

Justicia

NEWSLETTER OF THE JUDICIAL PROCESS COMMISSION

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Dear JPC supporters and readers:

Welcome to the first e-issue of Justicia [in a text-only version], which continues the decades-long tradition of the Judicial Process Commission and its pioneering writer and editor, the late Clare Regan. We hope you find this email format useful and accessible - and please send us your feedback so we can improve our outreach. Thank you!

-Jack Spula, editor

ADVOCATES FOR LIFE REJOICE AS TROY DAVIS GETS A BREAK

By Suzanne Schnittman



Millions of people in America and in fourteen countries throughout the world have been holding their breath as the capital case against Troy Davis has held our attention for years. The past several months, with executions scheduled and stayed at the last moment, have been the most dramatic. Rochester's Reconciliation Network joined with Amnesty International in one of many vigils for this purpose this past May 19. We were planning a series of vigils in early and mid- September, as his latest execution was scheduled for September 23. Many assumed the Court would not rule until after the summer recess.

Troy Davis

Our current reason to celebrate is the Supreme Court's extremely rare move. It announced on August 11 that Troy Davis will get his day in court and a chance to prove the innocence he claims. "The high court ordered a federal judge in Georgia to determine whether there is evidence "that could not have been obtained at the time of trial (that) clearly establishes petitioner's innocence."

"The substantial risk of putting an innocent man to death clearly provides an adequate justification for holding an evidentiary hearing," said Justice John Paul Stevens, writing for the court. Justices Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Stephen Breyer concurred with Stevens.

As reported in previous issues of *Justicia*, the case has troubled the abolitionist community and others who simply believe in justice.

What are the facts?

Troy Davis, nineteen at the time, was sentenced to death for the 1989 killing of police officer Mark MacPHail in Savannah, Georgia. Working as an off duty security guard at a bus station at the time of his murder, MacPHail had rushed to help a homeless man who had been pistol-whipped at a nearby parking lot. The officer was shot twice when he approached Davis and two other men. Witnesses identified Davis as the shooter at his 1991 trial.

There was no physical evidence that tied him to the crime. Seven out of nine witnesses have recanted or contradicted their testimony.

Davis has spent 18 years on death row, since his trial and sentencing in 1991. His attorneys have been fighting for a new trial for years. He will remain on death row throughout the new trial.

Davis' lawyers say new evidence proves their client was a victim of mistaken identity. They say three people who did not testify at Davis' trial have said another man confessed to the killing.

The case has attracted worldwide attention, with calls to stop Davis' execution from former President Jimmy Carter, Pope Benedict XVI and Nobel Peace Prize-winner Desmond Tutu.

State officials have rejected calls for clemency and state and federal courts have rejected Davis' request for a new trial, until the Supreme Court finally took the case.

Justices Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas dissented from the decision to order an evidentiary hearing, with Scalia saying that "every judicial and executive body that has examined petitioner's claim has been unpersuaded."

Davis' "claim is a sure loser," Scalia said. "Transferring his petition to the District Court is a confusing exercise that can serve no purpose except to delay the state's execution of its lawful criminal judgment."

Scalia said the Supreme Court was sending the District Court for the Southern District of Georgia "on a fool's errand."

"That court is directed to consider evidence of actual innocence which has been reviewed and rejected at least three times," he said.

Justice Sonia Sotomayor, who was just confirmed as a new justice earlier this month, did not take part in the consideration of Davis' motion, the court said.

EDITOR'S NOTE: For the latest news on the Davis case, go to www.troyanthonydavis.org.

APPRENTICESHIP MENTOR TRAINING

Interested in learning about how to effectively help ex-offenders?

JPC APPRENTICESHIP
MENTOR TRAINING

FOR BACKGROUND, SEE ARTICLE BY ROBERT CROW BELOW.

Sept. 21 & 22

Mon. and Tues. 5:00 to 9:00 PM,

84 Scio Street

Hosted by Rochester Friends Meeting

(Near the Eastman Theatre)

Training Topics:

Local, State and Federal representatives discuss their agencies role in the criminal justice system. Project guidelines and boundaries.

Mentor reflections and requirements.

Active listening skills and feedback.

Health issues affecting those affected by the criminal justice

Employment discrimination and welfare issues.

Reservations required in advance by Friday, Sept.18, at noon. Call 325-7727 or email info@rocjpc.org. Interested volunteers should have 2 hours a week to give, be willing to commit to 1 year of apprenticeship service, attend Monday Night Training Workshops and provide written information about the outcomes.

VICTORY FOR GREYHOUNDS IN MASSACHUSETTS

By Joel Freedman

In the September - October 2007 issue of "Justicia," I reported in my article "Fight Continues to Close Down Dog Racing Tracks" that a coalition of animal protection groups had announced plans for a ballot question to end greyhound racing in Massachusetts. Seven years earlier, voters rejected a ban on greyhound racing, 51% to 49%. In 2006, the Committee To Protect Dogs gathered 150,000 signatures to get a racing ban on the 2006 ballot, but the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that the proposal's wording lacked clarity and ordered it off the ballot.

Every day that greyhounds are raced for commercial profit in America is a day that many of these dogs will suffer broken legs, spinal cord paralysis, puncture wounds or heart attacks. Every year in our nation, tens of thousands of greyhounds are killed as surplus or sold to research laboratories. The Humane Society of the United States reports that racing dogs spend much of their lives in stacked cages, in an unsanitary and infectious environment, where they are apt to receive inadequate nutrition and veterinary care.

Another deplorable aspect of the dog racing industry is the use of smaller animals such as cats, rabbits, guinea pigs and chickens in the training and running of the greyhounds. These animals serve as bait, hung by their legs from a mechanical arm that spins around the track, or set

loose to run in an enclosed field from which escape is impossible. Some greyhound trainers break the front legs of rabbits before releasing the dogs on them. Such "training methods" are supported by a lucrative animal trafficking underground that obtains "bait" animals from the southwest and transports them to greyhound racers elsewhere.

When I wrote the 2007 article, greyhound racing had been banned by the legislatures of Maine, Vermont, Idaho and Virginia. Greyhound racing was legal in 16 states. I reported that the New Hampshire House of Representatives defeated a bill, 198 to 138, that if enacted would have closed down New Hampshire's three dog tracks.

Since then, there have been some accomplishments. On Election Day last year, Massachusetts voters outlawed dog racing when they voted 56% to 44%, to enact The Greyhound Protection Act. Massachusetts' two dog tracks will close by January 2010. For the first time, churches joined in the fight to end dog racing. The Council of Churches in Massachusetts dedicated all of its Blessing of the Animals services to the greyhounds suffering at local racetracks. GREY2KUSA's proposal to restore racing greyhounds to New

Hampshire's anti-cruelty laws was signed into law. Greyhounds will now receive the same legal protection as other dogs in New Hampshire. Because of poor attendance at the dog tracks, the dog tracks in New Hampshire are in the process of closure. Bills to authorize statewide slot machines at dog tracks, which would attract more people to attend dog racing events, were defeated in New Hampshire and Florida. Last year both Mile High Kennel Club and Cloverleaf Greyhound Park of Colorado closed, followed by the Woodlands in Kansas. Twin River, Rhode Island's only dog track recently announced it has suspended dog racing. As people learn about the cruelty of greyhound racing, support and attendance at dog racing events declines.

A lot more work remains, however. Greyhound racing remains legal and operational in Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, Florida, Iowa, Texas, West Virginia and Wisconsin. GREY2KUSA continues to educate the public about the plight of greyhounds in these states, and to work in the legal process to end dog racing nationwide.

GREY2KUSA also supports the efforts of greyhound rescue groups throughout America through grants to many of these groups, including Kansas City Retired Greyhounds as Pets, Arizona Greyhound Rescue, Greyhounds Galore and Greyhound Friends of Georgia, USA Dog of Indiana, Second Chance for Greyhounds and Greyheart Greyhound Rescue of Michigan, Wine Country Greyhounds and Golden State Greyhound Adoption of California, Greyhound Companions of New Mexico, Greyhound Gang of Utah, and Freedom Greyhound Rescue of Ohio.

The victory in Massachusetts - which was won on a ballot initiative campaign - calls to mind the thoughts of anthropologist Margaret Mead: "Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has."

Elected officials who have been negligent in protecting animals should be guided by the words of the late U.S. Senator Richard Neuberger: "People often ask me why I spend so much time protecting the welfare of animals. Dr. Albert Schweitzer often said that one of the real symbols of a truly civilized person is whether he is kind to animals. I have always believed cruelty to animals is a black mark in Heaven. I realize animals do not vote. They do not make campaign contributions to enrich the coffers of politicians. But I will be their friend. I imagine he who spoke the sermon on the mount would want it that way, too."

To learn more about GREY2KUSA to to www.GREY2KUSA.org or write to GREY2KUSA, P.O. Box 442117, Somerville, MA02144. (info@GREY2KUSA.org.)

POETRY WORKSHOPS AT JPC

By Paulette Swartzfager

JPC will be offering their clients poetry workshops at the Judicial Process Commission office on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of each month from 5 pm until 7 pm beginning Tuesday, September 1.

The workshop leaders will be John Mourning and Paulette Swartzfager. The purpose of the series is to provide a safe space for creative expression of the participants¹ feelings and thoughts, as well as the opportunity for the participants to share their work with others.

On August 24th, John and Paulette were guests at the Monday meeting so they could introduce the workshop series. Among the people there were a number of clients who already write poetry, one who was published during his time in prison. John read a few of his poems, and Paulette answered questions from the group.

The workshop leaders will offer resources in the form of films, books, and guest poets from the Rochester region. A number of local poets have volunteered to be guests: John Roche, Vincent F.A. Golphin, Patricia Schwartz, Jack Spula, and others. Guest visits will begin in October.

The participants will be provided with composition books, pens, and copies of each others¹ poems.

The workshops will be free and open to people who are served by the JPC. No registration is necessary.

A typical Tuesday schedule:

1. Each participant will read a work he/she has been writing. This is meant to begin the workshop with focus on the work of the group.
2. Then the workshop leaders will present a resource (poetry, a film, a guest poet) so that discussion can be held about the topic or work.
3. There will be a writing *prompt* and participants will write in their composition book. Afterwards each person will read what he/she has written to the group. Discussion will focus on how the poem makes us feel, what would improve the work, and what else could be written.

The process of the workshops is going to be a flexible one, so that the workshop series remains responsive to the needs of the participants who choose to form this group. The goal is not *teaching* poetry. We want to offer what will help these participants express themselves, so the format of the sessions may change as needed to accomplish this goal.

POLICE INTERROGATION AND AMERICAN JUSTICE, by Richard A. Leo

A Review by Joel Freedman

On June 4, 1982, 19-year old Rebecca Lynn Williams was raped and stabbed 38 times at her apartment in Culpepper, Virginia. Before she died of her injuries, Williams told police that a lone black man, whom she did not know, had raped and stabbed her. A year later, Fauquier County Sheriff's Investigator Terry Schrum and Deputy Denny Zeets arrested Earl Washington, a 23-year old day laborer, in a nearby town for the assault of one of his neighbors and the theft of a pistol from her house. During several hours of questioning, Washington not only supposedly confessed to these crimes, but also to several other, unsolved crimes, including three rapes police later determined Washington could not have committed.

On a "hunch", they interrogated Washington about the Williams murder, too. Washington confessed to that crime as well, though only to the murder since at the moment Schrum was unaware Williams had been raped. Fauquier County authorities notified local and state police of Washington's confession to the murder of Williams. The next day, Culpeper police officer Harlan Hart and Special Agent of the Virginia State Police Curtis Wilmore interrogated Williams about the murder and rape of Williams. Washington, after an hour of unrecorded interrogation, once again confessed. Wilmore drafted a typed statement which Williams, who could not read well, signed.

Washington's confession indicated he was ignorant of many aspects of the crimes. Washington said he stabbed Williams two to three times (she was stabbed 38 times), said Williams was black (she was white), said he gained entry to Williams' apartment by kicking the door down (there was no forced entry), and said he saw no one else in the apartment (two of Williams's young children were present during the attack). Following the confession, Wilmore and Hart asked Washington to take them to the crime scene and show them the murder weapon, but Washington could do neither.

Nevertheless, the prosecutor would argue at Washington's trial that Washington provided details that only the perpetrator would know. Hart and Wilmore fed Washington several non-public crime facts Washington could not have guessed by chance, including the fact that the victim wore a halter top, that the perpetrator had left his shirt in the apartment, and that a radio was on during the assault.

In January 1984, a jury convicted Washington of rape and murder, relying almost exclusively on Washington's confession. Washington spent the next ten years on Virginia's death row; at one point he came within nine days of being executed.

In 1993, a DNA test indicated the seminal material found in Williams's vagina was highly unlikely to have come from Washington. Virginia Governor Douglas Wilder refused to pardon Washington, but commuted the capital sentence to life imprisonment. Seven years later, more sophisticated DNA testing revealed with absolute certainty the semen could not have come from Washington. After learning this, Virginia Governor James Gilmore pardoned Washington, who was released from prison in 2001.

At Washington's trial, the prosecutor emphasized the nonpublic details supposedly provided by Washington in his confession, notwithstanding Washington's insistence that "I ain't know nothing about the crime. They told me about the crime, how they want me to say this and that---they kept telling me they know I commit the crime in Culpepper---I told them I didn't commit no crime. Then they kept telling me how the crime went."

Once the DNA evidence exonerated Washington and identified the actual culprit as convicted felon Kenneth Tinsley, it became obvious that investigators had fed information to Washington and had pressured him to include this information in the confession.

Prior to the DNA exoneration, five different appellate courts, including the U.S. Supreme Court, upheld Washington's conviction. In 1984, the Virginia Supreme Court denied Washington's appeal

because it mistakenly concluded Washington had volunteered crime details only the perpetrator could have known. Ten years later, the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals decided that "the strength of the prosecution's case rests in the numerous details of the crimes that Washington provided to the officers as they talked with him. Our review of this evidence, as heard by the jury, indicates that petitioner knew so much about this crime that the jury could afford his confessions substantial weight. Washington had supplied without prompting details of the crime that were corroborated by evidence taken from the scene by the observations of those investigating Williams' apartment."

On October 24, 1988, Nancy DePriest was tied up, raped and murdered at the Pizza Hut where she worked in Austin, Texas. Two weeks later, 22 year old Christopher Ochoa, who worked at another Pizza Hut and his co-worker, 18 year old Richard Danziger, stopped for a beer at the Pizza Hut where DePriest had been killed. Danziger talked about the crime with a security guard, asked where DePriest's body had been found, and said they wanted to drink a beer in her memory. Employees became suspicious. They called the police who picked up Ochoa and Danziger for questioning.

For the next two days, Austin detectives Hector Polanco, Bruce Boardman, and Ed Balagia interrogated Ochoa, mostly off tape. Ochoa recounted that he was threatened, screamed at, told he failed polygraph tests he consented to take, and that Danziger was about to implicate him. Ochoa said the detectives threw a chair at him, threatened to put him in a cellblock where he would be "fresh meat" for other inmates, and told him he would be executed if he didn't confess.

And so Ochoa implicated himself and Danziger. He said that he and Danziger had raped DePriest and that he (Ochoa) had shot her in the head. Ochoa's confession contained non-public details of the crime, including the kind of gun used and the fact that an apron had been stuffed into the sink to flood the restaurant in an apparent attempt to destroy evidence. Ochoa also stated - consistent with the police's theory at the time - that he repeatedly anally sodomized DePriest. However, it was later learned that the minute rectal tears discovered postmortem had been caused not by sodomy but by a thermometer inserted in DePriest's anus during the autopsy. Ochoa later said detectives supplied him with crime details and explicitly directed him what to say.

Ochoa was indicted for capital murder. Danziger was indicted for aggravated sexual assault. Pressured by his attorney, Ochoa pled guilty to murder to avoid the death penalty. As a condition of his plea bargain, Ochoa was required to testify against Danziger. The jury rejected Danziger's testimony that Ochoa and the detectives were lying about his involvement. Both Ochoa and Danziger were sentenced to life imprisonment. A year later, in 1991, Danziger was assaulted by a fellow inmate, causing Danziger to suffer permanent brain damage and leaving him in need of life-long medical care.

In 1996, another inmate, Achim Joseph Marino, wrote to Texas Governor George W. Bush, the Austin Police, the American Civil Liberties Union and to Austin news media, admitting that he alone raped and murdered DePriest. Marino said he had become a born-again Christian and wanted to take responsibility for all his crimes and to exonerate two innocent men. Marino was already serving three life sentences for aggravated robbery. His confessions initially did not help Ochoa and Danziger. Marino's letters contained a detailed description of the crime scene and instructed police where to locate DePriest's keys, the currency bag from Pizza Hut that had contained the money, the handcuffs Marino had used to bind DePriest's wrists, and the gun he used to kill DePriest. The police then tried unsuccessfully to establish a connection between Marino and Ochoa and Danziger.

In 2001, Ochoa and Danziger were officially exonerated and released from prison after DNA testing matched semen found on DePriest to Marino and excluded both Ochoa and Danziger.

Like Earl Washington's confession, Ochoa's detailed confession contained many nonpublic crime facts that convinced even Ochoa's and Danziger's defense attorneys they were guilty. Because there is now no doubt that Ochoa had not been involved in the crime, it can be said with certainty that detectives had fed him the information contained in Ochoa's confession. An Austin Police Department investigation

that followed the exoneration affirmed this. As in the Earl Washington case, the police had coerced a false confession that convinced the judge, the jury and the media Ochoa and Danziger were guilty.

Another case of false confession described in this book is the case of Bruce Godschalk. After serving 15 years in prison for the rape of two women in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania, Godschalk was released after DNA testing conclusively determined that the semen from each of the two rapes had come from the same person but that person was not Godschalk. The initial interrogation and confession of Godschalk were not recorded. Police falsely told Godschalk they had fingerprint evidence and witnesses that proved his guilt. They yelled at him and made threats. After providing Godschalk with nonpublic crime information and rehearsed answers to significant questions that would be asked, the detectives turned on the tape recorder, read Miranda warnings to Godschalk for the first time, and produced a confession that would convince a jury and appellate courts that he was guilty.

In *Colorado v. Connelly* (1986), U.S. Supreme Court Justice William Brennan wrote, "No other class of evidence is so profoundly prejudicial---Triers of fact accord confessions such heavy weight in their determinations that the introduction of a confession makes the other aspects of trial in court superfluous and the real trial, for all practical purposes, occurs when the confession is obtained."

The Innocence Project reports that false confessions or admissions of guilt resulting from police interrogation tactics convinced juries to convict in 23 percent of its cases in which post conviction DNA analysis conclusively established the actual innocence of wrongly convicted defendants.

Richard A. Leo, Associate Professor of Law at the University of San Francisco, wants to upgrade the quality of police interrogation in our country, to increase the likelihood that police will elicit confessions from the guilty, and to eliminate the chance of false confessions being elicited from the innocent. Leo believes that police interrogation is an important aspect of law enforcement, as long as it is conducted honestly and legally. But far too often, detectives use deceptive and fraudulent psychological interrogation techniques, and occasionally use brutal methods, to extract confessions. Saul Kassin, who has extensively researched the psychology of false confessions, is quoted in Leo's book: "A police-induced confession is like a Hollywood drama: scripted by the interrogator's theory of the case, shaped through questioning and rehearsal, directed by the questioner and enacted by the suspect."

For the most part, police interrogation remains shrouded in secrecy. In order to shed more light on these practices, Leo has observed hundreds of actual interrogations, either in person or as a viewer of electronically recorded interrogations by police departments throughout America. He has attended numerous police interrogation training courses and seminars, analyzed police interrogation training manuals, interviewed police interrogators, prosecutors, judges, defense attorneys, judges and defendants, scrutinized archival and historical materials and contemporary case documents, and studied more than 2,000 felony cases involving interrogations and confessions.

Leo concludes that American police interrogation is "strategically manipulative and deceptive because it occurs in the context of a fundamental contradiction." Police need confessions to solve many crimes, while there is almost never any good reasons for suspects to provide them. Such a contradiction relates to many other contradictions. Interrogation remains largely secret in one of the world's most open and democratic societies. Police proclaim truth as the purpose of interrogation, yet detectives frequently utilize sophisticated forms of trickery to elicit confessions. The law requires all confessions to be voluntary, but interrogation is designed to persuade suspects that their only option is to confess. While confessions are presented as reliable indicators of a suspect's guilt, confessions are among the most unreliable forms of evidence.

With all of the above in mind, Leo calls for a focus on policy reforms to help protect individual rights, check overreaching state power and promote truth-finding. Policy reforms should address fundamental problems of accurate and complete fact-finding in the interrogation process. As the U.S. Supreme Court concluded in *Escobedo v. Illinois* (1964), "a system of law enforcement which comes to

depend on the 'confession' will, in the long run, be less reliable and more subject to abuses than a system which depends on extrinsic evidence independently secured through skillful investigation."

In *Commonwealth v. DiGiambattista* (2004), the Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court ruled that any confession resulting from an unrecorded interrogation will entitle a defendant to a cautionary instruction to the jury: "When the prosecution introduces evidence of a defendant's confession or statement that is the product of a custodial interrogation or an interrogation conducted at a place of detention (e.g. a police station) and there is not at least an audiotape recording of the complete interrogation, the defendant is entitled (on request) to a jury instruction advising that the state's highest court has expressed a preference that such interrogations be recorded whenever practicable, and cautioning the jury that, because of the absence of any recording in the case before them, they should weigh evidence of the defendant's alleged statement with great caution and care." More recently, the New Jersey Supreme Court adopted a similar rule.

In 1984, England and Wales enacted the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) that prohibits police interrogators from lying about evidence to induce confessions and that requires the recording of the entirety of all interrogations. Despite these changes, the confession rate in Britain has not gone down, and it remains higher than the American rate.

Leo concludes: "With all its cultural historical, and legal differences, Britain ultimately may not offer a feasible alternative or model of reform for American police interrogation. It, nevertheless, offers an important object lesson. The normative upshot of my empirical analysis in this book is that we must take the adversary system out of the interrogation room - as the English have done - to improve the quality of our interrogation practices and the quality of confession evidence police obtain. We must always remember that American interrogation is supposed to occur at the pre-adversary stage of the legal process, before any charges have been filed or formal adversary proceedings have commenced. Police interrogation should be an investigative function, not a prosecutorial one. It should therefore not be guilt presumptive, and its purpose should not be to incriminate the suspect in order to build a successful case against him. Instead, the goal of American police interrogation should always be to get the truth - even if the truth proves the detectives' theories wrong, demonstrates the suspect's innocence, or elicits information that favors the defense over the prosecution. Only by deadversarializing the police interrogation process will we be able to achieve the ideals of American justice."

Police Interrogation And American Justice gives us a sensitive, sensible and balanced perspective on police interrogation. Leo's appreciation for both crime control and the rights of the accused is evident throughout this well-written, meticulously researched study of police interrogation in America.

Police Interrogation And American Justice was published by Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 2008. Hard cover. ISBN-13:978-0-674-02648-3.

RELEASEES, MENTORS AND JPC

By Robert Crow

Being paroled or released from jail or prison is intimidating and difficult. The world seems as if it has completely changed and to the releasee, quite frankly it has. Society can seem like an enemy that aims to send the parolee back to jail. The Judicial Process Commission has been helping people to reconnect with the community and reclaim their lives for over 13 years because of the efforts of volunteer mentors from the community. The value of a mentor to men and women returning to Rochester is beyond measure and the JPC needs mentors now more than ever.

From 2007 to 2008 the number of individuals served by the JPC increased almost 50% and while funding has decreased -- the commitment to helping anyone who seeks it out has not. Beyond financial support, the JPC needs volunteer mentors - especially male mentors. Our goal is to recruit at least 40 male mentors (there are currently only 8).

Thanks to the efforts of former Mayor Bill Johnson our recruiting efforts will reach more people than ever this fall. The Mayor's tireless commitment to combating social ills in Rochester and beyond is well recognized, as he demonstrated throughout his career. A former president of The Rochester Urban League with too many accomplishments to list, he has even volunteered to become a mentor himself. It is because of that spirit of personal involvement that JPC has found such a great champion in Bill Johnson. JPC asks everyone with an interest in working within prisons and helping men and women both pre and post release - please explore volunteering their time.

JPC has also been very fortunate to find a great ally in Rochester's faith community. To date, JPC has 25 endorsements from local faith groups and historically has partnered with faith communities on a wide variety of justice endeavors. The faith community is currently one of the major focuses of JPC's recruiting efforts.

JPC draws mentors from all walks of life: the only real requirements for being a mentor are: being over 21, having a non-judgmental attitude and a desire to listen and help.

A mentor will help the mentee look at options for change. A mentor throws out the life line and a mentee needs to decide to grab onto the rope. A mentor also connects the mentee to resources in the community and helps the mentee set goals and reach them.

That still does not define what a mentor means in someone's life. A mentor has a unique ability to be a stabilizing force and an emotional anchor to someone who needs it. A good mentor may also learn how to support someone as they combat their personal demons to become a better person. A mentor generally meets with the mentee for two hours each week. Meetings take place in the Monroe County Correctional Facility (Brighton) or at the JPC office initially.

Mentoring is a serious challenge and can sometimes be disappointing however. For this reason Mentors need support too. Mentors work under the supervision of experienced JPC staff, Valerie White-Whittick, Mentor Coordinator and John Mourning, Mentor Outreach. Valerie provides mentors with her cell phone number and is always available for questions and resources. In addition, Mentors are required to meet quarterly for further training and recognition. Mentors needing additional resources or support are always encouraged to schedule a meeting with Valerie or John or attend Monday Night Training Events, every Monday Night from 5:30 to 7 PM at JPC (every Monday night throughout the year except major holidays).

Mentors and mentees that are willing to grab onto the life line lower recidivism rates and make a healthier and happier future possible for Rochester's families.

JPC is offering a seminar explaining the Mentor's role and how to connect with community resources.

JPC will offer the two night training course, free of charge, on September 21st and 22nd at the Friends Meeting House at 84 Scio Street. The training lasts from 5 to 9 PM and a light dinner is generously provided by the Friends Meeting.

To reserve a spot in the training session please call the JPC at (585)-325-7727 or email your name, phone and address by noon on September 18.

The JUDICIAL PROCESS COMMISSION

285 Ormond Street

Rochester, NY 14605

585-325-7727; www.rocjpc.org; email: info@rocjpc.org

We welcome your letters and Justicia article submissions by e-mail or postal mail.

VISION

The Judicial Process Commission envisions a society with true justice and equality for all.

We understand that in a just society, all institutions will be based on reconciliation and restoration, instead of retribution and violence.

MISSION

The JPC is a grassroots, nonprofit organization that challenges society to create a just, nonviolent community which supports the right of all people to reach their fullest potential.

We do this by:

-Providing support services for those involved in the criminal justice system

-Educating the public

-Advocating for changes in public policy.

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