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Kings County Re-Entry Task Force

Bi-Monthly Meeting of June 1, 2016 – Preliminary Minutes

Meeting Date:	Wednesday, June 1, 2016	
Meeting Time:	12:30 pm – 2:30 pm	
Meeting Location:	Office of the Kings County District Attorney 350 Jay Street, 19th Floor – Bob Kaye Room, Brooklyn, NY 11201	
Attendees: (From Attendance Sheet signatures)	<p>BROOKLYN DEFENDER SERVICES (BDS): Wesley Caines</p> <p>BURNING HOUSE PROJECT: Melvin Blackman</p> <p>CENTER FOR APPELLATE LITIGATION: Susannah Karlin</p> <p>CHURCH OF GETHSEMANE: Min. Chibueze Okurie</p> <p>COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY- CENTER FOR JUSTICE: Claudia P. Rincon, Geraldine Downing (?)</p> <p>COMMON JUSTICE: Diamond Overby</p> <p>COUNSELING SERVICES – EDNY (CSEDNY): Melina Rose</p> <p>DOE FUND: Timothy Matthews</p> <p>FAMILIES, FATHERS AND CHILDREN: Ellen Edelman</p> <p>FEDCAP REHABILITATION SERVICES: Terrence Byerson</p> <p>FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF CROWN HEIGHTS: Rev. Donald Odom</p> <p>THE FORTUNE SOCIETY: Ann Travers</p> <p>HELP ROADS: Nykeema McCallum, Hayley Walton</p> <p>HOUSING WORKS: Dee Baker</p> <p>LAGUARDIA COMMUNITY COLLEGE – CUNY FATHERHOOD ACADEMY: Johnny Lozada</p> <p>M.A.D.E. TRANSITIONAL SERVICES: Toney Earl, Tarik Greene</p> <p>MEDGAR EVERS COLLEGE OASIS BEACON: William Boone</p> <p>NYC ACS: Michael Dunbar</p> <p>NYC DEPT. OF HEALTH-OFFICE OF MENTAL HEALTH: Julia Phillips</p> <p>NEW BEGINNINGS OUTREACH PROGRAM FOR WOMEN: Aretha Taylor</p> <p>NYC HOUSING AUTHORITY: Sarah Figuereo-Bey</p> <p>NYS DEPT. OF EDUCATION – ACCESS-VR: Wendy Hersh</p> <p>PRISON WRITES: Alessandra Ramos</p> <p>PROJECT CONNECT: Dave Ehlke</p>	<p style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">KINGS COUNTY RE-ENTRY TASK FORCE</p> <p>KINGS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY’S OFFICE Renee Gregory, 1st Assistant District Attorney Christopher Owens, Co-Chair Designate Director, The Re-Entry Bureau Dr. Vanda Seward, Program Administrator/Coordinator Norma Fernandes, Case Manager Andrea Johnson, Case Manager</p> <p>NYS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS AND COMMUNITY SUPERVISION (DOCCS) Audrey K. Thompson, Re-Entry Operations Manager</p> <p>NYS DEPARTMENT OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE SERVICES (DCJS) Margaret Chretien</p> <p style="background-color: black; color: white; text-align: center; padding: 2px;">KINGS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY</p> <p><u>The Re-Entry Bureau</u> Anne Broomfield, ADA for Re-Entry Compliance</p> <p><u>ComALERT</u> Marybeth Melendez, Case Manager Micaja Verna, Intern</p> <p><u>Bureau of Youth Diversion</u> Tyrone Larkins, Case Manager, Project Re-Direct</p> <p><u>Human Resources</u> Dana Martin, Performance Management Specialist</p>

ITEM #	ITEM	DESCRIPTION AND ACTION ITEMS
1	Call to Order	The meeting was called to order by <i>Mr. Christopher R. Owens, KCRTF Co-Chair designate</i> , at 12:40pm.
2	Opening remarks	<p>The Chair, Mr. Owens, presented the Agenda for June 1, 2016.</p> <p>Mr. Owens reminded the attendees that the KCDA was holding the next Begin Again event on June 11th.</p> <p>Mr. Owens introduced the Co-Chair, <i>Ms. Audrey Thompson, representing NYS DOCCS</i>. Ms. Thompson spoke about the importance of working well with partners and that the current focus was on employment-related services.</p>
3	Presentation of meeting minutes: April 6, 2016	Mr. Owens requested that attendees review the Minutes from the April 6, 2016 KCRTF Bi-Monthly Meeting, and contact the Co-Chairs if there were any comments or concerns that required corrections. There were no comments or corrections.
4	Introductions	<p>Those in attendance then introduced themselves and their organizations, if applicable.</p> <p>Mr. Owens introduced <i>Dr. Vanda Seward, Coordinator of the Kings County Re-Entry Taskforce</i>.</p>
5	Coordinator's Report	<p>Dr. Seward presented the Coordinator's Report.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Update on Cognitive Behavioral Intervention programs: • Dr. Seward stated that the KCRTF has met and exceeded its contractual obligations regarding CBI participation for FY16. She stated that the close working relationship with DOCCS has been helpful in keeping participants enrolled and engaged. • Dr. Seward discussed <i>Thinking 4 Change</i>, the 13-week CBI program which is offered at the Brooklyn DOCCS office, 15 Second Avenue (11215). Cohort #3 is in progress. She reiterated that the location was important in ensuring successful levels of participation. • Dr. Seward also discussed <i>Ready Set Work!</i> -- a CBI program implemented on-site at 210 Joralemon Street. The program is a 20-hour workshop which helps individuals prepare for and find employment. Dr. Seward stated that efforts are in place to increase participation levels. Currently, participants are often recruited through orientation sessions with ACCES-VR, vocational training program offered by the NYS Department of Education, as well as through the recommendations of staff members. Dr. Seward mentioned that some immediate opportunities in construction had presented themselves, which led to some participants receiving a "crash course" regarding soft skills that would assist them with interviews and job performance. The goal is to have a greater number of individuals enrolled and retained with a track rolling at DOCCS-Brooklyn. • Mr. Owens noted that a training class for <i>Thinking 4 Change</i> was coming up and that the DA's office had applied to have additional individuals receive training. The NYC-based class is "overflowing" so he awaiting word as to whether or not additional people have been accepted for the class. It is hoped that the frequency of T4C classes and their aggregate number will both increase as a result of having more facilitators. • Dr. Seward stated that a consultant has been identified to co-facilitate all CBI programs going forward. Approval is pending. <p>KCRTF Committee updates:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CASE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE. Dr. Seward stated that a high level of coordination exists between DOCCS and the KCRTF staff, ensuring that high risk parolees are referred to the KCRTF or sometimes mandated. Sharing information regarding who is scheduled for release within 120 days enables the KCRTF to correspond with appropriate potential clients and attempt to make the transitions as smooth as possible. Ms. Thompson stated that she is happy with the results. The population being served is a challenging one

		<p>and Ms. Thompson believes that the CBIs have been impactful in a positive way.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. William Boone (MEDGAR EVERS COLLEGE OASIS BEACON) asked about potential housing for new releasees. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Dr. Seward stated that housing is the top concern for the transition. There is no special designated pool of residences. There are programs that individuals can be a part of, such as the NYCHA Re-Entry Pilot – designed to reunite family members post-release. ○ Mr. Tyrone Larkins (KCDA) gave a brief outline of the NYCHA program’s substance, coordinated with NYCHA and The Vera Institute, as well as the other services provided by the DA’s re-entry programs. There are some challenges when dealing with the correctional facilities located farther upstate. ○ Mr. Wesley Cains (BDS) asked how NYCHA residents are being educated regarding the program, leading to fear and misunderstandings regarding the implications for families who choose to have new releasees come live with them. Mr. Larkins responded that there are concrete benefits for the families, including a two-year freeze on rent increases. ○ Dr. Seward stated that the NYCHA newsletter contained program information over a year ago – a result of meetings that took place amongst the active parties. She suggested that tenants can be called by Mr. Cains or Dr. Seward. ○ Ms. Sarah Figuero-Bey (NYCHA) stated that the NYCHA managers are now more aware of the program and making inquiries. Furthermore, there are numerous outreach efforts launched by NYCHA. Ms. Thompson stated that DOCCS also engaged in outreach to families of inmates identified as having come from public housing, but this may need to be made an ongoing initiative on their part. • PUBLIC EDUCATION COMMITTEE. Dr. Seward discussed two free events scheduled for June 9th that would be good to attend and which the DA’s office has been actively involved with. Each involves educating people about rights and opportunities for formerly incarcerated individuals and their families. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ NYC Commission on Human Rights Conference: <i>Rethinking Reentry: You Deserve A Fair Chance In Employment</i> – June 9 (day), Brooklyn Borough Hall ○ First Baptist Church Rehidim Ministry Forum: <i>Rebuilding Families and Individuals: The Collateral Consequences of Incarceration</i> – June 9 (evening), First Baptist Church of Crown Heights • Dr. Seward stated that the KCRTF continues its efforts to create better re-entry programming and better educate the Brooklyn community as a whole regarding re-entry issues. • Mr. Owens reiterated the two upcoming events as well as the Begin Again session taking place on Saturday, June 11th in Bushwick. Re-entry staff will be on-site, along with other DA staff, to assist.
6	Fiscal Report	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Seward stated that all milestones will be met for the Fiscal Year coming to a close (FY16). She expects the next contractual year to be very busy with more clients and new programs.
7	Reports / Concerns	<p>Ms. Ellen Edelman (FAMILIES, FATHERS AND CHILDREN): Event taking place regarding solitary confinement issues (including a lawsuit against DOCCS). There are two pieces of legislation that require support. Event is Sunday, June 5, 4:00 pm at 47 Sterling Place between 5th and 6th Avenues.</p> <p>Mr. Michael Dunbar (ACS): ACS Back-To-School Fair is on Friday, August 18th at 1274 Bedford Avenue.</p> <p>Mr. Boone: What kind of transition counseling do returning individuals receive? What kind of general information is shared?</p>

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mr. Owens highlighted the role of the KCRTF as a case management center and referral center and the need to have people referred to us. Appointments are not necessary at 210 Joralemon Street. Mr. Owens also stated that each person is unique and has specific needs regarding their transition. The re-entry staff is trained to help people get what they need. ○ Dr. Seward stated that questions must be asked regarding what programs the individual may have already heard of or be familiar with. “Yes, one size does not fit all, and whatever is needed can be found.” Most services are free, but if assistance is needed with Medicaid, etc., we can provide that. ○ Mr. Cains stated that Mr. Boone serves a role, himself, as a resource and should consider using any space he has to host helpful events such as group sessions, etc. The trauma of the transition requires a lot of attention. ○ Mr. Owens stated that re-entry staff will come out to scheduled meetings to make presentations and answer questions. ○ Mr. Boone stated that sometimes people are reluctant to come to “this setting” – the DA’s office. ○ Mr. Owens responded that the “real setting” at 210 Joralemon is more conducive to the work that needs to be done, but that does not mean that staff will not come to community meetings. ○ Mr. Cains also stated that he would be happy to attend as well. <p>Ms. Julia Phillips (NYC DEPT. OF HEALTH-OFFICE OF MENTAL HEALTH – STD UNIT): Services are expanding. For HIV prevention, PEP is a six-day supply with follow-up availability. PREP will be starting by the end of the summer. Birth control services are available, mostly for free. Chelsea is closed for renovations. There are 7 full-time clinics operating and she is available for workshops and trainings.</p> <p>Dr. Seward: NYC Health & Hospitals Corporation has opened a one-stop location for individuals and families suffering with medical and mental health issues related to incarceration at Riker’s Island. This is a new initiative. Location is just “across the bridge” from Rikers. Hours will increase over time. Goals are to connect folks with entitlements, housing and other services. Information will be distributed.</p>
8	<p style="text-align: center;">Guest Presentations</p>	<p>M.A.D.E TRANSITIONAL SERVICES (MAKING A DIFFERENCE EVERY DAY): Toney Earl, Jr., Executive Director (formerly incarcerated) Tarik Greene, Deputy Director</p> <p>Working only with re-entry population. Base is in Rockland County with work also in Orange and Westchester Counties. Looking to expand work into the NYC area. Both Earl and Greene are OWDS-trained and employment specialists. Mr. Greene leads OWDS training as well. Focus is on CBIs and job placement assistance; work with potential employers regarding biases. Looking to have a “Second Chance Job Fair” in NYC during the Fall. RSW! is used as a screening process to ensure that referrals are prepared for employment. Establishing an eight-bed housing unit with a faith-based community to serve as a “whole life” training opportunity for 12 to 24 months, including vocational skills that will be developed and applied to the facility itself (e.g. – kitchen, maintenance, agriculture, landscaping, etc.). In 2017, a 24-bed facility is also being planned to expand the “one-stop” service concept even more, with the exception of substance abuse services. This will include opportunities for group work, etc., within a safe space for those dealing with the transition. Also looking to offer services to at-risk youth as a form of prevention.</p> <p>Mr. Owens: What are the top challenges with the populations you serve? Mr. Greene responded: “Their ingrained way of thinking.” Earl: Credible messengers are needed; “people need to know that you care before they care what you know.” For many agencies, the CBI and job readiness pieces are more “add on” than the focus of their work due to the amount of responsibilities that these agencies have (particularly the parole officers.)</p> <p>Mr. Owens: What was the single biggest challenge you faced as a new organization starting in Rockland County? Earl: MADE established in 2014, but both leaders have been in the field for a longer period. Having opportunities to prove oneself and build the track record is hard due to biases.</p> <p>[Meeting participant]: Do you have a mentor program for your youth? Earl: Limited to speaking engagements and workshops (including a curriculum) for schools. Looking to build mentorship work.</p> <p>Mr. Boone: Do you have any age limits? Earl: Work in Rockland County jail, so ages 16 and</p>

higher for the adult services, but there are some adolescent services offered as well.

Mr. Boone: Housing? Earl: Housing model is based on college dormitory approach – 2 people per room, certain responsibilities as household members. Facilities are in demand, but they don't want to rush. Greene: These are "living learning centers" – not shelters. More dignity.

Ms. Ann Travers (THE FORTUNE SOCIETY): What is your client capacity? Is there any criminal justice history "touchpoint" that you don't serve? Earl: No exclusions for services, but sex offenders excluded for housing purposes at this time due to difficulties around biases. Capacity is based on funding – contracting and sub-contracting. In 2015, MADE served 112 clients – 97 inmates and 15 post-release. The budget limits the capacity.

Mr. Terrence Byerson (FEDCAP REHABILITATION SERVICES): How long is housing provided? Earl: The living/learning centers opening in August will be up to 24 months. Applications/screening are assessing levels of commitment to the concept. Within the last 6 months, a housing specialist will work with client to identify housing for the next chapter.

Ms. Margaret Chretien (DCJS): What employment outcomes have you realized? Earl: 80% of the 15 clients from 2015 were successfully placed in addition to 4 in 2016. Two individuals were not placed and one "recidivated." RSW! is supposed to enable clients to engage in their own job searches.

M.A.D.E PRESENTATION CONCLUDED

Dr. Seward: It is inevitable that some clients will be in shelters for some period of time due to the lack of housing, in general, within the City of New York. Shelter residence, however, can include case management and other services that can make the shelter time productive. "If we can keep someone engaged for the bulk of the day and provide the services, then they will be able to move along. Those who just stay in the shelter space all day will have problems." There has to be an affirmative effort to surround the individual with what is needed to complete the transition to full independent living. "We must also accept that there are some folks who are simply not yet ready for independent living" and need more help to prepare.

- **Ms. Norma Fernandes (KCRTF staff):** Cases provide challenges. Working client experienced a rent increase due to work income which led to re-placement in the shelter until a better apartment could be found. This move was approved by parole.
- Mr. Owens: We provide the coping mechanism for people facing very difficult choices.
- **Ms. Wendy Hersh (ACCES-VR):** We have many clients who are shelter-based but they see "a light at the end of the tunnel" if they are getting the training and assistance to move on. They have their space and meals, and they have some hope.
- Ms. Thompson: Shelters serve as points of access for other programs. Partnership with the Doe Fund assists undomiciled parolees with getting services.
- **Ms. Marybeth Melendez (ComALERT staff):** Parolees have reporting requirements and travel needs. Presence of wraparound services, including mental health, that can be found in shelters enables individuals to better manage their expectations and outcomes.

THE BURNING HOUSE PROJECT: *Melvin Blackman, Founder*

Founded in 2008. Purpose: End the cycle of incarceration, violence and criminal justice involvement.

Served as substance abuse counselor. See people struggling to find employment, particularly the formerly incarcerated, and heard them consider re-committing crimes to "get by." The question is not "how do you survive another incarceration", but "how does your child survive the incarceration" -- which changes one's perspective. A child left behind by an incarcerated parent in the "fire" of the negative environment will be burned. So how do we rescue the child from the fire? We have to put out the fire and change the environment. Children absorb everything and imitate everything their elders do (referred to a video of a young child replicating a CPR training session after watching adults do it.) Changes, therefore, have to take place with us and it is the behaviors that have to change. "We have to take the children out of the fire." Using alternative topics and innovations to engage younger people and help them break away from what they have seen. Quote from The Great Debaters: "The time to deal with such issues is always right now."

The project has not had funding, despite efforts over a few years, so there is no set site for the work.

		<p>Would like to have classes for parolees and family counseling, business development, etc. In 2015, a pilot program took place in Queensboro with five groups, all of whom were enthusiastic about this “different” approach.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Owens: What were the outcomes associated with the five groups? Blackman: No funding available to evaluate the outcomes. • Mr. Boone: Many formerly-incarcerated young men say “Prison is not that bad” and younger kids are hearing that. How do you break that cycle? Blackman: Target cohort is ages 2-5 years old. Highlight for the formerly-incarcerated individual whether or not they want that young child to be “where they are at now.” <p style="text-align: center;"><i>BURNING HOUSE PRESENTATION CONCLUDED.</i></p> <p>Mr. Owens: Reminder that the June 9th event at First Baptist Church focuses on families and the impact of incarceration and its aftermath on families. Many people doing things. Get the message out.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Mr. Cains: Family issues usually start pre-incarceration and incarceration only makes things worse. Hope that the events will provide insights as to how to address the full timeline of developments. ○ Mr. Owens: The follow-up on June 9th will take place later during the summer. ○ Rev. Donald Odom (FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH OF CROWN HEIGHTS): The conversation has to be started with these families. The goal is to provide the safe space so the conversation can start. ○ Mr. Owens: In Brooklyn alone, between 20,000 and 30,000 sentences involving incarceration during 2015. There are at least, therefore, 40,000 to 60,000 family members who are impacted just during this one year. This reality need not be met with shame, which is a powerful burden for families, but with a plan to address this reality: “What can we do to make ourselves more whole and move forward?” ○ Ms. Edelman: Social structures are critical in addressing the family issues. It is part of the ongoing work that needs to be addressed and these conversations are positive developments. ○ Mr. Owens: The hope is to have multiple houses of worship involved with this effort, as well as other entities.
9	New Business	There was no new business.
10	Adjournment	The meeting was adjourned at 2:15 pm.
<p>2016 KCRTF meetings are proposed for 12:30 pm – 2:00 pm on these Wednesdays - August 3, October 5, December 7. Locations may vary. Corrections to the minutes should be emailed to owensc1@brooklynda.org</p>		