



Santa Clara County Re-Entry Resource Center

VOLUME 1 ISSUE 3

NOVEMBER 2012

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Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony and Open House at the Re-Entry Resource Center

On October 18th the Re-Entry Resource Center had its official ribbon-cutting ceremony with over 150 people in attendance. The ribbon-cutting ceremony was followed by an open house of the Re-Entry Resource Center. County employees, San Jose City partners and community-based organizations got to see first-hand the essential services and programs being offered at the Center. Thanks to the vision of several County's leaders, the Re-Entry Resource Center is a safe place for former offenders to access services.

"Over the past two years, Santa Clara County has been putting the building blocks in place to assist former offenders to successfully transition into the county, and at the same time create a stronger, safer and healthier community," said President George Shirakawa. "The Re-Entry Resource Center supports the County Re-Entry Network's mission to create a seamless system of services, support and supervision for former offenders. Ultimately, our integrated system of services may serve as a model for other California counties facing the same challenges of recidivism and State realignment."

"The Probation Department supervises as many as 18,000 probationers on a daily basis," said Probation Chief Sheila Mitchell. "With re-entry services and referrals to the Re-Entry Resource Center already in place to help individuals integrate back into the community, we were able to quickly link the additional 1,000 formerly incarcerated individuals released from state prisons, who otherwise would have been released from the State into our community without the County's services."

"As part of our model, we believe that former inmates may commit fewer new offenses if we meet basic needs such as job training and placement, housing and evidenced based programming to address substance abuse," said Santa Clara County Sheriff Laurie Smith who co-chairs the Re-Entry Network. "The Re-Entry Resource Center is a grand collaborative of County departments to meet these needs in a one-stop center. I'm very excited to be a part of the team that offers a new vision into rehabilitation and re-entry. I've assigned Correctional Deputies, Rehabilitation Officers and Milpitas Adult Education instructor, which make up the Custodial Alternative Supervision Unit (CASU), at the Re-Entry Resource Center to provide supervision, drug testing, re-entry services and education."

"We have a new approach and are providing services in a way that has never been done before in Santa Clara County," said Dr. Nancy Peña, Mental Health Department Director, who was instrumental in establishing the Re-Entry Multi-Agency Program. "Clients are taking steps to change their lives. Whether it's career development, finding employment, addressing mental health issues or addiction challenges, or taking the time to map their road to long-term recovery, the Re-Entry Program is there to help."



Photo of Ribbon-Cutting Ceremony

Peer Mentors: Helping Others to Navigate County's Services

Meet Jose Garcia. At a young age, he got involved in a gang, a path that led him to a life of drugs, violence, and incarceration. It wasn't until his best friend got murdered that Jose started thinking he needed to change his lifestyle. "My best friend was like a brother to me. It was an eye-opener for me when he was killed. I started thinking that the same people who killed him could be looking for me. I had to make a change because I was constantly looking over my shoulders," said Jose.

After 2000, when he was released from Elmwood Correctional Facility, Jose found faith and decided to turn his life around. He wanted to work with youth and to help guide them to a path of success. In 2001, Jose got a job as a peer mentor working with youth at the Mexican American Community Services Agency (MACSA) Youth Center.

When Jose reflected on why he got involved in a gang, he attributed it to feeling different growing up. He said people would always question his identity. "I was searching for my identity and wanted to belong."

Meet Manny Ortega. At 12 years old, Manny was gang-involved and addicted to drugs and alcohol. He went in and out of juvenile justice system. The inmates would tell him, "you'll be back. Once you are criminal, you will always be a criminal." At 17 years old, he was tried as an adult and spent 4 years in California Youth Authority. In 2006, Manny got a rude-awakening when he was tried for 3 Strikes. "It scared me. I asked myself, what do I have to offer?" Fortunately, Manny was released and given a second chance.

After his release, Manny separated himself from all negativities in his life including an unhealthy relationship with his wife. He turned to his Native American culture for healing and identity. "I know my native language, I don't smoke or do drugs anymore. Someone saw me as a human being."

Today, both Jose and Manny are peer mentors with the Re-Entry Multi-Agency Program (MAP) at the Re-Entry Resource Center helping others to reintegrate back into the community. Through their life's journey, they are using their experience to support former offenders in navigating the County's systems and linking others to essential services. "I am not a PFN (Personal File Number) anymore. I am a County person with a spirit to care for people," said Manny. "I don't often use the word 'love', but I love this work!"

Jose is raising his five children as a single father. He is a positive role model for his children and demonstrating to them that people can overcome adversity.



Photo of Manny and Jose

"I am not a PFN anymore. I am a County person with a spirit to care for people."

Key Ingredients to Re-Entry Success: Housing & Employment

By Reilly Johnson
AB 109 Housing Liaison

One particular case that demonstrates the value of supportive services in regards to re-entry is a young man named Tomas. When Tomas was released from Chino on May 19, 2012, he was essentially homeless without any connections to housing, employment or income. Through a referral from the Probation Department, Tomas was connected to the Re-Entry Resource Center (RRC). The RRC immediately enrolled Tomas in an AB109 emergency housing program allowing him to enter stable housing for a period of 6 months while receiving case management. With his housing issue solved temporarily, Tomas focused his efforts on developing stable employment. Center for Training & Careers offers job development and placement assistance for clients who are referred through the AB109 network, Tomas utilized this resource and enrolled in job training courses.

Once enrolled in CTC, Tomas hit the ground running, quickly becoming a standout in the Green Light Academy. The CTC Green Light Academy offers clients training in “green construction”, focusing on construction with an environmental benefit. This curriculum is a 13 week program, attendance is required and instruction is 5 hours daily Monday through Friday. It was Tomas’s work ethic and accountability that led his instructor to connect him with an interview with the Local 95 Roofers and Water Proofers Union. Tomas did very well in his interview and was hired as an apprentice, giving him the opportunity to progress in his professional development. In the last weeks, Tomas has started to work at a Union job in Palo Alto. In order to make it to work on time, Tomas wakes up every morning at 3:30am, catches Caltrain at 4:30am, arrives in Palo Alto and walks 30 minutes to his job site. In our conversations Tomas has said, “When I have to work so hard to get to work, I think back to me being in prison and I remember that I would pray for an opportunity to be out in the real world and working.”

Tomas has recently been approved as a recipient of the Santa Clara County AB109 Rental Subsidy, designed to help clients who are employed secure and maintain stable housing. This stability ensures clients can develop their support network and strengthen their finances in order to become self-sufficient. Tomas has been clean and sober for over 4 years and is active in his church community, his priority is taking the steps to put his past behind him and move forward. The opportunities available through the Re-Entry Resource Center undoubtedly played an important role in Tomas’s success. When the resources are available and clients are motivated to follow through the possibility of rehabilitation becomes a reality. Tomas continues to strive and the Re-Entry Resource Center is grateful to have taken part in helping to build a better future.

“When I have to work so hard to get to work, I think back to being in prison and I remember that I would pray for an opportunity to be out in the real world and working”.

Did You Know? New Skin Adult Tattoo Removal

The New Skin Adult Tattoo Removal is a community-based organization whose focus is to provide affordable tattoo removal and referrals to community resources to individuals looking to transform their lives. Since 2010, New Skin Adult Tattoo Removal has served 1,697 clients where former gang members and individuals recently released from incarceration make up over 75%.

Tattoos can be a hindrance when searching for work or housing. Tattooed individuals are often stereotyped. The New Skin Adult Tattoo Removal gives individuals a second chance for a regrettable decision made in the past. New Skin Adult Tattoo Removal services include:

- Tattoo Removal
- Interviewing Skills
- Record Clearance
- Resume Writing
- Job Placement
- Vocational Assistance

For more information:

Contact Person: Adam King
1695 South 7th Street, San Jose, CA 95112
Phone: (408) 899-9695 adam.king@newskinadulttattooremoval.org

Upcoming Events: November 2012

<u>Date</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Location</u>	<u>Event</u>
November 7	4:00 pm – 6:00 pm	Re-Entry Resource Center 151 W. Mission St., San Jose	Holiday Resource Fair
November 15	3:00 pm - 5:30 pm	Re-Entry Resource Center - Auditorium 151 W. Mission Street, San Jose	SJSU Speed Screening Individual review of rap sheets
November 28	2:00 pm – 4:00 pm	Franklin McKinley School District 645 Wool Creek Drive, San Jose	Re-Entry Network Governance Meeting

Wish List

The Re-Entry Resource Center is seeking donation for our clients. Do you have gently used clothes you wish to donate? To make a donation, please contact Buu Thai at (408) 535-4236 or buu.thai@ceo.sccgov.org.

Contact Us

Multi-Agency Program (MAP) Services – (408)535-4257
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www.sccgov.org/sites/reentry