

Youth' n Justice

Laurie Parise

This is the first edition of a quarterly column that will appear in National HIRE Network News to highlight the activities of our youth reentry and employment project. If you have information you would like to share with our members on youth issues, particularly in the areas of reentry and workforce development, please send an email to Laurie Parise, our Equal Justice Works Fellow, who oversees the project, at lparise@birenetwork.org

I joined the HIRE team last September, and at that time I wrote an article for National HIRE Network News about our new project which focuses on the employment barriers faced by youth emerging from the juvenile or criminal justice systems. In a very short period of time, the project has engaged in a tremendous amount of activity that we wanted to share with members. We hope these highlights will offer additional strategies for your use in addressing the workforce development needs of youth with criminal records in your communities.

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A Change of Place, Not a Change of Focus

Debbie A. Mukamal

As many of you know by now, I am stepping down as Director of the National HIRE Network and moving to John Jay College of Criminal Justice to develop and build a prisoner reentry institute there. I am hopeful that this new professional opportunity will enable me to continue working and collaborating with many of you. I am certain that my relationship to the HIRE Network will continue to be strong.

My transition offers me an opportunity to reflect on where our field has come and where we are going. When we – Lorin Harris, Mindy Tarlow, Mark Elliott, Paul Samuels, and others - conceived of the need for and concept of the National HIRE Network several years ago, I couldn't have imagined that it would grow into the success it has become. We recognized that the professional fields of workforce development and criminal justice were beginning to come together to form an intersecting and embryonic practice area that required nurturing and developing. We believed that the creation of a single information clearinghouse could fill gaps in knowledge and offer the opportunity for the exchange of knowledge and practice, as well as provide leadership in moving this new practice area forward. In just a few years, the HIRE Network has achieved a tremendous amount of success – building a network of practitioners, researchers, policymakers, and concerned citizens to share expertise and build consensus; modeling public policies to lift unnecessary barriers to employment and harness resources to meet the labor market needs of people with criminal records; addressing the stigma faced by individuals with past convictions; and identifying and disseminating relevant research to shape and affect practice. These accomplishments can be attributed to several factors – a committed and active Advisory Board comprised of national experts, a passionate and talented staff, supportive management at the Legal Action Center, generous and visionary funders, and enthusiastic members around the country willing and eager to share best practices and challenges with one another.

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o “Know Your Rights” Campaign

“Rights” Manual

This month we hope to complete a “Know Your Rights” manual for use in New York State. The guidebook is aimed to educate young people who have been involved in the court system about the challenges that a youth with convictions face when looking for employment and what can be done to lessen or alleviate these barriers. It highlights federal and state laws that a young person – as well as providers who work with them - should be familiar with when applying for a job. This includes guidance on what type of employers are entitled to see on applicants’ rap sheets; how to get and correct rap sheets; what must be legally disclosed about a criminal history on a job application or in an interview; and what types of criminal records can be sealed. The manual also explains in detail the different types of youthful adjudications in New York. This is critical information for young people since how an individual was adjudicated or processed through the criminal justice system can effect how they should answer questions pertaining to their criminal history. We hope that this information will give youth the tools they need to successfully enter and remain in the workforce.

Trainings – Local Level

Over the past four months we have conducted “Know Your Rights” trainings at various youth organizations and detention centers in New York City. The trainings are based on the information in the manual and are geared towards young people who will be entering the job market, as well as the staff who work with them. For example, HIRE conducted a training for 70 staff members at The Door, a community-based organization in Lower Manhattan that works with young people who are transitioning out of the New York State juvenile justice system. The presentation was so well received that HIRE was asked to return to repeat the training with the organization’s workforce development staff.

Trainings – National Level

In January, HIRE was asked to speak at a week-long youth reentry planning conference sponsored by the U.S. Department of Labor and YouthBuild, a national organization that works with at-risk youth. Many participants expressed interest in having HIRE create “Know Your Rights” manuals in other states similar to the one we are completing for New York. We will soon begin to investigate the feasibility of providing this much-needed information in several other states across the country.

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Our intersecting field of workforce development and criminal justice policy and practice has grown and matured in the last several years as well, thanks to the dedication, hard work, and vision of so many of you and others. A major piece of federal, bi-partisan legislation was introduced in Congress last year to address prisoner reentry, including facilitating the employment of people with criminal records. Who could have imagined that the job training needs of people with criminal records would be highlighted in a President’s State of the Union speech? Several states reached out to us to develop legislation and public policies that would address the workforce needs of those returning home from prison, and localities have similarly explored ways to foster the labor market participation of people with criminal records through new taskforces, municipal ordinances, and tax credits.

We have much work to continue to do. Unfortunately, as the research study HIRE collaborated with Princeton University Professors Bruce Western and Devah Pager on will likely demonstrate, employers remain fearful about hiring people with criminal records. They need to be convinced that tapping into this labor market can be done safely and without compromising their bottom line. Moving forward, I know that the HIRE Network is committed to continuing to foster a strong relationship to the business community. Shortly our guidebook for employee assistance programs (EAPs) will be completed to offer guidance to those programs in working with employers and employees on the unique issues arising from the employment of an individual with a criminal record. And on the policy side, HIRE continues to play a leadership role at the federal, state and local level in offering recommendations on how legislation and public policy can better facilitate employment for our set of job-seekers. With the addition of our juvenile justice project, HIRE is once again foraging into a practice area with gaps in knowledge and training. We hope our efforts will strengthen the intersecting issues within the fields of juvenile and criminal justice and workforce development. As you can see, there is still so much important work to embark on and finish.

Finally, I want to express my gratitude to so many of you who have reached out over the last several years to share your experiences, express your gratitude, and offer ideas. It has been a privilege for me to work on such a meaningful project with such committed colleagues.

I know that my experiences at HIRE will enhance the work I undertake at John Jay in very profound and

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o **RAP Sheet Review and Clean-Up**

We encourage young people to obtain a copy of their Record of Arrest and Prosecution (RAP) sheet before beginning a job search for a number of reasons. First, getting a copy of their rap sheet gives them an opportunity to correct any errors that may appear before they apply for a job. Secondly, it also gives youth the information they need about their criminal history to accurately and truthfully answer questions in a job interview or on an application. We have been able to assist a number of young people in this area, since we are one of the only non-profit organizations in New York State that can obtain official rap sheets from New York's criminal record repository, the Division of Criminal Justice Services. ❖



H.I.R.E. on the Hill

Alexa Eggleston and Gabrielle de la Gueronniere

House Government Reform Committee Holds Hearing on Reentry Programs; Focuses on Efforts to Assist Formerly Incarcerated People Obtain Employment and Substance Abuse Treatment Services

This week, the House Government Reform Committee convened a hearing, "Confronting Recidivism: Prisoner Reentry Programs and a Just Future for All Americans." Led by Mark Souder (R-IN), Chairman of the House Government Reform Criminal Justice, Drug Policy and Human Resources Subcommittee, the hearing focused on the need for additional federal efforts to assist people reentering society from the criminal justice system. Witnesses providing testimony to the committee focused on the need for reentering individuals to have better access to support services such as employment training and placement, substance abuse treatment, educational assistance and housing. A number of the panelists spoke in support of the Second Chance Act, bipartisan reentry legislation introduced during the last Congress that is expected to be reintroduced early in the new 109th Congress.

Other participating members of the Committee included

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I hope to remain in touch with many of you. My new phone number is (212) 484-1327 and my email address is dmukamal@jjay.cuny.edu. ❖

Pell Grants for Public Safety

Glenn Martin

Dallas Pell is the daughter of Senator Claiborne Pell, who was the Chairman of the Senate Education Committee in 1972 when the Pell grant program was created. Senator Pell championed the program's creation, which awards undergraduate students grants for educational purposes that do not have to be repaid. HIRE had the opportunity to sit down with Ms. Pell and explore her interest in restoring availability of Pell grants to people who are incarcerated.

HIRE: Please give us some background on eligibility for Pell grants.

Pell: Pell Grants used to be available to people who were incarcerated until they were removed under the Crime Bill of 1994. Immediately after eligibility was discontinued, the hundreds of college prison programs around the country disappeared. There are only a few remaining programs all of whom function mostly on donations. In addition, the ones that have remained operate as a skeleton of their former capacity and curriculum because of relatively low funding.

HIRE: Why is this issue so important? Who benefits if Pell grants are reinstated for those who are incarcerated?

Pell: A college education is a proven method of reducing recidivism. Only 8% of people with convictions who obtained their Bachelor's degree in prison have ever returned and less than 1% of those who have obtained their Master's have recidivated. Compare this to the fact that 70% of parolees return to prison within three years of their release and you can see the benefit. Basically, it's a public safety issue. People who get out and get jobs and don't commit crimes contribute to society. What is the alternative? Increased crime. There is cost savings too. Not just in terms of the reduction in incarceration, or the money saved by the reduction in crime and subsequent victimization. In fact, studies have shown that for every dollar spent educating a prisoner, there is a \$3 cost savings to taxpayers in terms of increased tax revenue, payment of child support obligations, court fines and a reduction in public assistance dependency.

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Subcommittee Ranking Member Elijah Cummings (D-MD), Delegate Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), Representatives Katherine Harris (R-FL), William Clay (D-MO), Patrick McHenry (R-NC), Lynn Westmoreland (R-GA), Charles Dent (R-PA), C.A. Dutch Ruppersberger (D-MD), Chris Shays (R-CT), Diane Watson (D-CA), and Danny K. Davis (D-IL.) Three witness panels provided testimony to the committee. The first panel was comprised of Congressmen Rob Portman (R-OH) and Danny Davis, chief co-sponsors of the Second Chance Act. Felix Mata, representing the City of Baltimore's Mayor's Office of Employment Development Ex-Offender Task Force, Reginald A. Wilkinson, Commissioner of the Ohio Rehabilitation and Corrections Agency, Paul A. Quander of the District of Columbia Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency, Jim McNeil and David Russell, Mentor and Protégé in the InnerChange Freedom Initiative, and Lorna Hogan, mother advocate for the Rebecca Project for Human Rights participated in the second witness panel. Pat Nolan, head of Prison Fellowship, Joseph Williams of Transition of Prisoners, Chaplain Robert Toney of Louisiana's Angola Prison, Frederick A. Davie, Senior Vice President of Public Policy, Public/Private Ventures, and George A.H. Williams, Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC), Chicago, Illinois participated in the third witness panel.

In Chairman Souder's opening statement, he spoke about the high rate of recidivism for formerly incarcerated individuals and largely attributed this to the many burdens formerly incarcerated people face when they return home from prison. In addition, Chairman Souder emphasized that, in light of states and community- and faith-based institutions working individually to address the needs of reentering individuals and to reduce recidivism, there is a clear need for a national strategy. In his opening comments, Ranking Member Cummings noted the many legal barriers people with criminal records experience, speaking in particular about the student financial aid ban that delays or denies federal financial aid to individuals who have been convicted of a drug-related offense. In addition, Ranking Member Cummings spoke about the large percentage of people in the criminal justice system with substance use disorders who have not been able to access treatment services and the need to increase such services.

Congressmen Portman and Davis both spoke in support of their legislation, the Second Chance Act. Congressman Portman framed the reentry issue as an effort to restore people's lives. Speaking about the Second Chance Act, Congressman Portman stated that although this legislation would not provide solutions to all of the problems reentering individuals face, it would be an important step in the right direction.

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HIRE: Is there an official name for your efforts and are there any partnerships involved?

Pell: Yes, it is the Pell Grants for Public Safety Initiative. As for partnerships, the Bard Prison Initiative, Patten University at San Quentin, the Consortium College Initiative and Episcopal Social Services' College Initiative have all helped spearhead this effort. All of these programs serve as examples of the efficacy of a quality education. Also, the National HIRE Network should be acknowledged for its work in helping to bring attention to this important issue.

HIRE: How would the grant money be administered if you were successful?

Pell: Well, unlike students who aren't incarcerated, the funds would go directly to the college program to pay for the cost of the education and supplies. At no time would the funds be made directly available to the student.

HIRE: Do you have current support for your work?

Pell: Yes. Senator Kennedy's (D-MA) office has offered to sponsor a bill. Unfortunately, we are still seeking bipartisan support. While last year was somewhat frustrating, we are hoping to build on recent momentum and identify a Republican co-sponsor.

HIRE: What has been your biggest hurdle?

Pell: Getting people to see why education is the critical key to preventing recidivism.

HIRE: And how do you respond to people who say that people who have committed crimes don't deserve a benefit that is not offered to those who have done nothing wrong?

Pell: Well...that argument makes the assumption that this is some sort of zero-sum game. The truth of the matter is that even at the height of Pell grant utilization in prisons - around 1994 - the funds used for education in prison only amounted to 1/2 of 1% of the total Pell grant budget. Furthermore, the trend has been that for every dollar taken out of education in the U.S., there has been a dollar invested in the prison system. So, here you have a proven method of reducing recidivism versus expansion of imprisonment. The question to me should be "Why are we not investing more in education?"

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Congressman Davis spoke specifically about the need to connect reentering individuals with employment opportunities. In addition to increasing job training and placement opportunities, Congressman Davis emphasized the need to broaden incentives for employers who hire individuals with criminal records.

A number of the other panelists also focused their testimony on the need for additional support for programs that assist people reentering the community from the criminal justice system with job training and employment placement. Frederick Davie of Public/Private Ventures spoke specifically about the need to assist people with criminal records with workforce development services. Felix Mata of the City of Baltimore's Mayor's Office of Employment Development Ex-Offender Task Force identified employment as critical to ensuring that individuals reentering from incarceration can successfully transition back to the community. Citing a number of successful initiatives taking place in Maryland, Mr. Mata highlighted the need for greater collaboration between existing government programs, employers, and the community of people with criminal records.

The Second Chance Act, introduced last session in the House as H.R. 4676 and in the Senate as S. 2789 by Senators Sam Brownback (R-KS), Rick Santorum (R-PA), and Arlen Specter (R-PA), is expected to be reintroduced in the House next week and in the Senate soon after. This legislation would provide demonstration grants to states and local areas to begin to address the need for drug and mental health treatment, job training and education opportunities, and housing for individuals when they return to the community from incarceration. The bill would provide resources for the formation of a task force on Federal programs and activities relating to the reentry of individuals into the community and for research on reentry issues, including the impact of incarceration on families. ❖

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HIRE: How can interested stakeholders offer their support of your initiative?

Pell: Anyone who is interested can email me at dallaspell@aol.com.

HIRE: Good luck and thanks for your time. The National HIRE Network recognizes the importance of your efforts.

Pell: Thank you. ❖



Hot Off the Press: Recent Reports

Capturing the Essential Elements, by David Racine of Public/Private Ventures (October 2004): When a program with demonstrated effectiveness is expanded, knowing how it works and why it works the way it does is an indispensable first step in preserving its quality. This report draws on Public Private Ventures' experience with different programs to show how to define a model's essential elements to increase the chances of successful replication. It contains lessons for program developers, funders and practitioners interested in adopting model programs. To view this report, go to http://www.ppv.org/ppv/replication_expansion/replication_expansion_publications.asp?section_id=4

Unrealized Gains: How Workforce Organizations Can Put Money in the Pockets of Low-Wage Workers, by Mae Watson Grote of Public/Private Ventures (November 2004): Social policy continues to emphasize the importance of work, but many working families struggle to make ends meet. Work supports can be a critical factor in enabling people to make a successful transition to employment. Packed with tools and resources, this report will help practitioners make use of work supports: laying the groundwork with a financial literacy curriculum, creating income packages, promoting access to work supports through advocacy and keeping graduates on track with a variety of retention strategies. To read this report, go to http://www.ppv.org/ppv/publications/assets/178_publication.pdf

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Upcoming Conferences of Interest

Feb. 22-24, 2005

National Career Development Association “National Offender Workforce Development Conference”

Millennium Hotel

St. Louis, MO

Tel: 314-209-9400

Email: pwdconf@jimtek1.net

Information: www.proworkdev.com

March 14-16, 2005

The International Association of Reentry “The International Association of Reentry Inaugural Summit 2005”

Hilton Columbus

Columbus, OH

Information: <http://www.reentry.cc/confindex.htm>

March 30-April 2, 2005

16th National Youth Crime Prevention Conference and International Forum

Radisson Miami Hotel

Miami, FL

Tel: 305-670-2409

April 6-8, 2005

Women Work! The National Network for Women’s Employment “Women Work! 2005 National Conference”

Hilton Crystal City

Arlington, VA

Tel: 202-467-6346

Information: www.womenwork.org

April 10-13, 2005

National Correctional Industries Association (NCIA) Enterprise 2005 National Training Conference and Exposition: “Strategic Alliances: Dynamic Results”

Hyatt Regency Hotel

Minneapolis, MN

Tel: 410-230-3972

Email: info@nationalcia.org

Information:

<http://www.nationalcia.org/e2005/e2005.htm>

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The Report of the Re-Entry Policy Council, by the Council of State Government’s Reentry Policy Council (December 2004): This report was authored by the Council of State Governments and 10 project partners. It reflects the results of a series of meetings among 100 of the most respected workforce, health, housing, public safety, family, community, and victim experts in the country and offers hundreds of consensus-based, bipartisan recommendations for reducing public spending and increasing public safety by promoting the safe and successful return of individuals to the community. To view this report, go to <http://www.reentrypolicy.org/report-index.html>

Chicago Prisoners’ Experiences Returning Home, by Nancy G. LaVigne, Christy Visher, and Jennifer Castro of the Urban Institute (December 2004): This research brief presents findings from the Returning Home study in Chicago, Illinois. It documents findings from the original data collection effort and describes the experiences of prisoners returning to Chicago. It includes key findings on a range of reentry challenges and describes the factors related to postrelease success or failure, such as employment, substance use, attitudes and beliefs, health challenges, criminal histories, and family and community contexts. To read this report, go to http://www.urban.org/UploadedPDF/311115_ChicagoPrisoners.pdf ❖



Funding Opportunities!



Technical Assistance to Develop Transitional Jobs Programs: Cities, counties, states, CDCs and nonprofit organizations can apply to receive 18 months of technical assistance to establish innovative job programs for residents with barriers to work. Transitional jobs are time-limited, subsidized jobs that combine real work, skill development, and support services to help participants overcome substantial barriers to employment, including a criminal record. A consortium of organizations – the National Transitional Jobs Network, Center for Employment Opportunities, Transitional Work Corporation, and National League of Cities – is seeking proposals from entities operating within a city or other defined region with a population over 50,000 to receive expert assistance in designing local transitional jobs programs. *The deadline to apply is March 15, 2005.* For more information, please contact Laura Zusman at the National Transitional Jobs Network at (312) 660-1345 or via email at lzusman@heartlandalliance.org. ❖

May 1-4, 2005

National Association of Workforce Development Professionals 16th Annual Conference: "Riding the Workforce Wave"

Fontainebleau Hilton Hotel
Miami Beach, FL

Contact: www.nawdp.org

Note: Now accepting workshop proposals

April 20-22, 2005

Public/Private Ventures' Working Ventures: "Charting the Course: Navigating New Directions in Workforce Development"

Dolce Tarrytown House
Tarrytown, NY

Tel: 212-822-2400

Information:

http://www.ppv.org/ppv/working_ventures/working_ventures_workshops.asp?section_id=6

May 5-6, 2005

2005 Fifth Annual Transitional Jobs Conference: "Transitional Jobs: A Critical Reentry Employment Strategy"

Hilton Washington
Washington, DC

Email: Izusman@heartlandalliance.org

Information: www.transitionaljobs.net

May 18-19, 2005

The Workforce Alliance 2005 National Conference: "What's the Big Idea? Workforce Development Policy for the Next Four Years"

Renaissance Hotel
Washington, DC

Contact: www.workforcealliance.org

July 24-27, 2005

30th Annual American Probation and Parole Association Training Institute

Marriott Marquis
New York City, NY

Contact: <http://www.appa-net.org/Training%20and%20Tech%20Assistance/callfor1.htm>

Note: Now accepting workshop proposals ❖

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