



Reentry Task Force

TASK FORCE PARTNER HIGHLIGHT



NEW VISTA!

Madison Yee joined the Appalachian Center for Economic Networks this month to begin her OHIO CDC AmeriCorps VISTA term. Madison's goal is to find solutions to the unemployment and underemployment issues facing low income individuals in impoverished areas of rural Appalachia Ohio through the Appalachian Workforce Development Project. Her research primarily focuses on women in poverty and reentry individuals. She hopes that her research, data collection, and push toward community partnerships will help others become self-sufficient through economic independence.

Madison graduated in Fall 2016 with a degree in Media & Social Change from Ohio University. She has been involved in grassroots-based activism within Athens in addition to serving in state, local, and federal political campaigns. Madison wishes to attend graduate school for Public Service/Administration and work for an NGO in the near future. Welcome Madison!

Erin Phillips has been working with the Athens Reentry Program as an AmeriCorps VISTA worker through ACEnet since August 1st 2016. Her last day as an AmeriCorps worker for the Reentry program will be June 23rd 2017. She graduated from Ohio University in 2016 with a degree in Communication Studies and Political Science. Erin was the President of the Pre-law Fraternity and also was active with Students Defending Students while in college. She plans on attending law school in the fall.



Erin wanted to work with the Reentry Program due to an interest in helping those returning from prison to have better opportunities for employment and success. She also focused much of her attention on women in poverty and how to help them move towards self-sufficiency. Her goal with the Reentry Program was to collect data from intakes and interviews to identify barriers for participants and develop solutions for better job opportunities. Erin also wanted to improve networking and collaborations with community partners as a part of the Southeast Ohio alliance. Erin has done a tremendous job accomplishing her goals with the Reentry Program and the Reentry Task Force. She created the Athens Reentry Task Force Newsletter so that partners and programs can receive more recognition and information about how we work together. Erin also updated the Reentry brochure, created Reentry Highlights and Participant Demographic Statistic Infographics, and worked with 211 to develop a new brochure called the Athens County Telog. She compiled data from the Reentry Program participants to share information regarding the barriers that people face trying to gain employment.

Erin helped to organize the donated clothing and hygiene items. She made contacts so that women in poverty could gain access to feminine hygiene products. Many of our participants have excellent skills and have benefited greatly from individualized business cards that she creates for them. The Reentry Program and Reentry Task Force has been greatly improved thanks to Erin's "Getting things done" attitude. We have been fortunate to have her for this brief time and wish her well with her future law school plans.

CONGRATULATION TO THE VIVITROL GRADUATES!

The Athens County Prosecutor's Office held its first Vivitrol graduation ceremony on June 21st at Grover Center on Ohio University's campus. 36 people were congratulated on the completion of the Vivitrol program and given certificates as well as a keychain that had "You are the key to a fresh start." printed on them.

The Vivitrol program started in October of 2015 with the goal of serving 40 people in its first year. The program has now started treatment on over 200 people. Vivitrol is a once monthly, non-addictive medication that, coupled with counseling, prevents relapse to opioid dependence. The program run through the Prosecutor's Office takes participants an average 15 months to complete. Starting with a court or self-referral, participants sign an initial treatment agreement. After the agreement is signed, the Prosecutor's Staff sets up an appointment with Health Recovery Services to receive bloodwork, and if the participant is fully detoxed, the first shot of medication can be administered as soon as 10 days after a referral. There are 15 shots total as well as mandatory individual and group counseling sessions. Participants are also required to call the Prosecutor's Office with updates and attend "phase meetings" to talk with Prosecutor's Office staff, nurses, and other program service providers. After the 15 shots are given there is a 2 month period of post program supervision before a participants can officially graduate. Some participants stay on the Vivitrol shot after the program has ended as an extra safely net to prevent relapse. Prosecutor Keller Blackburn wants the community to know his program is available to anyone and states, "It works because of the determination of the participants, the support of his staff, and outside agencies willing to fight the opioid epidemic through treatment."



The Athens Reentry Task Force is so thankful that the Vivitrol program is available to those in our community who suffer from opioid dependence. We congratulate the Vivitrol program graduates and can't wait to attend the next ceremony in support.

REENTRY QUOTES

Thoughts on addiction from a woman who was incarcerated for 2 years on drug charges:

"People in addiction don't realize all of the services that are available to them because they don't want to believe that anyone will help them. The reality is that there is a lot of help if you want it."

A Statement from a man that was incarcerated for 2 years:

"It's like you drop off the face of the earth and are placed in your own little community for a while. Then they put you back in society like nothing has changed. You have to self-segregate to survive in prison almost like you have no choice. People who are from the country hang out with each other and city people do the same."

A young man recently released shares a funny observation about prison:

"I talk to guys happy because they get free meals, a bed, and a roof over their head like 'What more could I want' I'm like there's no girls here dude..."

- Reentry Coordinator Shawn Stover

NEXT MEETING INFORMATION

The Next Task Force meeting will be on July 24th 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! There will not be a meeting in August.

This newsletter was a collaborative publication between Athens Reentry Taskforce Chairperson Shawn Stover and Newsletter Editor AmeriCorps VISTA member Erin Phillips working with the Appalachian Center for Economic Networks (ACENet) released on June 22nd 2017