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IN TOUCH with OWDS

NYS DCJS Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives: IN TOUCH WITH Offender Workforce Development Specialists (OWDS)

News

- **NIC Virtual Discussion**
- **RSW!-for Persons in Mental Health Recovery**
- **RSW!-Sex Offenders**

Inside Highlights

- **RSW! Update**
- **2010 OWDS Grads implement RSW!**
- **OWDS to Join Youth Council**

Other News

- **RSW! Data**
- **OWDS Training Begins in February**
- **DOWD Conference**
- **Congratulations**

Welcome to *In Touch with OWDS* an electronic newsletter from the **New York State DCJS Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (OPCA)**, written specifically for OWDS and others interested in offender employment

Leading the Way... NYS OPCA will join Maryland in staying Virtually connected (via WebEx) to keep OWDS connected. NIC will host a Discussion Forum for NYS beginning in January of 2011.

This forum will allow OWDS who have completed the 180 hour intensive training to stay current on issues and to share accomplishments in their various venues around the state. A survey went out to capture interest, preferred time and dates as well as topics of interest. More information will follow on topics and dates.

Ready, Set Work! Curricula Expands



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Ready, Set, Work!-for Offenders in Mental Health Recovery

OPCA has unveiled its latest addition to the **RSW! – for Persons in Mental Health Recovery** for probationers and other offenders with mental health challenges. OPCA Intern, Danielle Rogers who is pursuing a degree in Forensic Mental Health, developed a draft curriculum for this initiative with the supervision of OPCA staff. The curriculum was reviewed and finalized by a committee of OWDS trained probation officers and other OWDS professionals. **Matt Charton** and **Craig MacNeil** from Albany County Probation, **Fran Ricci** and **Kevin Pausley** from Schenectady County Probation, **Adam Stephenson** from Warren County Probation, **Beth Bobela** from Dutchess County Probation and **Mark Pisano** from Ulster County

Probation. Also on the committee were **Elaine Kost**, Department of Labor, and **Bernard Wilson** and **Cynthia Blair** from OPCA.

OPCA Finalizes RSW! For Sex Offenders

OPCA and county probation departments have finished the **Ready, Set, Work!-Sex Offender Probationers (RSWI-SO)** Curriculum. Each module was examined and additions or deletions made as needed to make the module relevant to the sex offender population. We have also included an additional module specifically for this population to deal with the special conditions imposed due to their offenses. This module is designed to be presented with the assistance of a probation officer with a sex offender case load. Job placement should only be undertaken with the input of an ATSA compliant treatment provider.

Ready, Set, Work!

Ready, Set, Work!

Update



Robin Toyloy, OWDS class of 2010



Robin Toyloy of **Women's Prison Association** received her OWDS certificate in July and held her first **RSW!** group in September and another in October. The group had 18 women who started and 15 successfully completed the program. Two women have found employment and two others are in training. The others are involved in job search activities. According to **Robin**, women who are just released from prison can really utilize this training. She said about the **RSW!** training "I had a great time with the training and so did the participants." **Robin** has been busy using her OWDS skills and making the difference in the lives of women who need a second chance.

Richard Smith, OWDS class of 2010



Richard Smith of **TASC of the Capital District** held his first **RSW!** Group in September. He had 8 starters and 6 who completed his first **RSW!** group at Albany TASC. Great news, 3 of the 6 are now employed. Way to go **Richard!** He says that the participants, who are in substance abuse treatment, value the groups and consider it one of their favorites. Richard is now holding his second **RSW!** group with 10 participants.

RSW! Groups are currently in operation in several counties across NYS. **Albany, Cattaraugus, Dutchess, Erie, Monroe, NYC, Ontario, Onondaga, Schenectady, St. Lawrence, Suffolk, Ulster, and Warren** counties all have probation officers or other staff trained as Offender Workforce Development Specialists. Many in the Alternatives to Incarceration Community are also using **RSW!** or elements of it, in their job readiness groups. **BASICS, NYC; Center for Community Alternatives, Syracuse; Education and Assistance Corporation, NYC; Fortune Society, NYC; TASC of the Capital District, Albany; Trinity Institution, Albany; Palladia PVRC** and

Women's Prison Association, NYC; are all currently using the program with several other agencies slated to begin by the end of the year. The **RSW!** curriculum is intended to be facilitated by **Offender Workforce Development Specialists** (OWDS). OPCA's collaboration with the NYS Department of Labor and several county probation departments has trained 64 OWDS in Albany. Along with the 17 criminal justice professionals and partners who attended NIC's national trainings, **81 professionals** sponsored by OPCA have successfully completed the OWDS training.



Mark Pisano has been nominated to become a member of the Youth Council of the Ulster County Workforce Investment Board. The Council is currently planning several Youth Job Fairs for individuals between the ages of 16-21. The target audience is both in school and out of school youth. The goal of the Job Fairs is to connect youth in Ulster County with youth friendly employers in targeted areas within the county. Participants will complete a work readiness training. Congratulations!

OWDS Corner

By

Matt Charton

GCDF-Instructor



RSW! Groups Working

Albany County started **RSW!** program in 2005, and since then we have had 304 probationers complete the program. This number does not include the specialized convictions and others with whom we also work, specifically, those with a Sex-Offense

conviction and those on parole. Of the 304 people completing, 209 are currently employed/in school or have reached their Maximum Expiration date while employed. 65 people who completed **RSW!** violated their probation (VOP). For comparison we used a control group consisting of people who were referred to **RSW!** but did not complete. This group was chosen because they presented similar needs to those who were referred and completed. This group equaled 158 people. Out of those 158, 11 are currently employed and 107 were violated. This data indicates that

probationers presenting similar employment needs, **RSW!** graduates had a 69% chance of becoming employed, and a 21% chance of being violated. The comparison group a 7% chance of becoming employed and were violated in 69% of being violated. Albany County Probation **RSW!** Works!!



OPCA conducts Third Annual Offender Workforce Development Specialist Training

Held in Albany, NY.

February 28-March 4, 2011

(Monday-Friday)

April 11- 15, 2011

(Monday-Friday)

May 23- 26, 2011

(Monday-Thursday)

**Attendance required for all three
weeks**

For additional information please call or
email Cynthia Blair at 518-485-5162 or
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CONGRATULATIONS FRAN!



After a long and accomplished career as a probation officer as well as the Director of the Schenectady County One- Stop, an adjunct professor and the list goes on, **Guy Francis Ricci** is moving on. **Fran** has been one of our most loved and well respected OWDS Instructors since he completed his training in our first in-state class of 2008. We are hoping that Fran loves training new OWDS so much that he will continue this even after he retires. We know that **Fran** will not be able to resist continuing to inspire others in a discipline that he loves. We wish **Fran** all the best.



2011 Defendant/Offender Workforce
Development (DOWD) Conference
April 18-21, 2011
San Francisco, California

Keeping In Touch:

Didn't see **your** name here? Let us know what you are doing. Also please contact Cynthia Blair if you need technical assistance with your **Ready, Set Work!** or **Retention Counts!** groups at 518-485-5162 or cynthia.blair@dpca.state.ny.us