



FRIENDS OF THE WAY HOME

Our Mission: To meet former prisoners at the prison gates and the office door in Georgetown to provide connections with community, meet needs, and foster relationships that prevent return to prison.

Volume 6, Issue 1

Winter 2015

From the Director's Corner



Winter 2015

Outside it looks pretty bleak. We have just gone through the coldest snap Delaware has seen in quite a while. The birds and squirrels are busy foraging for food. As I fill the feeders and broadcast seed on the ground, the bitter wind cuts into my face. What must it be like to be homeless in this kind of weather?

We are fortunate in Sussex County to have two excellent shelters one in Georgetown and one in Milton. Additionally, the Code Purple program is in effect during this weather. Countless volunteers and pastors are working to make this happen. A Georgetown health center (also see article on page 4) works to provide treatment, transportation help, and many other services, to those with mental health needs, as well as physical needs. We, and the people we serve, simply cannot thank them enough.

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Save the Dates!

March 19th 6:30 p.m. June 18th

Quarterly Celebration -- Participant of the Quarter Dinners

Georgetown Presbyterian Church
North Bedford Street
Georgetown

The quarterly dinners are times for fellowship, good food, inspiration, sharing ideas, but most of all, supporting The Way Home participants as they continue their journey. If you wish to participate, please call The Way Home office (302) 856-9870.

Save the Date!

The Way Home Participant Retreat

April 18th @ Camp Barnes

37171 Camp Barnes Road
Frankford, DE 19945

9:00 to 4:00 p.m.

Former Associate Director of The Way Home, Rick Chamberlin, will facilitate several team building exercises, a ropes course, a trust fall, and, weather permitting, canoeing and kayaking for the retreat. Lunch and snacks will be provided. If you would like to attend, assist, to cook, or volunteer food, call The Way Home office at 856-9870.



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Since 1998, The Way Home has helped hundreds of ex-offenders stay out of prison, providing comprehensive case management for participants for less than one-sixth of the cost of incarceration.

An assessment, released in September 2012 by the School of Public Policy and Administration of the University of Delaware, covering the period 1999 through 2008, compared the recidivism of Way Home (WH) clients and Delaware Department of Corrections (DOC) detainees. Subject, released from Supervision Levels IV and V, were compared in marital status, gender, and race. Recidivism is defined as the return of ex-offenders to incarceration (prison or jail) due to either an arrest or a parole/probation violation.

The Way Home Program performed more effectively than Department of Corrections on all recidivism dimensions:

- **Over the 1999-2008 time period, the various recidivism analyses showed that the predicted odds of WH clients to NOT recidivate are 1.23 times the odds for DOC.**
- **Over a five-year period, the risk of recidivism for WH clients has been 57% of the risk for DOC ex-offenders.**
- **WH had lower proportions of their clients who recidivated in the first year of their release than DOC ex-offenders.**
- **WH clients experience a longer time period before recidivating.**
- **For any point in time after release WH clients had higher probability of not returning to incarceration.**
- **Women, Caucasians, married, and older ex-offenders and those released from Level V were less likely to experience recidivism and they manifested higher probabilities of avoiding recidivism than men, non-Caucasians, non-married and younger offenders.**

The present analyses and findings represent a preliminary evaluation. A longer time frame for analysis is needed for The Way Home programmatic experience so that more conclusive statements can be made regarding The Way Home's performance.

From the Director's Corner...continued from page 1

The Way Home is grateful for so many efforts on the part of volunteers. Our Board works tirelessly to support the program, help with fundraising, write, edit, and get this newsletter out to you.

Community and Board volunteers are hosting support groups. Others are helping participants with much-needed rides and job leads. Some stand ready to coach those preparing for their GEDs and other educational endeavors. Churches and individuals join together to donate clothing and toiletries, or to help in the office. A dedicated group visits the Men's House to talk with the guys and see how life is going for them. Sometimes they bring pizza or ice cream, but they always bring good cheer and encouragement! The outpouring of these gifts of time, self, and talents warms our hearts, despite the plunging temperatures!

I can remember points in my life when things could have swung in a promising direction – or quite the opposite. At more than one critical juncture, there was someone there, to listen, to encourage, to give me the respect, patience, and space to find a good path, and, with their encouragement, to put down that first step and start walking towards the next challenge. I wonder, looking back, if I would have had the courage and resolve to take that first step alone. Our volunteers are those voices for many who face crossroads with enormously different destinations.

In Barbara Brown Taylor's book, Gospel Medicine, she speaks of many things, in her voice which is eloquent, down to earth, and playful all at once – good reading for anybody who feels the need for some life-giving medicine right here on Spring's doorstep, when snow, ice, and bitter wind are getting in their last closing arguments for the season.

In her fifth essay in the book, she speaks of God's promises to us, his irascible children, who are continually, down through the ages, running roughshod over the blueprint God provided for right living, spelled out plainly in the Ten Commandments. After the flood, God set a rainbow in the sky – the mark of God's covenant with all people. I don't know about you, but rainbows are in short supply in winter –

Continued on page 3

I don't think I've ever seen a winter rainbow. Maybe a little snippet of a sundog, but no full arc, knock your socks off, make you weep with the sheer beauty of it, rainbow. But I do know this – there is a rainbow somewhere on earth right now – we just can't see it in winter, just as we can't see the beauty of ever-present stars in day light. From now on, Barbara Brown Taylor writes, "God will not repay betrayal with betrayal. From now on, I am in the protection business, not the destruction business. From this day forth, you are all my partners, and your lives are as precious to me as my own."

God's Partners

May God grant us the strength and wisdom, give us the courage, to face our own shortcomings and fears - and keep going out anyway - with Gospel medicine tucked in our pockets, woven into our words, imprinted upon our intentions, with little glimmers of rainbows in our eyes – ready, at those crossroads, to offer anyone who asks, some directions home.

Faithfully,



Del Mastro

"On cold winter nights, when Mother Earth sleeps soundly beneath her blankets of snow, the Spirit walks in silence, seeking any who may have become lost on their way home. There is no life left unnoticed by God. There is no child forgotten, no elder dismissed, no prisoner unworthy of recognition, no addict left alone, no lonely soul abandoned. Even the hidden ones among us, the silent ones who try to bear their burdens unspeaking, are under the watchful eye of their Maker. On even the coldest nights, the Spirit walks the back roads and the city streets, holding the light of love just a little higher, for those who expect to see only shadow."

Bishop Steven Charleston

Visit, leave a message, or a comment on The Way Home's Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/thewayhomeprogram/> When commenting, please be cognizant of others' sensibilities.



Helping Hands

The Way Home is entering the 17th year of steadily helping ex-offenders, after completing their sentences, prepare for life outside prison walls and providing other practical assistance such as finding housing, jobs, transportation, support groups, and other social services. As a non-profit, TWH relies on grants, state funding, monetary donations, and in-kind donations such as volunteering time and talents. There are many behind-the-scenes helping hands and these are just a few:

Lois

Lois, a Way Home participant profiled in the Summer 2014 newsletter, was grateful and delighted when an anonymous donor who read her story stepped forward to donate a car.

After release, Lois, who works part-time at an after-school and summer program, was riding her bike to the work and the grocery store. Worried about the impending winter weather and unable to save the necessary funds to purchase a car and to afford the insurance and gas since she is paying restitution, she nevertheless continued to be positive in her thoughts and actions. Recently, she learned she had completed all probation requirements and her request to reduce the restitution amount was approved.

"I am so grateful to the person who stepped forward to provide this car. I do not have to depend on others to get me to doctor's appointments, to meetings, to get

groceries, and a myriad of other things. When my son was sick, I was able to take him to the doctor's."



Way Home participant, Lois, with her new/used car.

Metetwa Shakur

In 2007, at a troubled place in his life, Metetwa Shakur met The Way Home's case manager, Tony Neal, and Tony provided rides to meetings at his church, Booker Street Church of God, in Georgetown. In explaining the beginning of his journey, Shakur, as he is known by many at The Way Home, states, "I have a great respect for Tony. He would call me or I would call him and he would listen. He has a great attitude and played a large part in keeping me on the right path. He instilled his faith in me, a desire on my part to do the right thing, and assured that the process can work for me. I loved the seed that was planted. I sucked it right up!"

"For three years, I followed everything needed to get my life in order and in early 2012, I regained custody of my son." Shakur now has two other children, ages one and two.

He secured permanent employment at a local chicken processing plant until it was sold. Unemployed briefly, after a second interview at the La Red Health Center, he was hired in July 2012 as a health ambassador and in November 2014 promoted to homeless case manager. "That was a good step up for me. My job is to build relationships with the community, particularly the shelters and transitional homes and doctors and other medical personnel in Sussex County."

Not including the wind chill factor, the average reported daily low temperature for January 2015 was 26.4 degrees and the February temperatures may surpass

those statistics. We are fortunate that we are not susceptible to the New England and Midwest snow storms. But for some homeless Delawareans, those factors probably do not enter into their minds.

Starting in 2005, the Homeless Planning Council of Delaware has conducted bi-annual Point-in-Time studies on homelessness that provide a snapshot of homelessness for one night each year. Comparison of 2006, 2008, 2009, and 2010 data conducted by the HPC of Delaware identified 1,249 homeless persons on the night of January 26, 2010. Data from surveys over the years shows that these figures have remained constant. Using a national formula, it is projected that an estimated 6,000 individuals are homeless in Delaware throughout the entire year.

Shakur receives requests from local organizations and also searches for homeless individuals needing medical, dental, and mental health care living on the streets, in tent cities, behind shopping centers, or in the woods. Since November 2014, he has placed three to four Way Home participants. "I never turn off my phone because the homeless never turn off," he states emphatically.

La Red Health Center was started in 2001 by a network of physicians partnering with a local hospital, a local community center, a local faith-based organization, and local government in Sussex County to meet the needs of a growing number of locally uninsured individuals. It has transformed into an independent, federally and privately-supported ambulatory care center. "There are close to 90 staff members between their offices in Seaford and Georgetown. I love the La Red family," he grins, his eyes dancing. And, I am sure they love him.

Bi-annually, the Sussex County Health Promotion Coalition recognizes outstanding individuals and organizations who go above and beyond their everyday work to improve the lives of families and children in Sussex County. Nominated and voted on by their peers, SCHPC recognizes their efforts in this public way to show they are valued and making a difference in our community.

Shakur and another La Red Health Center employee, Juanita Mireles, were recently recognized for promoting healthy lifestyles through all of their hard

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work and dedication to the food drop project as well as their involvement in many coalition-supported activities.

"Both of these individuals go way above and beyond to ensure Sussex County residents are served. Their organization, La Red, is a great partner working to support the families and their health needs in Sussex," Amanda Meade, Sussex County Health Promotion Health Coalition Project Director, commented.

When assessing the availability of food resources in Western Sussex, United Way of Delaware found that there were gaps in food access for the low income, rural, families in the area. In collaboration with United Way, the Sussex County Health Promotion Coalition and its members located four community locations spanning the western Sussex region to host food access events for surrounding community members. La Red Health ambassadors, Shakur and Juanita Mireles identified and facilitated communications between event locations and the food access initiative.

In 2014, 252 families were given 75 to 100 pounds of food over the course of the 12 mobile pantries supported by United Way's Sussex Success initiative. United Way's Sussex Success program focuses on homelessness, transportation, and food access.



(Left to Right) Daryl Meade, Sussex County Health Promotion Coalition Board President; Juanita Mireles and Metetwa Shakur, La Red Health Center Health Ambassadors; and Amanda H. Meade, Sussex County Health Promotion Coalition Project Director.

Amy Walls

The Way Home is extremely grateful to Assistant Community Re-investment Director of Discover Bank in Greenwood, who is responsible for coordinating all charitable contributions and in-kind services in Delaware, for arranging for the printing and preparing for mailing of this newsletter for approximately two years. She also assists in managing the Greenwood branch and in that capacity, through the years as funds permit, Amy has facilitated several grants for The Way Home. In December, 2014, Discover Bank awarded a grant that will provide case management for five additional Way Home participants in the coming year.

*We, at The Way Home,
are Grateful for These Helping Hands!*



Profiles in Courage

Recently released inmate, Robert, knows at least one thing he must do: "I do not want to return to Wilmington. I want to stay in Sussex County. The people are different, the thinking is different, even the air is different. It is a better place for me."

Robert spent many years dealing with courts. "I always wanted the easy way out which really became the hard way. I never had a job more than a year. My attitude was 'why work when I could sell drugs'." He had many charges as a juvenile, such as receiving stolen property -- a car -- that morphed into drug-related charges. While in prison, he worked in the kitchen, on the environmental E-crew, and in the infirmary.

He recently fulfilled a two-and-one-half-year sentence in Level V at Howard R. Young Correctional Facility. While in the Key Program, he wrote The Way Home's Executive Director, Barbara Del Mastro, for information about the program. He was released earlier than expected for "good time earned. "When I left prison, nothing I had planned was in my head and it scared me." he was in a shelter for 24 hours, until Ms. Del Mastro picked him up. "She didn't know me but she was willing to support me."

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Within 24 hours, Robert had a birth certificate, an identification card, and a social security card.

Recently, Robert was hired for the night shift by a local chicken processing plant. "I am willing to do anything they will let me do. I am happy and most appreciative to have a job. I will retire from this company," he announces confidently. After 990 days, he intends to apply for a forklift position. He takes the bus to work and a friend drives him home.

From age one to five, Robert's son was in his custody. "When the phone rang late at night and my son asked, 'What do you do?' I lied. My main concern is for my eight-year-old son presently living with his mother." Robert is looking for an apartment and wants to bring his son to live with him. "My life has changed. I have changed. Who I've become is not really me. I forfeited everything. But, I came out a blank slate. I must avoid what I once thought was normal and build a new normal. I want to be somebody and give my son an opportunity to say, 'He really did his best; he gave me something.'"

Robert eventually wants to take auto mechanics at Del Tech Community College. He has ordered the books and studied. "I needs hands-on experience."



Did You Know?

Among Governor Jack Markell's remarks in his January 22nd State of the State speech was a statement: "We know that one of the best ways we can build a safer city and state is to improve the chance that those who were involved with our criminal justice system can get a job when they return to their communities." He continued by saying one of the goals is to "expand job training programs at correctional facilities including auto mechanics and culinary arts...in memory of the noted Delaware restaurateur and philanthropist, Matt Haley, who credited culinary training in prison with turning his life around."

Those remarks prompted an interview with Deputy Warden Ernest McBroom of the Sussex Community Correction Center (SCCC) also known as Work Release. While the Work Release program has been in operation for 26 years, the following programs have been developed within the last 10 years:

The Culinary Arts Program

Staff at a high schools in Woodside, Delaware established the curriculum and provided an instructor in the summer 2014 for the first of two programs presented in New Castle for 10 females students.

The second program was run in collaboration with the Delaware Food Bank in Milford. Upon completion of the 14-week classes, where students learn the technical skills necessary to master the art, science, and business of the culinary world, students earn ServSafe certification as well as a Pro Start Certificate of Achievement. This program was started in Work Release in January 2015 for men with six months to one-year sentences and is paid by a Department of Labor grant and by SCCC. Ten male offenders are now in the program.

"One of the major issues is transportation to Milford as there is no public transportation," Deputy Warden McBroom explains. After classes are completed, there is an 80-hour internship at a local restaurant and the Food Bank pays their salary during the internship. Once they start work, they pay room and board of \$5.00 a day while housed at SWRU.

In the near future, classes will be held in a newly-converted hog birthing building on the SCCC campus containing a state-of-the-art kitchen and a classroom. Possibly night classes will be offered in addition to day classes.

Auto Mechanics

This apprenticeship program, located at the Automotive Service Center in Violation of Probation has been in existence for 10 years. Offenders are provided on-the-job training for oil changes on state-owned vehicles and in removing decals from police and fire vehicles before being resold. Upon completion, graduates are provided with a letter of reference. The auto body shop is not completed and a Trades Instructor position is needed. There will also be a state-of-the-art paint shop.

Computer Lab

Recycling Program

"SCCC is in the forefront of this program which first began through agreements with towns and with the state to cut grass in the highway median strips or at other state service centers. It was suggested by a staff member that trash, mainly aluminum cans, collected by VOP in communities along the highways be separated, compacted, and sold as salvage," Deputy Warden McBroom explains.

State service centers, as well Department of Corrections facilities, provide cans and other recyclables, SCCC staff transport the recyclables, and the Delaware Department of Natural Resources and Environmental Control (DNREC) provided the compactor. Boat wrap is compacted into bales and is sold to recycling companies. Black agriculture plastic is compacted into 800-pound blocks and sold to recycling companies.

Butcher Shop

This program is a 50-hour certificate program and graduates receive a letter of introduction upon completion. Offenders learn basic sanitation and knife skills and how to skin, cut meat off the bones, and grind meat. In an agreement with DNREC, local hunters via the Sportsmen Against Hunger Program bring deer to four Sussex County locations and it is then transported to the SCCC butcher shop. The finished meat is provided to 16 local shelters. "It is more economical for DNREC to have the meat butchered at the prison than at local butcher shops," Deputy Warden McBroom continues.

Trades/Metal Fabrication Shop

For the cost of materials, offenders are trained to fix prison equipment such as lawn mowers and log splitters, learn to weld, and to construct bunks and lockers.

Horticultural Program

In this 40-hour VOP program, offenders learn composting, landscaping components/technologies and flower arrangement.

In collaboration with the Department of Labor, offenders can search for and apply for jobs on computers provided by DOL.

"There are several recent successes," Deputy Warden McBroom continues. "Security staff have agreed to become certified instructors which is beyond their job descriptions. So far, five staff members are now certified in welding and the program will be developed more robustly."

Finally, a law passed last summer enables the Department of Correction to offer employment for up to six months for ex-offenders in a Level 4 or Level 5 vocational program. (See Summer 2014 The Way Home Newsletter.)

The SCCC is in the process of accreditation by the American Correctional Association."

The "I am Responsible" two-volume guide and workbook by Brett Lunger and Steve Wookey is soon to be put to use by Tony Neal of The Way Home and other volunteers in facilitating counseling sessions every Tuesday night in the Violation of Probation Center. (See Fall 2014 The Way Home Newsletter.)

For almost two years, a Way Home Board member, Dan Cowell and Carole Laspino-Franks, a Thresholds facilitator, have volunteered conducting a support group in SCCC for incarcerated women. (See Summer 2014 The Way Home Newsletter.)

"Our motto is 'Excellence in Public Service Through Innovation.' The new SCCC programs were created without expense to taxpayers. Additionally, several programs generate revenue." Deputy Warden McBroom further explains. "All programs came from ideas or innovations from staff and/or the warden. The warden is open and will try anything within legal and security concerns. However, funding for additional staffing or to expand programs, at present, is not available. It takes a move of the legislature to get additional staffing. We have always strived to do more with what we have."

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The Georgetown Presbyterian Church on North Bedford Street in Georgetown is hosting a Way Home Women's Support Group every other Tuesday night from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. The group is also open to women in the Work Release Program. For more details, call The Way Home office at (302) 856-9870.

See also Ongoing Support Groups below.



Representative James Johnson, D-New Castle, has introduced a bill that limits the conviction data provided to prospective employers to Class B misdemeanor convictions or greater. A passing of House Bill 37, introduced January 29th, would mean criminal acts classified as unclassified misdemeanors or violations would not be disclosed for employment purposes. Law enforcement agencies, courts, and individuals, and entities in the criminal justice system would still have access to an individual's entire criminal history. The bill has been assigned to the House Judiciary Committee.



## Ongoing Support Groups

### Everlasting Hope

Wednesday nights, 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.  
Booker Street Church of God, Georgetown

### Conflict Resolution Workshops

Held throughout the year at St. Paul's Episcopal Church Pine & Academy Streets, in Georgetown from 9:00 a.m. to 6:15 p.m. Lunch of soup & bread supper is provided. Call The Way Home office for the schedule and to register.

### Men's Support Group

Held every other Tuesday at Sussex Violation of Probation Center from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. For more information, call Ira Kalbrosky at 215-431-1927

### Transforming Trauma Workshops

Led by Charito Calvachi Mateyko, are held throughout the year. For more information, call The Way Home office.



## *Real Gear*

To feel what we feel  
takes real gear

crampons to grip ice, rock  
stout rope, pick axe  
carabineers –  
plenty of them-  
lots of angles to consider,  
switchbacks  
possible dead ends.

To feel what we feel  
takes energy bars – homemade if possible  
clear water  
head lamp for the caves  
flares  
time.

High above  
Eagles soaring  
Ram balanced on sharp pinnacles  
down below  
Strong friends snapped in  
ready to break a fall  
into the abyss.

Barbara Sophia Del Mastro



**Thank You!!!!**

...to everyone who plays such a vital role in helping The Way Home  
keep reaching out to those leaving prison!  
...and the many individuals who give of their time, talent, and treasure!

Churches, synagogues, and centers of worship  
across the State of Delaware  
businesses, banks, financial institutions, foundations,  
clubs, and other nonprofit organizations,  
county and state,  
and individual donors and anonymous patrons...  
**Please know that you are truly appreciated.**

**Thank You!!!!**

## **HELP WANTED**

### **The Way Home is always looking for individuals willing to:**

- Mentor a participant. - Visit someone in prison who receives few visitors. - Help with on-going workshops.
- Help with transportation. - Help organize a clothing/coat/necessities drive.
- Serve on one of the Way Home committees.
- Work with your church or civic organization to hold an annual fundraiser or give an annual pledge to The Way Home.
- Help with job search/job contacts for The Way Home participants.
- Pray for former prisoners and all who live and work in correctional institutions, and the community.

To Volunteer, call The Way Home Office at (302) 856-9870

Visit The Way Home website: <http://www.twhprogram.org>

Phone: (302) 856-9870

To contact Barbara Del Mastro: [Barbara@twhprogram.org](mailto:Barbara@twhprogram.org)

To contact Tony Neal: [Tony@twhprogram.org](mailto:Tony@twhprogram.org)

**Note web site and email address changes!**

<https://www.facebook.com/thewayhomeprogram/>

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