

Justicia

Newsletter of the Judicial Process Commission

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SEASON'S GREETINGS



NOVEMBER/ DECEMBER 2010

REALITY TOUR VISITS JPC!

Dorothy Siegel

Twice on Sat Oct 23 the Reality Tour bus came to JPC, bringing a total of 62 people to meet Suzanne Schnittman, Greg Bouie (both Board members) and Shalanda Patterson, program graduate and volunteer administrative assistant, to hear about the programs and services that JPC offers.

The people were a diverse group in several ways: veteran activists, college students, city and rural residents, people looking for somewhere to volunteer, some who were looking for how to get a hold on their own lives. Suzanne commented, "They picked up every piece of information we had available,

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and listened to us in almost stunned silence. Shalanda told her story of incarceration and her road to recovery. Greg talked about his new appreciation of JPC as a board member and his belief in our Mission Statement."

"The reality of this tour," said Greg, "is that many of these people have no idea what happens to people who come out of jails and prisons. However, I think they see now that a person who has been incarcerated has a choice to either return to their old ways or find a new way to live. I think they left with a deeper understanding that even though we would

The Reality Tour is sponsored by the Social Welfare Action Alliance, a national organization of progressive social workers and other human service workers. Founded in 1985, the Alliance is based on principles that reflect a concern for social and economic justice, peace and coalition building with progressive social movements. For more information, visit their website www.socialjusticeactionalliance.org

We were honored and excited to be a part of this community education outreach.

appreciate their monies, it is their time that really counts in the life of a person that really wants to change."

What is New Yorkers for Alternatives to the Death Penalty?

Suzanne Schnittman, PhD, with Jonathan Gradess, Esq.



Four times a year I travel to Albany to represent Rochester for a board meeting of New Yorkers for Alternatives to the Death Penalty. Many of you know this group as NYADP, New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty. In the early days of my participation, our goal was to abolish capital

punishment in New York State. I filled the seat of Clare Regan on the board. Well, no one can ever fill her seat, but I tried. The co-author of this piece, Jonathan Gradess, a JPC supporter from Albany, has been a board member of NYADP since the earliest years. Director of the New York State Defenders Association, Jonathan chairs NYADP's Program Committee.

After I got my feet wet on this board, I became more active. I offered to chair a new committee, Governance, and even guided us through a re-write of old By-laws. Today, I serve as the Vice President. Bishop Howard Hubbard of Albany is our President.

With changes in New York State's position on the death penalty (it has been found unconstitutional), NYADP needed a new, broader role. Those of you who receive our literature have heard about this role. I'd like to share just a bit of it here.

Background Information: The New York Court of Appeals effectively abolished the death penalty in 2007. Our death row is now empty. Political calls to bring back capital punishment have stirred little interest, as the public has been made increasingly aware that capital punishment is a costly, biased, flawed, and ineffective way to confront violent crime.

What do we do now? Without a death penalty, we now have the potential of revisiting the question of how to respond to violent crime. We believe a new model is necessary, and that NYADP can play a role in facilitating such a paradigm shift.

As NYADP reaches out strategically to a broader community, who should be at our table?

- Police and communities of color to promote community policing and community-based violence prevention;
- Murder victim family members and advocates for the incarcerated to discuss policies around sentencing, parole, re-entry, prison programming and restorative practices;
- Law enforcement, victims, and mental health experts to implement community-based trauma response teams

to assist victims of violence;

Why should NYADP lead this effort? NYADP has the capacity to help facilitate and guide such discussions and will rely upon the good will, experience, wisdom and insights of "violence preventers" to seek out common ground solutions to reduce violence and to heal its damaging effects.

How can New Yorkers for Alternatives to the Death Penalty serve as an example to other states? In order for abolition to be achieved nationally, we must demonstrate that states that have abolished the death penalty are better off than they were before abolition. This can be done by showing that victims are better served, law enforcement is able to perform its work with less distraction, and comprehensive crime prevention is taken seriously. In essence, the campaign intends to lift up New York as a model of the benefits that abolition can bring by creating a model for post-abolition organizing work around real alternatives to the death penalty.

What has NYADP done so far toward this new mission? Through its outreach to victims, law enforcement, and communities of color, NYADP pioneered approaches that not only were strategically successful, but that also succeeded in promoting a broad shift in public attitudes about the death penalty and about crime and violence generally. NYADP's continuing work not only helps to insure that the death penalty will not return to New York, but also makes a meaningful contribution to national criminal justice reform efforts by creating and testing a new template for abolition and post abolition organizing.

Who helps direct this? NYADP executive director David Kaczynski uses his public visibility as the brother of the Unabomber to articulate and advocate for NYADP's vision of criminal justice reform. His blog at the Albany Times Union website, <http://blog.timesunion.com/kaczynski/>, attracts 1500 visitors per month.

Where can you find NYADP on the web? www.nyadp.org, the new and improved website revealed in February to better

explain and promote the organization's post-abolition mission. Or contact us through info@nyadp.org to receive NYADP's biannual newsletter. One more thing. We can always use your support, so for statewide non-violence efforts, here's your place!

Reaching Our Goals: We Know We Can!

Mary Boite



\$12,387 and Counting!

Thanks to all of you, we are very close to our goal of raising the \$13,000 needed to receive the matching amount from our very generous, but anonymous, donor. Individuals have so far sent an amazing total of \$12,387 - only \$613 to go!

Will yours be the check to push us over the top?

Of course, we are still hoping to reach \$15,000 to receive an extra \$2,000 matching donation from Board Members, so please think about us as you plan your giving over the next couple of months. All of you recently received Betty Wynn's eloquent and heartwarming testimony in your email boxes, so you know how much our clients depend on us and appreciate your support.

Thank you, as always, for your generosity of spirit!

NYS Prisoner Justice Network

Dorothy Siegel



On March 27, 2010 a conference was held in Albany for the purpose of organizing the NYS Prisoner Justice Network. Over 170 individuals representing more than 50 organizations

attended, including representatives from Judicial Process Commission. A mandate developed at the conference to build and maintain a statewide Prisoner Justice Network (PJN).

According to their website:

The goal of the NYS PJN is " to build our individual and collective strength and to challenge and change New York's criminal justice system.

The Network works to facilitate communication and connection among all the activists, advocates, and organizations from different regions, with diverse approaches, doing work toward justice for people in prison in New York State, and to share ideas, information, calls for support, campaigns in progress, obstacles, and successes in order to strengthen and support each others' work.

The Network's purpose is to explore, plan, strategize and implement organizations and individuals working collaboratively to change the criminal injustice system, .."

A regional meeting is to be held in Buffalo on November 29 and JPC board members plan to attend. For more information on the Prisoner Justice Network, check out their website at www.nysprisonerjusticenetwork.org and look for updates in our future newsletters.

Spreading the Word About JPC

Helen Cheves



On Tuesday, November 2, Gregory Bouie, a JPC board member, and Darnell Smith, an AmeriCorps case manager, were guests of RCTV-15. Students from The College at Brockport interviewed Gregory and Darnell and learned a great deal

about the many services that are offered at JPC.

Highlights of the interview included: JPC's history; the importance of advocacy; the reentry program; safe housing, and mentoring. The interview also emphasized the opportunity for a second chance and the right chance, for individuals reentering society. Gregory and Darnell affirmed JPC's commitment to helping individuals who have made the decision to change; a decision that is often made prior to reentry into society, and supported by JPC.

The program will be aired in two weeks.

Volunteering: The Gift of Time

Mary Boite



Volunteering: The Gift of Time

We know that many of you have given time and time again, and still we need to ask. The Board, especially the Fundraising Committee, has as its mission to make sure that the JPC remains financially viable to continue its work with people who need our support at a critical point in their lives.

We can't do it without you, and I'm not (for once!) talking about money. We get our money from many sources - individuals, organizations, foundation/government grants and some events such as our annual Fundraising Luncheon.

It would be wonderful if a famous actor, singer, dancer or writer would just have a great concert, for example, and give us the proceeds! But while we hunt for that person and wait for that to happen, we have to try lots of smaller events. Some thoughts include (but don't have to be limited to):

An Auction (online or otherwise)

Yard Sales in different locations

Dinners in people's homes for their neighbors or other JPC supporters

*A dance or gallery opening
Being a part of Community Day at stores like the BonTon
Etc, Etc, Etc. (Your imagination at work here)*

Over the coming months, one of us will be calling some of you to ask for your willingness to occasionally help the Fundraising Committee by calling people, hosting a garage/yard sale, donating to an auction, or other ad hoc efforts. Working with others for a great cause can be a lot of fun and not too onerous. Get a jump on this - call us first to see if you can help or to contribute an idea.

Volunteer Opportunity

Dorothy Siegel

Justicia

JPC needs a volunteer to act as Rental Apartment Coordinator. As a separate part of the Women's Reentry Project, JPC won the rights to secure and manage eight single-bedroom apartments over five years for which HUD will pay the rent. The job will be to find safe, clean apartments for women who are pregnant or have children two years old or younger and who are coming home after being in jail. The Rental Apartment Coordinator will coordinate with landlords, women clients, Dept of Human Services, case managers and others. Hours will vary between 8 and 30 hours per week. (less as program becomes established). Training is available.

If you enjoy a challenge and want to help be a part of guiding clients in establishing their new lives in the community, please contact Sue Porter at 325-7727 or sporter@rocjpc.org. Thank You!

Thank You!

Dorothy Siegel

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As the brand new editor of *Justicia*, I want to thank you for reading this, my first issue. In future issues I plan to expand and improve. I would appreciate any comments or suggestions you might have. Please contact me at kenanddor@yahoo.com. Thanks again for your time and interest!

JPC Information

Justicia

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.

BOARD MEMBERS:

Susan K. Porter, Executive Director, CEO

Mary Boite, Vice-Chairperson

Gregory Bouie

Helen Cheves

Jane Coons, Treasurer

Duncan McElroye

Isabel Morrison

Gail Mott, Secretary

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