



Reentry Community News



Ohio University Pre-Law Fraternity members Hanna Stepanic and Abby Bentley with recent donations

I was able to speak at the Phi Alpha Delta Pre Law Fraternity meeting on October 30th due to a special invite by current president Amal Afyouni. The purpose was to talk with the members about the Reentry Program and how beneficial their donations are to our Returning Citizens leaving prison. Phi Alpha Delta does ongoing fundraising in order to provide donations to the Reentry Program. They have also been taking a more active stance in looking for places for their members to volunteer in the community to help out and gain more experience regarding services and needs. Phi Alpha Delta has far more active chapters than does any other law fraternity in the world. The Fraternity has initiated over 200,000 members into chapters at accredited schools only. In September of 1970 Phi Alpha Delta became the first law fraternity to admit women. In 1972 Phi Delta Delta Law Fraternity, the leading fraternity for women was, by joint action, merged into Phi Alpha Delta and 5,000 leading women judges, attorneys and educators became members of Phi Alpha Delta. The 1980 Convention adopted a program of Pre-Law Chapters and in the Spring of 1981 the first Pre-Law Chapter of the Fraternity was established at Southwest Missouri State University. Today there are 197 Pre-Law chapters chartered.

Ohio University Sociology-Criminology Student Olivia Henry

My name is Olivia Henry and I am originally from Pittsburgh, PA..I will graduate from Ohio University December 2018 with a Bachelor of Arts majoring in Sociology-Criminology and a minor in Communications Studies. I am currently a work study Student Learning Community Leader, and Hearing Board Member with Community Standards and Student Responsibility at OU. I began interning with the Reentry Program early September through Roberta Roberson's Sociology class. I also interned at the Athens County Prosecutors office in the Victim Assistance Program in 2017.



I plan to move to Columbus upon my graduation where I will work as a Staffing Consultant for Beacon Hill Staffing Group. Even though I plan to work in a business setting when I graduate, I still remain interested in the rehabilitation process of individuals getting out of prison. I have always had an interest in the criminal justice system and how it runs. Growing up I was exposed to the reality of how social problems can impact an individual, for example, how family dynamics, neighborhood influence, and childhood trauma can cause a common theme for patterns of behavior. I want to be a part of the process that helps aid people to lead a healthier lifestyle. I am aware that society tends to reject and stereotype people who have a felony or have dealt with the criminal justice system. So, considering that I wanted to help combat that stereotype and not let social barriers be such a hurdle for people.

I have had a wonderful time here at the Ohio Means Jobs Center and have learned about the opportunities that Athens County has for people struggling with addiction and other obstacles as well as the process of Reentry and how it works. The experience has opened my eyes to the realities that many people face in poverty. As an intern I observed and talked with the people in the program, attended a prison Reentry Fair, completed intakes, organized hygiene packs/clothing that were donated, and attended meetings that focused on services to help people in the Athens community.

I will always remember what an impact this program had on me as I move forward to Columbus in the new year. Further, Shawn Stover has been an excellent mentor through this internship and has exposed me to the realities that Athens County faces. I plan to work full-time, but also find out what resources and opportunities there are in Columbus for individuals who have been recently released from prison. I plan to find out where I can help and hopefully volunteer to help people who are less fortunate than me, or are struggling with substance abuse. This was a fantastic experience for me and I plan to use what I have learned at this internship in my future endeavors.

Melissa King AMERCorps/VISTA at ACEnet

My name is Melissa King and I moved to Athens in 2015 from Cleveland, Ohio where I have lived my whole life. I graduated from Ohio University in December of 2017 with a bachelor's degree in Social Work. While I was attending Ohio University I became interested in advocating for vulnerable populations and assisting individuals in locating supportive services in the community through the various volunteer experiences that I chose to pursue. While I was attending college I volunteered at organizations like Good Works Incorporated and Havar Incorporated where I gained a wide variety of professional experiences through various volunteer roles. My favorite volunteer experience while I was in college was my senior field practicum at Havar Incorporated who serves adults with developmental disabilities and I spent most of my time at the day habilitation center on Columbus road leading group discussions with consumers and collaborating with my supervisor on creating fun new programs or group activities.

When I graduated I became an AmeriCorps Vista at The Appalachian Center for Economic Networks (ACEnet) and for most of my service I have been researching how small businesses are expanding and adapting to residing in a rural location. ACEnet is a small business incubator whose purpose is to help everyone who is interested in the immediate area to start and maintain their own small business. I have had the opportunity to interview many local small business owners and analyze the techniques and online tools that they have used to successfully continue to fund their venture. I was introduced to the Athens Reentry program at the Ohio Means Jobs Center at the beginning of my VISTA service and I have been participating in the referral process at ACEnet and the Workstation for individuals who are participants of the program and interested in small business opportunities or resources. So far I have enjoyed learning about the various resources and programs that are available in Athens County to individuals who participate in the reentry program and I am honored to have the chance to connect others with resources that are available in the community if they wish to start their own business and pursue their entrepreneurial dreams.

I plan to pursue a master's degree in Social Work at Ohio University and I want to continue learning the various therapeutic roles that I can portray as a social worker with populations who may be disadvantaged and struggling to overcome consequences of substance abuse or incarceration. During the last few months I have chosen to attend meetings in the community that address opiate abuse which are referred to as Athens HOPE and the Opiate Taskforce that consist of various mental health professionals who are usually providing clients with direct services in the surrounding area. These meetings have provided me with insight regarding the real scope of the problem surrounding addiction and recovery in the Athens community and the experience has also demonstrated how mental health professionals are coming together to try to think about how they can improve the lives of others. I think that it is important to keep having the conversation about addiction in the community and how everyone can positively contribute to recovery.



REENTRY RANTS & RAVES

I wanted to thank Jennifer Fredette who invited me to speak at her Political Science Intro to the Legal System class at Ohio University on November 8th. There are many people who do not know the purpose of Reentry Programs and may not have a firm understanding of the benefits of helping our Returning Citizen's focus on goals and needed services upon release. Many of the people who meet with me state that lack of structure outside of prison can be a difficult adjustment. Our services in the community help them to make better choices and stay on task. The students were very interested in the discussion and hopefully left the class with a new appreciation of obstacles that people with a felony must overcome. Sometimes after class individual students feel comfortable enough to approach me and share a story of something that has happened in their life or family regarding incarceration or substance abuse. Sharing can help others to feel less alone with their struggles and also find out what resources are available. This was a great class and very positive experience- Thanks Jennifer for providing these learning opportunities to your students.

NEXT MEETING INFORMATION

The next task force meeting will be on **January 28th 2019** at **9:30AM** at the Athens County Job and Family Services County Home Office (13183 St Rt. 13 Millfield, Ohio 45761) in the conference room. See you there!