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IN TOUCH with OWDS

February 2009
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NYS Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives Presents: IN TOUCH WITH Offender Workforce Development Specialists (OWDS)

They're off and running...

New Ready, Set, Work! Groups in 2008

- **Manhattan (NYC)**
May 2008
- **Dutchess County**
October 2008
- **Monroe County**
October 2008
- **Schenectady County:** October 2008
- **Ulster County**
October 2008
- **Onondaga County**
November 2008
- **Cattaraugus County** December 2008

Inside Highlights

- Congratulations
- Collaborations
- Strategies for Challenges
- Conferences/Trainings

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

Leading the Way... Craig MacNeil and Matt Charton are moving forward on the new Retention Counts! groups. The groups began in October and have been held once a month since that time.

Craig MacNeil, Albany County Probation and **Matt Charton** have worked with DPCA to develop the **Retention Counts!** (RC) curriculum which builds upon the **Ready, Set, Work! (RSW)** curriculum.

The first four modules developed are:
Module 1: Resolving Workplace Conflict
Module 2: Workplace Communication
Module 3: Workplace Culture and the Power of Attitude
Module 4: Decision Making and Problem Solving in the Workplace

Additional modules being developed include:
Module 5: Workplace Productivity and Advancement
Module 6: Your Money Management
Module 7: Managing Workplace Stress
Module 8: Your Personal Best

The **Retention Counts!** curriculum will be available to OWDS by the end of 2009.

New Ready, Set, Work! Groups

There are currently 12 RSW groups running in probation departments and community corrections agencies as a result of the 2008 OWDS training held in Albany. More than 140 individuals under probation supervision completed their groups in 2008 and as of last count, 80 had found jobs. The 10 top performing counties completed an average of 68 % of probationers beginning RSW!

Amy Harvey (St. Lawrence) is on the right track. She began her **RSW!** group with ten people and eight of those completed. Seven of those completing are employed, including three with new jobs. Congratulations **Amy** for your exceptional work in this area.

All probation departments that attended the OWDS training in 2008 committed to hold a minimum of three RSW! groups in the first year after training. Dates we have so far for 2009 are:

2009 RSW! Groups Scheduled

- Albany**
March 3-April 1, 2009
- Cattaraugus**
February 2- February 13, 2009
- Dutchess**
January 21-February 24, 2009
- Erie**
January 28- April 1, 2009
- Onondaga**
January 26—March 2, 2009
- Orleans**
February 23- March 26, 2009
- Ontario**
March, 2009
- Schenectady**
February 23-April 1, 2009
- St. Lawrence**
March, 2009
- Ulster**
February 17-March 26, 2009

Congratulations

To Nancy Chu

Global Career Development
Facilitator

Nancy Chu of Erie County joins Mark Pisano (Ulster) and becomes the 2nd person from the first NYS NIC Albany Partnership Class to receive her GCDF.

Matt Charton

Matthew Charton, Albany County Probation Officer and Workforce Development Specialist, has been tapped by National Institute of Corrections' Consultant, John Rakis, to co-present a workshop at the APPA 2009 Winter Training Institute in Myrtle Beach, South Carolina. Matt, who has been instrumental in the development of the widely recognized DPCA offender employment Series, "Pathways to Employment" will present "Moving Offenders into the Workforce and Keeping Them Employed: 7 Habits of Highly Effective Parole and Probation Officers."

**New OWDS Class
to begin in the
spring!**

For more information on the upcoming Offender Workforce Development Specialists Training, please contact Cynthia Blair at Cynthia.Blair@dPCA.state.ny.us or call 518-485-5162

RSW! and OWDS Collaborations

Mark Pisano (Ulster) and Elizabeth Bobela (Dutchess) don't let a little distance stop them from getting the job done and done well. Due to the growth in the number of our RSW! groups and the economics of the day, it is not possible for Elaine Kost to attend every group in person to present on **Legal Issues and Employer Incentives**. The willingness of Beth to drive her group in a probation department bus to Ulster County proved to be the perfect answer. Not only did both groups get the information first hand from Elaine, but Mark and Beth were able to use the same format for another module with an outside speaker on **Barriers and Resources**. We applaud their efforts!

Leanne Serrato (Orleans) has established a new collaboration with her One Stop. They have hired a new Resume instructor who will hold special sessions with her group beyond the 20 hour curriculum to ensure her probationers are well prepared in this difficult economy. Just another example of collaboration.

Remsen Street Terrific Trio

Alma Sehovic (Education and Assistance Corporation), Jose Vasquez (Osborne

Association) and Virginia Nepa (Women's Prison Association), otherwise known as the **Remsen Street Terrific Trio** (RSTT), collaborated to pull off a three agency training in November. The RSTT was joined by Hulen Ginn, also a 2008 OWDS graduate who works at EAC. Staff from each of the three agencies attended. The workshop focused on the importance of using assessments to obtain a good job match and on two of the major career theorists covered in the NIC OWDS Curriculum, Holland and Super. DPCA's Bernard Wilson attended the workshop as well. Congratulations again to the RSTT plus Hulen.

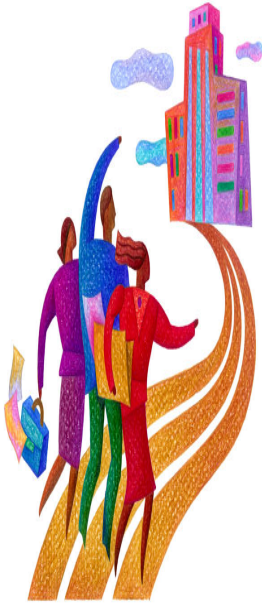
OWDS Presents to the Dutchess County Criminal Justice Council

On January 13, 2009, Elizabeth Bobela and Cynthia Blair presented to the Dutchess County Criminal Justice Council. They provided an overview of the "Pathways to Employment" project as well as the Offender Workforce Development Specialist Training. It sparked much interest and as a result, Beth was asked to assist the Dutchess Collaborative Reentry Project.



OWDS GRADUATE FACILITATES BREAKFAST MEETING

On Thursday, January 22, 2009, OWDS graduate Shirley Robinson (pictured above); Senior Vocational Counselor for Greenhope Services for Women, Inc. facilitated her first breakfast meeting with community partners. Representatives from VESID, TIMES SQ. INK, STRIVE, ADAPTIVE DESIGN, PARTNERSHIP FOR THE HOMELESS/COMMUNITY VOICEMAIL, and NEIGHBORHOOD COALITION FOR THE HOMELESS/EMPORIUM ONLINE attended. The theme of the meeting was "Strengthening Our Partnerships." Shirley facilitated a group in which Greenhope's staff and the community partners developed strategies for achieving mutual goals and ensuring positive and permanent client results. This meeting demonstrated how collaboration can benefit participants and our community.



Job Search Strategies for Challenging Times

Tips for Jump-starting Your Next Job Search

Employment in N.Y.S.
December 2008, *adapted*
from

A N.Y.S. Department of
Labor Publication:

www.labor.state.ny.us

Getting Started

To increase the likelihood of
being hired, we suggest a
three-step plan:

Know your product (i.e.,
yourself) better than your
competitors know theirs;
research what employers
need from you as an
employee; and market
yourself in a way that makes
it obvious to the employer
that you are the best
choice.

Product Research

Job applicants must identify
unique strengths, skills and
talents and spell out how
they meet an employer's
needs. The first step is
"product research." Look at
every job one has ever
done (paid or unpaid) and
analyze the skills required.
Next, broaden the analysis
to include non-work
experiences (hobbies,
volunteering) that helped
develop work-related skills.
Third, and most important,
identify and list tangible
accomplishments related to
each of them. A great site
for job analysis is:

<http://online.onetcenter.org>

Networking is Key

It is also important to decide
where to concentrate job
search efforts. Historically,
networking has tended to
be the leading method of
finding employment. Thus,
the old catchphrase – "It's
not what you know, but who
you know" is as true as ever.
Estimates from the job
search literature vary, but
research suggests that the
vast majority of jobs –
around 70 percent - are
filled through networking.
Another 20-25 percent are
filled by recruiters, while only
5-10 percent are filled
through ads and online
postings. These statistics
underscore the existence of
a "hidden job market."
Most available jobs are not
publicly advertised or
posted. Once a job
becomes public - either in
an online posting or
newspaper advertisement –
competition for that position
rapidly increases. Searching
the Internet is a convenient
method to look for a job but
it is generally one of the
least effective.

by Christopher Myers,
Victoria Gray and Kevin
Jack

N.Y.S. Department of Labor
Research and Statistics
Division

Job Seeking in Challenging Times for Ex-Offenders

By *Elaine Kost*, GCDF
NYS Department of Labor

As you assist job seekers with
a criminal history be sure
they understand the
importance of the following:

The Conviction Question

As jobseekers with a criminal
history they must be
prepared to discuss their
crime during an interview.

Resumes:

Resumes contain a personal,
individual summary of
background, experience,
training and skills. Employers
can compare specific
qualifications to those of
other candidates and

resumes will help focus and
improve an interview.

Once the information is
organized in a resume format,
it will be easier for job seekers
to discuss their skills and
abilities during the interview.

The Interview:

During the interview it is very
important to explain how the
job seeker's skills and work
experience can best suit the
employers' labor needs.
Employers can and do
conduct background checks.
Job seekers must be prepared
to explain convictions in the
most positive honest way
possible. They should let the
employer know that they
accept that the behavior was
wrong and that they are
aware of the negative
consequences of that
behavior. They should not
place blame on others.
Instead mention the changes
made so that the situation that
supported the bad behavior
no longer exists. Job seekers
must demonstrate to
employers that their skills and
attitude will make a positive
contribution to the company.

You're Hired! Retention Counts!

Emphasize the importance of
being on time and being
reliable – employers have little
patience for employees who
are continually late.
The job seeker should have a
positive attitude – it's easy at
first to feel alone and become
defensive. When they
encounter problems at work,
they should ask to meet with
their supervisor to discuss
concerns.

Finally, advise job seekers to:

Do the job! The employer
needs people who are
reliable, dependable,
responsible and motivated.

NYS Probationer

Employment Do you

know what your county
probationer employment rate
is? Please visit our site for
upcoming 2008 information.

<http://www.dpca.state.ny.us>

Keeping In Touch:

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

OWDS Corner

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

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@dpca.state.ny.us



DOWD Conference!!! April 5-8

**This is your chance to unite
or reunite with more OWDS
than you can imagine. Yes,
there are more people who
actually navigated that 180
hour course and come out
successfully on the other
side, with the coveted title
of OWDS. Join them in
Pittsburgh if you can. For
details go to ncda.org
and let us know if you are
planning to attend.**