

Athens County Reentry Task Force Meeting

January 28, 2019



Meeting Attendees: Shawn Stover (OMJ Athens Reentry), Joe McGowan (OMJ Athens), Susan Douglas (Athens JFS), Samantha Gress (Integrated Services/ Sojourners), Jennifer Fredette (OU Political Science), Zack Eckles (SE Ohio Legal Services), Lacy Rogers (United Campus Ministry and Hopewell Health), Carlene Triplett (Foothills District United Methodist Women), Janalee Stock, Lee Ann Brooks, Cate Matisi (Women for Recovery/Serenity Grove), Kerri Shaw (OU Social Work), Melissa Walker (ACCS), Monica Silverthorn (Athens VA-HUDVASH), Melissa King (ACEnet), Diane Pfaff (AHV 317 Board), Bill Ryan (community Member), Laura O'Neil (Athens Co. Public Library), Kyle Verge (ACEnet), Joan Nease (United Appeal 211 Athens), Nick Dioguardi (Integrated Services), Drew Case (ODRC), Jay Forshey (ODRC)

Shawn Stover- Reentry Chairperson- Introduction of guest speaker and stated that we are all here to talk about ideas, share services, community events and programming about Reentry, recovery, and community

Samantha Gress- Integrated Services

- Samantha did a presentation to the task force on ending Youth Homelessness in SE Ohio – one of five rural communities in the Nation to receive 2.2 million funding through HUD to help youth up to age 24 years of age in Athens, Meigs, Vinton and Jackson Counties.
- Coordinating Reentry through various agencies for homelessness needs and additional supportive service's needs.
- Possible help with crisis beds, rapid re-housing, and additional outreach services to link youth with needed help.
- To access the homeless services system, contact an access point at Integrated Services 1-800-321-8293 or Sojourners Care Network 1-877-496-8531

Jennifer Fredette- Ohio University Political Science Professor

- Jennifer has an interest in learning more about Reentry and helping people in recovery. She attended the meeting to see what is happening in our community.

Cate Matisi, Janalee Stock, Lacy Rogers, Keri Shaw, Lee Ann Brooks- Women for Recovery and Serenity Grove

- Discussed collaborating services to help women coming out of prison/jail to find employment.
- Reaching out for ideas and ways to help women with a felony to have better opportunities for gainful employment
- They are working as a group on creating an electronic employer and community survey to gather information about employment barriers of having a felony. Survey will be sent to task force members later.

- Lee Ann Brooks hired recently as the new House Manager since Amy Standall took a different job.

Mr. Ryan- Community Member

- He came to the meeting to try to find out better ways to help his son in prison to have a better opportunity for parole when his hearing comes up.
- Jay Forshey DRC stated that the best things that a long-term inmate can do is to become involved in as much programming and activities that they are able as well as good behavior reports.
- There are many factors to be considered by the parole board and the better impression that an inmate can make with activities the better the odds of release which also is dependent on the seriousness of the crime.

Melissa Walker- Athens County Children Services

- Melissa discussed the new EDMS electronic database that they have been using that should speed up services and benefit both the worker and participant.
- There will be a Superhero/ Princess Ball on Saturday March 16, 2019 1:00pm to 3:00pm at the Athens Community Center where kids and community members can dress up like their favorite character. Contact Athens County Children Services for more info.
- Kid Fest April 13, 2019 from 10am until 2pm.

Susan Douglas- Supervisor Athens Job and Family Services

- SNAP/FS Benefits Loaded early due to government shutdown.
- Athens Job and Family Services is stocking up on food items for food boxes to help with the extra need in the community.
- The agency keeps evolving to try to meet the needs of our consumers.

Joe McGowan- Supervisor for OhioMeansJobs Athens County

- OhioMeansJobs Athens has a business before hours open house scheduled for February 20th for business leaders in the community to learn about services at the OhioMeansJobs.
- The 15th annual OhioMeansJobs Job Fair will be held at the Athens Community Center 701 E. State Street on April 17, 2019 from 10am until 2pm with over 70 employers/training opportunities Veterans may start early at 9:30am.
- Remember to refer people to OhioMeansJobs for their GED or High School Equivalency and if they utilize our services we will pay for the GED testing. Also looking for referrals for the WIOA training Program, employment services, free resumes, and job search leads.

Monica Silverthorn.- Social Worker for HUD VASH program

- Monica talked about the HUD VASH program helping homeless Veterans with housing and other needs. She also discussed VA medical services that are beneficial to our Veterans.

Carlene Triplett- United Methodist Women Foothills District

- Carlene talked about the HOPE letters Pilot Project and how the Athens and Zanesville communities have been chosen to participate due to their communities being very supportive of Reentry and Recovery individuals. The good news is, anyone can write letters or sign cards. It's an easy way to make a big difference in someone's life. The Foothills District United Methodist Women invite you to come learn about how we can send hope to a neighbor in need with HOPE Letters. This is a pilot project in partnership with the Restored Citizens Network (Zanesville) and the Athens County Reentry Task Force. You do not need to be a United Methodist Woman to participate. Men who wish to start their own HOPE Letters group are encouraged to attend. The more of us who come together for this challenge, the more people in prison we can impact.
- **March 16:** The Foothills District UMW invite you to join one of two groups helping Ohio Reformatory for Women residents write new life narratives through the **HOPE Letters Pilot Project**. Contact Carlene Triplett at carlenetriplett@yahoo.com for details or 614-439-0685 to register for a **HOPE Letters Information Meeting Training** in Zanesville or Athens. (See attachment)

Joan Nease- United Appeal 211 Athens County

- Joan reminded people to let her know of any changes/updates with their organizations through the 211 system. Updates can be sent to resource@unitedappeal.org

Diane Pfaff- 317 Board Community Services Manager

- Diane talked about how the 317 board has provided funding to various agencies/organizations to be able to help people. Some of the places that they help support are Serenity Grove, Clem House, Mike's Bridge House, and Our House in Logan.
- She discussed Rapid Access Services through Hopewell Health Centers providing services to people quickly as they need the help and the full range of Medication Assisted Treatment through Hopewell.
- There will also be a new recovery house in McArthur opening soon.

Kyle Verge- ACEnet

- Kyle talked about how ACEnet is working on expanding Reentry type services and gathering information on recovery services and their connections within the community. ACEnet serves many counties throughout Ohio and the SE Ohio region.
- He also has been offering a series of small business development classes in many communities through the local library system. Contact Kyle for more information on classes kylev@acenetworks.org

Melissa King- ACEnet AmeriCorps VISTA volunteer

- Melissa has been working with the Athens Reentry Program to gather statistics/demographics from intakes completed by Shawn Stover Reentry Coordinator for the years of 2017 and 2018. She is near completion.
- She also has been doing research on GoFundMe and Kiva for participants to be able to access funds to start small business. Melissa has presented multiple webinars on funding opportunities through ACEnet. You can register and view the webinars through the ACEnet Facebook page.

Laura O'Neil– Athens County Public Library

- Laura talked about a site Lynda.com that can be accessed through your library account that is free to members of the library with their library card. This site provides many opportunities for online learning and tutoring.
- She talked about a grant that will enable people in Amesville to utilize an electronic locker system to safely pick up library materials.
- Ohio University also donated a large amount of cheesy-rice vegetable packets to give out at the libraries.
- The Plains Library continues to sponsor parents support groups and The Nelsonville library has many activities including **FEAST--Snacks that ShamROCK** — Tuesday, March 12, 2019, 5:30 PM – 7:00 PM
- Visit the Athens County Ohio Public Library site online to see what events are happening at the library in your community. You may be surprised at all the events happening in our local libraries.

Zack Eckles– Southeastern Ohio Legal Service

- Zack recently transferred to Athens from the Steubenville area working with SE Ohio Legal Service and wanted to learn more about what was available in this area and how their office could be of more assistance with people in reentry and poverty
- He has an interest in doing more with CQE's (certification for qualified employment) in this area for people who have a felony. CQE's may help people in certain fields to become more employable and overcome certain obstacles with getting hired
- He also inquired about any types of legal workshops that people were interested in SEOLS presenting to educate our members and community on their legal rights and resources

Drew Case- SE Ohio Region Adult Parole Authority

- Drew attending the meetings to share information with the local adult parole authority offices and prisons to share information about what is going on in the communities with new services/events.

Jay Forshey- SE Ohio DRC Regional Reentry Coordinator

- Jay wanted to thank the Athens County Reentry Task Force for hosting the OERC event at Hocking College to highlight some of our local partners and success. He states that we are doing very good work especially for being a rural community with many obstacles.
- He reports that Athens County has 342 adults incarcerated in 27 prisons and 95% of those incarcerated will be released at some point. They are projecting that this year 78 people will return to their communities with 5 of those being female.
- ODRC has a new director Annette Chambers-Smith replacing Gary Mohr upon his retirement.
- Jay discussed The Community Transition Program and the internal linkage through DRC with external community programming upon release. Inmates must be identified and assessed for recovery service programs.

Nick Diogaurdi- Integrated Services Reentry Specialist

- Nick reported that this is the 3rd year of a grant for the Community Transition Program through CareSource and through his work at Integrated Services they have 15 people who were released from prison and in their programming receiving housing, therapy, and case management services.
- Most need to be participating in certain prison programming to be eligible and he schedules interviews/intakes around 7 days from their release.
- Nick can continue services for people even if they go to jail or back to prison. He reports that they currently have 10 people in the program who have sustained living with employment and paying rent.
- They can often help with furniture needs for new housing or basic things that will help with maintaining housing/employment.

Shawn Stover – OMJ Athens Reentry Coordinator

- Shawn talked about the great collaborations and connections that our community is making to help people in reentry and recovery.
- He also stated that he was grateful for the continued donations of clothing and hygiene items from Phi Alpha Delta Pre Law Fraternity at Ohio University. They have been very consistent with donated items to make hygiene packs over the last 3 years.
- There should be more funding to enhance services in this area in the coming years through multiple sources to help reduce incarceration rates and assist people in recovery to prevent further legal issues.
- Shawn has been seeing more people coming into the Reentry program from court ordered inpatient recovery treatment rather than being incarcerated for probation violations or minor offenses. This has been a positive ongoing trend for the area.

Next Reentry Task Force meeting will be Monday March 25th 2019 starting at 9:30am and generally runs to about 11:00am at the main office of Athens County Job and Family Services 13183 St Rt 13 Millfield, Ohio 45761 2nd floor conference room.