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IN TOUCH with OWDS

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

They're off and running...

New Ready, Set, Work! Groups

- **Staten Island (NYC)**
May 2009
- **Suffolk County**
April 2009
- **Warren County**
October 2009

Inside Highlights

- Congratulations
- Collaborations
- Upcoming Trainings
- New OWDS

Welcome to *In Touch with OWDS* an electronic newsletter from the [New York State Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives \(DPCA\)](#), written specifically for OWDS and others interested in offender employment

Leading the Way... Matt Lucas, Suffolk County Probation and Sabrina Dargan NYC Probation both held Employment Matters trainings for their counties.

Matt Lucas, Suffolk County Probation held an **Employment Matters (EM)** training in Suffolk County on April 16th. Matt's was the first **EM** training which was not facilitated by the original DPCA team. The training, held at the Suffolk County Legislative auditorium in Hauppauge, had 61 attendees from many different agencies. Matt was able to recruit the Fortune Society's, Glenn Martin to facilitate the Legal Issues piece of the training. Among others facilitating the training were NYC Probation's **Sabrina Dargan** and **Rosemarie Salinger** both like **Matt**, OWDS and GCDF certified instructors.

Sabrina Dargan, New York City Probation held an **Employment Matters** training in NYC on August 26th. In all, 27 Probation Officers participated in this one-day training. From the comments that were relayed to Associate Commissioner (**OWDS**) **Lorene Gilmore**, the information was well received by the Officers and would undoubtedly prove useful their work with probationers. Other trainers included OWDS: **Virginia Nepa (Women's Prison Association)** and NYC

Probation's **Rosemarie Salinger, Roberta Posner and Elton Maynard**. **Rosemarie Roberta**, and **Sabrina**, are all OWDS and GCDF certified Instructors.

RSW! Groups

The following probation departments are currently running **RSW!** groups:

- Albany*
- Cattaraugus
- Dutchess
- Erie
- Monroe
- NYC
- Onondaga
- Ontario
- Schenectady
- St. Lawrence
- Suffolk
- Ulster

*Albany County Probation also runs **RSW!** at Trinity Institution in Albany

Starting in October

Warren County

DPCA Graduates 2nd OWDS class!

DPCA, in collaboration with the New York State Department of Labor and County Probation Departments, graduated the second class of Offender Workforce Development Specialists (OWDS) from its In-State Partnership with the National Institute of Corrections (NIC). This year's class included probation officers and service providers from 200% of Poverty and Alternative to Incarceration programs. Twenty-one participants successfully completed the intensive 180 hour training program. All of the participants deserve our congratulations for the hard work they did to accomplish this goal. With the addition of these 21 OWDS, the DPCA- led collaboration has trained 45 OWDS in Albany. Along with the two teams that attended NIC's national training, 62 OWDS have now completed the program.

Congratulations

To:
Art Cooney
Cattaraugus
Craig MacNeil
Albany
Shirley Robinson
NYC
Alma Sehovic
NYC
Virginia Nepa
NYC

**Global Career Development
Facilitators**

The above join **Mark Pisano**
from Ulster County Probation
and **Nancy Chu**, Erie County
Probation as certified **GCDFs**.

**RSW! Specialized
Convictions groups**

Albany County leads the way on a new initiative with DPCA to bring **RSW!** to individuals with specialized convictions. OWDS's **Matt Charton and Craig MacNeil**, along with several others from Albany County including Principal Probation Officer Bill Connors teamed with DPCA and forensic psychologist Dr. Richard Hamill, to work on **RSW!** for Sex Offenders, the first group to be identified as in need of a specialized curriculum. Also involved in the development of this project have been Fran **Ricci** from Schenectady County and **Beth Bobela** Dutchess County as well as **Elaine Kost** (OWDS/GCDF-Instructor) from the NYS Department of Labor.

Congratulations

New OWDS Graduates



2009 DPCA OWDS Graduating Class, Albany, NY

Michelle Arcamona	Education and Assistance Corporation- Brooklyn TASC
Tina Austin	Project for Success, Chemung
Ray Barnes	Center for Community Alternatives, Inc.- Onondaga County
Erin Beiter	U.S. Probation, Western District of NY
Grendal Bland	Project More, Poughkeepsie
Derrick Brown	Education and Assistance Corporation- Brooklyn TASC
Ann Faulkner	Cattaraugus County Probation
Clyde Hagan	Fortune Society, New York City
Rachel S. Heasley	Salvation Army, Onondaga
Clifford Jackson	U.S. Probation, Western District of NY
Malronev McLean	Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services, New York City
Collin Quigley	Cattaraugus County Probation
Byron Reed	Center for Employment Opportunities
Michele Rosplock	Project for Success, Chemung
Michael Sanabria	Education and Assistance Corporation- Bronx TASC
Daniel Servera	Education and Assistance Corporation- Bronx TASC
Nicholas Smith	Center for Alternative Sentencing and Employment Services, New York City
Adam Stephenson	Warren County Probation
Johanna K. Vespe	Center for Employment Opportunities, New York City
Shawn Wallace	Trinity Institution, Albany
Dale Wilkinson	Cattaraugus County One Stop

Graduation News

On August 6th, 21 people received the much anticipated reward for all of their hard work: a certificate officially recognizing them as Offender Workforce Development Specialists. The ceremony held at the NYS Department of Labor was facilitated by OWDS Program Manager, **Cynthia Blair**. DPCA's Executive Deputy Director **Tom Slater** and DOL's Bureau Chief, Workforce Innovations, **Douglas Reamer**, addressed the graduates and provided timely information on the state of employment in NY, and the strides being made to assist offenders in this difficult time for all job seekers. Also on hand to congratulate the groups was last year graduate, **Victor Ellis**, Director of Job Retention at CEO. Victor has effectively used many of the skills learned at the 2008 OWDS training in Albany and has been promoted to a Director (do we think there is a connection?)

OWDS Corner

Art Cooney, OWDS 2008 writes:
*An unemployed mother completed the **RSW!** program in June. In the second week of **RSW!** she began searching for a job with a new found sense of zeal, even though she still had several weeks of unemployment as a cushion. With a revived sense of self-efficacy, she interviewed for a job to start right after graduation from **RSW!** A week into her new job an old nemesis almost derailed her employment. Severe dental problems suddenly got worse. Uninsured, she seemed to fall through the cracks in qualifying for any government sponsored program. When she reported to Probation, she sat wincing in pain despite the dulling effects of a prescription pain killer. Thankfully, we were able access about \$1,400 from a few civic organizations to help. She is getting her dental work done with a dentist who agreed to do the work for a reduced fee. She is still working. The barrier to job retention posed by the dental problems will soon be a thing of the past. PO Cooney reported, " I am humbled by the sense of work ethic, self reliance and perseverance she displayed."*

Art is a Sr. PO in Cattaraugus County Probation Department and a member of the 2008 DPCA OWDS class.



Taking it to the Next Step

Global Career Development Facilitator Instructor Training

We encourage all OWDS trained individuals to apply for their GCDF. This will qualify specialists to become instructors in the NIC instructor training. DPCA is working with NIC to schedule additional instructor training early next year

Hot Off the Press

On Wednesday September 9th 2009, the [Osborne Association](#) celebrated its new partnership with the Men's Wearhouse by co-hosting a kick-off event to launch the Men's Wearhouse National Suit Drive. Through this partnership, Osborne will receive suits, dress shirts, slacks and ties for participants seeking to re-enter the workforce.

OWDS Memories 08



2008 DPCA OWDS Class

Most of the class are hard at work delivering RSW! groups as well as training other professionals in the NIC OWDS competencies. **Fran Ricci and Craig MacNeil** co-facilitated the second OWDS training held this year in Albany with GCDF Instructors **Matt Charton, Judy Sogolian, Elaine Kost and Cynthia Blair**. Busy running RSW! groups are: **Art Cooney, Amy Harvey, Nancy Chu, Jennifer Ball, Jeff Crane, Shawn Bartlett, Beth Bobella, Mark Pisano and, Mickey Record** along with **Craig** and **Fran**. **Craig, Fran and Beth** are part of the new **RSW!-Sex Offender** committee. **Craig, and Fran** are part of the Retention Counts module development group and **Craig** is on his 5th Retention Counts group.

The **Remsen Street Terrific Trio (RTT)** continues to impress. **Alma Sehovic**, EAC Brooklyn TASC is working with her participants on job readiness and retention. She is also making a difference in the system as according to **Alma** "Courts and judges are incorporating employment as a *must* in order to have mandates lifted. RTT member, **Virginia Nepa** (WPA) has collaborated with NYC probation's **Sabrina Dargan** and **Elton Maynard** on training staff and probationers. **Virginia** has also launched several projects at WPA to assist participants in finding employment. Notably, she and co-worker **Donna G. Joyner**, Manager of Employment Support, held a fashion show where formerly incarcerated women modeled donated clothing and were critiqued as to appropriateness for job interviews.

OWDS **Jose Vasquez**, of the Osborne Association has opened a computer lab for formal training of participants as well as informal program for participants to sharpen their skills for enhanced employment opportunities. Most importantly, **Jose** says that he is teaching the OWDS competencies to his staff. They are now seeing employment in a different way. **Jose** says that the job placement and retention rates have gone up since he returned from the training. OWDS Class of '08: keep up the great work!

Keeping In Touch:

Offender Workforce Development Specialists should advise as soon as they receive their GCDF or other certificates, etc.

OWDS Corner

We invite original articles from Offender Workforce Development Specialists. We will try to share one in each issue

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@dpc.state.ny.us



Employment Matters Training Held in Cattaraugus County

On September 23 a regional Employment Matters training was held in Cattaraugus, Allegany and Chautauqua counties also participated in the one day training.