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IN TOUCH with OWDS

NYS DCJS Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives: IN TOUCH WITH Offender Workforce Development Specialists (OWDS)

Welcome to *In Touch with OWDS* an electronic newsletter from the [New York State DCJS Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives \(OPCA\)](#), written specifically for OWDS and others interested in offender employment

Inside Highlights

Congratulations

- New GCDFs
- New OWDS Instructors
- New OWDS Graduates

Other News

- *RSW!* News
- *Retention Counts!*
- *RSW!*-Sex Offenders

OWDS Corner



NYS POA Conference!!!
August 11-13th, 2010
See inside for more conference information

Leading the Way...

Mark Pisano, Senior Probation Officer from Ulster County, GCDF instructor and New York State Probation Officers Association (NYSPOA) President is helping to forge change in offender employment.

Mark Pisano, a graduate of our first In-State OWDS class has served as a member of the DACUM (developing a curriculum) committee on Employment Retention Specialist Training being developed by NIC. In February Mark was asked to participate in the Offender Employment Retention National Forum held by the NIC and the Urban Institute. Mark has his GCDF as well as his OWDS Instructor certification which has been a tremendous aid to him in his work as an OWDS Instructor and as a *RSW!* group facilitator for his county. Mark is also serving as **NYSPOA** president this year. He and OPCA invited **Patricia Taylor**, Correctional Program Specialist for NIC to be a part of this year's NYSPOA conference. She

will be a co-presenter with OPCA and county probation in a workshop on Offender Job Retention on Wednesday, August 11 at 1:45 at the Crowne Plaza in Albany.

OPCA Graduates 3rd OWDS Class!

The Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives, in collaboration with the New York State Department of Labor and County Probation Departments, graduated the third class of Offender Workforce Development Specialists (OWDS) from its In-State Partnership with the National Institute of Corrections (NIC). This year's class included probation officers, service

providers from 200% of Poverty and Alternative to Incarceration programs and federal probation. Nineteen participants successfully completed the intensive 180 hour training program. All of the participants deserve our congratulations for the hard work they did to accomplish this goal. With the addition of these 19 OWDS, the OPCA- led collaboration has trained 64 OWDS in Albany. Along with the two teams that attended NIC's national training, 81 OWDS have now completed the program.

Congratulations OWDS class of 2010!

Congratulations



New OWDS Graduates



2010 OPCA OWDS Graduating Class, Albany, NY

Fact

A GDF and Instructor training provided by NIC qualifies you to become an instructor of the NIC OWDS Curriculum

- | | |
|--------------------|--|
| Annette Robinson | Palladia, NYC |
| Cadija Tibbs | Center for Community Alternatives, NYC Salutatorian |
| Dwayne Harris | Osborne Association, NYC |
| Erin Hastings | Center for Community Alternatives, Syracuse |
| Gregory Pellegrino | Monroe County Probation |
| Jamel Muhammad | Trinity Institution, Albany |
| Karlie Hall | U.S. Probation, Syracuse |
| Katherine Colella | Center for Community Alternatives, Syracuse Valedictorian |
| Kenneth Sutton | Fortune Society, NYC |
| Kevin Pausley | Schenectady County Probation |
| Leantine Cornelius | Trinity Institution, Albany |
| Manuel Caraballo | Erie County Probation |
| Nigel Jackson | Harlem Community Justice Center (CCI), NYC |
| Richard McGuire | Palladia, NYC |
| Richard Smith | TASC of the Capital District |
| Robeena Walker | BASICS, NYC |
| Robin Toyloy | Women's Prison Association, NYC |
| Shanna Hinds | BASICS, NYC |
| Troy Clarke | Center for Community Alternatives, NYC |

Congratulations

To:
**New Global Career
Development Facilitators**

Ann Faulkner
Collin Quigley
Dale Wilkinson
Cattaraugus
Elizabeth Bobela
Dutchess
Nigel Franklin
NYC
Rachel Storm Heasley
Onondaga

The National Institute of Corrections has announced the release of Career Resource Centers – An Emerging Strategy for Improving Offender Employment Outcomes. This information-rich bulletin provides a step-by-step guide for setting up a Career Resource Center in a correctional facility, a parole or probation office, or a community-based organization. It includes a companion, multimedia DVD that contains many of the resources needed to operate an effective center. Through an easy-to-use menu that parallels the written text, you can watch videotaped interviews with practitioners, install career assessment software, and read dozens of documents related to career exploration, offender reentry, collaboration building and much more. For your no cost copy of this important bulletin, call NIC's information center at 1 (800) 877-1461 and ask for item number 023066 or visit NIC on the web at <http://nicic.gov/features/library/default.aspx?library=023066>.



Offender Workforce Development Specialists Instructor Training Completed

On March 19th thirteen Offender Workforce Development Specialists completed instructor training given by **John Rakis** of the National Institute of Corrections. This three day, 20 hour training, along with the Global Career Development Facilitator certification, qualifies them to instruct the 180 hour OWDS training. The following OWDS completed the training: **Ray Barnes** and **Mike Pasquale** (Center for Community Alternatives), **Elizabeth Bobela** (Dutchess County Probation), **Nancy Chu** (Erie County Probation), **Art Cooney**, **Ann Faulkner**, **Collin Quigley**, and **Dale Wilkinson** (Cattaraugus County Probation and DSS), **Nigel Franklin** (Fifth Avenue), **Rachel Heasley** (Salvation Army, Syracuse), **Virginia Nepa** (Women's Prison Association), **Mark Pisano** (Ulster County Probation) and **Fran Ricci** (Schenectady County Probation).

After completing training **Nancy Chu**, **Art Cooney**, **Rachel Heasley**, **Virginia Nepa**, **Ann Faulkner**, **Collin Quigley** and **Ray Barnes** all participated in the OWDS training as instructors. They joined the core trainers, **Matt Charton**, **Craig MacNeil** and **Fran Ricci** in providing the 2010 training

OPCA wishes to thank all of our trainers and their departments and agencies for giving their time and expertise to this worthy undertaking. Our OWDS trainings would not be possible without your assistance and we thank you.



RWS! Group Outcomes!

Albany County Probation Department (ACPD) started running its Ready, Set, Work! (RSW!) program in May 2005, after Probation officer Matt Charton received his Offender Workforce Development Specialist certification from NIC. Since that time, Albany County Probation has developed an Employment Services Unit (ESU), which oversees all employment programming for those under probation supervision. In 2008, Craig MacNeil became certified as an Offender Workforce Development Specialist and joined the ACPD-ESU. The ACPD-ESU currently facilitates or oversees three different RSW! programs. The first is the one that is run for the general probation population in Albany County, and is held at the Albany County Probation Department. The second addresses the TANF population and serves both the probation and parole populations and is run in conjunction with The Trinity Alliance, a local not-for-profit agency in Albany. The third RSW! program was designed specifically for the Sex Offender population. The current RSW! curriculum was modified to meet the specialized employment preparation needs of this population. Albany County Probation Department's RSW! program outcomes to date:

- 35 RSW! groups
 - 241 program completions
- 17 RSW!-TANF groups
 - 76 program completions
- 3 RSW!-SO groups
 - 14 program completion
- total, completions
 - 55 groups
 - 331 completions

Employment: 215 are currently employed or have completed their probation sentence while employed. This is a 65% employment rate.

Comparing the above outcomes to those who were referred to RSW! but did not complete the program:
Employment Rate = 11% percent vs. 65%

Violation of Probation Rate =59% (non-completers)
Violation of Probation Rate =25% (RSW! completers)

Cattaraugus County Probation Department's CCPD RSW! program has garnered great results. Art Cooney, Ann Faulkner, Collin Quigley and Dale Wilkinson are making the RSW! Program work in Western NY. Since Art graduated with his OWDS in 2008 they have consistently run the 20 hour program at various sites in Cattaraugus County. This approach has enabled them to broaden probationer access to the program. Since the program began in December of 2008, statistical information for CCPD is as follows:

- 13 RSW! groups
- 118 RSW! Enrollments
- 95 completions
- 66 Employed

To date 80% of those referred from Probation and Parole or 95 offenders have completed the 20 hour RSW! Program in Cattaraugus County. 70% of the graduates are currently employed.

New Beginnings...

A TANF (200% of poverty) program in Cattaraugus County shares the following story about an RSW! program participant. The unemployed mother of four had just been laid off from a local plastics manufacturing firm where she had been employed for five years. She came to the TANF program only to be compliant. She begrudgingly participated in one of the first series of RSW! classes. She proved to be a stand out member of the class and asked challenging questions at every turn. She went on to get her CDL and graduated with a stellar recommendation as the top student in her class. She was rehired by her former employer even as the company continued to downsize. They rehired her because of her knowledge of plant operations and because she could fill in as a truck driver when needed. Her dual capabilities became a plus for her and the employer. The example she set in reinventing herself motivates others as they go through the RSW! program.

**More
Ready Set Work!
News**

Onondaga County

Jeffrey Crane and Shawn Bartlett OWDS (2008) from Onondaga County Probation continue their RSW! groups. They started a new 20 hour session on 7/26/10. One of our newly certified OWDS, Karlie Hall who is a Federal probation officer from Syracuse, plans to join Jeff and Shawn for this RSW! group.

Monroe County

Gregory Pellegrino, new OWDS from Monroe County Office of Probation and Community Corrections will begin his first RSW! group in September. He will be assisted by Jennifer Ball, OWDS (2008). Monroe County first began running RSW! groups in 2006 with Rochelle Lempert, GCDF and OWDS who was a member of the original Oklahoma City team as the facilitator.

Erie County

Nancy Chu and Manuel Callabaro are co-facilitating a RSW! group for Erie County probation. Nancy graduated from our first in State OWDS class and went on to become a GCDF Instructor. She presented at this years OWDS training in Albany. Manny is a graduate of the 2010 OWDS class.

Ulster County holds Employment Summit

By Mark Pisano GCDF-I, OWDS

As Ulster County continues to experience employment challenges, the County Executive, Michael Hein, asked that workforce service agencies develop a comprehensive and efficient approach to employment services. For several months, agencies and county departments serving Ulster County unemployed and underemployed have been strategizing how best to implement a more comprehensive workforce system in Ulster County. As part of this discussion, a survey has been conducted of employment

and training providers seeking information about services provided in Ulster County. A matrix result of that survey was presented at a Workforce Summit on June 21, 2010. The goal of the Summit was to provide an opportunity to explore ways to enhance collaboration amongst agencies. Featured as part of the program was a Keynote Address by John Twomey, President of NYATEP (New York Association of Training Employment Professionals). Mr. Twomey is a well-versed expert on workforce

development issues that confront employment and training specialists across the State. He identified labor market strategies and anticipated resource challenges that will assist in future planning. Attending the Summit were Ulster County Probation Director Melanie Mullins and Sr. Probation Officer Mark Pisano. The Ulster County Probation Department utilizes the **Ready Set Work!** Job readiness program for individuals involved in the Criminal Justice System.

Promotion News!!! Clyde Hagan, OWDS graduate 2009 has been promoted to Program Manager for Castle Gardens a new low income housing building at the Fortune Society. Clyde will co-facilitate the RSW! program with this year's graduate from Fortune, Kenneth Sutton. Congratulations on your promotion Clyde.

**RSW! for Sex Offenders
(RSW!-SO)
Review Held**

On June 17th a meeting was held at OPCA to review the first year of RSW! SO groups. Attending the meeting were representatives' from Albany, Schenectady, Rensselaer, Saratoga, Ulster and Warren Counties. So far there have been 3 cycles of this specialized RSW! Curriculum and a 4th one is now in progress. Matt Charton, Craig MacNeil

(Albany County Probation) and Fran Ricci (Schenectady County Probation) are facilitating the groups as a joint project between counties. The groups are open to surrounding counties.

The OPCA **Retention Counts!** Curriculum has been finalized and is ready for distribution. It is currently being used for graduates of the OPCA RSW! groups. Retention Counts is a

sixteen hour curriculum designed to run over 8 weeks with 2 hours per session.

Retention Counts!-SO

A committee has now been convened to modify the Retention Counts curriculum to use with Sex-Offenders. The modified curriculum will be piloted with graduates of the RSW-SO! Groups being held in the Capital District.

to anyone who gets asked to attend OWDS training next year- get ready to be overwhelmed...in a good way (when it's over!). Katie Collella, class Valedictorian





**NYS POA
Conference!!!
August 11-13th, 2010**

Crowne Plaza hotel in Albany, New York

And don't forget OWDS will be there: **Wednesday 1:45-3:15**

Workshop Title: *Keep that JOB!* How Probationers Can Retain Employment in Tough Economic Times.

Getting a job is a critical element in lowering recidivism. However, if that job is not retained, probationers often end up further behind than when they started. With the jobless rate hovering around 10%, it is more important than ever to assist probationers in retaining employment. This workshop will present service providers with specific information that they can use to help individual probationers retain employment. The new Retention Counts Curriculum will be discussed and their will be a special presentation by **Patricia E. Taylor**, Corrections Program Representative from NIC.

Other Presenters: **Cynthia J Blair**, NYS DPCA Community Correction Representative II
Guy "Fran" Ricci, Probation Officer, Schenectady County Probation

Keeping In Touch:

Offender Workforce Development Specialists should advise as soon as they receive their **GCDF** or other certificates, promotions, etc.

Didn't see **your** name here? Let us know what you are doing. Also please contact Cynthia Blair if you need technical assistance with your **Ready, Set Work!** or **Retention Counts!** groups at 518-485-5162 or cynthia.blair@dpc.state.ny.us

OWDS Corner

By Cadija Tibbs, CCA

It is almost impossible to pinpoint just one positive thing that I came out with, as the entire training was educational, and it completely increased exponentially my understanding of people with a criminal justice history and the workforce. If asked however about one positive thing, I would say that I found the entire area on overcoming barriers to be the most interesting. I found this particular subject interesting because all of our clients come to us facing significant barriers. Having a more thorough understanding of the different types of barriers our clients have to deal with, allows me to meet them where they are at. It affords me the ability to work with them to create a detailed action plan to identify, overcome, or minimize the barriers that thwart their efforts to find and hold a job. If we do this with our clients each step of the way, without putting too much weight on the end goal of finding that job, they would have learned how to develop and implement realistic, achievable goals.

"Take a man fishing and he will eat for a day, teach him how to fish and well..."



CCA OWDS 2010

Graduates

Troy Clarke, Cadija Tibbs, Katherine Colella and Erin Hastings

CCA has 4 more OWDS Graduates!

CCA has shown its commitment to Offender employment in a big way. Not only did they send Program Director **Michael Pasquale** to the first In-State training in 2008, they also sent **Ray Barnes** to last years training. They were both a part of this year's OWDS Instructor class. This year they topped things off by sending four more students to be trained, 2 from NYC and 2 from Syracuse. Included in this year's class was **Katherine Colella** class valedictorian from Syracuse and **Cadija Tibbs**, class salutatorian, from NYC, **Troy Clarke**, (NYC) and **Erin Hastings** (Syracuse) also completed this years training. We commend CCA on their commitment to Offender Workforce Development.

OWDS Corner:

We invite original articles from Offender Workforce Development Specialists. We will try to share one in each issue.