such as drug abuse and involvement with gangs; sense of acceptance and belonging to the "right" group; opportunities to participate in practical, real, and meaningful law enforcement related hands-on experiences; new career and personal skills; and opportunities to try leadership roles and develop skills.

## Advanced SNAP Class Offered to Further Enhance Job Searching Skills

By Peggy Howard & Evaundra Timas, Newport News Sheriff's Office

Following the success of the Peninsula Worklink's Share Network Access Point (SNAP) class offered to inmates at the Newport News Jail Annex, an advanced SNAP class has been developed and introduced to those completing the basic class. Facilitators, Katina Richardson and Evaundra Timas, conducted the first basic SNAP class offered to females in November of 2012. Shortly following this class was the first basic SNAP class offered to males, which was facilitated by Lorrene Crowell

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and Peggy Howard. The advanced class is also a six-week course, but differs from the basic in that it incorporates the use of ResumeMaker software which has a virtual recruiter. Participants will focus on building their portfolios, marketable resumes, and utilizing financial management skills. The virtual recruiter offers the potential to practice over 500 interview questions with answers and



rationales. This allows the participants to work independently while sharpening their skills. Before graduation, participants have an opportunity to meet with an employer who will provide information and answers to questions that are industry specific. At a most recent graduation, the speaker was a successful businessman, who happened to be an ex-offender and was very open and shared his unique perspective.

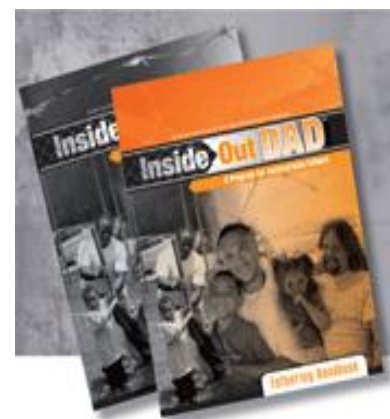
What's next for SNAP? If grant funding is approved, the SNAP program will become mobile through the use of iPad technology and can be offered to those located in the Newport News City Jail, which eliminates the need to transport them to the Jail Annex. In addition, iPads can provide services to those ex-offenders no longer incarcerated, but who would like to continue with basic and/or advanced SNAP classes through post-release reentry services. This offers continuity of services because the ex-offender is able to return after being released to continue their training until they have been successful in their job search. Because post-release job-search training is located outside of the detention facilities, the iPads are essential in providing this training and allows flexibility to facilitate individuals or large groups, significantly increasing the number of people served.

## Internship Program

**By Katina Richardson, Newport News Sheriff's Office**  
Christopher Newport University and the Newport News Sheriff's Office have a wonderful partnership providing students an opportunity to gain work experience in the field of law enforcement. One CNU student interned for Katina Richardson, in the Inmate Programs Department of the Sheriff's Office early in 2013. The intern proved to be efficient, dedicated, and responsible. The student completed tasks such as coordinating graduation ceremonies, drafting inmate correspondences, and managing statistical data. Thanks to the Newport News Sheriff's Office and Christopher Newport University's partnership, the Internship Program continues to be a success giving students an opportunity to gain skills, exposure, and hands-on experience in the workforce.

## Fatherhood Graduation in City Jail

**By Evaundra Timas, Newport News Sheriff's Office**  
The InsideOut Dad evidence-based program had its first graduation ceremony for its participants in the Newport News City Jail on April 17, 2013. The City of Newport News Mayor, McKinley Price, was the guest speaker and congratulated all the dads for the successful completion of the six-week course. InsideOut Dad is a powerful course that enhances incarcerated fathers' communication with their children while housed in the jail. The course also helps them to become an expert on their children's interests, dreams, hopes, and fears so that the dads can have more meaningful contact and communication with their children.





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## Local Success Stories!



### **Newport News Redevelopment & Housing Authority** By Teresa Jones

Client S registered with the Family Investment Center on February 14, 2013. Her immediate goal was to gain employment so that she could better take care of her children and ultimately become a first generation home owner. Client S was impressive with her determination, drive and eagerness to do whatever she had to do in order to meet her goals. The one thing noticeable was that S. was very shy by nature and needed to build up her confidence; I recalled holding Client S's hand (because she was so nervous) as she entered the room where a speed "mock" interview exercise was being held. Surprisingly to her, she did very well with the exercise. She applied the feedback from the exercise to her employment seeking endeavors and began believing in herself more. The Family Investment Center helped her with her building a professional resume and assisted her with the job searches in our SNAP lab. Client S never missed a self-advancement, life coping skills workshop or job fair that she was asked to attend at the Family Investment Center. She even went to the local library to do job searches and completed applications on her own when the lab was not accessible to her. During one of the workshops, Client S mentioned to the staff that she had completed an application with a local Public School System with hopes of being called for an interview. A few weeks later, staff received a call from S. that she went on an interview with the local school system and was scheduled to take her fingerprints and begin the background check process. Client S visited the Family Investment Center in her uniform to inform staff that she got the job and began

employment on May 21, 2013 in the child nutrition services department. We are all so very proud of Client S. She is an example that hard work and determination equals success!

### **New Zion Baptist Church SNAP Site**

By Bernice Perkins and James White

Client DB met with SNAP Job Search Assistants (JSAs) on June 18, 2013. He was seeking summer employment as a cashier at a retail store, food service establishment or related work at a theme park. He graduated from high school in June of 2013. DB's only work experience was as a cashier at a fast food restaurant in NC. He did not have a resume but had submitted applications online to a local retail store and theme park. On July 6, 2013, client DB was accepted for a job at a local large retail store and is scheduled to begin orientation. Although DB did not use this resume for that position, it can easily be updated for future use.

The JSAs were persistent in exploring the candidate's work background and high school accomplishments and helping him understand their value to future employers. Also, the JSAs provided coaching in interview techniques and follow-up. These proved helpful in securing that position. These will also prove helpful in future employment situations.

### **Hampton Redevelopment & Housing Authority**

By Steve Robison

Story 1: After spending 18 years with her last company, Client A was let go from her job. Facing unemployment, she spent her time making multiple visits to the SNAP site where she searched for the next opportunity. She said all she knew was warehouse, cooking, and housekeeping; those were the areas of work she focused on in her search. With news of a new restaurant opening up in town, she decided to apply. She stated she was going to "put her name on it". Out of 1,200 applicants, she was one of the few given a job. "I put my name on it!" she stated. She is expected to start training at the end of the month.

Story 2: Transportation can be a big issue when it comes to searching for a job. This was just the case for Client B, but it didn't stop her from visiting the

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SNAP site. She found out about a floral nursery that was hiring a part-time worker. She told me that it was located right across the street from her house and that she really hoped to get the job. A week or so passed; she was given the job. She was excited and couldn't wait to start. She has been at the job for a couple weeks now.

Story 3: Client C had been coming into the SNAP site to complete his fork lift certification. After missing out on a job, he realized he needed this certification to become more marketable. Two weeks after completion of the certification, he was offered a temporary job working in a warehouse. He says he loves his job and hopes that it turns into a permanent job.

## **New Zion Baptist Church SNAP Site** **By Vivian Brown**

Client D had used the services of the New Zion SNAP four years ago to assist in obtaining a chef's job at a local restaurant. Recently, after being laid off from the chef's job, Client D contacted SNAP again to get help in updating his resume so that he could apply for a chef's position at a local country club. A SNAP Job Search Assistant (JSA) met with Client D and reviewed the job description of the new job. Then the JSA helped Client D add to his resume the skills that he had developed during his years at the restaurant. The JSA also rehearsed Client D for his upcoming interview. Client D was recently hired by the country club. When asked what he thought won him the job, Client D said, "It was my resume."

## **Hampton Redevelopment & Housing Authority** **By Steve Robison**

Client E had gone through several months of unemployment when she started using the HRHA SNAP. We focused on helping her identify her skills, develop her resume, and teach her techniques and tools in following up on applied positions and landing an interview.

A month went by, and several applications and resumes were sent out. Finally an interview opportunity presented itself. She had been contacted by an employer at a restaurant in town, who was looking to fill supervisor and management

positions. With news of the interview, we spent time discussing what to focus on during the interview. It was show time!

I received a call a few days ago, saying she got the Job. Client E says they plan on eventually putting her in a management position. Everyone is excited!

## **Reentry Council Membership**

**By Peggy Howard, Newport News Sheriff's Office**

The Newport News Reentry Council was formed in 2011 as one of the Mayor's Task Force on Teenage and Young Adult Violence Reduction's components. The Council meets on the first Monday of every other month at 5:30 p.m., 2501 Washington Avenue, 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor. The next meeting will be held August 5, 2013. Membership is open to anyone interested in promoting successful reentry strategies and working collaboratively with other stakeholders. There are subcommittees for each reentry component such as housing, employment, legislation, veterans, mental health, faith-based, mentoring, and financial obligations. Because the real work takes place outside of the Council meetings at the subcommittee level, members are asked to sign up to work on at least one of the subcommittees. If you would like to join the Council, please fax or mail the attached Partnership & Participation Agreement form to:

*Newport News Reentry Council  
2501 Washington Avenue  
Newport News, VA 23607  
Fax (757) 926-8429*



You can also send your completed form in a PDF file to [phoward@nngov.com](mailto:phoward@nngov.com). Through active partnerships with all stakeholders on the Reentry Council, the work of reentry will contribute to safer communities and an enhanced quality of life in Newport News.

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## Newport News Reentry Council Partnership & Participation Agreement

This is a statement of agreement for participation as a member of the Newport News Reentry Council. I understand the purpose of the Council is to work collaboratively at the local level to improve public safety and strengthen the community and its families through effective delivery of reentry services.

I also understand the local Newport News Reentry Council uses a comprehensive approach to reentry. Based on a collaborative model, it is a community-based and family-focused reentry approach that integrates public safety and human services.

The Newport News Reentry Council is not a new program or organization. Rather, it is an approach to reentry. Council members will consist of government agencies, community-based agencies, local businesses, non-profits, civic groups and faith-based organizations. All will coordinate post-release service delivery in the community. Each individual or agency council member provides their own service, but shall do so in a coordinated and collaborative way. The goals of the Newport News Reentry Council are to:

1. Increase public safety and reduce recidivism through effective reentry planning and service delivery.
2. Maximize opportunities for people returning to the community after incarceration.
3. Support family and community integration for people returning from incarceration.

### Statement of Participation

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As an individual or an agency member of the Newport News Reentry Council, I agree to assist and/or provide services to previously incarcerated citizens returning to the community.

Partnership Type: Individual \_\_\_\_\_ Agency/Organization \_\_\_\_\_

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Agency/Organization: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone Number: (\_\_\_\_) \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Please describe the services provided by you or your agency below:

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\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date