



REENTRY TASK FORCE

ATHENS STAND DOWN



Friday, October 6 – 10am-2pm
Athens County Fairgrounds (286 W Union St)

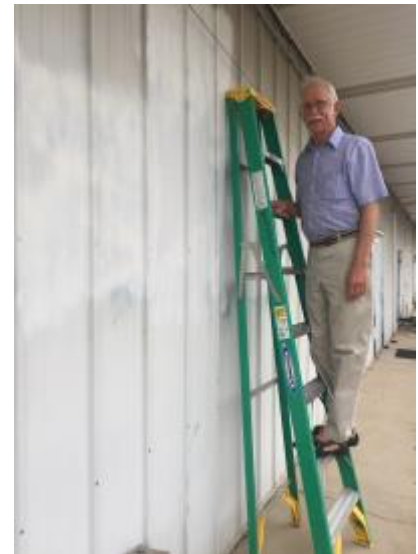
It's time for the second annual Athens Area Stand Down as local organizations come together in a day of collaboration to provide relief to homeless veterans and other at-risk individuals. As stated on the Athens Area Stand Down website, the mission of this event is to provide those without homes the resources they need to address their problems and rebuild their lives. An array of goods and services will be provided at the event, ranging from available cold weather clothing and hygiene items to job coaching and legal services.

To ensure the accessibility of the event, Athens Public Transit will be providing free bus rides to and from the Fairgrounds for the entirety of the day. All items received from the event may be brought onto the buses. If you or a local organization would be interested in hosting a table at the event, please contact Nancy Stotts (Nancy.Stotts@jfs.ohio.gov)

We look forward to seeing many of you there!

TASK FORCE PARTNER HIGHLIGHT

Sometimes the smallest of tasks, like holding a ladder for someone, can profoundly impact our lives. For Jared Butcher, this was just the case. Butcher served in the Athens community for over 30 years as an Organic Chemistry Professor at Ohio University before beginning his engagement outside the campus with the Kiwanis Club. The Club itself is a fertile ground for fostering community collaborations and meeting individuals who one otherwise could not have in other circumstances.



After Scott Zielinski spoke at the Kiwanis Club about his work with Reentry, Butcher had his memorable experience of re-painting the Dairy Barn in which an ex-felon held the ladder below, thus sparking a community-wide acknowledgement that Butcher was someone who approached all in his path with an open mind. Additionally, it was at the Kiwanis Club that Butcher was able to connect with Asti Payne, the SEO Foodbank Development & Community Relations Coordinator. Payne helped Butcher develop grants that would culminate into the successful Trimble Backpack Initiative, providing food to Trimble-area school children for the weekend in which they were at-risk for not receiving meals at home. Butcher will be receiving a Jenco Foundation award for his impactful work later this month.

Butcher also spoke passionately of his involvement with Kairos, a national faith-based organization for men and women. He has provided us with additional information about the organization, including a letter from a Kairos graduate, which we have attached to the email of this newsletter. With his work in Kairos and in other community capacities, Butcher has learned that, "When you work [with the reentry population], you become part of their family, whether you know it or not." When asked about where he hoped the future of reentry was headed, Butcher was quick to note that reentry is not an entity, but a community of real, living, evolving people. Butcher does hope that more efforts in the community will focus on children of currently and formerly incarcerated parents, as they often "face consequences of actions they did not even commit." It is important for the community to continue to support family members effected by incarceration. We thank Butcher for his steadfast work and continued efforts in the community!

A NEW HELPING HAND

In light of the growing heroin epidemic, a new clinic is set to open its doors in Athens. Groups: Recover Together, which has clinics in six other Ohio cities, takes a unique approach to rehabilitation by “combining two of the most powerful tools for recovery: group therapy and medication-assisted treatment” by way of Suboxone. The clinic is going to be initiated by Treasa Lucas, a community professional and life-long Ohio resident. As the Program Director for Flores & Associates who oversees the Driver Intervention Program as well as the Court Alcohol Substance Abuse Program (CASEP), Lucas has interacted with individuals facing addiction for years. “This is my way to be part of a solution,” Lucas remarked. She is eager for Groups’ patient-centered program in which clients are addressed as “patients”, not “addicts”, to take root in Athens after its success in Chillicothe where over 100 individuals are currently receiving mandatory weekly group counseling in addition to individualized counseling on an as-needed basis. Even after patients complete group counseling during their Suboxone treatment, they are welcomed back to the Groups community for life. Lucas notes that the community-oriented approach of therapy is just as essential as the medication-assisted treatment (MAT), especially for individuals such as those within the reentry population who often struggle with social connectivity in the community upon reintegration. Lucas also stresses that Groups does not have any interest in replacing the existing MAT options, but hopes that the clinic will be seen as another option for struggling individuals who were unable or uninterested in using the other available options in the area. “We are a rescue boat in the ever rising sea of addiction” Lucas stated of the various MAT options. “Just get in, and we’ll help you get there [to recovery].”

SHAWN’S BOX

I recently began working with a person again who was one of the first people that I started working with around 2014 when I began the position of Reentry Coordinator. She was just released from incarceration after about a 1 year sentence. This person has climbed many peaks and spent the night in many valleys but has always maintained a positive attitude and outlook through it all. She has done customer service, fast food and factory type jobs always willing to take whatever is available and work with her limited resources to try and continue with employment. Her last violation and prison sentence was due to her ongoing battle with addiction and taking risks to support that lifestyle.

She meets with me in my office upon release with a smile like an old friend who has come home ready to start a new life. We talk about her past, present and future. She is ready again to fight the demons and do the best that she can do for as long as she is able. She offers me her wisdom on addiction stating “When I was using, I was mad at God for allowing me to wake up” “Every day was consumed with finding drugs and the fear of getting sick without them” “Now I am sober again and can enjoy a Mt Dew and movie with my kids and can’t wait to do that with my grandkids”.

She met with me on a Tuesday taking job leads from The Work Station, and by Friday, she was employed. She said, “I told the employer of my background and struggles, and they were impressed with my honesty.” She was hired on the spot.

-Shawn Stover, Reentry Coordinator

NEXT MEETING INFORMATION

The next task force meeting will be on **Monday, September 25th, 2017** 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!

This newsletter was a collaborative publication between Athens Reentry Taskforce Chairperson Shawn Stover and Newsletter Editor AmeriCorps VISTA member Madison Yee working with the Appalachian Center for Economic Networks (ACEnet) released on September 21st, 2017.