

33rd Annual Report
April 18, 2005



Judicial Process Commission

2004 Annual Report

GOAL

The Judicial Process Commission challenges society to create a just, nonviolent community which empowers all people to reach their fullest potential. We do this through education, conflict resolution training and advocacy for change in the justice system. These changes can be achieved only through addressing the basic inequities in our society.

RECONCILIATION NETWORK: DON'T KILL IN OUR NAMES

New York State Joins 12 Other States in Abolishing the Death Penalty

The Reconciliation Network rejoiced with others around the state when the hard work of everyone resulted in New York becoming the 13th state without a death penalty, at least for the foreseeable future. The Assembly Codes Committee voted 11-7 to not send the revised death penalty bill to a full vote of the Assembly. The original bill had been declared unconstitutional by the Court of Appeals because the sentencing portion was deemed coercive. Before the committee vote, five hearings had been held in which 170 people either testified or sent written statements, nearly all opposing the death penalty. During the time the bill had been in effect, 7 men had been sentenced to death at a cost of about \$200 million. No one was executed.

Attitudes toward the death penalty have changed in the past 10 years. A recent Siena College poll of New Yorkers found that 56% favored life without the possibility of parole to 29% for the death penalty as the sanction for first degree murder. Many factors influenced this change of heart, one being the availability of life without parole. Also, 119 death row inmates had been exonerated nationally, 14 by DNA evidence. Attention focused on Illinois when Gov. George Ryan commuted the sentences of all death row inmates after he found that 13 innocent people had been sentenced to death there. When in Missouri, Pope John Paul II had spoken out strongly against the death penalty.

The RecNet's efforts were instrumental in helping to affect the change. Monthly vigils had been held since September 1995. The Rochester City Council was encouraged to become the first in the state to ask for a moratorium. Over 50 local groups joined in the call. The fall issue of *Justicia* was devoted entirely to capital punishment. David Kaczynski, the unbomber's brother and director of New Yorkers Against the Death Penalty, spoke in Rochester several times. Other death penalty opponents - Marietta Jagger Lane, Ron Tabak and Malcolm Bell - had made presentations. Recently, three book reviews on the issue were given at Writers and Books. The play, *The Exonerated*, which uses the words of 6 death row inmates found innocent, was performed in Brockport. An ad about the work of the RecNet ran for two months at the Little Theater. Over the years, a statewide conference was organized in Binghamton and a prison pilgrimage traveled throughout 50 communities in Western and Central New York highlighting the death penalty and other criminal justice topics as well. Locally, presentations were made to many high school and church groups, along with debates with death penalty proponents. We hope New York will remain in the abolition column.

Over the last 10 years this group has worked with many other partners to defeat the death penalty. Some of them include: Church Women United, Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester, Public Policy Committee, Social Action Committee of Temple Sinai, Feminists for Life of New York, Greater Rochester Community of Churches, Office of Social Policy, Catholic Family Center and Democrats for Life.

WHAT DIVIDES US WORKSHOP TEAM

The more awareness is spread in our community about diversity the more we are able to understand each other and build a stronger community. In this workshop participants experience the similarities between different groups of people and begin the process of accepting the differences.

The highly acclaimed video *The Color of Fear*, produced by Stir Fry Productions, was borrowed from the JPC library a couple of times last year. This video is actual footage of a group of men on retreat. Their sometimes painful but always honest discussion about racism helps to promote a refreshingly honest sharing among viewers.

Stir Fry productions has recently released 2 new videos. The *Last Chance for Eden I* is about nine men and women that spend 2 weekends together talking about racism.

Taped for 24 hours the men and women search for ways to understand each other's differences. The ***Last Chance for Eden II*** uses the same format and this time the group tackles sexism. The women share their experiences with sexual harassment in the workplace as well as the role the media plays in perpetuating sexism and male privilege.

JPC makes all three videos available to the public free of charge. The Team welcomes requests for workshops on racism and sexism and is looking for people who want to help develop new material to present.

SUPPORT SERVICES FOR PAROLEES & PROBATIONERS: EMPLOYMENT AND MENTORING

A total of approximately 400 parolees or probationers received direct services from JPC. A recent sampling of 156 customer files over a 2 month period reveals an estimated **38% working, 5% in school, or in treatment**, 18% are unemployed, 29% cannot be located, and 6% are in jail.

Two AmeriCorps workers and two JPC staff work as job developers along with a core group of about 25 mentors.

We are grateful for a grant from Rochester Area Community Foundation for \$15,000 to the Faith Community Adult Mentoring Project, FCAMP and are hopeful for a second year of support. This collaborative involves: Bibleway Healing Temple, Calvary St. Andrews Presbyterian Parish, Cephas, Church of God - Clarissa Street, Elim Jail and Prison Ministry, Federal Probation, Monroe County Correctional Facility, New York State Parole, Rochester Friends Meeting, Faith, Hope and Charity, Faith Temple and others. Eighty nine new mentors were trained during the program year and the Public Policy Group will be advocating for pre and post case management services for those re-entering our community from jail or prison. In 2005 FCAMP will place special emphasis on involving Latino faith groups and will provide more support for mentors.

A team of presenters completed two series of job readiness and life skills workshops in the Monroe County Correctional Facility for 29 young men ages 16 to 18. JPC has helped to start a collaborative of mentoring projects that work with families involved in the criminal justice system that will work on publicizing the unique barriers and issues faced by children and parents alike.

**ESTIMATED
NUMBERS OF
PERSONS
SERVED**

<i>Justicia</i> newsletter	3,300
Support Services	
Transitional services	400
Youth Job Readiness & Life Skills Training - Jail and prison correspondence	29 355
Presentations- Roch. Psychiatric Center, Mt. Rise, Nazareth & Mercy HS	125
What Divides Us Workshop - Color of Fear	20
Faith Community Adult Mentors	89
Active Mentors	24
Public Policy Group members	12
Total	4,354

2004 - 2005

COMMISSION MEMBERS

Mary Boite
 Joyce Clark
 Vivan Cook Johnson
 Laurie Hamlin, Treasurer
 Bob H. Jones, MD
 Gail Mott, Secretary
 John Mourning
 Harry Murray
 Mimi Porter, former Chairperson
 Susan K. Porter, temporary Chair
 Clare Regan, *Justicia* Editor
 Fred Schaeffer
 Mary Sullivan, SSM
 Yolanda Wade
 Jacquie Whitfield
 Louise Wu Richards

STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

Keisha Anderson, AmeriCorps
 James Caldwell, Admin.Assistant/Mentor Coord.
 Tabitha Barber, AmeriCorps, Job Developer
 Pam Hunter, Intern, Best Program
 Mark Hussey, AmeriCorps, Job Developer
 Greg Latta, Intern, Monroe County
 John Mourning, FCAMP Outreach Coord.
 Susan K. Porter, Coordinator
 Wanda Richardson, MCC Student Intern
 Steve Shannon, Administrative Assistant
 Aimee Sevigny, MCC Student Intern
 Tim Williams, MCC Student Intern

FUNDING SOURCES

Foundations

Aloha, Ruth M. Knight Foundation
Phogg Foundation and Rochester Area
Community Foundation

Groups

Aids Rochester, Bethany House
North East Area Development
Progressive Neighborhood Federal
Credit Union

FAITH ORGANIZATIONS

American Baptist Churches/USA

Lake Avenue Memorial Baptist Church
Public Christian Mission of the Rochester
Genesee Region

Presbytery of Genesee Valley

Bethany Presbyterian Church
Downtown United Presbyterian Church
Summerville Presbyterian Church

Roman Catholic

Catholic Charities Diocese of Rochester
Church of the Assumption
Sisters of Mercy
Resurrection
Sisters of St. Joseph

Genesee Valley Association of the United Church of Christ

Irondequoit
Mountain Rise

Other Faith Organizations

First Unitarian Church
Interfaith Alliance
Religious Society of Friends
Spiritus Christi

OTHER SOURCES

Individuals, Workshop Fees, Honoraria