



## Office of Reentry Services

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## Message from Director of Reentry Services



**Javier Aguirre, Director**

Our countywide reentry efforts date back to June 21, 2011 when the Board of Supervisors approved the cross-system Reentry Network to identify reentry and recidivism reduction strategies, streamline processes to link inmates to effective in-custody and community-based programming, and prepare Santa Clara County for the realignment of parolees and low-level prisoners. With the enactment of AB 109, the Public Safety Realignment Act of 2011, implemented on October 1, 2011, this legislation created an opportunity for the County to modify systems and enhance service delivery.

Since then the County and its community-based partners have been committed to providing the necessary tools for formerly incarcerated individuals to be productive residents and reintegrate back to their communities. These individuals have paid their debt to society, and now want to contribute to their communities with the right tools and support. Whether it is the support of a County-run mental health treatment program, support from a vocational/job training service provider, or linkage to peer mentors at the Reentry Resource Center or one of three faith based reentry centers, individuals are be-

ing treated fairly and given the chance to make a difference in their lives.

Looking at recent data from our partners at the Reentry Resource Center, individuals are obtaining the linkages to jobs and health care:

- 15 individuals enrolled in Job Training/Vocational Opportunities with Goodwill since August 22, 2013
- 550 individuals enrolled in Health Care Coverage since July 2012

Earlier this year, the Board of Supervisors approved the creation of the Office of Reentry Services to promote effective policies, practices, and services by implementing the Public Safety Realignment Program (AB 109) and the Adult Reentry Strategic Plan. The office is responsible to operate the Reentry Resource Center, coordinate/leverage services for clients, oversee the budget and evaluation of reentry efforts, review policy and legislation impacting reentry efforts, and facilitate cross systems collaboration. Most importantly, the Office of Reentry Services is responsible to coordinate countywide efforts to reduce recidivism and ensure public safety. The Office of Reentry Services team is comprised of Buu Thai, Lorena Madrid, Elizabeth Sesma, Chad Martens, and new to our team Diana Sandoval. We are committed to working with our reentry partners to strengthen the bridge to a better future.

I look forward to working with our County and community partners to achieve the goal of building safer communities and strengthen families through successful reintegration and reentry of formerly incarcerated individuals.

## Three Striker Succeeds with Reentry Support

**By Reilly Johnson, Peer Mentor**

On April 23, 2013, J was release from California Medical Facility which is more commonly known as Vacaville State Prison. J was put on a train to San Jose with nothing more than his wheelchair and a box of personal items accu-

mulated in the 17 years he had spent behind bars. Proposition 36, California's recent change in the "Three Strikers" legislation, had taken affect allowing those convicted of a non-violent third strike to appeal for new or reduced sen-

tences. For many of those facing life behind bars this became a chance at a new beginning and for others like J it would be another challenge to overcome.

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## Three Striker Success with Reentry Support (Con't)

J is over sixty years old and suffers from a number of debilitating illnesses. He was released from prison with nowhere to go and no family to offer him any support. When the Reentry Resource Center (RRC) learned of J's release, they scrambled to come up with a plan to provide the much needed support within a very short timeframe. As the Housing Specialist, I picked up J up at the Diridon Station, loaded his wheelchair and belongings into the car and brought J down to the RRC. Through the RRC, J was able to connect to benefits like General Assistance, Cal-Fresh and monthly bus pass. Having been released with state issued grey sweat suit, J wel-

comed the items he was able to receive from RRC's Clothes Closet. In his words, J felt blessed by the support he was receiving, he was moved by the kindness of the staff and was very thankful to have help when it was needed.

The greatest challenge for someone in J's position is to find adequate housing. Knowing that J would need access to medical support, I reached out to EHC Lifebuilders to see if they could offer J a shelter bed. EHC was unable to accommodate the request considering beds were only available by program referral and the Reentry Shelter Program beds were

all occupied. I rallied other County agencies and thankfully one offered to provide a shelter bed until a RRC program bed opened up. Once J was placed at EHC, he was able to connect with one of the EHC's case managers who assisted him in accessing SSI and supportive housing. J has been out for nearly 6 months and is doing well.

In order for reentry to be effective, it truly takes County services and community partners working together to support the individuals' reintegration back into the community.

## Meet Mona Guerrero, Housing Specialist



Mona Guerrero began working at the Reentry Center in September 2013. She brings extensive experience and has

accepted the position as a Rehabilitation Counselor ~ Housing Liaison through the Mental Health Department and is stationed at the Reentry Center.

Ms. Guerrero's duties include providing case management services to 30 individuals approved to receive AB109 rental assistance, additionally, Ms. Guerrero monitors two shelter sites (EHC and MSI) which have 5-beds at each site that are dedicated to clients who have been involved in the criminal justice

system and who are working and/or looking for employment.

Ms. Guerrero graduated from San Jose State University, where she received a degree in Behaviors Science and Sociology. She later returned to San Jose State to receive her Master's degree in Counseling.

Ms. Guerrero brings more than 10 years of experience working with various bay area non-profits and has been with the County since 2007.

## Community Resource: Expungement Services

### Are criminal convictions on your record keeping you from getting a job?

The Santa Clara County Office of the Public Defender will begin providing expungement services for Reentry Program Clients through the Public Safety Realignment Act (AB109). This program will provide record clearance (expungement) services to clients who have misdemeanor or felony convictions on their record.

Interviews will be done by appointment and on walk in basis during office hours if time permits. If you are not financially eligible for Public Defender assistance, you can pursue record clearance by obtaining an application from the Probation Department or by retaining a private attorney can pursue record clearance by obtaining an application from the Probation Department or by retaining a private attorney. For more information or to make an appointment, please call (408) 535-4290.

## Veteran Emergency Housing Making a Difference

By Reilly Johnson, Peer Mentor



### Rhyme on Crime and Prison

The judge said  
I had no affection  
Then gave me imprisonment  
For the public's protection

In years  
A minimum of four  
But realistically  
We know a lot more

It's time to step up  
Step up to the plate  
To change your future  
Don't hesitate

Now 11 months later  
My progress is greater  
As I battled all forces  
By enrolling in courses

Mathematics and English to start  
Then something more close to heart  
A parenting course for affection  
And a family man course for direction

Occasionally you might hear me sing  
While doing my tea orderly job on the wing  
Making tea in the day and night  
Plus teaching people to read and write

You see in prison  
All you got is time  
To sit back  
And think of your crime...- Liam Hall

ES was hoping that soon he would have a release date on a Prop 36 appeal. His letter to the RRC was different from the others. Typed in a professional manner, impeccable spelling and proper punctuation, his letter clearly showed that ES was attentive to detail.

ES received a multitude of proficiency certificates during the last 18 years he spent incarcerated including a number of office skill certifications like Microsoft Word, Power Point, Excel, and Access. Not to mention his vocational certifications in Drywall, Auto body and Paint, Welding plus Small-Engine and Motorcycles. After corresponding with Peer Mentors from the Re-Entry Center, ES also reached out to the Faith Based Re-Entry Collaborative. ES knew that the first stop on his release date would be the Santa Clara County Re-Entry Resource Center.

ES came into the RRC on October 10th. His primary concern was to locate stable housing. ES met with the Peer Mentors who had been corresponding with him over the last month; they helped him to connect with several Faith Based Men's homes in the area and Homeless Shelters. Having spent the last 18 years with every waking moment dictated by the system, ES felt he would like to find a program with a less restrictive environment. Transitioning to a shelter also seemed like it would present some difficulties, ES was not sure what to do.

The following morning an RRC Peer Mentor picked ES up at his hotel and brought him into the center to complete some paperwork. ES was a veteran of the Navy and that meant that there would be other options for housing. The RRC Peer Mentors made a call to Homeless Veterans Emergency Housing which houses 150 veterans. They sent a referral, fortunately there was availability. ES toured the facility and he was impressed. The program could house him for up to 2 years, everything was coming together. ES entered the veterans housing program and plans to focus the tools he developed during his incarceration to land employment in a skilled field. ES hopes to become a member of the Iron Workers Local Union 377.

## Calendar of Events - OCTOBER/NOVEMBER 2013



**October 23rd**  
Flu Vaccination  
151 W. Mission St., San Jose  
1:30-4:30pm

**November 6th**  
Holiday Resource Fair  
151 W. Mission St.  
4-6pm

**November 8th**  
Flu Vaccination  
151 W. Mission St., San Jose  
1:30-4:30pm

## Office of Reentry Services

Reentry Resource Center  
151 W. Mission Street  
San Jose, CA 95110

Phone: (408) 535-4299  
Fax: (408) 998-7126



We're on the Web  
[www.sccgov.org/sites/reentry](http://www.sccgov.org/sites/reentry)

## Donation Wish List—Men's Clothes Wanted!

The Re-Entry Resource Center is seeking clothes donation for our male clients. Do you have gently used clothes you wish to donate? We are in need of the following items:

### Reentry Toiletry Kit Supplies

- Men Deodorant
- Shaving Supplies
- New packages of men underwear
- New Men Socks
- Bifocal Reading Glasses
- Mouthwash
- Ear Swabs
- Bar of Soaps
- New Hair Brushes and Combs

Men's Coats

Men's Clothing

Clothes Rack

Large Rubber Storage Bins with Lids

To make a donation, please contact Lorena Madrid at (408) 535-4236.

