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News

Ready, Set, Work!
(RSW!) Collaboration
in Rensselaer County

RSW! 2014

Albany County RSW!

Other Highlights:



**August 2014 OWDS
Graduates**

**Chautauqua County
Jail *RSW!***

Upcoming Training:

GCDF-Instructor

**OWDS Dates
for 2015**

Leading the Way

Three agencies have combined forces to present ***RSW!*** in Rensselaer County.

Rensselaer County Probation, the Rensselaer County Re-entry Task Force and the state Department of Labor are co-presenting the ***RSW!*** curriculum for probationers and parolees.

Senior Probation Officer Pauline Franz, Workforce Program Specialist Angela Crupe from the state Labor Department's Special Populations Unit and **Rensselaer County Re-Entry Task Force Coordinator Wendy Brown** (pictured from left to right) have formed a collaboration that is successfully working with probationers and parolees in the community.



In January, 16 participants enrolled in ***RSW!*** and when the class ended in March, seven had graduated. Six people have successfully obtained employment, which is an 86 percent employment rate. The Hill Street Inn, a local housing site, allowed the use of space to hold ***RSW!*** groups. Along with probation and parole officers, the OWDS opened the group to ex-offenders referred by other community providers. Although most individuals referred were mandated or strongly recommended to attend by their probation officer, not all were there because required by their supervising officer. Local businesses, and community and government agencies joined the group to speak about employment opportunities as well as ways the agencies and programs can eliminate or minimize barriers that may hinder employability or job retention.

Rensselaer County Probation Director Laura Bauer said the current collaboration benefits all involved. One benefit has been the numbers of participants that are able to take the class. In May, 24 people were enrolled in the collaborative ***RSW!*** group. **Director Bauer** also advised that participants benefit from the variety of perspectives and skills displayed through the collaboration of these three agencies.

Albany County takes *Ready, Set, Work!* (RSW!) program to new level

DCJS Deputy Commissioner Robert Maccarone joined Albany County Probation Director William Connors and County Executive Daniel McCoy in June for a press conference about the new onsite computer lab at Albany County Probation.

Craig MacNeil (right), an Offender Workforce Development Specialist and Offender Employment Retention Specialist, heads the Albany County Employment Services Unit and facilitates the ***RSW!*** groups for Albany County Probation.



Watch Time Warner Cable News' coverage of the event:

<http://albany.twcnews.com/content/745432/albany-co--program-prepares-people-on-probation-to-enter-the-workforce/>

OPCA Graduates 8th NIC OWDS Class

OPCA joined with the state Labor Department and county Probation Departments in August to celebrate the completion of the eighth class of individuals to receive Offender Workforce Development Specialist (OWDS) training as a result of the in-state partnership with the National Institute of Corrections. This year's class included staff from county Probation Departments, ATI Programs, 200% of Poverty Programs and County Re-entry Task Forces.

A total of 185 professionals have completed the 180-hour OWDS training. OPCA also sponsored two teams that attended NIC national OWDS training for a total of 202 graduates.



Alamu, Adedayo	Osborne Association (NYC)
Auletta, Jessica	Project MORE ATI (Dutchess)
Burgos, Raul	Exodus Transitional Community (NYC)
Cornwall Shannon	TASC of the Capital District
Dietrich, Meredith	The Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services (NYC).
Dodson, Jeffrey	Osborne Association (NYC)
Earl, Toney	Tomorrow's Workplace (Rockland)
Edwards, Anthony	Osborne Association (NYC)
Foote, Gerard	Leadership Training Institute (Nassau)
Frazier, Patricia	Workforce Investment Board (Oneida)
Gaston, Nancy	Workforce Investment Board (Oneida)
Gravette, Michael	Exodus Transitional Community (Dutchess)
Harrison, Barbara	Leadership Training Institute (Nassau)
Koffi, Assana	St. John's Riverside (Westchester)
Lewis, Audrey	E Joy Resource (Nassau)
Mamelka, Angela	Greenhope Services for Women (NYC)
Morales, Monique	Project MORE PVRSC (Dutchess)
O'Connor, Michael	Albany County Probation
Perez, Michael	Fortune Society (NYC)
Santana, Margarita	Orange County Stayin' Out Project
Serritella, Carrie	Rensselaer County Probation
Staples, Timothy	Center for Community Justice-Schenectady
Williams, Kamika	Project MORE ATI (Dutchess)
Woodard, Melissa	Project MORE PVRSC (Dutchess)

2014 OWDS Graduates Making a Difference

Project M.O.R.E. Inc. and RSW!

Melissa Woodard, facility manager for Transitional Housing/PVRSC at **Project M.O.R.E., Inc.** was the valedictorian for the August 2014 graduating class.

Project M.O.R.E. has run groups for several years, since it began training staff in 2009. They now have six staff trained in OWDS.

"The RSW! curriculum is a huge asset to the services we are providing our clients," Melissa said. "We have incorporated many fun activities into each module to help grab their attention and keep their interest. Our clients are leaving the program better prepared than ever! I am looking forward to moving on to the next stage of becoming a GCDF."



Valedictorian Melissa Woodard with DCJS Deputy Commissioner Robert Maccarone

Congratulations also goes out to **Meredith Dietrich**, salutorian. Meredith is a social worker for the Manhattan Start Program at the **Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services**.

2014 OWDS Graduate Profile: Toney Earl

Toney Earl, one of the August 2014 OWDS graduates, also is executive director and founder of M.A.D.E , a transitional re-entry agency servicing Rockland County and surrounding areas. M.A.D.E is committed to reducing unemployment, crime, recidivism and homelessness by empowering participants, primarily non-violent ex-offenders, to make sustainable, personal changes that positively impact society.



M.A.D.E. also generates opportunities for individuals to transform their own lives by encouraging behavioral changes that promote personal responsibility, healthy relationships, and positive contributions to society through programs which include: job readiness and placement, life skills training, ex-offender re-entry services, relapse prevention and housing.

Toney also works with Tarik Greene, a 2012 OWDS graduate, on the RSW! groups at Tomorrow's Workplace, the local one stop career center, in Rockland County. Tarik is a Disability and Offender Workforce Development Specialist.

Visit www.made-transitions.org for more information.

RSW! Worth Noting: CodyAnne Weise

CodyAnne Weise, an employment and re-entry facilitator for the 200% of Poverty ATI grant awarded to Chautauqua County last year, works inside the Chautauqua County Jail. She received her OWDS certification in 2011, has her GCDF, is a trained T4C facilitator and was trained by NIC as an offender employment retention specialist (OERS). CodyAnne reports the following about "Nick," whom she assisted. Nick was sentenced to county jail for the maximum amount of time allowed by law.

During his incarceration, despite the many barriers he faced, Nick took positive steps to change his life. He obtained a job as a kitchen trustee and enrolled in the 200% of Poverty ATI program. He completed both **Ready, Set, Work!** and **Thinking for a Change** in December of 2013. Nick attended every class and fully participated in all activities.

Within a month following his release, Nick landed a job at a restaurant owned and operated by "Jack," another **Ready, Set, Work!** and **Thinking for a Change graduate**. Jack participated in the first **Ready, Set, Work!** group in Chautauqua County run by the 200% of Poverty ATI Program.

Nick is Jack's longest employment retention, as he reached 180 days of employment retention this quarter. The skills learned during programming allow both of these ex-offenders to be models and advocates for other program participants.



CodyAnne Weise

Ready, Set, Work!

A Mid-Year Snap Shot

So far in 2014, 23 programs have reported holding **RSW!** groups. These include 12 Probation Departments reporting on 22 groups, with 130 people completing the first two quarters and 70 individuals finding employment within 90 days.

Alternative to Incarceration (ATI) programs, Re-entry, Probation Violation and Residential Stabilization Centers (PVRSC), 200% of Poverty and U.S. Probation also reported holding 22 **RSW!** Groups, with 215 completions and 73 individuals finding employment within 90 days.

So far this year, agencies have reported a total of **345** people completing **RSW!** and **143** finding employment within 90 days.



Training Opportunities in 2015

OWDS: The 9th OWDS training will be held in Albany on the following dates: March 9 through 13, April 27 through May 1 and June 15 through 19.

GCDF Instructor Training: NIC has agreed to facilitate GCDF-instructor training with a Master Trainer in Albany on April 7 through 9.

Eligibility to facilitate OWDS training begins with getting the GCDF. Anyone who has completed the 180-hour OWDS training is encouraged to apply for GCDF certification. Individuals who have received the GCDF through the Center for Credentialing & Education are eligible to take the three-day OWDS instructor training.

A limited number of scholarships that will cover lodging expenses for eligible applicants are expected to be available. Applications will be forthcoming.

For more information about OWDS or GCDF, contact Cynthia Blair at cynthia.blair@dcjs.ny.gov or (518) 485-5145.

Offender Employment Retention Specialist (OERS) Training: OERS training will be held May 4 through May 8.

This training combines motivational interviewing techniques with cognitive behavioral principles to teach practitioners how to increase offenders' motivation for change while addressing the thoughts and feelings that negatively impact employment retention and successful re-entry.

For more information on this training, visit: <http://nicic.gov/training/15c2301> or contact Pat Taylor at petaylor@bop.gov or (202) 353-9354.



Andrew Roberts OWDS 2012
NEW Global Career Development Facilitator