

MCCA

June 1994

Happenings

Minnesota Community Corrections Association

Community: more than an illusion

by Sonny Haas

"Community" is an elusive concept.

It doesn't exactly seem to be a priority in peoples' lives these days and hasn't been for some time. I mean, when was the last time you and your neighbors had a discussion about community over the fence? When was the last time you had a discussion with your neighbors? Yet, when you think about it there is something comforting and empowering in the word — COMMUNITY. Like the feeling you get when you know that, despite it all, everything is going to be okay.

How long has it been since you have attempted to define your community? Have you ever taken the time to define community, or have you, like me, assumed it is just out there — somewhere? I thought so. Take a couple of minutes and try it now...How was it? Not as easy as you thought, I'll bet.

We tend to use the word community as freely as if we, at any time, could reel off a working definition that we would be proud of. The truth of the matter is: community has become so fractured by fear and differences, no one seems to trust it any longer. It has lost its identity. Community has gone by the wayside along

with an understanding of interdependence and responsibility, both personal and collective. It has been eroded, devalued, and replaced by the instant gratification demanded from a "quick fix", ME society.

We need to relearn community. We need to begin — carefully and deliberately — to rebuild community as an identifiable entity people can count on.

For the sake of example let me pose a question: What is it that makes gangs so powerful and seductive to so many young people? The answer is complex and interwoven with countless variables, but basically, I believe gangs offer an arena where a sense of community is created. Being in a gang offers a person the things she/he can't get someplace else. Gangs, despite the negative behavior they foster, meet some very basic and fundamental needs. They offer a place to belong. A place to be affirmed and accepted. A place where one can get support and validation. A place where there are rules and a framework to model oneself from. There is a structure in which expectations and acceptable behaviors are clearly stated. Feelings of respect, solidarity, and trust are esteemed and reinforced. There is strength in unity. Loyalty is given and safety and protection are the norm. People know one another by name. There is a code of ethics that is followed to the letter. Deeds and

favours are reciprocated without asking. I could go on, but I think I've made my point.

If communities would begin to reestablish the values they once had — those very similar to the ones above — gangs would not have the seductive illusion they have now. There would be a REAL place to develop positive lifestyles and belief systems.

Community is gauged through relationships and connections with others. Within the community, relationships are more important than power. Differences are celebrated. Victims of crime are supported and validated, not shunned because their victimization becomes a bitter reminder of our own vulnerability. Trust and belief in a community would reduce the terrifying feeling of aloneness the detached individual experiences.

More than a place, I feel community is a belief, an attitude. It is a fabric woven by individuals who stand together and say: Enough is enough! Collectively, we have the strength to take back the power to accomplish anything we want. Community just isn't thought about enough. If perception is reality — then perceiving a viable community becomes an unparalleled reality.

It seems clear to me that people need to come together — take a stand. Start making community a household word. If the kids ask: "What's a community?" tell them.

If the kids don't ask, tell them anyway. Give them something to believe in — to be proud of. Give them a life with love, values, rules, responsibility, and expectations. Give them a COMMUNITY.

The politics of community corrections

by Paul C. Friday and Michael Brown

The success of community corrections rests on how well programs are designed and implemented. The greatest risk is that community corrections funds will be used for new programming while courts and prosecutors continue to follow the same sentencing practices as before. To guard against this, community corrections managers must keep decision makers, government officials, criminal justice personnel, and community leaders informed of what is happening with the programs, and why they warrant support and use.

The political rhetoric of the past decade has made the implementation of community-based sanctions extremely difficult. The public fears crime and frequently considers all offenders to be equally serious and dangerous. The "effectiveness" of the criminal justice system is often measured in terms of whether jail and prison sentences are imposed while increases in crime and recidivism are attributed to judicial and correctional "leniency."

Substantial investments have been made in community corrections in recent years and a great deal has been learned about efficient and effective management and service delivery. The greatest challenges, however, are not managerial but political. Unless the general public supports community programs, few officials will feel comfortable doing so. Those who attempt to implement community corrections programs should keep the following political

lessons drawn from experiences in several states in mind.

1. Work to overcome the justice system's isolation from the public. A corollary of isolation is ignorance. While the public has generally been supportive of law enforcement, there is a broad distrust of other parts of the system. Little attempt has been made to link sanctioning in the public mind to any social values except punishment and little effort has been made to clarify program goals and objectives.

The importance of realistic goals cannot be stressed too strongly. As a general rule, both the public and elected officials look for simple solutions to complex problems, creating problems later in determining if they have worked.

Goals need to be related to specific problems identified through analysis of data on offender characteristics and needs, program components, and the program's recidivism "track record." Criminal justice practitioners have the knowledge to set realistic goals and need, therefore, to assist in bridging the gap between public knowledge and expectations for the system.

2. Don't underestimate neighborhood politics. Citizen groups have become increasingly active and place the needs of a small geographical area over the needs of the community at large. This NIMBY (not in my back yard) phenomenon can frustrate creative and innovative programs on the basis of facility or program location alone.

While citizens may accept that community corrections is important in reducing jail and prison overcrowding, potential program sites that state or local justice leaders feel are appropriate are often not acceptable to local residents. The result is often a stalemate with politicians feeling they must pander to voters' fears (often aggravated by "get tough" political campaigns) rather than support criminal justice needs.

Efforts to implement community corrections are no-win situations; some people don't like the idea of community corrections and those who do don't want them in their neighborhood. These attitudes appear to be widespread.

This stance is understandable. Community corrections programs are often viewed by the public as increasing their probabilities of victimization, increasing crime rates and reducing property values. These concerns are particular problems when determining sites for residential facilities and half-way houses.

Showing people that research has repeatedly shown that crime rates do not increase nor property values decrease in neighborhoods having residential facilities may reduce opposition. Creation of "community advisory boards" may reduce resistance to residential facilities, if the members are confident they know what is going on and feel they have a degree of control over what takes place in their own neighborhood.

The programs for successfully implementing community corrections may not be as dubious as it appears. The chances of successful implementation increase significantly when concerns of the community are addressed.

3. A cooperative and trusting relationship needs to be achieved between community corrections personnel and judicial, prosecution, and law enforcement officials. Judges have enormous power. Community corrections is not, and should not be, involved in subverting or supplanting judicial discretion. But the effectiveness of alternatives is undermined if they are not used effectively — and they won't be unless community programs are respected by justice system officials and are accountable to them.

The nature of crime and criminals has changed and key criminal justice players are elected,

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President's Update



Sharen Southard

Recently, MCCA was delighted to be one of the sponsors of the Restorative Justice Conference held in St. Cloud, MN. During an exercise at the conference, participants were asked to define their community. What was interesting about this exercise is that several people identified more than one community: family, neighborhoods, colleges, and other organizations were just some of those listed. As you read this issue of Happenings which examines several programs working in various aspects of community, you may reflect on what community means to you and which communities you are a part of in your personal and professional life.

Community has been a recurring theme for MCCA as of late. Last year's Winter Conference focused on "Putting the Community back into Community Corrections" and our Vision for 2013 invites us to "Engage the Community." The 1994 Board of Directors is committed to providing continued services to our community of MCCA Program Sponsors and Individual Members. The Board of Directors has approved a budget which will allow us to continue to provide the many programs you have come to expect from MCCA as well as offer some new and exciting events. Several Board Members have chosen to continue chairing, co-chairing or serving on the same committees they did last year

which means we have a very experienced group of volunteers. Here are this year's committee leaders: Kay Pranis is chairing the Public Education Committee and also serving on the Newsletter Committee; Michael Nichols is chairing the Conference Committee and also is participating the Vision Committee; Louise Wolfgramm and Bill Nelson are continuing to co-chair the Membership and Legislative Committees; Rick Pung and Ricki Tufte are continuing to co-chair the Fundraising Committee; Susanne Lambert is continuing to chair the Education Committee; Kris Clendenen is acting as the Board liaison to the Newsletter Committee and also serving on Public Education; David Loftness and Sharen Southard are representing MCCA at MCC; Mary Scully Whitaker is continuing to act as liaison to the Adolescent Female Conference; and Bruce Clendenen is chairing The Vision Committee, monitoring legislative issues for MCCA and serving on the Public Education Committee. This list is not exhaustive and there are several board members who are serving on the various committees in addition to those listed here. We do have some changes in the officers at MCCA for 1994. I am pleased to announce that Louise Wolfgramm is the Vice President and Mary Scully Whitaker is the Secretary. Ricki Tufte remains as our Treasurer, and I am serving my last year as President.

Because you are the community we serve, we are open to your ideas and concerns. Please feel free to contact any of us.

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making it increasingly important to base community corrections programs on data rather than on testimonials. A data-based information system that incorporates both the characteristics of the offender population and an assessment of program outcomes provides the best "ammunition" to appeal to officials.

4. A better understanding of the nature of crime and offenders is needed. Research findings must work their way into decision making so that empirical evidence forms a cornerstone of policy. Academics need to do more policy-oriented research that practitioners can trust.

Both practitioners and academics have an obligation to educate the general public, who alone can rein in the political rhetoric. Education must address two subjects: knowledge of crime and offenders, and knowledge of appropriate and effective responses.

Judges believe that offenders deserve jail time, but how much time is effective or necessary to achieve justice? Despite the general failure of incarceration to reduce recidivism, there appears at least to be some comfort in being tough. Justice, therefore, becomes equated in many peoples' minds with punishment rather than with restitution or behavioral change. Recidivism and the fear of crime are what count, and for community corrections programs to thrive, their impact on recidivism must be demonstrated empirically.

5. Citizens must be helped to understand that crime is a local problem requiring local solutions. In most instances, offenders come from the communities in which they commit their crimes. They are, in important senses, products of the local community and responsibilities of that community. If they are sent to jail or prison, they usually return. Offenders are depicted as being significantly

different from the rest of the population. Statistical representation of the local offender population can be used to generate a local understanding of crime as a local problem.

To this end, the local media are an essential ally. Public education is critical and one method of assuring the accuracy of the information generated is to spend time briefing those responsible for the dissemination of information. The public has been inundated with media stereotypes of offenders and offenses committed elsewhere. A local public education campaign based on empirical data and known research is necessary not only for community corrections to be accepted but also for it to be effective.

6. Every program must have adequate information and monitoring capacity. By statistically monitoring events, programs and policies can be changed and developed to meet local needs. Only by monitoring can operators know whether program slots are being filled by the kinds of offenders they were intended for and that something other than net-widening is going on.

Too many people fear data. But it is an ally and a resource. It protects what works and serves as a basis for discarding what does not work. Too few resources are available and too many of them are being wasted on ineffective programs that do not serve target populations because the population has never been clearly defined. And effective programs are under-used because they have never been evaluated. It is time to change this.

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Helping the community to heal by Kris Clendenen

Violence has a ripple effect that reaches far beyond even the immediate family and friends of the victims. It also impacts the community - whether "community" is defined as the immediate witnesses of a violent act, a geographic community such as a city or an apartment building, or a community bound together by a common heritage or racial group. Despite a growing awareness of this, there is little that has been done to help communities to heal afterwards. However, some social service professionals have answered the call for help, and are trying to develop systems that can help various communities deal more effectively with the aftermath of violent incidences.

For Sarah Snapp of the Wilder Child Guidance Clinic, it started with a phone call. She got a message on her voice mail one day last summer from a woman at the East Side Development Corporation. Sarah returned her call and found out that the woman was looking for someone to talk to the residents of a coop of 30 townhouses. A woman who lived in one of the townhouses had murdered her 5-year old and 2-year old children. The murders had had a strong impact on the townhouse community, especially the children. Sarah agreed to help — not realizing at the time that the woman had already called 20 different social service agencies, and had been turned away by all of them.

Sarah immediately began looking for someone to go with her to help, and got Rudy Rousseau, a psychologist at the Wilder Child Guidance Clinic, to go along. Sarah and Rudy went and facilitated a series of meetings with the residents of the townhouses. Some of the meetings were held with both adults and children, and some were held with just the

adults or just the children.

The meetings were designed to help "debrief" the residents, using the following process:

Giving people a chance to process what happened. People need a chance to talk about what happened and how it has impacted them. To put something in perspective, you need to be able to bring it out in the open and share your own experience with it.

Clear up missing or incorrect information. After an incident it is often hard to separate fact from fiction. Children in particular can be very frightened by missing or incorrect information, and may develop a mythology about certain pieces of it. For example, the children were afraid that the woman who had killed her children was still in the building. Sarah and Rudy were able to tell them exactly when she had been taken away, and where she was, which helped to reassure them. The children also believed the myth that "you can't paint over blood on a wall...it will just seep through the paint". The facilitators were able to help with that through their final suggestion for the residents to have an open house once the apartment was cleaned and repainted.

Give people an idea of what is a normal response to trauma. By talking about the typical reaction people have to trauma, it helps to reassure them that their own responses aren't bad or abnormal. They can feel okay about the process they are going through, knowing that their reactions aren't so different from others.

Help people in the community reconnect with each other. When a violent incident happens, people tend to withdraw, and isolate themselves. This can make them more susceptible to other bad things happening. It is important to help them reconnect with others in their community, and work through the shared trauma together.

Do "triage" when needed. In any community, there will be some

people who are more shaken by an incident, and may need referrals for mental health services. The services they are receiving through the debriefing may not be enough to help them cope with what has happened. It is important to be able to identify other services or resources for them. This need is more common for people who have had previous experience/exposure to violent or traumatic incidences.

Sarah and Rudy saw their role as facilitators who were helping to set a course and a direction. Sarah said she heard a lot of shame from the residents, as they asked questions like, "How will other people look at us?". There was a lot of fear of being stigmatized by the incident. Finally, Sarah and Rudy recommended that when they were through with the cleaning process for the apartment where the murders took place, that they have an open house and use the time as a "community celebration", and a way of looking toward the future. The residents took them up on the suggestion, and even had a pastor come and bless the unit. They had cookies and punch, and many of the adults and children attended. As one child said, "It looks just like a regular apartment!" The residents made the event happen — Sarah and Rudy just planted the idea — and took this final step towards uniting to move beyond the tragedy.

More recently, Sarah and Dave Matthews (from Wilder's Community Assistance Program) were called in to help with another community debriefing. In April 1994, a 19-year-old woman was murdered in her apartment, and the alleged perpetrator is another resident of the apartment building. Sarah was again contacted, because this apartment is managed by the same company that managed the coop where the last debriefing took place.

Particularly challenging in this case was the fact that everyone in the building knew both the victim

and the alleged perpetrator. This made things even more unsettling, especially as the man was viewed as a friend to many of the school aged boys in the building, and perceived as a "good guy and a friend". The children talked about how he "turned into a monster", and asked "Who can you trust?" This particular debriefing is very difficult, because both the children and the adults are dealing with the issues of learning to trust again. This has been even harder for the community, as it was "one of their own" that may have committed the murder.

Although this debriefing is not finished yet, the team will be making the same recommendation as they did to the last group — have a community event in the apartment.

Developing a more formal approach

Even while these interventions were going on, Dave Matthews was working on a more formal intervention process. He got the idea at an MCCA Winter Conference, during a workshop conducted by Pam Mindt on the Critical Incident Stress Debriefing Team. This team is used in corrections to help debrief staff at institutions and in the field after a violent or traumatic incident has happened. At that time Dave wondered about how this model could be used to help other secondary victims of violent crime. Dave also had conversations around that time with Michael Jones, Hennepin County, who wanted to develop a triage for victims of violence and families who've experienced violence. He was interested particularly in kids, especially African American kids, and wanted to see them get "triaged".

With those two ideas, Dave thought more about what secondary victims of violence experience and what the Wilder Foundation could do in Ramsey County to help with this. In his definition of secondary victims, Dave included witnesses, the

geographical community, ethnic community, etc. All of these groups may need a chance to debrief after a violent act has occurred.

Dave started looking at the services that already existed in the Twin Cities. He found that there were a number of private therapists, and other social service agencies dealing with grief and loss issues — but none that directly focused on secondary victims, especially of violence. Probably the closest thing he found were support groups that helped families, such as Parents of Murdered Children. But otherwise, there were no agencies doing any debriefing or triage for the secondary victims.

"Violence begets violence," said Dave, "And I thought it would be nice to try to short circuit that cycle by using debriefing sessions." The most similar model currently in use is the debriefing that they use for victims of natural disasters around the country. Otherwise, nothing really exists. "At first I thought we'd need a grant, full time staff, etc.", said Dave. But as he thought more about it, he moved toward the belief that it would be possible to use a model that used and trained people already in the community. Social service agencies could volunteer their staff when something happens, and these people would be trained to do a debriefing session. Although people liked the idea when Dave presented it, the project lay dormant for a while, as no one wanted to commit time and energy.

After Sarah and Rudy got involved with the first debriefing session, Dave was encouraged to pursue the project again, and try to set up a development team. To date, they have had eight meetings of the development task group. This group is comprised of about 32 different social service agencies, with about 17 people acting as consultants and project supporters. There is a regular group of about

nine people that attend the meetings, and report back to the others. It is a diverse group, ethnically, geographically, and professionally.

So far they have developed an intake protocol and a services protocol for the program, and are working on bringing the pieces together into a document to present to interested parties. In June, they will be attending the National Conference for Critical Response Teams. Also in June, Dave and Sarah will be presenting at the 1994 Justice Fellowship Midwestern Regional Conference (June 9-11) at the Mall of America Grand Hotel.

Anyone interested in more information or in participating in the project should contact Dave Matthews at 221-0048.

Conference a big success

by Mary Scully-Whitaker

The Fourth Minnesota Conference on Adolescent Females took place at the Northwest Inn in Brooklyn Park on April 21 - 22, 1994. There were over 300 participants at the conference whose theme was "Partnerships for Change: Promoting Voices — Increasing Choices."

The keynote speakers included Geraldine Carter, Ph.D., Founder and President of Survival Skills Institute of Minneapolis; Michael Resnick, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Public Health and Pediatrics at the University of Minnesota; and Judy Mahle Lutter, President and Co-founder of Melpomene Institute for Women's Health Research.

Dr. Carter discussed a unique method of therapeutic story-telling for use with young females, designed to empower them with a more positive self image. Dr. Resnick talked about the impact of risk factors, protective factors and resiliency in the kinds of experiences and opportunities that help young women develop as caring and compassionate human

beings. Ms. Mahle Lutter's talk focused on how we need to promote health and physical fitness for adolescent females as a means to achieving well-being and self-esteem.

In addition to workshops, the format also encouraged participants to suspend the traditional lecture-type learning and listen to poetry, music, humor and watch Wanawake Wa Nia African dance by young women. Among the 27 workshops were topics such as: Rites of Passage; Lost Between Two Worlds (about Hmong girls struggling with their identity); Through the Eyes of Men: Perspectives on Working with Adolescent Females; and Mothers and Daughters: Matters of the Heart.

The Fourth Minnesota Conference on Adolescent Females clearly met its objectives of celebrating and affirming the strength, resiliency and uniqueness of adolescent girls via a multicultural focus.

Managing community corrections programs

by Kris Clendenen

On April 18 - 20, the National Institute of Corrections, and the International Association of Residential and Community Alternatives presented a training session on "Managing

Community Corrections Programs". This training was also co-sponsored by MCCA. The trainers included Leo Dauwer, Ph.D. (Massachusetts), Neil Tilow (Ohio), and Anne McDiarmid (Washington, D.C.). This training was the first one of a series that will be held across the country to help train community corrections managers.

There were approximately 25 participants at the training from Minnesota, Iowa, and Wisconsin. All were administrators of various

types of community corrections programs, both residential and non-residential. Having a mix of programs really helped to keep the discussions broad, although at times the mix of experience and expectations made sticking to the agenda a bit difficult. However, the presenters did a nice job of continually checking in with the group to see if the material was too far above or below their expectations and needs.

One of the areas that was covered in depth was *stakeholder mapping*. The definition of stakeholder mapping is "a method to assess the possible impact of all stakeholders given a set of objectives or a specific plan of action. It broadens the view of the organization and increases the opportunities for dealing with the total constellation of stakeholders. This will aid in preventing the familiar phenomena of putting out unexpected fires as they develop from various dissatisfied groups. It is a method for the management of change." (Source: [NAC Lesson Plan, 9/89](#)). In stakeholder mapping, you identify the circles of influence that surround your program or agency. By mapping them, you identify who has the power, what the interests are, and strategies to cope with them. Mapping helps to prioritize, focus energies, determine strategies, look at interrelationships, show your supporters and foes, and helps you to see the big picture. All of the trainers strongly recommended actually writing out a "map" for any new (or existing) program, because even when you are familiar with the process, you can still miss a stakeholder or a key issue.

Another area covered during the training was analyzing your organization's ability to accept information from the outside and accept (and seek) change. It is important for administrators to get both internal and external feedback regarding the program's services. As Leo Dauwer said, "We should all be able to tolerate

at least one reasonable maverick in our organizations", meaning that being surrounded by only those who see things as we do can be dangerous.

The training also spent time on dealing with the media and creating effective media relationships. The practice session (and afternoon highlight!) was a mock press conference. As everyone struggled a bit with their roles, the trainers made sure to stir things up even more throughout the exercise!

Special thanks for organizing an excellent training go to Susanne Lambert from Reentry Services and Peter Kinziger from IARCA.

Don't knock your block off - Club it!

by Mary Kaye Malone

In today's society, it is all too common to read newspaper stories about shootings involving young people in their teens and early twenties. What the media doesn't commonly report is the effects these shootings have on the communities in which they occur. The following is one example of a community attempting to ensure that only one story of this type will need to be written about their neighborhood.

On a warm summer evening last August, several of the neighbors on the 1300 block of Blair Avenue in St. Paul were sitting down to watch the six o'clock news. Minutes later, their neighborhood became the news when a fourteen year-old boy was shot in the head by a 22 year-old man. The reactions were as varied as the people who had them. Some immediately called the police, some raced to their windows or front porches, and some sat convincing themselves it was merely a car backfiring the way cars have done for decades.

When the police and ambulance arrived, the most common sign of community could be seen. People began emerging from their houses and moving

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The members of the Happenings Newsletter Committee welcome your suggestions and comments.

Please call any of the above members with your ideas.

Thank you

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toward each other. Neighbors spoke in hushed voices over fences and on front sidewalks. Some crossed the street to join this group or that, and still others carried information to those who were house ridden or too scared to come out. Looks of fear, anger, concern, and confusion could be seen on the faces of those gathered. But this time, a new element could be detected in the expressions that wasn't there when emergency units responded to broken legs, heart attacks, or false alarms. This new element was the knowledge the violence that had been going on in neighborhoods around them had finally, and resoundingly,

entered their own.

On that day and in the days that followed, neighbors compared notes and realized common concerns about the neighborhood had existed long before the shooting took place. What also emerged was the need to do something, and then came the move to action. Telephone calls were made to the St. Paul Police Department, the Hamline-Midway Coalition, and the City Council. One household volunteered their home as a meeting site and flyers were printed and distributed. On October 13, 1993, 30 neighbors, representatives of the St. Paul Police Department and the Hamline Coalition, and Councilwoman Paula Maccabee attended the first block club meeting to ever be held in that community.

The purpose of the meeting was two-fold: to discuss neighborhood problems and to meet one another. In the two hours that followed, issues raised varied from alley snow removal to the availability of guns to young people. At times tempers flared, accusations of racial bias and irresponsibility were made and answered, and tears were shed. But there was also laughter, good-naturedness, and a strong sense of community. It became apparent there wasn't enough time to discuss and resolve all the items demanding attention, and it was equally obvious that this meeting was merely a beginning.

At the suggestion of Paula Maccabee, a small voluntary group was formed to address the major issues raised at the meeting and prepare a summary of these issues to distribute to the neighbors. It was decided that regular meetings of this type would take place, and an official Block Club was formed.

Since then, members of this community have continued in their efforts to promote communication and discourse with one another. Their story is neither special nor unique in that their neighborhood is just like any

other. What is special, and still too rare, is the commitment this community has made to taking an active part in ensuring their right to a neighborhood that offers safety, security, and peace of mind. The challenge to communities to get involved in the civil and criminal concerns of their areas has been trumpeted by all aspects of government, including the President of the United States. It is a reminder that people impact people, regardless of where, how, and how well they live. Perhaps this universal theme is best stated in the minutes of this neighborhood's first Block Club meeting:

"...We have a right to the quiet enjoyment of our homes, we have a right to feel secure, and we have a right to be treated respectfully by our neighbors. We also have a responsibility to treat our neighbors with respect. We have to set a standard of INCLUSION in this neighborhood: if you live here, you belong here.

We formed the block club to practice, and eventually learn, how to communicate well with one another. The better we know one another and the more informed we are about block problems, the more comfortable and secure we will feel. Despite our diversity, we neighbors have some rich common ground. We need to build from that..."

For information about forming a Block Club in your neighborhood, contact your local police department and ask for crime prevention assistance. Other good resources of information are your local neighborhood coalition and the community newspaper office.

Not in my neighborhood...

by Bruce McManus

It seems that corrections has been controversial ever since the concept emerged from the grim dungeons of medieval times and the squalid poor houses of 18th

Century England. I have participated in the treatment vs. punishment, community vs. institutions, medical model vs. justice model, state control vs. local control issues — and those are just a few of them.

Since retirement to the peace, quiet and leisure of the non-profit sector, an issue which we at Reentry Services, Inc. (RSI) face daily has come crashing into clear focus. That is the Not-in-my-neighborhood Syndrome. I know it well because I have the symptoms. Do not think that I will stand idly by while some do-gooder wrecks my "little Eden" with a community residence for ex-cons. In all likelihood, most readers share my no-longer "closet" heresy at least to some extent. I can truly understand when a small town in California threatens to run out (or worse) a convicted multi-victim rapist placed there by harried California officials as a last resort. Who in their right mind wants to invite that guy to a block party?

The Not-in-my-neighborhood Syndrome is logical and should be expected. It has resulted in the failure for ten years of any corrections agency to obtain local authorization to establish a halfway house in the Metro area. In recent years, the legislature has helped protect less politically powerful neighborhoods where we had some success in the past by limiting the number of such facilities in any given area.

We at RSI live in daily fear that our neighbors will become upset with our presence. This is particularly so in residential areas where irritations like increased traffic, noise, and double parking are of equal concern as public safety. We can't move out of the neighborhoods in which our residences were established in a more tolerant area, because there is nowhere we are welcome. "Not in MY neighborhood."

What are we to do? Don't think I will jump into the trap of trying to provide the answer.

However, here are some observations which might be unique because they come from a sophomore (more dangerous than a freshman because sophomores think they know something) in the halfway house business.

1. Perhaps some of our facilities are in the wrong (read "residential") neighborhoods and would be better located elsewhere. But where to go?

2. If we are to be accepted into any new area, it will have to be primarily non-residential in character.

3. We need the active assistance of our customers — the state, federal and/or local governments in our efforts to site new facilities, in order to meet the needs of growing populations of offenders.

4. We must actively and continually court the neighborhoods in which we have residences to counter the inevitable "incidents" associated with residential operation as well as incidents with which we are not associated for which we are blamed anyway.

5. We cannot be satisfied with making our facilities merely fit into a neighborhood, but must try to make them a positive influence. A long shot, but not necessarily impossible.

6. We and our customers must work at developing non-residential programs which can offer many of the benefits of the inpatient programs. This is probably the long-run solution to the Not-in-my-neighborhood Syndrome.

Native Americans return to their communities Walking Tall

by Cathy Smith

To many of us, community is a hard thing to define. For me, when someone asks me about my community, I end up sorting out my various groups of friends and reaching for those with whom I truly belong. Depending on whose

asking me and why, the answer changes.

Mary Foot, of the Walks Tall program, seems to have a clear vision of what community means to her. In addition, she has the privilege of working with her community to help offenders make the transition back.

When Anishinabe, a Native American halfway house, closed its doors last August, Jon Poupart wanted to make sure the funds continued to serve Native American clients. He established the Walks Tall program. The program is intended to assist Native American inmates three months pre-release and three months post-release transition back into the community. The program officially started March 1, 1994. Mary Foot is the Southern Case Manager and responsible for all pre-release services. In addition to Mary Foot, Andy Favorite and Paul Hayes assist in providing services to Southern Minnesota. Don Cook is case manager for Northwest Minnesota and Don Goodwin is responsible for Northeast Minnesota. They are projected to assist with ninety inmates by September, 1994.

Ms. Foot had been doing Intensive Supervision at the Citizen's Council. She is familiar with the issues facing a defendant released from incarceration. What she hopes to add to her work is connecting her clients to cultural events and services geared towards their cultural heritage. As an example, she spoke about working with chemical abuse in Native American clients. She has found Native American clients to be more receptive if they are taught more experientially versus the more traditional talk therapy. She also spoke about using Medicine Men and Women to deal with the grief and healing defendants coming out of the institutions experience.

After interviewing Ms. Foot, it was clear she has great vision for the program. Her goal is for every Native American to be touched. She talked of the others involved

and it was clear they too were committed to connecting the defendants to the community and helping build the bridge over the enormous chasm many experience when they transition back from the institutions to where they belong — their communities.

Restorative Justice Conference

by Cathy Smith

The second annual restorative justice conference was held on April 18th and 19th. The conference was attended by 300 professionals, primarily in the corrections field. This was a marked increase from the 50 who attended last year. The conference, sponsored by the Minnesota Department of Corrections, focused on restorative justice, a framework for responding to crime which places greater emphasis on victim involvement and on requiring offenders to repair the harm caused.

The first day was broken into three speakers. The first speaker, Kay Pranis, began by introducing the topic of restorative justice. The community has several important roles in this model. The community has responsibility to support victims, communicate expected standards of behavior and condemnation of crime, offer opportunities for the offender to make amends to the victim, and work to prevent crime from happening in the first place. Ms. Pranis went on to compare restorative justice to the current system.

The next speaker, Don Streufert, spoke from a community perspective. Mr. Streufert works with the Brannis Foundation as a community psychologist and is endeavoring to address peace-keeping needs in rural Minnesota. His agency has established five goals to help build community — one of the goals centers on restorative justice. Other key elements of creating peaceful and safe communities include: naming

and monitoring peacemaking and violence, raising non-violent children, reconciliation, equity and inclusion. Mr. Streufert discussed the advantages to the community when victim mediation occurs, and spoke to how to facilitate such mediations.

Even more moving than the work of the Brannis Foundation is Mr. Streufert's personal involvement in restorative justice. Mr. Streufert's daughter was murdered in Grand Rapids. he has been participating in medication with his daughter's murderer and was able to speak to the benefits his family received from this experience.

The final speaker of the day was Dennis Maloney, Community Corrections Director for Deschutes County, Oregon. Mr. Maloney spoke about his agency's efforts to adopt an attitude of restorative justice within his program. Quoting Native American

philosophy and practice, Mr. Maloney discussed how making amends helps the offenders as well as the community. He characterized restorative justice as the most confrontational experience for offenders we have yet developed because it requires offenders to come face-to-face with the harm their behavior causes to other human beings. Mr. Maloney spoke of a three-pronged approach, addressing all three parties affected by criminal behavior: the offender, the victim, and the community. He spoke to the need for interventions to incorporate three. Mr. Maloney shared a wide range of community service efforts his county has used to help defendants pay off restitution and benefit the community while raising their self-esteem by given them a sense of accomplishment.

The second day brought a panel consisting of various

individuals from each spectra of the criminal justice continuum. These individuals answered questions regarding how juvenile justice had impacted their professions. After the panel, work groups were formed to help participants bring back the ideas from the conference to their agencies. Participants were asked to think of one or two ways they could be practicing restorative justice in the job they currently held.

Through the two days it was clear that people were excited and interested in the idea of restorative justice. While it is clear that restorative justice lies in a difference in attitude more than any technique, people seemed focused when they left with the beginning of an idea of how to change their own approach at work. While it is clear this process of changing to a restorative justice perspective is a slow and tentative one, it is hopeful so many attended this stimulating workshop.

Seattle Hosts International Research Conference On Community Corrections

Reducing crime and violence is the preeminent policy issue of the day. Most offenders are sentenced to some form of community supervision, and nearly everyone sentenced to prison returns to the community under supervision. What works in improving public safety and reducing recidivism among these offenders, especially those types of offenders most feared by the public? This is the fundamental question to be explored at an innovative international conference to be held in Seattle, Washington, Nov. 2 - 5, 1994.

This Works! Community Sanctions and Services for Special Offenders is the title of this special research conference being organized by the International Association of Residential and Community Alternatives (IARCA). During the conference, commissioned papers from distinguished researchers on the most promising approaches to supervising and serving offenders in the community will be presented. Special focus will be placed on five offender types: violent offenders, chemically dependent offenders, mentally impaired offenders, sex offenders, and unskilled-unemployed offenders. Presenters will also respond to questions from a reaction panel composed of a legislator, prosecutor, judge, service provider, and scholar. Keynote presentations will feature internationally recognized experts.

Following the conference, the papers presented will be edited into an important new publication, which will be made available to policy-makers, professionals and the public. The research conference is being supported and co-sponsored by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, the National Institute of Corrections, Correctional Services of Canada, American Correctional Association, Volunteers of America, and others.

For more information on the conference, contact: *Peter Kinziger*
IARCA, P.O. Box 1987, LaCrosse, WI 54602, (608) 785-0200

Corrections outing

by Rick Pung

The 11th annual corrections crappie tournament took place on May 6th, 1994 at Lakeview Resort on Rush Lake. This event had a record breaking turnout of 258 registered fishing enthusiasts. The weather was great and the fishing was productive. This fishing getaway went from 9 a.m. until 4:30 p.m.

The winning fish ranged from 15 to 12 ounces. After the weigh-in, the following anglers went home with trophies for 1st through 10th places: Steve Paquay, Bruce Anderson, Steve Simmers, Mike Silbitschka, Don Hauge, Tom Swartz, Tim O'Neal, Todd Johnson, Ada Ricker, and Sue Winchester.

The tournament also has a traveling trophy for the agency that catches the largest fish. This year the award was won by MCF-Stillwater. Besides the many door prizes that were given away, there

was a raffle with three grand prizes. Kevin Armstrong won a 13" color TV, Mike Erickson won a camera, and Lenore Adey won a 2.2" color TV.

This event always seems to be a nice change of pace, especially interacting with other corrections people away from work.

It takes time and planning to pull off an event like this. People like Jerry Soma, Bruce Anderson, Jerry Keeville and the rest of the Anoka County gang should be commended on their efforts. Also, the people at Lakeview Resort who provide their services to make this an enjoyable day.

This page contains some crappie tournament highlights!



Anglers of '94

Gone fishin'



Membership Update

The following are new and renewed members since last newsletter

Raeone Loscalzo
Marjorie Brinkman
Alade Oduloye
Jerry Soma
Paul Anderson
Thomas Christian
Lisa Maddalena
John A. Thomas
Dick Harden
Jean Hansen
Ronald C. Samuelson
Chen Dubay
Andy Doom
Brenda Bauer
David Conde
Deborah Swan
Steve Nelson
Diana Scott

Mary Ann Schmitz
Dana Feddema
Lennis Carpentier
Ronnie Bouma
Pete Batterman
Debra Briggs
Virginia Geston
Nancy Hollins
Margaret A. Olson
Tom Hayden
Amy P. Chavez
Joan Cichosz
Brian Portzen
Ray Moonen
Joan Shepperd

WANTED...

Your comments, letters,
opinions, etc.

Send to **Sonny Haas,**
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Practitioner's Notebook

Applying Cognitive Skill Training as a Part of Community Corrections By Russell Stricker

This is a follow-up to a previous Practitioner's Notebook on cognitive skills training. The pendulum in corrections is beginning to swing back from what has been primarily a retribution model to a more balanced approach in dealing with offenders. Cognitive skills training can, and in my opinion should, be one part of that approach. Minnesota has made significant progress towards the establishment of cognitive skills training both in our correctional institutions and, more recently, as a part of community corrections. Under the leadership of Roger Knutson, Education Coordinator for the MN Department of Corrections, the DOC offers to offenders in state institutions a Reasoning and Rehabilitation program as developed by Ross and Fabiano. I attended one of their week-long trainings held at Sauk Centre in January.

In this article I will discuss our experience at the Citizens Council with implementing cognitive skills training. This program has been provided to over a hundred offenders as part of two separate community programs:

- 1) Safe Streets First, a comprehensive program for multiple DUI offenders sentenced from the First Judicial District, and
- 2) the DOC's Intensive Community Supervision program for high-risk offenders.

The curriculum we have implemented for both was drawn primarily from the National Institute of Corrections training materials discussed in the previous Practitioner's Notebook article and is consistent with Ross and Fabiano's R & R approach. The R & R program delivered in 36 two-hour sessions has proven to be effective through evaluation research. In my opinion its drawback is that it was primarily developed for application for offenders while under community supervision. It is often not

feasible to deliver this extensive and time consuming program to offenders in the community.

In Safe Streets First, the Citizens Council has collaborated with two other agencies: Reentry Services, Inc. and River Ridge Treatment Centers to provide a balanced approach of services which includes electronic monitoring, day reporting, drug/alcohol testing, case management, chemical dependency treatment and cognitive skills training over an eight month period. The ICS program is a 12 month program of community supervision primarily provided by an agent whose caseload is not more than 15 offenders and services consisting of high surveillance and accountability, drug/alcohol testing, mandatory employment, school or treatment, and case management. In ICS we have begun to provide cognitive skills training to some offenders as part of their individualized case plan (ICP).

Our program is delivered in 11 two-hour sessions and focuses on teaching six primary cognitive skills:

- 1) understanding ourselves through an awareness of our thoughts and problematic thinking patterns,
- 2) problem solving,
- 3) negotiation and understanding the feelings of others,
- 4) anger control,
- 5) assertive communication, and
- 6) open-mindedness.

We have developed and implemented cognitive skills training as a part of and supported by other

aspects of the primary program. In SSF the River Ridge treatment staff have incorporated cognitive skills into their work with the client. To facilitate this inclusion into both programs we provided an in-service training for both the SSF and ICS staffs.

What have we learned from these two experiences that may be helpful to other community corrections programs interested in implementing cognitive skills training?

- 1) Cognitive skills training should be a part of a balanced approach to dealing with offenders. Twenty-two hours of class time is often not sufficient to change an offender but as part of a total approach it can be effective. Cognitive skills training gives them an opportunity to learn how to make better decisions. Therefore, the training is much more meaningful to participants when they can see that the decisions they make have certain consequences. If an offender is going to continue to choose criminal behavior then this behavior may result in negative consequences. Those having supervisory responsibility need to hold the offender accountable for their decisions.
- 2) Cognitive skills training is probably more effective when it is provided by persons other than someone responsible for correctional supervision, i.e. probation officers or supervising agents. The trainer needs to remain neutral and non-judgemental and build a degree of trust with offenders so they can be open and honest with their thoughts and thinking patterns. It is not that this dual role cannot be overcome, but it is another obstacle.
- 3) All staff working with offenders that are participating in cognitive skills training should understand the basic concepts of the training and reinforce those concepts in their work with the offender. Cognitive skills training emphasizes that offenders are responsible for their own decisions. This needs to be supported by those having power over them.

While it is still early from a scientific point of view, based on my empirical evidence I believe that those offenders who have participated in cognitive skills training in the institution or in a community setting seem to benefit more from other programs

in which they participate. They tend to approach problems differently; they understand themselves and others better; they take more responsibility for their thinking, their decisions, and as a result, most importantly, their behavior. I think we are beginning to see the results which good balanced correctional programming can produce.

If interested in developing a cognitive skill training program or need information about training options, feel free to contact me at the Citizens Council, 822 South 3rd Street, Minneapolis, MN 55415, Phone: 612/340-5432.