



Juvenile Networking

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"Many Ministries—One Mission"

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Facts You Can Use:

- In 2004, courts with juvenile jurisdiction handled an estimated 1,660,700 delinquency cases.
- In 1960, approximately 1,100 delinquency cases were processed daily.
- In 2004, juvenile courts handled about 4,500 delinquency cases per day.
- The number of delinquency cases processed by juvenile courts increased 44% between 1985 and 2004.

Source: Juvenile Court Statistics — March 2007

"The framers of our Constitution meant we were to have freedom of religion, not freedom from religion."

Billy Graham

Inside this issue:

- Suspension—Legalized Truancy **2**
- Mentoring Programs for Success Continued. **3**
- TYC Needs —30 Mentors in 30 Days Cont. **3**
- Upcoming Juvenile Justice Ministry Events **4**

Mentoring Programs for Success

By Don Smarto



Don Smarto

Mentor programs for adult prisoners, youthful offenders, and ex-offenders is one of the most effective ways to stabilize a former criminal. When done correctly, the failure rate nationally is as low as 10 per cent or a success rate of over 90 percent. The failure rate (recidivism) is 74 – 80 per cent. By failure I mean primarily a return to crime resulting in a new arrest and incarceration. Mentoring also has a positive effect on technical violations (an infraction of the rules of probation or parole). All of us know the value of a worthy mentor by remembering a coach, teacher, grandparent, or pastor in our youth that encouraged us and helped us to form worthy goals and law abiding conduct.

However an effective mentor program for prisoners (adults and youth) and ex-offenders is anything but simple. In my thirty years of research and observation, I have witnessed many mentor programs fail through lack of planning, poor supervision, and ineffective matches. It looks deceptively easy but because of an offender's customary history of poor and broken relationships, anger, mistrust of authority, and poor decision making, such a program must conform to a "Special Needs Design".

A successful mentor program for offenders requires proper recruiting from a pre-arranged base, screening by those with a background in psychology and/or sociology, practical training, a written mentor/volunteer manual with clear boundaries, ongoing supervision, a mentor support group, and the flexibility

(Continued on page 3)

TYC Needs 30 Mentors in 30 Days!

By Roberto Ruiz

Do you want to make a huge, positive difference in the life of a young person? Are you dedicated, caring, and eager to contribute to the effort to help our at-risk youth? If the answer to both of these questions are a resounding "YES—count me in!" this article was written with you in mind.

The Texas Youth Commission provides for the care, custody, and rehabilitation of Texas' most serious juvenile offenders. A vital piece of the puzzle lies with volunteers who offer to assist at different levels—and this is where you come in: TYC needs Mentors! You are never too late to volunteer.

We are in critical need of mature, trustworthy adults who are willing to enter into a mentoring friendship with one of these young people and share their walk, helping them by their presence, their support and understanding, and by being a role model of upright and responsible citizenship. One carefully matched assignment at a time, one hour a week, for six months, right here in Corpus Christi and San Antonio with TYC community based-programs. It is a privilege, it is a pleasure, it is a rich learning experience, and it has proven to be extremely effective

(Continued on page 3)

Suspension: Legalized Truancy? By Phil Oliver



Phil Oliver

I am a teacher with the Waco Independent School District. I also spend much of my spare time mentoring boys as a certified volunteer at the Texas Youth Facility in Mart and the Bill Logue

Juvenile Justice Center.

In these youngsters, I have found a common complaint with their education — no one seems to care whether they are in school or not “They don’t care about me, they just want me out of their hair,” I hear.

Many of these youngsters have decided they would rather be roaming the streets — or sleeping all day and out all night. Several have figured out that if they just act up at school, they can be suspended to go home — a free pass for several days to do what they want, where they want.

In these cases, even though the school sends a follow-up letter directing the parent to be responsible, in too many of these cases the students aren’t supervised. The ultimate irony

is that if they skip school, they can be picked up for truancy. But if they are suspended, they have a valid excuse for not being there.

Is this sending the message that if they act badly, they will get more freedom and fewer boundaries? We can and should do more to encourage and reclaim these youngsters. This issue merits a “think-tank” approach for some authentic, systemic change, because these are the students who will drop out (95 percent).

“They don’t care about me, they just want me out of their hair,”

A daytime curfew is a great way to increase positive pressure in the community to stay in school. In addition, having requirements, assignments and quantifiable expectations while these students are out would at least give some accountability for their being away from school and still hold them responsible for organized learning.

Required community service during their suspension would even be better than just releasing them with no learning expectations. Required counseling sessions or appointments with the school counselor or an adult mentor

during their suspension would help identify the educational or situational problem, rather than just the behavioral problem.

They need to understand that their behavior is not the whole problem. We want to look deeper and get at the root of the behavior.

This is the paradox: We suspend them and keep them away from school to make a point about school attendance and behavior.

With parental support, suspension can be effective. However, with this high-risk group, could we be actually promoting failure and legalized school truancy?

I am committed to help change the educational system to convince these students that they do matter — that they matter so much we don’t want to lose them.

Phil Oliver is the Central Texas Representative for the Juvenile Justice Ministries Network of Texas. He also serves on the Executive Committee.

NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP MEETING

THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE MEMBERS OF THE JUVENILE JUSTICE MINISTRIES NETWORK OF TEXAS WILL BE HELD ON SATURDAY, THE 26th DAY OF JANUARY, 2008, AT 1115 COLUMBUS AVE WACO, TEXAS, BEGINNING AT 10:00 AM.

THE PURPOSE OF THE MEETING IS TO ELECT MEMBERS OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE FOR TWO YEAR TERMS WHICH WILL COMMENCE ON JANUARY 1, 2008 AND END DECEMBER 31, 2009, AND SUCH OTHER BUSINESS AS SHALL COME BEFORE THE MEETING.

NOTICE OF THE MEETING WITH A PROXY FORM WILL BE MAILED TO MEMBERS IN GOOD STANDING THIRTY DAYS IN ADVANCE OF THE MEETING DATE.

for adaptations.

Such programs are evaluated by PROCESS or by RESULTS. Simply, this means (results) immediate measurable goals like a good work ethic demonstrated by performance and productivity, improved

"When done correctly, the failure rate nationally is as low as 10 per cent or a success rate of over 90 percent."

marital and parenting communication, and no return to crime. These can be measured within one year. A more reliable measure of success (process) evaluates the building of trust, self-esteem, and healthy relationships which need a five year period of observation.

Many programs are frequently impatient and eager to show a board or the local press success. Those who design a mentor program should choose long term success and permanent change which reaches the core belief system of the ex-offender.

Treatment of addictions is an important component of a diversion program but treatment is only a part of complete success for the ex-offender. People with addictions fail at a rate over 90 per cent and often repeat drug and alcohol programs multiple times. That is why coupling treatment

with mentoring is preferred.

Churches are frequently the most responsive to mentor programs and people from 45 – 65 years old (baby boomers) are most apt to volunteer. But there must be religious boundaries. Within a correctional facility the separation of church and state requires voluntary admission, and programs of equal quality for faith based curriculum and secular ones.

Volunteers should be trained to mentor with a faith centered rather than a faith saturated approach, which means by example rather than preaching.

Finally, the formation of an accountability team (usually within a church) creates both a support network for the ex-offender and for the mentor. A stable, growing mentor relationship is frequently weekly for at least one year to 18 months.

To assume a man or woman coming out of jail, a youth facility or prison without a positive support system and a caring guide can succeed is to ignore the massive volume of statistics of the system's ultimate failure. Healthy relationships require healthy models and stable guides.

WHITE HOUSE CONFERENCE

National Summit on
Prisoner Re-Entry
November 27, 2007

Don Smarto, President of Youth Direct has been invited to speak on Juvenile Re-Entry. Attending will be social scientists, key policymakers, legislators, parole and probation officers from across the country. Only "front line experts and those with effective program models" were invited to speak.

Mr. Smarto said, "I am humbled by this opportunity and privileged to be able to present faith based solutions."

Topics he plans to present include:

- Juvenile Offender Profile
- Stereotype Origins
- Special Needs Program Design
- Leading Causes Of Juvenile Recidivism
- Best Practices
- Faith-Based Methods
- Church And Government Collaboration
- Developing A Sense Of Community

Mr. Smarto's extensive experience and exemplary service in juvenile ministry coupled with his excellent academic credentials make him an outstanding choice to present faith-based solutions.

TYC Needs 30 mentors in 30 Days

Continued from page 1

as an instrument in turning wayward lives around.

Imagine yourself in the sometimes desperate conditions some of our youth tragically have to contend with. How much would it brighten up your days to have a hard-working, reliable, warm-hearted mentor show up for you week after week, to walk together with you a

while? That stable and generous "someone" is you: TYC needs mentors! Come join us, make a huge and positive difference, one youth at a time.

If you are interested please contact Roberto R. Ruiz, TYC Community Relations Coordinator 210.242.785 or roberto.ruiz@tyc.state.tx.us website www.tyc@state.tx.us

Matthew 11:28-30

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you. Let me teach you, because I am humble and gentle, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke fits perfectly, and the burden I give you is light." NLT

Officers and Executive Committee

Don Smarto, Chairman
National Representative

Mike Gahan, Vice Chairman
South Texas Representative

Boone Vastine, Secretary
East Texas Representative

Weldon Fox, Treasurer
North Texas Representative

Bill Cook
South Texas Representative

John Grubb
North Texas Representative

Phil Oliver
Central Texas Representative

Shirley Orr Smith
West Texas Representative

Roy Teague
North Texas Representative

Upcoming Juvenile Justice Ministry Events!

Bexar County Detention Ministries

December 7, 6:30 PM
The Miracle on 34th Street – Annual Fundraiser
San Antonio, Texas
www.bcdm.org

Youth Direct Evangelism Event

Saturday, December 8th
Victory Fields
Vernon, Texas (near Witchita Falls)
www.youthdirect.org

Juvenile Justice Ministries Network of Texas membership is open to Christian ministries, churches, and individuals.

- Mentor Youth
- Small Group Bible Studies
- Chapel Services
- Spiritual Direction and Counseling
- Evangelism Events
- Aftercare and Specialty Programs

Life Time membership is \$35. To find out more about membership go to www.jjmnt.org



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"Many Ministries—One Mission"