

# ***OREGON CURE***

(Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants)

A newsletter for family and friends of Incarcerated Individuals

Fall 2007 Volume 30

## **Dr. Rachel Hardesty, Guest Speaker “Restorative Justice”**

October 14, 2007

By: Eileen Kennedy



Oregon CURE was fortunate to have Dr. Rachel Hardesty speak about restorative justice at its 2007 annual meeting on October 14, 2007, at the Hillsdale Community Church, in Portland. Dr. Hardesty is an immigrant from England who has been in the United States since 1990. She has been teaching at Portland State University the past three years and has developed her own niche in teaching classes that explore nonviolent responses to very violent interpersonal crimes.

In her lecture, Dr. Hardesty contrasted the restorative approach with the current criminal justice system. She said the criminal justice system makes the crime a defining moment for both the offender and the victim in such a way that it holds everything about the criminal event in place.

(continued on page 3)

## Publication Notice

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Memberships and Inquiries can be directed to:

Oregon CURE  
1631 N.E. Broadway, #460  
Portland, OR 97232

Telephone: (503) 977-9979 (Portland area)  
1-877-357-CURE (2873) (Outside Portland)  
Website: [www.oregoncure.org](http://www.oregoncure.org)

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## A Message From the Chair - - -

By Cindy Van Loo

This past month I have noticed the brilliant colors of the fall leaves and look in awe at the beauty each tree manifests this time of year. The changing of the seasons is something we may take for granted, because we are anticipating winter around the corner. However, there are many prisoners who never see the changing of the seasons. We are their eyes and ears to the outside world, so when you see or hear something really beautiful in your surroundings, be sure you convey that description to your incarcerated loved one or friend through pictures, letters, or phone calls.

Oregon CURE had a very successful Annual Meeting a few weeks ago with Dr. Rachel Hardesty speaking on Restorative Justice (see article on front page and suggested list of reading). Those who attended went home with a better understanding of what restorative justice is and how we can help. On a lighter note, everyone who attended enjoyed the fund-raising raffle, refreshments, and jewelry for sale donated by our incarcerated friends at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility and Oregon State Penitentiary. My heartfelt thanks go out to all who made the event a success, including my steering committee for planning and organizing the event.

Our focus in the next month will be our annual fund-raising/membership drive. Look for a letter in the mail in the coming month to renew your membership and to add (if you are able) an additional donation to help Oregon CURE continue to bring you these newsletters and provide resources to individuals "free of charge".

Best wishes,  
Cindy

**Correction:** In the Summer 2007, Vol. 29, Oregon CURE newsletter, Robert Barzler (not Brazier) is the President/CEO of Point West Credit Union, 718 N.E. 12<sup>th</sup>, Portland, OR 97232; (503) 546-5000. Our apologies for this mistake.

## FAMILY RELEASE ORIENTATIONS – MULTNOMAH COUNTY to begin November 13, 2007

By: Cindy Van Loo

Oregon CURE has been working with Multnomah County Department of Community Justice for many months to work out the details to establish an orientation meeting for families and friends of loved ones who will be released from an Oregon State prison to Multnomah County in the next six months. More than 800 incarcerated individuals will be released in the next six months to Multnomah County. The "emergency contact" for each prisoner will be notified of the upcoming orientation he/she can attend in Multnomah County to help them plan for the release of their loved one,

have questions answered, and get an idea of what to expect or not expect. A parole officer will be available to answer questions, as well as an individual from Oregon CURE and Multnomah County Department of Community Justice. Handouts will be provided. The first event will be held on **November 13, 2007**, from 3 to 5 p.m. at 3800 N.E. Mallory, Portland. For those who cannot attend in November, a second meeting will be held **December 4, 2007**, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. at the same location.

(Dr. Rachel Hardesty - Continued from Page 1)

This gridlock does not help transform and heal the pain. Over time, victims and offenders alike can view the event differently and change their lives accordingly. Victims can become survivors, and offenders can become law-abiding citizens. The criminal justice system seeks to vindicate the victim by punishing disobedience. If punishment is ineffective, then more severe punishment is added. Restorative justice asks what is needed to heal the harms that have been done. Nothing we can do to the offender will undo the crime or undo the immense change that both victim and offender undergo as a result.

Our community creates restorative justice. We do this justice work by listening and by bearing witness to the pain and hostility produced by a criminal event. In this listening process, we reduce the pain and hostility and share that burden that both the offender and the victim carry. At one time, Dr. Hardesty said she spent hours listening to a member of Parents of Murdered Children show a memory book of his son who was murdered by the Green River killer. Afterwards, she reflected on the healing power the retelling of his son's life had on him and how this father had released anger, frustration, unfulfilled dreams, and deep sorrow at his loss. Closure means more than retribution; it is a transformation of self. We as community members can bear witness to this process through our attentive listening.

Afterwards, Dr. Hardesty, in a private interview, indicated that this listening and bearing witness is about extending her belief in the basic good intentions of someone as she really listens to what they are saying. It is not about judgment. It is about offering them acceptance in an attempt to create a safe space where their defenses and denial can let them go. Trust is central, so it is important to tell the truth. It is about a very intense connection with a sense of the love in the universe, and a commitment to the person so if they need her to return she would. She was unable to reach some people as their pain had too great a hold on them to trust her.

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**Suggested Reading about Restorative Justice**  
**BY: Rachel Hardesty**

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*The Little Book of Restorative Justice*, by Howard Zehr (2002) Intercourse, PA: Good Books

This is written as a beginner's guide to restorative justice, so it is a good place to start.

*Changing Lenses: A new focus for Crime and Justice*, by Howard Zehr (1990 and 1995) Scottsdale, PA: Herald Press

This is a more detailed analysis of the principles of Restorative Justice coming from a Christian angle, but if that angle troubles you, you can set those references aside and still get a lot from this book.

*Restorative Justice and Criminal Justice: Competing or Reconcilable Paradigms?* Oxford, UK: Hart Publishing

An edited collection of works by Andrew Von Hirsch, Julian Roberts, Anthony Bottoms, Kent Roach, and Mara Schiff offers readers the opportunities to read about the controversies and issues in including a more restorative approach in our criminal justice system.

*Crime, Shame and Reintegration*, by John Braithwaite (1989) Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press

This is mandatory reading for the serious student of restorative justice, as it is constantly referenced in other more recent works. The author has done a great deal of thinking about the core sequence of restorative justice and he coins the term "reintegrative shaming" in this book.

*Restorative Justice in the United States*, by Clifford Dorne (2008) Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall

This textbook covers the broad landscape of the current Restorative Justice movement in the U.S.

# **HOME FOR GOOD IN OREGON REGION VI**

**(Part four in a series)**

By: Judy Farrell

## HOME FOR GOOD IN OREGON REGION 4

Marion  
Linn  
Benton/Polk  
Yamhill/Lincoln

Home for Good in Oregon (HGO), Region 4, consists of Marion, Linn, Benton/Polk, and Yamhill/Lincoln counties. Services available vary from county to county in Region 4. It is very important that any inmate scheduled for release to one of these counties contact the prison chaplain and request the Home for Good in Oregon application form at least 4 - 6 months prior to release. Return the completed application form to the prison chaplain, and it will be sent to the county of release. Someone should then be contacting the applicant either in person or by mail. If no reply is received by 2 months before release, send an inquiry to the HGO office in Salem:

Chaplain Tim Cayton  
2575 Center Street NE  
Salem, Oregon 97310-0470  
503-945-0929

**Marion County:** Chaplain Angel Frutos, 503-363-6161  
Chaplain Bill Johnson, 503-559-9305

To receive services after release from HGO in Oregon in Marion County, a person coming out of prison must be willing to participate in a faith-based program and be willing to attend church. There are some resources for housing, but none for those with a history of sex offenses. Chaplains Frutos and Johnson do reach-ins at OSCI, Mill Creek, Santiam, and OSP. HGO chaplains in Marion County work closely with Parole Officer Cindy Strada.

Another faith-based program in Marion County that assists men and women coming out of prison is Stepping Out Ministries. Contact: Rev. Steven Silver at: PO Box 12277, Salem, OR 97309; 503-363-2805

**Linn County:** Chaplain Michelle Shannon, 541-791-3411 (office); 541-981-8637 (cell)

Chaplain Shannon reports that HGO is active in Linn County, and they link with CHANCE, an organization that also provides services to people releasing from prison. They provide mentors who write to inmates during incarceration and are prepared to assist them upon release. For those who are in alcohol and drug treatment, paid housing is available for four months in Oxford House. Also available, is a list of employers who will hire people with a legal history. Housing for those with sex offenses is limited; however, Helping Hand Shelter will provide temporary housing, and they can be reached through Chaplain Shannon.

**Benton County:** Unfortunately, CURE was unable to contact the regional chaplain in Benton County. For those inmates who are scheduled for release within six months, contact your facility chaplain to confirm that HGO services are available in Benton County.

Chaplains Hays and Hinrichs share responsibilities in both Yamhill and Lincoln counties. They work in affiliation with Stepping Out Ministries, Calvary Chapel, Love, Inc., and Church on the Hill. It is not necessary for inmates who are scheduled for release to belong to any particular religion, but in order to participate in HGO in these two counties, they must have a desire to be involved in bible study groups and be motivated to seek a better life. Housing resources are very scarce for sex offenders, but resources are available for those who have served sentences for most other types of crimes. There is a program for sex offenders in Yamhill County called COSA, Circles of Support and Accountability. This program is based on a very successful project in Canada, and it is just getting started through the efforts of Chaplain Hinrichs

Since availability of services varies from region to region and county to county, it is so important for those who need assistance upon release to begin applying six months prior to their scheduled release date. Some counties, especially small, rural counties, have limited or no HGO services to offer; CURE hears stories of some sleeping in doorways, in parks, in the woods, or in their cars—not the easy way to reenter the community. If you discover early on that you live in a county with no or very limited HGO services and have no supportive family or friend, be sure to contact your facility's release counselor to explore resources. Also, you may write to:

Oregon CURE  
1631 NE Broadway, #46  
Portland, OR 97211

Any questions and comments may be directed to Judy Farrell at Oregon CURE, 1631 NE Broadway, Portland, OR 97232, 503-977-9979.

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## AND HOW ARE THE CHILDREN?

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By: Rebecca Smith

“And, how are the children?” Bridget Ortega (Jones) asks the crowd.

A few meager voices reply, “The children are well.”

“That was weak, let’s try it again,” she says. “And, how are the children?”

More voices reply, stronger this time, “**The children are well**”!

That is what we all would like to believe, that the children are well. But sadly enough, many children in our communities are not well. “What children?” you might ask. These are the invisible, and often overlooked, children of incarcerated parents. They are out there by the thousands, and they truly are not well. For many they are looked upon as children of high risk, but for those attending the First Annual Children of Incarcerated Parents Leadership Summit, held in Portland, Oregon, on July 19, 2007, these are children of *promise*.

More than 125 people representing seven counties in Oregon, and more than 90 different agencies statewide were gathered to reach out and seek effective ways to identify, serve, and promote the well-being of these children, as well as the success of their incarcerated parents’ return to the family unit and society.

Bridget Ortega, MA., J.D., emceed the day’s events. Ms. Ortega is currently the Lead Consultant for Building Better Bridges, a consulting organization dedicated to improving outcomes for children and families at various levels of involvement in the Criminal and Juvenile Justice Systems. She has developed the *“And How are the Children: Multi-disciplinary Community Building Curriculum”* to assist communities in understanding the cumulative risk factors and special needs of children of

incarcerated parents. She also shared with us her keen awareness and insight to the ever-growing problems encountered by communities and how communities can rise to the many challenges of bringing hope to these children of promise.

Opening remarks were given by Claudia Black, M.P.A. Claudia is the Board Chair of the Children's Justice Alliance, a not-for-profit organization whose mission is to improve outcome for children whose parents are involved in the criminal justice system. Claudia's vast experience in the field of corrections and the far-reaching impact incarceration has on the family structure was evident throughout her presentation.

Keynote Speaker, Nell Bernstein, author of *All Alone in the World: Children of the Incarcerated*, addressed what it takes to sustain family connections and promote the success of those incarcerated to become productive citizens in their communities upon their release. With the staggering statistic that one in ten children has a parent either in jail, prison, parole, or on probation, it is little wonder that there is a great need for programs that target these children and turn them from being "Children at Risk" into "Children of Promise." The problem doesn't stop there; it is just the beginning of what it takes to break the chain that keeps generations of a family in prison. We are on the leading edge of a nationwide movement to find and implement programs that are evidenced-based as "what works." Nell then set the goal for all of us to focus on programs that strengthen these tenuous family ties, reduce recidivism, and keep our children out of jail.

The counties that were represented and gave reports were Malheur, Umatilla, Lane, Clackamas, East Multnomah, Washington, and Marion. Each county had something different to share. Services include a Center for Family Success in Portland, Relief Nurseries in Umatilla, Portland, and Eugene, and a Hospitality House in Malheur County.

The lunch break was followed by a panel of two men and two women, all of whom had been incarcerated and have children in their families. Their stories and shared experiences brought a new perspective and thought process to the forum. This opened several eyes as to the many, and sometimes overwhelming, obstacles encountered by families of inmates who have been recently released. It also brought more questions to be answered -- such as what programs and services would make their incarceration more family friendly and their transition more successful? Or, what programs and services need to be in place to help the families cope with the burden of incarceration/transition they share as well?

After the panel discussion, we broke off into a series of Round-Table discussions. Round-Table topics included:

1. Effective Strategies/Best Practices – Local and National
2. Building Partnerships
3. System Change (Legislation)
4. Mentoring & Child Advocacy Programming
5. Working with Corrections – Prisons, Jails, Parole, and Probation
6. Curriculum for justice –involved population- Parenting, Healthy Families, Cognitive
7. Starting a Center for Family Success
8. Child-Centered Therapeutic Approaches
9. Parent and Family Participation

The summit concluded with speaker Dee Ann Newell, M.A., U.S. Senior Justice Fellow. She is the Director of Fellowship Project to Improve Policies for Children of Incarcerated parents in 14 states and is the author of the *Handbook for Relative Caregivers: What You Need to Know When a Parent is Arrested or Absent* and the *Legal Handbook for Incarcerated Parents: Your Rights and*

**Responsibilities.** She offered ideas and suggestions, with an emphasis on finding programs that have evidence-based research to back them up as to “what works,” in getting programs started and funded in our communities.

We are indeed embarking upon a new frontier in corrections and its impact on our communities, as well as with the families struggling to deal with the many challenges incarceration brings to the parent and child alike. There are many avenues we can take as a community to address the multitude of complex issues that surround incarceration, transition, children, and parents. It is the vision that this First Annual Event will be followed by bigger and better events in the future.

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## MENTAL ILLNESS AND PRISON

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By Eileen Kennedy

*“My son was saved by the Department of Corrections”!* a family-to-family instructor tells a new group of family members taking a 12-week education class from NAMI (National Alliance for Mental Health).

“Let me explain,” she continues. “Before my son went to prison, I knew he had a problem with alcohol, and had trouble maintaining his AA programming, but I didn’t know he had a mental illness as well. While he was incarcerated, he was supervised for a time, almost daily, by a psychiatrist who eventually gave my son a dual diagnosis.” A dual diagnosis is a diagnosis of both addiction and mental illness. In her son’s case, this meant alcohol addiction and schizoaffective disorder.

In the mental health field, the diagnosis is of fundamental importance because medications for one mental illness are inappropriate and even dangerous for another illness. In fact, AA programming is considered a wrong fit for someone with a dual diagnosis. These mentally ill people need a less confrontative therapy style to maintain their health.

With such a successful ending to the above story, it is hard, possibly, to see what is wrong with this scenario.

### **Why Are We Sending People with Mental Illnesses to Prison?**

It is, however just what we as a society are doing: sending the mentally ill to prison and in record numbers. Look at the statistics below supplied by the Bureau of Justice Statistics from the U.S. Department of Justice in 2006:

More than half of all prison and jail inmates had a mental problem. The breakdown is as follows:

State Prison	Federal Prison	Local Jail
56%	45%	64%
(705,600)	(70,200)	(479,900)

Most of these numbers represent a significant increase in the past decade as estimates of the mentally ill imprisoned were lower then years ago.

A generation ago, large, impersonal institutional settings for people with mental retardation, or mental illness, were closed because these settings were considered inhumane. For those people with mental retardation disabilities, the replacements were smaller, family-style group homes, and sheltered workshops, with trained, compassionate staff administering these homes and workshops.

People with mental illnesses have fared far less well. When policies changed concerning our state-run mental hospitals, people with serious mental illnesses ended up living on the streets of our urban centers, or being sent to prison for nonviolent offenses, and drugs.

Often prisoners with mental illnesses have poor adjustments in prison, incurring more rule infractions with disciplinary actions than other prisoners. They are also more likely to serve their entire sentence, and in fact, have longer sentences than other prisoners. After prison, people who are mentally ill have the highest recidivism rate because of the stress of readjusting to the outside world.

Stress is a key factor among the mentally ill for continued poor management of their illness. Stability in a community setting is necessary for a person with mental illness to maintain adequate mental health to function successfully. "Wonder drugs," which are used to quiet symptoms enough for a mentally ill person to function, do not cure illness. Most patients need to work closely with their psychiatrist, sometimes over a lifetime, to keep their dosage level effective, and strategize coping responses to maintain mental health. Often these drugs have strong side effects that impact a person's ability to live a normal life, and require substantial help from society where that mentally ill person lives.

What is needed is an overhaul of the criminal justice system dealing with people who have mental illnesses: from training police in mental health procedures, to diverting mentally ill people from prison to community-based programs, and to establish a special court to administer to the needs of the mentally ill. Prisons are no better an answer than large state-run hospitals of yesteryear, and they may be less humane. Moreover, prison sentences may seriously undermine a mentally ill person's ability to live a productive, meaningful life, and regain mental health.

Mental health is not a crime punishable by prison, but a brain disorder, and people with this type of disorder need appropriate medication and therapy programs, fostered by their community setting.

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### **"Voices from the Inside"**

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#### **Parting Sorrow**

My name is S.F. I am a recovering addict and a member of the Hole in the Wall Group at Oregon State Penitentiary. I started using at age five or six with my older brother and the drug dealer who lived in our camper in the backyard. From age eleven on, I was raised in boys' homes and cages as addiction took its natural progression from my early using to the extremes. I can't remember really having fun or enjoying being high. It was just an escape, a numbing of the reality that was my life -- anything to change the feelings or shut them off, even for just a few miserable hours. But no matter how fast or far I ran, I couldn't get away from me! No matter where I went, there I was.

Today's I've chosen to live my life clean, facing my problems and feelings head-on. What a relief that has turned out to be. I know God didn't design me to be high and disengaged from life.

Not long ago, my best bro and I were selected to interview each other for a public radio project: a collection of oral histories that were recorded all over the United States, aired on the radio, and stored in the Library of Congress. My friend shared about his certainty that he would someday be released from this institution. Twenty-five days after our interview was played on the radio, my friend was found dead of an overdose on the floor of his cell.

This guy was a loving husband and father with thirteen children and twelve grandchildren. He had a larger-than-life persona and knew how to be a friend. If anyone needed help, he was always there. He was a gentle giant of a man. He started showing up at meetings, but his attendance was sporadic. I thank God we had enough of a program to love him no matter what. He had a lot of anger, shame, and despair in him. Sometimes, he would talk about it, but he could not *would* not -- work the steps.

My friend died of our disease, and not a day goes by that I don't miss him and feel the pain of this loss. My grief cuts deep. He has now found his freedom and peace. Every day, I remember that no matter what, we don't have to end this way. Today, I know the scope and true meaning of powerlessness.

*(S.F. is currently at Oregon State Penitentiary)*

#### **Life on the Inside**

Life on the inside is not easy. Some would say that it was and with three squares a day and a safe place to sleep, clothing provided, adequate medical care, and constant supervision that there wouldn't be a great deal for any inmate to worry about. That is not my reality.

Some days are okay. I won't minimize those days. They are the days I am able to telephone that place that I used to call my home. They are the days that I am not beating myself up for being here. They are the days when I can actually look in the mirror without disgust for the person looking back at me. The "okay" days are few and far between.

A typical day is a day that I think about my victim and his family. When I wake in the morning, I thank God for another day. I then ask Him to bless my loved ones and to give a special blessing to my victim's family. Not a day begins that I do not think of him. Not a day ends that he isn't on my mind.

I work in the legal library. I am a legal assistant and it is my job to assist my fellow inmates with their legal issues. My job is my saving grace. It is a way that I can help others in similar situations. It is a way to reach out to other human beings. It is a way to have a purpose.

Every day is lived in the memories of what was. In the "before" time I was never satisfied with what I had or was doing. I always wanted more. I now know and realize that "then" was beautiful and that I had it all. Now there is nothing. I am alone, one of the things I dreaded most in my before life. I am able to sit with myself now, however, it was something I had to learn. It sure doesn't feel all that wonderful even still.

I cannot turn my thoughts off. It is a never ending torment that I must endure on a daily basis. Yes, I feel guilt. Yes, there is remorse, tons of regret. I can't not think of why I am here when I constantly see where I have ended up. The razor wire is a constant reminder. There isn't any way to avoid thinking about why I am here.

I miss life.

*(By MT at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility who has 14 years left on her sentence.)*

### **Day-to-Day**

On the day-to-day, it's a struggle to make your way through the many prison gangs, hostile guards, and many rules, without snagging yourself on something. There are strip searches and trips to the segregation unit that are demoralizing, and can cost you more time and heavy fines, respectively.

With the onset of Ballot Measure 11, the system is flooded with youth. They are taken into gangs and fed a steady diet of "convict thinking," that fuels the fires of the authority problems that brought them here in the first place. The cycle continues. The door revolves.

On the biggest stage, everything costs money. I am at SRCI in Ontario. There are three complexes here with 150 orderlies per complex who make \$28 a month. Most have disciplinary fines, it simply doesn't meet the needs. No one likes to be without. The fallen prey on those they deem beneath them. Sex offenders are extorted for money.

Homosexuality is ramped. Rape happens. I've heard the screams, seen the faces, looked into the eyes, turned away. It's not my business.

I have worked hard to make myself a better person, husband, son. However, some of my problems persist. I'm doing surgery on myself. The long term counseling that I need is out there. I've been denied parole three times.

So, like others here, I fight, struggle and claw to climb out of the pit that is the Oregon Prison System, and still I fall short.

*(D.L. is currently at Snake River Correctional Facility)*

#### **To Our Incarcerated Friends:**

**Please continue to send us, for future publishing in our newsletter, a short essay on what life is like for you on the inside to give those on the outside a better understanding. Please give us a brief description of yourself. You may include pictures or artwork. All submissions will become the property of Oregon CURE and will not be returned to the sender. If selected for publishing in our newsletter, submissions may be edited. Please mail directly to: Oregon CURE, 1631 N.E. Broadway, Suite 460, Portland, OR 97232.**



**(Submitted by Shawn Fox, OSP)**

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**A Father Speaks from His Heart**  
**By: Randy Geer**  
**(Re-printed from the "Walled Street Bulletin,  
Oregon State Penitentiary," with permission from Randy Geer)**

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**To the Oregon Convicts (and a couple of transfers) I Have Known:**

Twice in my lifetime, the inmate population of the Oregon Department of Corrections has reached out to my family by sending flowers to a funeral. The first time was some 35 years ago, to honor my father; the last time just a few weeks ago, to honor my son. Although it may surprise some people, the compassion and respect you have shown my family does not surprise me, nor will it surprise many of my fellow DOC employees and inmates who are or were members of the Oregon State Penitentiary community.

Some of the most noble and compassionate acts I have ever witnessed were performed in prison by convicts with "SID" numbers. On the day following the sudden and senseless death of my son, I asked that several inmates across the department be informed so they would not be shocked by reading the obituary and would know the reason I was away from my desk and out of reach.

The Geer family has been inundated with letters, cards, and artwork from those inmates and many others who heard the news via the DOC grapevine. I have placed all the artwork above my desk to remind me of Alex but also as testimony to the strength of my relationships with many of you, built by years of dialog and cemented by hundreds of shared events and activities. I plan to use the artwork to stimulate conversation about how corrections, in my experience, works best when it has a heart, a soul, and a human face. During the past few weeks, it has occurred to me how often incarceration can be, for some, the last best hope to intervene when a young life hangs in the balance. With the prevalence of inmates who have a diagnosed mental illness and a co-occurring alcohol and drug abuse problem, many of the youthful offenders within ODOC resemble my son, Alex, in many ways.

Alex's death by accidental overdose has given me cause to reexamine and to recommit to the humane principles of incarceration that DOC has always endorsed and expected from all DOC employees. I have promised myself to start every work day by reminding myself that I am responsible for the care, safety, and growth of real people, who, like my late son, are desperately battling demons. People who are sons and daughters, brothers and sisters, fathers and mothers and that I can honor those universal and eternal relationships best by performing my duties with gravity, compassion, and humanity.

So long as I am sharing memories of things past, I will share a story from my early career. When processing a Native American elder, age 65, into a prison event, I noted that he was accompanied by his sons, ages three and eight. Later, I asked him what prompted him to start a family at his age. He smiled and told me, "I still have a lot to learn and my boys are the best teachers." Well, I learned from my father and I learned from my son but I feel I must, in no uncertain terms, let you know I have also learned and continue to learn lessons in humanity from all of you. For the tender mercy, for the compassion, and for showing my family and the Department of Corrections, unashamedly, the angels of your better natures, I will be forever grateful and humble.

With Deep Respect and Gratitude,

Randy Geer on behalf of the entire Geer Family

*(Randy Geer is a long-time staff member of the Oregon Department Corrections whose son passed in the spring of 2007.)*

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## Support Groups

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### For Adult Family Members & Friends of the Incarcerated Monthly Meetings

#### PLEASE CALL TO REGISTER

##### Beaverton 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday

7 – 8:30 p.m.  
Beaverton Comm.  
Center  
12350 SW 5<sup>th</sup>,  
Ste. 100  
(FREE PARKING)

(503) 350-0236  
(Gretchen)

##### Central Oregon\*\* 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday

6-7:30 p.m.  
Redmond Library  
Board Room  
827 SW Deschutes  
Redmond  
(FREE PARKING)

(541) 475-2164  
(Tina)

##### Eugene 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday

7-8:30 p.m.  
Private Residence  
4745 Brookwood  
(FREE PARKING)

(541) 935-1182  
(Ken)

##### Medford 2<sup>nd</sup> Monday

6:30 – 8 p.m.  
United Methodist  
Church  
607 W. Main  
(FREE PARKING)

(541) 944-3304  
(Sam)

##### John Day 2<sup>nd</sup> Tuesday

6:30 – 8 p.m.  
Presbyterian Church of  
Mt. Vernon  
171 E. Main St.,  
Mt. Vernon  
(FREE PARKING)

(541) 932-4446  
(Julie)

##### Ontario 4<sup>th</sup> Saturday

6 – 8 p.m.  
The Family Place  
390 NE 2<sup>nd</sup> St.  
(FREE PARKING)

(541) 889-3826  
(Sue)

##### Salem 1<sup>st</sup> Saturday

11 a.m. -12:30 p.m.  
CALL FOR  
LOCATION

(503) 566-9190  
(Butterfly)

\*\* Serving Bend, Sisters, Redmond, Prineville, Madras, and LaPine

\*\*\*Serving Grant County (John Day, Prairie City, Mt. Vernon, Long Creek, Monument, Dayville, and Mitchell)

#### Update on Oregon CURE Support Groups

By: Gretchen Hite and Jan Singleton

**Eugene Support Group:** Ken reports that their meetings have been “chuggin’ along pretty much like a routine” in recent months. He said they had an “enormous” crowd in September – 25 people, but that in October the group dropped to its regular size of 15 people. He said that he has received calls from six new people recently who inquired about their meeting place, time, and format, so he hopes that the next meeting will see an “enormous” crowd again. Ken went on to say that he is surprised just how many people there are “out there” who have very serious hurts and very heavy burdens, and that, apparently, only CURE offers them a safe place to unload and share their feelings.

**Central Oregon Support Group:** Tina reports that their last meeting was attended by five people, one of which was a first-time attendee. She said they discussed various pertinent issues, one of which was medical treatment in prisons. They also discussed the new facility recently opened in Madras, the possible consequences of the Real ID Act to people visiting prisons, and heard the stories of two former inmates in a youth correctional facility.

**Salem Support Group:** Butterfly and Alicia report that they will change the location of their monthly meeting to: The Christian Center, 1850 45<sup>th</sup> Avenue NE, Salem. The meeting will be held in the choir room. The

meetings will continue on the first Saturday of each month from 11 am to 12:30 pm. If you would like to attend the Salem group, please contact either Butterfly at 503-566-9190 or Alicia at 503-930-0330.

**Beaverton Support Group:** Gretchen reports there is a consistent group of returning participants. At one of the recent meetings, there were several questions about release issues in Washington County. David Bellwood, of Washington County Department of Corrections, probation and parole division, will attend the December 5 meeting to explain and answer questions pertaining to release issues.

**Troutdale Support Group:** Renee is finalizing the dates for a Support Group that will encompass the

Gresham, Boring, and Troutdale communities. We look forward to opening this site in Troutdale for people in the eastern metropolitan areas. Specifics, when available will be posted on our website. Please check our website [www.oregoncure.org](http://www.oregoncure.org) for site information in November or December.

**If you would like to be a part of our support group network, please contact Oregon CURE for information. We are still searching for a group leader for N and NE Portland. We have the site – the Center for Family Success – we just need a leader who can devote 90 minutes a month to helping families and friends of prisoners maintain contact and a support system on the outside.**

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#### FRESH START Multnomah County

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By: Judy Farrell

Oregon CURE's Fall newsletter had an article about Ready to Rent, a program for landlords and tenants in Multnomah, Washington, and Clackamas counties. In order to be eligible for Ready to Rent, applicants must attend a 12-hour tenant education class.

Recently, another program to access housing for those with rental barriers has been started in Multnomah County called "Fresh Start." The Fresh Start approach is a formal partnership between housing providers and service providers that emphasizes rapid placement into housing and supporting persons in that housing. For example, a person with a history of a felony must be a client of a community agency such as SE Works, Central City Concern Transition Projects, Human Solutions, Portland Impact, or Center for Family Success. As a client of one of these agencies that has an agreement with Fresh Start, you could obtain housing. Those who are eligible must meet the following requirements:

- Homeless or at risk of homelessness
- Individuals or households earning less than 50% Median Family Income
- Current residents of Multnomah County or someone who intends to settle within County limits
- Have admission barriers to rental housing, and are in need of supportive services following housing move-in.

An advocate in the service agency will remain involved after move-in to provide supportive services and assist with any problems that may arise concerning the housing.

As a client, you must agree to training around landlord-tenant rights and responsibilities, fair-housing laws, budgeting, and consequences of not abiding by the lease agreement and housing goal plan. The program is administrated by Housing Authority of Portland.

Funds are not provided. When released to Multnomah County and in need to housing, apply to one of the community agencies—for a list of those agencies authorized to assist their clients with Fresh Start housing, contact:

Suzanne Therrien  
Housing Authority of Portland  
135 SW Ash  
Portland, OR 97204  
503-802-8494

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## Federal Legislation Update

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### The Family Telephone Connection Protection Act H.R. 555

(This information provided by the eTc Campaign (Equitable Telephone Charges  
c/o MI-CURE, PO Box 2736, Kalamazoo, MI 49003-2736)

#### When the eTc Campaign in 2000 began, we knew . . .

- Three prison systems offered debit calling at reduced rates (the Federal Bureau of Prisons, Colorado, and Tennessee)
- One state (Nebraska) accepted no commission on prison calls.
- One state (Texas) allowed only trustees to make phone calls – and then only one call per quarter.
- Commissions paid by phone companies to prison systems were high and trending higher.
- The rates charged for prison phone calls were trending higher.

#### Today, we know:

- At least 20 prison systems offer debit calling at reduced rates (Federal Bureau of Prisons, Colorado, Idaho, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, New Mexico, North Dakota, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, Wyoming)
- Two states (Nebraska and New York) accept no commission on prison calls.
- Texas is working to implement a phone system that will give access to the majority of prisoners.
- Commissions are trending lower.
- Rates charged for prison phone calls are trending lower.
- Federal legislation (H.R. 555) has been introduced to empower the FCC to regulate interstate prisoner calls.
- There has been editorial support for improvements in prison phone systems in more than 25% of the states.
- Legislation to improve the systems has been introduced in more than 50% of the states.

Here's how you can help:

**If you are in the free world:** the information you need to understand the system and to advocate for changes is at the website: [www.etccampaign.com](http://www.etccampaign.com) . Please visit the website and use the information and/or tools there to begin advocating for improvements to the system.

**If you are incarcerated:** Let others know about the campaign. Send the above information to someone in the free world who may participate in the web-based campaign.

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## The Oregon Accountability Model Children and Families Component

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By: Gretchen Vala

While visiting the Oregon DOC website a few weeks ago, I ran across a statement within the section regarding Orientations to the Oregon Department of Corrections as follows:

The Department, in partnership with Oregon CURE, delivers a monthly orientation to inmates' families and friends. Together, CURE and designated department staff deliver information to family members on what incarceration is all about, what the Oregon Department of Corrections does, how to avoid manipulation by an incarcerated loved one, and how to effectively advocate for them.

CURE members have worked closely with DOC staff over the years and have built a practice of respectful communication to effect change where we can. It can be a gigantic task to carefully edit material before it's either posted on a website or goes to print – it is even more daunting to go back and re-edit material that could be several years old! At our request to the DOC Public Information Office; they agreed to alter the above publication so it more clearly defines our intentions, as follows:

For several years DOC has partnered with a group dedicated to helping family members manage the loss of having a loved one in prison. This group is called Oregon CURE which stands for Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants. CURE members are primarily people who have loved ones in prison. They understand the range of difficulties encountered by families and friends when a loved one is incarcerated, and they can provide information and support.

We appreciate the DOC's willingness to make the above change to the wording on their website, as it more clearly reflects CURE's purpose and intentions.

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### Volunteer Opportunities

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**Support Group Leader:** If you would be willing to donate a couple hours a month to lead a North Portland support group, please contact Oregon CURE at (503) 977-9979. We will train you and get you started and in return, your reward will be great! This is your chance to support and help those who walk a lonely path and need the support of others.

**Mentor:** Portland Partners Re-Entry Initiative is looking for mentors to offer support, encouragement, and motivation to an adult who has been incarcerated. Must be at least 25 years old, clean and sober for at least three years, emotionally mature, stable, patient, and kind. Contact Cynthia Harrison, Volunteer Coordinator, (503) 772-2300 or email: [charrison@seworks.org](mailto:charrison@seworks.org).

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### Update on Pilot Program for E-Mail at SRCI and Warner Creek

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**By: Jan Singleton**

In a recent conversation with Mark Montgomery, of Electronic Message Solutions, Inc. ("EMS"), Oregon CURE has learned that the pilot program is going well and that customers and EMS are pleased. This pilot program is scheduled to end March 19, 2008. Stay tuned for further information as it becomes available.

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### POETRY CONTEST

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*By: Judy Farrell*

The Shot Callers Press, LLC, is presenting a poetry contest of prisoners, ex-prisoners, family members or friend of someone in prison, corrections officers, prison volunteers, and prison staff:

First Place: \$250  
Second Place \$100  
Third Place \$ 75

All entries must be submitted by December 31, 2007. To obtain the RULES and an ENTRY FORM, write to:

**Shot Caller Press, LLC – Poetry Contest**  
**8615 N. Lombard, #317**  
**Portland, OR 97203**

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**You Can Make a Difference!!**

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We must be the change we want to see in the world. If you're not happy with the way things are, you may work to effect a change in Oregon's criminal justice system. Contact Oregon CURE for volunteer opportunities.

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**THANK YOU!!**

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To: Our Incarcerated Friends at Coffee Creek Correctional Facility and Oregon State Penitentiary – for jewelry donated to Oregon CURE and sold at our Annual Meeting.

\* \* \* \* \*

**THE IN SIDE** by Matt Matteo



*Reprinted by permission of Matt Matteo  
from Serving Time, Serving Others by Tom Lagana and Laura Lagana.*

Matt Matteo is an aspiring 39-year-old writer, painter, cartoonist, and prisoner from Derry, Pennsylvania. Matt continues to improve his art, writing, and self through contributing to many publications, including *Chicken Soup for the Prisoner's Soul*, *Chicken Soup for the Volunteer's Soul*, *Serving Time Serving Others*, and *Touched by Angels of Mercy*. Letters are welcome at: #BS-7345, 801 Butler Pike, Mercer, PA 16137.

I DO WANT TO HELP **OREGON CURE** CONTINUE ITS WORK IN 2007

Here is my tax-deductible contribution.

- \$3/yr. Prisoner
- \$15/yr. Individual
- \$25/yr. Family
- \$50-100/yr. Sustaining
- \$100-250/yr. Sponsor
- \$250/yr. Benefactor
- \$50/yr. Organization
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Other

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

[optional]

Name of Incarcerated Loved One: \_\_\_\_\_

SID # and Address: \_\_\_\_\_

----- (tear off and return) -----

Oregon CURE  
1631 N.E. Broadway, #460  
Portland, OR 97232