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Kings County Re-Entry Task Force

DRAFT MINUTES - Bi-Monthly Meeting of March 25, 2015

Meeting Date:	Wednesday, March 25th, 2015	
Meeting Time:	1:00 PM – 3:00 PM	
Meeting Location:	Counseling Services – EDNY Conference Room 210 Joralemon Street, 3rd Floor, Brooklyn, NY 11201	
Attendees (Subject to verification):	Margaret Chretien (DCJS) Ellen Edelman (Families Fathers and Children) Wendy Hersh (NYSED) Michelle Nelson (CSEDNY) Hailey Nolasco (GMACC) Trevor Reid Michelle A. Yon (DOCCS)	Latoya Benjamin (KCDA) Michael Davenport (KCDA-BYDRP) Norma Fernandes (KCDA-KCRTF) Andrea Johnson (KCDA-KCRTF) Christopher Owens (KCDA-BYDRP) Dr. Vanda Seward (KCDA-KCRTF)

ITEM #	ITEM	DESCRIPTION AND ACTION ITEMS
1	Call to order	The meeting was called to order by Mr. Owens, Co-Chair, at 1:00 pm.
2	Opening Remarks	<p>Mr. Owens called for the approval of the January 21st, 2015 minutes. If there are any comments or concerns, he asked for individuals to please contact Michael Davenport and an amended version would be circulated. Mr. Owens asked Mr. Davenport to record the minutes of the meeting.</p> <p>Michelle Yon, Co-Chair, gave an update on the Parole situation in Brooklyn. DOCCS personnel are finalizing their moves to new offices and are planning to hold an open house.</p>
3	Next Meetings	The next meeting of the KCRTF is tentatively scheduled for May 20 th , 2015.
4	Introductions	<p>Those in attendance introduced themselves.</p> <p>Hailey Nolasco, a former intern for the KCRTF, introduced Gangers Making Astronomical Community Changes (GMACC). It is a non-profit organization located in East Flatbush, within the 67th Precinct. GMACC provides wrap-around services to at-risk youth, men and women ages 13-30 with a history of gang involvement and violence who are on probation, currently on parole or have previously been in prison. GMACC adheres to the Cure Violence Model, an evidence-based treatment model based out of Chicago.</p> <p>Mr. Owens invited GMACC to discuss collaborations with the District Attorney's Office and BYDRP.</p>

5	Coordinator's Report	<p><i>Referral Process</i></p> <p>Dr. Seward stated that the KCRTF continues to work on enhancing the referral process. The KCRTF has begun getting “Community Prep packets” from Michelle Yon via email for inmates roughly 120 days prior to release. This allows the KCRTF staff to review and approve participants through case conference meetings with DOCCS at an earlier point in time, ensuring that services will be ready for potential participants as soon as they are released from prison.</p> <p>KCRTF staff plan to complete the intake process within 10 days of a participant’s release from prison. Ms. Seward displayed the draft referral flowchart to show attendees the referral process.</p> <p>Mr. Owens asked for feedback on the flowchart. He stated that the chart would be submitted along with the DCJS grant renewal application, and that information that would improve the chart and other attachments was encouraged.</p> <p><i>Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS) Training</i></p> <p>Dr. Seward indicated that she and Ms. Fernandes are attending OWDS training in Albany sponsored by DCJS. The training consists of three sessions of one week each. The team of two have completed the first session, and will finish all the training sessions by the end of June 2015. She described it as a very good course complete with much useful information.</p> <p>OWDS is a Cognitive Behavioral Intervention (CBI) that focuses on work and criminal records for employment. It focuses on individual client needs by building on their strengths and addressing potential weaknesses. It places a high focus on client engagement and client comfort. OWDS Facilitators use the Holland Code to help participants determine career paths, job skills and ability. It is completed on computers allowing for quick and easy result sharing.</p> <p>Dr. Seward explained the goals of using OWDS to enhance job readiness workshop as part of the KCRTF services and to expand to other programs in the BYDRP at 350 Jay Street.</p> <p><i>Update on DCJS RFP For 2015-2018 CRTF Grant/Contract</i></p> <p>The KCRTF is currently working on the application for the new DCJS Re-Entry Taskforce Grant. It is due on April 6th, 2015 and will cover a 3 year period from July 1st 2015 – June 30th 2018.</p> <p>There are 19 Re-Entry Taskforces around New York State that are funded by DCJS. Dr. Seward explained the history of the KCRTF and how it began as the ComALERT program, evolving into its current form of two separate programs: KCRTF and ComALERT. The KCRTF is funded to provide services for moderate to high-risk parolees. In order to qualify, you must be on parole in Brooklyn and have a COMPAS score of 1-3. The ComALERT program provides services for all other NYS Parolees as well as NYC Probation, Federal Probation and BOP clients.</p> <p>Within the District Attorney’s office, a joint goal of the two programs is to ensure that no formerly incarcerated person is denied services in Brooklyn.</p> <p>Dr. Seward discussed changes to the new DCJS Grant. There will be a greater emphasis on CBI programming for parolees. The KCRTF will include the previously mentioned OWDS workshops as well as Thinking for a Change (T4C) workshops. T4C is a curriculum developed by the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) that has been used for many years in DOCCS. The KCRTF is planning to start T4C workshops in July on-site at Brooklyn Parole offices. These T4C groups will focus on those individuals who do not also need OWDS training, ensuring that a greater number of Brooklyn Parolees are receiving CBI.</p> <p>Dr. Seward asked Ms. Chretien if it would be allowable to provide T4C to those who are receiving no <i>other</i> services from the KCRTF. Ms. Chretien stated that as long as parolees had a</p>
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moderate to high risk score, they would be eligible for KCRTF T4C sessions.

Community Resource Bank

The KCRTF is constantly adding to its Community Resource Bank. It has not developed into a full-fledged listing yet. Dr. Seward and KCRTF staff have been going to meetings and community forums to discuss participation in the KCRTF.

Dr. Seward explained the process of joining the KCRTF resource bank. Prospective programs first attend a KCRTF bi-monthly meeting and present their program to the current KCRTF members. Then a site visit is scheduled and, if the program meets KCRTF criteria, it can join. If not, they are given feedback and a second chance to apply.

Dr. Seward stressed that Re-Entry programs cannot be one size fits all. Clients have a wide range of needs that must be addressed individually. In addition, our knowledge of re-entry is constantly changing so programs must be able to adapt as well.

The KCRTF is not a hierarchical entity. While it is governed by DOCCS, KCDA and DCJS, it depends upon feedback from all of its members to ensure that it continues to provide the best possible services. Member feedback is essential to the success and growth of the KCRTF. The KCRTF wants members to participate and contribute as much as possible. The goal is to help all programs improve their services by learning other experts in the field and, in turn, teaching.

KCRTF Committee Update

The Case Conference Committee is designed to review case plans and information provided from DOCCS for program participants. The goal is to ensure that KCRTF is appropriately engaging clients based on their needs, of which they can have many. At a minimum, the Case Conference Committee will consist of the DOCCS Co-Chair, Dr. Seward, and a KCRTF Case Manager. They will assign client to service programs and inform the PO before the participants release from prison.

Ms. Chretien asked about consent forms. Dr. Seward explained that consent forms will be sent to the ORC before release. While not every potential participant will consent to the KCRTF before release, we expect that most will. Ms. Yon gave the example of a letter she received from an inmate at Sing-Sing expressing interest in KCRTF. It is expected that as this new referral process starts there will be changes made.

The Public Education Committee has engaged in multiple community awareness activities since the last KCRTF bi-monthly meeting.

On April 1st, the KCRTF will be hosting a training entitled: Sex Offenders – Myths and Realities. It is expected that upwards of 60 people will be attending. It will include a panel discussion with panel members from Parole, NYPD, KCDA Victim Services and a treatment provider. Dr. Seward explained the importance of including Victim Services to ensure that they are not forgotten in this process. CASAC Continuing Education hours will be available.

KCRTF is working on developing a website that it hopes to have active by April 15th. The website will bring together resources for those on parole in Brooklyn. It will help inform the public of the KCRTF goals, provide links to service providers and information on legal rights. It will allow for community feedback. It will be accessible through the District Attorney's website.

There will be a Re-Entry Consortium Meeting in April. The Consortium Meetings are sponsored by ACCES-VR. The focus will be on children of incarcerated parents.

Dr. Seward discussed the planned Entrepreneurship workshop series for formerly incarcerated tentatively scheduled for May 6th or 7th. Its purpose will be to get formerly incarcerated

		<p>individuals thinking. She stated that many clients have plans but need help putting that plan into action. The hope is for it to be a three-part series. Ms. Benjamin discussed the interest of DEFY Ventures if participating.</p> <p>Ms. Chretien discussed the Job Summit DCJS has planned for Friday, May 8th. It will target the eight downstate County Re-Entry Taskforces. There will be presenters dealing with re-entry employment, job readiness and employment contractors. The hope is that Task Forces will come out of it with a commitment to use the resources available to them and their clients and to increase employment outcomes. Invitations and registration forms will be sent out soon.</p>
6	Fiscal Report	<p><i>Fiscal Report</i></p> <p>Mr. Owens circulated a chart illustrating the KCDA re-entry statistics for fiscal year 2015. It showed the tallies of 2015 KCDA re-entry intakes and 2015 KCDA re-entry retention. The chart also exhibited the KCDA and DCJS benchmarks for 2015.</p> <p>In the past, KCDA re-entry services did not have a good grasp on the retention of their clients. Recently this has changed; the Task Force has re-engaged many of their clients. Mr. Owens stated that the Task Force is doing very well, and revealed that there has been a big shift in keeping clients engaged. He presented that, since July, most unsuccessful discharges have been due to parole violations versus the client disengaging due to a lack of interest. He credits the success of KCRTF retention to their moral driven criteria rather than just being driven by DCJS grant criteria.</p> <p>KCRTF does not stop engaging with their clients after 90 days, it is important for the staff to keep lines of communication open with their clients. Through these communications, the Task Force can better keep data on their impact on recidivation.</p>
7	Reports/Concerns	N/A
8	Guest Presenter	<p><i>Ellen Edelman – Families Fathers and Children</i></p> <p>Ms. Edelman attended this meeting to provide meeting participants with information about the Families Fathers and Children organization. She described the organization’s history stating that eight years ago there began to be a greater interest for fathers involved in the criminal justice program. Traditionally, there had been many programs for mothers, but fewer for fathers. She likened a family without its father to an “amputation,” stating that 70% of children follow their fathers to prison. They found that kids of incarcerated fathers were often ashamed, marginalized and stigmatized. They would try to act invisible to hide the fact from their school friends. She stated that, in Central Brooklyn, there are currently 9000 kids with a father in state prison.</p> <p>Families Fathers and Children is currently in Park Slope (previously in Crown Heights) and began as an after school program. They would provide events on holidays, which she described as very popular and always filled to capacity. They conduct a lot of home visits. They often receive letters from incarcerated fathers asking them to check on their children. They assist fathers with paperwork for visits and will assist in Family Court as well.</p> <p>Ms. Edelman described a lot of ignorance from judges, lawyers, social workers and schools. They often state their intention of not letting the child visit their father as a means of protecting the child. However, she stated that it’s more traumatizing for a child to not see his/her father at all. Fathers can provide guidance and support, even from prison.</p> <p>Their organization has been providing classes to parents at Edgecombe Correctional Facility. It is a one-week psychoeducational group that focuses on child development and education. They have found that participants in their programming have a recidivism rate of 25%, compared to the statewide rate of 40%. Their goal is to provide parents classes as a standard part of reentry in</p>

		<p>the Bronx and Brownsville. They are working at the Murphy Community Center in the Bronx and are planning an Easter party there next Thursday.</p> <p>She stated that transportation to and from prison for family visits can be provided on a limited, case-by-case basis, but asked that anyone interested should call their office with questions. She stated that ACS will pay for transportation in the child is in foster care but that this service is often underutilized.</p> <p>Mr. Owens invited them to use space at 210 Joralemon for group and workshops in the future.</p> <p><i>Trevor Reid – Former Federal Probation Officer</i></p> <p>Mr. Reid is a retired Federal Probation Officer who spent over 15 years working on Re-Entry services for Federal Probation. He currently works at a family clinic treating co-occurring disorders.</p> <p>Mr. Reid explained the process of Federal Probation, stating that while many people know about their individual states procedures they are unfamiliar with the Federal criminal justice system. The United States Probation and Parole Department is overseen by the Department of Justice. There are 92 district courts. He stated that the Eastern District of New York (EDNY) and Southern District of New York (SDNY) are two of the major districts where many new laws emerge from. He stated that one of the reasons for this is the high number of criminals in Brooklyn that get tried in EDNY and SDNY.</p> <p>Reid explained how Federal Probation is the federal equivalent of supervised release, or parole in New York. 80% of offenders were high at the time of their crime or had a drug history. The Federal Drug Program takes 1 year in a halfway house. The largest Federal halfway house is in Brooklyn at 104 Gold Street.</p> <p>Reid stated that the priority for their inmates is to find work because a lack of work leads to a wide range of negative outcomes. They have found that work skills are very important and that they will help people get certified and credentialed in a field to improve their job outcomes. For example, he talked about Chef Jeff, who was the first black chef at the Hard Rock Café in Las Vegas. Chef Jeff was in the San Diego Federal Prison. Reid used this as example of how you can get work despite having a federal criminal record.</p> <p>Ms. Hersh asked about utilizing the ACCES-VR in federal prisons. Mr. Reid stated that he planned to help her get in touch with the current re-entry team in EDNY.</p>
9	Old Business	No old business presented at this time.
10	New Business	The National Action Network will be holding their Annual Conference from April 8 th – April 13 th in Manhattan.
11	Adjournment	<p>The meeting was adjourned at 3:00 pm.</p> <p>Next meeting is tentatively scheduled for May 20th, 2015.</p>