

Athens County Reentry Task Force Meeting

July 22, 2019



Meeting Attendees: Shawn Stover (OMJ Athens Reentry), Carlene Triplett (Foothills District United Methodist Women), Lee Ann Brooks (Women for Recovery/Serenity Grove), Becky Filar (Athens Co Prosecutor's office), Laura O'Neil (Athens Co. Public Library), Kyle Verge (ACEnet), Sheila Shafer (Athens Co. Children Services), Drew Case (ODRC), Jean Demosky (Director ACDJFS), Crystal Howard (Public Relation ACDJFS)

Lee Ann Brooks- Women for Recovery and Serenity Grove

- Lee Ann states that there are currently 5 women at Serenity Grove and that they continue to help them work on their goals by creating a supportive environment.
- Hopewell is working with peer support groups. Lee Ann also stated that they are planning an event with more details to be released in August and shared with the group.

Becky Filar- Athens Co Prosecutor's Office

- Becky stated that the prosecutor's office continues to partner with the library for their peer support groups. Contact her office for meeting times and locations.
- They are also planning a Vivitrol graduation towards the end of August with more details and location to be determined.
- Becky also reports partnering with Tri Co Adult Career Center to help up to 20 individuals connected to the adult judicial system with employment related skills training to increase hiring potential and employment opportunities. The Adult Parole Authority is also helping with referrals from their office.

Kyle Verge- ACEnet

- Kyle has been working on accessing grants and recently submitted one to the Department of Labor with the support of several local organization including the Athens Reentry Task Force.
- He states that the grants are to help people in recovery to work on goals related to small business development and help overcome some of the obstacles in creating a business. They continue to look for more partners to increase basic support services for individuals.

Sheila Shafer- Athens Co Children Services

- She stated that their agency has partnered with Athens County Job and Family Services to increase programming for kin caregivers with OWF eligible children to increase resources like clothing, food items, home needs and care repairs to name a few.
- Sheila said that they also have continued programming through the library for parent education with Hopewell and Integrated Services. They also continue to partner with Integrated Services through their peer mentoring program to increase services in the community.
- Integrated Services has recovery housing in Vinton County for women with children.

- Sheila shocked the crowd with the announcement that this is her last Reentry meeting because she is retiring from Children Services next month. She has been a wonderful member of the Reentry Task Force for many years and will be missed. Wendy Sheilds will step in as the representative for ACCS in future reentry meetings.
- Upcoming ACCS events August 7th is Kid day at the Athens County Fair, August 13th is the last day for the PB&J project since school will be starting, lace up program continue to take referrals and could use donations from the public.

Laura O'Neil– Athens County Public Library

- Laura reports that they have been offering free lunches at 5 of the 7 libraries that will end when school starts. There also are book drops for afterhours returns.
- She states that the book home delivery project has been very popular and is a good social outlet for people who are home bound. She is given requests or takes extra book in her car for people to check out like a book mobile.
- Their 2018 annual report is out and very informative. The Athens County Public Library site online has many useful links for services and learning. Check it out!!
- The system Lynda.com (a comprehensive learning site for people with a library card) may be going through some changes in the next year through their parent agency Linked In. More details to come later. Check out Lynda.co on the library site. They offer online teaching videos for most everything.

Drew Case- SE Ohio Region Reentry Coordinator/Adult Parole Authority

- Drew states that the new Director of DRC Annette Chambers-Smith has been restructuring to make changes and improvements with the office of Reentry Services. They have a stronger focus on creating solid links between prison and community with more preparation/contacts for inmates prior to their release.
- Jay Forshey our previous liaison with DRC Reentry services was reassigned to improve reentry work within the prisons and help to develop better programming and contacts to help inmates with reentry planning many months prior to their release.
- Darryl Graves will now be our DRC Liaison for the Southern Ohio Region working with community partners to provide information and updates from DRC.
- Drew Case, Marianne Carson, and Shawn Stover are also some of the members representing the SE Ohio region in rewriting the Ohio Plan on Reentry Centered Adult Supervision.

Carlene Triplett- United Methodist Women Foothills District

- Carlene reports that the HOPE letter writing project is going well and they are forming good relationships and helping people to connect with reentry services. The inmates are able to send one free letter a month and the HOPE group is honored that they choose them to correspond. We talked with DRC representative Drew Case about increasing the free letters for projects like this one and he said that he would try to look into that.
- They had a surprise with someone who was released much earlier than they expected and there has been difficulty reconnecting with that person to see if they need other follow up services.

- Carlene is pleased with the support of the community with the HOPE letters project and is trying to think of different ways to expand reentry services through their group.

Jean Demosky- Director Athens Co Job and Family Services

- Jean reports that the Back to School Bash on August 1st is going to be a huge event to help children and families in our community. There are about 1,300 students signed up to receive shirt w/school logo, shorts and shoes as well as backpack full of school supplies. There has been so much help/donations from other organizations and they will also be able to do free haircuts and pizza/water.
- Athens JFS received an ambulance through the county that they plan on re-working in order to make a mobile JFS unit to reach out more to the communities to promote services and employment opportunities.
- June 2019 food boxes handed out (1 per family) were 1058 and over 50 for operation Hungry Belly. These will help feed over 300 children with the average family size of 2.72. The 35 to 59-year-old age population is the largest group of consumers.

Crystal Howard- Public Relations Athens Co Job and Family Services

- Athens Co JFS will have a table at the Athens County Fair on August 5th through 9th from 8am to 5pm. If any other agencies have something that they would like to distribute at the table, please contact Crystal Howard at crystal.howard@jfs.ohio.gov
- Crystal shared that this will be our 4th year of the Athens Stand Down located at the Athens Fairgrounds. Last year over 200 people attended the event. The Stand Down will be held this year on October 4th from 10am to 2pm at the Athens Co Fairgrounds. If you would like to register to be a vendor/partner or donate new items, please see attached brochure.

Shawn Stover – OMJ Athens Reentry Coordinator

- Discussion with Jean and group about an Opioid Grant that Athens Job and Family Services received for about \$10,000. Our agency will be looking at potential uses. Each county received an individual grant for various funds related to the Opioid Crisis. Athens portion was much less than the surrounding counties.
- Reentry intakes continue to be consistent with 8 new people in May and 8 more in June. Many of the new intakes were early judicial release on community control and participating in various ongoing treatment programming.
- Questions were asked about the Hocking Correctional Facility future use since there has been little shared in our community. The general understanding is that this is an Ohio University, Star and Hocking County venture since the old prison is in Hocking County. There may be some residents from Athens County at the site, but Athens County Reentry and Athens Ohio Means Jobs has not been involved in any of the planning or future services. We are just outside of the information highway that crosses the county line.

Next Reentry Task Force meeting will be Monday September 23th 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.

