

THE SOLUTION

Keeping Community Solutions' Employees Connected



Kenya Mission Trip



Greg Lindsey, MST System Supervisor

I think we all realize that our work in helping people at CSI isn't likely to put us in the top tax brackets, yet there is some inner calling that pushes us to invest ourselves in helping others have a better life. Sometimes that calling goes beyond what we do for our paycheck, and can take us outside our comfort zone - sometimes, way outside.

I was recently asked to consider going on a mission trip to an orphanage in Kenya. The purpose of the trip was to help five recently orphaned children get settled with the other 25 children at the orphanage. Due to malnutrition, disease and intertribal violence, there are 1.9 million orphans in Kenya. Resources and services for these children are scarce. A friend of mine, Steve Kasha, traveled to Kenya on business, saw the plight of so many orphans and decided to act. Primarily from his own business profits, he started Serv Ministries and established the House of Hope orphanage in Lodwar, Kenya.

My initial reaction to the trip was that rather than spend the money to get me to Kenya, wouldn't it be better for me to give money to help the orphans of Kenya? As I wrestled with this, a series of events took place which seemed clearly Providential, and I stepped out on a limb and committed to the trip. Relatives, friends, and coworkers were extremely generous with their support and encouragement. Four weeks and thirteen vaccinations later, I was in Lodwar.



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Mission Trip continued . . .

Barren, hot, dusty, and primitive are words that don't even begin to describe the conditions. After picking up the five children from the tribal leaders, we took them to the market for clothes, shoes, and bedding. Even though they had rarely seen "outsiders" the children latched on to us immediately. As we walked hand in hand with them through the market, an older Turkana man commented to our local host, "There is still hope in Lodwar."

By the second day in their new home, all five children were making friends, enjoying full bellies, and had begun their school work. We played games and they tried their best to teach us Swahili. The boys were especially intrigued by the hair on my arms, and my white hair and beard. I evidently was an oddity, as few men in Lodwar live long enough to have white hair. They laughingly dubbed me "eupe nywele", or "white hair." My days with the children and the staff changed my perspective on so many things. Their smiles, spirit, and hope have inspired me to think and act differently. The House of Hope is truly an oasis in the middle of a bleak landscape.

I am occasionally able to receive emails and updates from the head of the orphanage whenever he walks the three miles to the one internet access site in Lodwar. He tells me the new children are all thriving in the love and security they feel at the House of Hope. Their lives are changed forever; so is mine.

I now find myself being more thankful for so many things I took for granted. My family has taken on the sponsorship of one boy, Francis, whose story especially touched me. My thoughts about short term mission projects have changed as well. Trips focusing on a clear purpose of bringing long term help are useful. The trip probably had a greater impact on me than on the children, but in the long run commitment to support children such as these will help change their lives forever. If you are interested in learning about Serv Ministries, go to www.servintl.org



One of the orphans is taken with Greg's "white hair."

Anniversaries

10 years

Teresa Williams, VP of Development – Adult, Central Office – 2/12/01

5 years

Robert Porcaro, Intervention Specialist, Danbury AIC – 11/7/05

Angela Kimbrough, Therapist, MST GA – 11/16/05

Melanie Kurylowski, Case Manager, Hartford House – 11/28/05

Irina Zaki, Teacher, NJ CRC – 11/29/05

Samuel Davis Jr., RTU Driver/Operations Assistant, Waterbury AIC – 12/19/05

Jennifer Cudworth, Contract Analyst, Contracts – 12/30/05

Thomas Finnucan, Community Service Coordinator, Bridgeport AIC – 1/3/06

Lucy Ortiz, Administrative Assistant, Waterbury AIC – 1/3/06

Jerry Teo, Court Liaison, Bridgeport AIC – 1/3/06

Nannette La Fosse, Therapist, MST RI – 1/25/06

Emmanuel Paulus, Shift Supervisor, Coventry House – 1/28/06

Megan Hunter, Clinical Supervisor, MST PA – 2/27/06

Awards

Lisa Pitts, HSW at the New Haven Re-Entry program, was awarded a President's Award.

Cesia Gonzalez, Lead Therapist of the FL FFT team, was awarded the Great Job Award.

Commentary by Robert Pidgeon

This edition of the newsletter features one of our MST System Supervisors, Greg, and his trip last year to Africa to work with children in a village in Kenya. Greg also made a very powerful CD of the trip, which I have seen and have also shown to our CO staff here in Windsor. I know that many of you participate in such ventures each year, by working in your neighborhoods and communities to help those in need, or perhaps making an extensive trip like Greg's, and I commend each of you for it. Such charity and giving makes us all proud, and especially proud that you work for CSI. When we say "Our name is our mission", this shows that we really mean it.

Many years ago the first Governor of the Massachusetts Bay Colony, John Winthrop, wrote these words:

"We must delight in each other, make other's conditions our own, rejoice together, mourn together, labor and suffer together, always having before our eyes our



commission and community in the work, our community as members of the same body".

Notwithstanding the various shortcomings of the Puritans, these words stand as a beacon for the rest of us. The test is not whether we can live constantly by those words, but that we make an honest effort to do so continually. I see this effort every day in our programs, and every day in the many other charities shown by our staff in their

actions outside the workplace. It is so easy to become inured to the hardships of the children and adults we serve; we see it so often, that we really do not see it anymore; like the crack in the wall that goes unrepaired, it just becomes part of the fabric of our lives. From time to time, we must step back and see the world in all its iniquity and accept that we cannot change everything, but we can change some things. It is worth the effort, and you make that effort every day. Some, like Greg and many others, make that effort in multiples.

We all have a remarkable ability to rise to the occasion, some more than others, to provide help when needed. I am reminded of what happened in New York City after the 9/11 attack. New Yorkers are known for their impatience; standing in line is one of the worst experiences in the city (remember Seinfeld and the soup Nazi?). On this day, shortly after 9/11 New Yorkers stood in a blocks long line, patiently, quietly. They had lined up to give blood.

Corporate Updates

After feedback from both the Youth and Adult Divisions, the HR department recently implemented a new resume database system called iapplicants. All candidates will now apply electronically via our external website (www.csi-online.org) and be directed to the iapplicants website. We are looking forward to better record keeping, storage and search capabilities under this new system.

The deadline to submit nominations for the 3rd annual John Stein Memorial Employee of the Year Recognition Award is May 31st. Forms for nomination can be found at www.csict.org, login, then click on HR Forms then Employee Recognition. Completed applications should be sent to Ed Palasek at Central Office. The purpose of the Annual John Stein Memorial Employee of the Year Recognition Award is to recognize outstanding employee contributions toward achieving the mission of Community Solutions, Inc. and to continue the memory of a colleague whose service to Community Solutions and friendship to all should not be forgotten. The primary criteria for consideration for this award are service and job performance beyond the daily work of the individual.

CSI's Annual Report FY2010 is hot off the presses and will be available for viewing online this month at ww.csict.org under the tab about us. This year's edition features stories from the Day Reporting Center in Santa Barbara, CA, the Clothing Closet at Drapelick/Berman Centers in CT, the Multi Dimensional Treatment Foster Care Program in MD, and MST in Berks County, PA.

A Different Approach to Gang Prevention

With gang intervention on the rise, MST therapist, Louie Lugo, a former gang member and Vietnam veteran, is helping the gang influenced youth in Clayton County, GA. The great work he is doing in Clayton County was recently published on the Juvenile Justice Information Exchange website.

Louie first met Patricia Ortiz when she was a young gang member in Clayton County. Patricia, like many youth, had been gang affiliated at an early age and was yet another statistic in the county having the largest gang growth rate in Metro Atlanta. The Clayton County Police Gang Intelligence unit estimates there are 1,200 gang members and 47 criminal street gangs in the county. The gang members range in age from 13 to 22. Patricia unfortunately fit into this segment of the population and began leading a life of crime and a gang influenced lifestyle.

Despite her gang involvement the Clayton County Juvenile Court placed Patricia in the Multisystemic Therapy Program (MST) funded by the Georgia Department of Juvenile Justice. Mr. Lugo began implementing MST interventions for Patricia and her family. Melinda Ortiz, Patricia's mom, worked with Mr. Lugo and used different techniques, behavior plans, safety plans, friend's approval lists, etc. to decrease Patricia's gang involvement. At the end of the school year, it was imperative to remove Patricia from the gang environment in Clayton County. Mr. Lugo was able to safely relocate Patricia with a relative in another state for the summer.

Patricia's mom knows the techniques she learned from MST were helpful in turning her daughter around. "When Patricia returned home, I utilized the interventions that I learned from Mr. Lugo to keep Patricia away



Author - Sedgrid Lewis, Program Director GA

from negative peers and her gang members" states Mrs. Ortiz. Upon returning back home, Patricia put her new skills to work and now has a part time job in the community, will be graduating from high school and looks forward to attending nursing school.

The entire article can be found on the CSI website www.csi-online.org and the Juvenile Justice Information Exchange website <http://jjie.org>

CSI Collaborates on Manuscript

Paul Boxer, PhD, assistant professor, Department of Psychology, Rutgers University has submitted a manuscript to the *Journal of Clinical Child and Adolescent Psychology* to be considered for publication. The manuscript, "Negative Peer Involvement in Multisystemic Therapy for the Treatment of Youth Problem Behavior: Exploring Outcome and Process Variables in 'Real-World' Practice," uses data drawn from CSI's clinical records.

Paul contacted CSI in 2009 requesting CSI to collaborate on a grant proposal for Middlesex County, NJ that he was writing. He had been referred by MST services which stated our positive outcomes



Paul Boxer

with youth and families. Using information he compiled from the Seginus data bank for NJ, his findings suggest that negative peer

involvement is significantly related to treatment failure, particularly when negative peer involvement is comprised of gang affiliations. CSI's MST NJ staff has presented for Paul at his classes at Rutgers and they plan on scheduling future presentations.

Paul's research interests center on the development, prevention, and treatment of aggressive behavior, particularly among children and adolescents. We at CSI look forward to working with Paul on future ventures as we spread the word on the effectiveness of MST and at-risk youth. Once published, Dr. Boxer's manuscript will be added to the CSI website.

Spreading the Word About MST



Baton Rouge radio personality, LaTangela Sherman and CSI's MST therapist Jarhonda Perkins tell the community about MST.

CSI's MST therapist Jarhonda Perkins first met Baton Rouge radio personality, LaTangela Sherman, when they were visiting a mutual friend. Jarhonda couldn't visit for long because she was off to meet with one of her MST families. LaTangela was so impressed with Jarhonda's dedication, she invited Monique Little, CSI Program Director and Jarhonda to be her guests on her radio broadcast "Inside Baton Rouge Public

Affairs." Both Monique and Jarhonda spread the word about CSI explaining the MST process and how therapists work with families of youth "at the back end of the system" as "coaches" with their families to find the root of the problem of why kids act the way they do. Monique further explained the main goal of MST is to keep families together by making their families self-sufficient, and the necessity to have role models in

place when the therapist leaves. Monique praised her therapists who are on call 24/7, 365 days a week and how they manage their job commitment with their own family life. "It's more than a job it is a mission," she stated.

Ms. Sherman encouraged her listeners to "get the word out", and to address this problem now, by telling friends and families who could benefit from MST. "The more we tell families we care about them, the more people will embrace the program."

"Hats off to you people at Community Solutions, you drop everything that you're doing in your personal life to help the family you are working with tackle the issues that are going on in their lives. That takes compassion!" stated Ms. Sherman.

Since the interview, social workers from local schools and community health centers have called for information regarding CSI's MST services.

Monique will be giving presentations in the near future to these groups to continue to spread the word!

Youth Division Breaking Ground in El Paso, TX

In February, the Youth Division was awarded a new Functional Family Therapy (FFT) contract in El Paso, TX. Currently providing FFT services in Florida, the youth division looks forward to starting a second program in El Paso. We look forward to this opportunity to spread the word about CSI in Texas and to providing a family-based prevention and intervention program to at risk youth and their families. More information about this exciting opportunity in the upcoming newsletter.

CSI Joins Alliance



Susan Pribyson, Vice President, CSI New Business Development for Youth Services, has joined the Alliance to Support Evidence-Based and Promising Practices (ASEP). She will be co-chairing the sub-committee “Utilizing Outcomes to Promote Evidence-Based and Promising Practices” with Shani Alexander from Advanced Behavioral Health, Inc. (ABH).

Holly Monroe, MST Program Director/Clinical Supervisor and Pat Wright, Youth Division Area Director have also joined an ASEP subcommittee, “The Future of Evidence-Based & Promising Practices.”

ASEP was formed in November of 2010 by Advanced Behavioral Health. Subcommittees will be meeting quarterly as well as via phone conference more frequently as needed. Through these Roundtable Discussions, ASEP brings together providers, funders and QA/QI monitors to act as a resource for the continued growth and implementation of evidence-based and promising practices in CT. ASEP will also assist with the identification of methods to best use limited resources to fund evidence-based and promising practices in CT.

CSI's MST Saves Berks County Money

Jeff Gregro, the Deputy Chief of Juvenile Probation in Berks County, PA is a strong advocate of Multisystemic Therapy, (MST), and Community Solutions. Wendy Seidel, Director of In-Home Services with Children, Youth and Families saw the situations in Berks County shifting toward gang related activities.

Both Wendy and Jeff knew the programs in place were not addressing the problems in Berks County effectively and wanted alternatives to the present in-home providers. 5 MST providers were interviewed and CSI was chosen for its experience working with Latino youth, as well as its proven track record, professionalism and reputation.

CSI's MST program was able to fill a niche that the JPO population desperately needed by changing the behaviors of the at risk youth. In addition, school attendance increased which ultimately benefited the entire community.

“After bringing MST into Berks County in 2007, fewer youth have been placed in out-of-home facilities, with a savings of 2.5 million budget dollars”, states Jeff Gregro. Over the past 3 years, out-of-home placement has decreased dramatically. In 2007, the first year CSI was in Berks County, out-of-home placement was at 22% decreasing to 9.8% in 2009. The number of youth with no new arrests has increased. In 2007, 70% of youth had no new arrests, and in 2009 91.9% of youth had no new arrests.

Berks County is yet another success story for CSI. These saved dollars were put back into juvenile community based programs to provide services to additional at risk youth who otherwise would not be serviced in their neighborhoods.

Both Jeff and Wendy applaud MST simply saying “It’s working”.



Jeff Gregro, Deputy Chief of Juvenile Probation in Berks County, PA and Wendy Seidel, Director of In-Home Services with Children, Youth and Families

Ms. Little Leads a Big Charge

The LA MST program has been open for four and a half years. This program provides a valuable service to the youth and families in the Alexandria and Baton Rouge areas. Last November, the LA MST program was facing a third rate reduction within the LA Medicaid reimbursement rate and there was talk of possible program closure. Ms. Monique Little, LA MST Program Director, met with her staff to review what clinical improvements could be made. Identifying some drift from the model, she and her staff were able to come up with creative solutions, keeping within the framework of the model to enhance services which in turn increased revenue.



Monique Little

With strong support from Rich Lutz, VP for the Youth Division, many persons within the finance department and some changes

within the clinical leadership of the program, LA MST will continue to provide services. Ms. Little exhibited creative leadership strategies by seeking collaborative assistance from many of us at central and insisted we travel to visit her offices. By doing so, we were able to obtain a true picture of operations and the LA staff received face to face validation of CSI's commitment to LA. As a result, Monique and her teams now motivated and inspired were able to take what appeared to be a dismal situation and turn it into a positive outcome. Monique and her teams are hugely supported by CSI to keep providing great services to youth and families.

Florida CSI Staff Cited for Service Above and Beyond



At the November 11th Florida Staff meeting, CSI Senior Area Director, Alesia Brooks presented five staff members Kelly Griffis, Amanda Bailey, Linda Newsome, Cesia Gonzales and Marsha Henderson, with Certificates of Excellence for service above and beyond the call of duty. The Florida offices were without a program director, administrative assistant, and a clinical supervisor for two MST teams for several months. The staff worked together to ensure the programs continued to provide high quality services for their clients and stakeholders.



Left: Amanda Bailey (MST Therapist) receives a Certificate of Appreciation for assisting with the Florida Provider Fair in October.

Center: Kelly Griffis (MS Supervisor) received a certificate for her support and work with Circuit 10 & 12 MST teams during a transition period. The teams were without a supervisor since September, 2010 and she assumed responsibility for the supervision of the teams and her team. She provided excellent support for all therapists.

Linda Newsome (FFT Supervisor) receives a Certificate of Appreciation for assisting with the Florida Provider Fair in October.

Not pictured are Cesia Gonzales and Marsha Henderson.



Development News

- On February 7, 2011 the Youth Division was awarded a new FFT contract in El Paso, Texas.
- Awarded re-bid Georgia MST contract.
- Working with Berks County, PA to implement the Incredible Years Program.
- Submitted OJJDP proposal “Comprehensive Anti-Gang Strategies and Programs” to target Newark, NJ.
- Collaborating with Paul Boxer PhD, assistant professor, Dept of Psychology, Rutgers University on OJJDP proposal “Field Initiated Research and Evaluation Program”.
- Attended MST International Conference March 7-8 in Charleston, SC
- Submitting Statewide MST proposal to the Texas Youth Commission (TYC) for four counties.
- Exploring submission of Family Unification RFP for TYC and RFPs for Lehigh County, PA.
- Upcoming MST training dates, Supervisor Training, Atlanta, GA – April 20-21, 2011,
Contact: Njemile Siwatu
- The CSI Training Department contract for Criminal Justice, Family Matters and Justice Administration Employee Training was recently extended by CSSD.
- The New London Alternative in the Community (AIC) held an Open House on March 11th to celebrate their new location.
- The new Norwich AIC will be holding an Open House on April 1st from 11 AM to 2 PM. CSI will be honoring Larry Albert for his years of dedicated service and outstanding accomplishments in criminal justice by naming the Norwich AIC, the Larry Albert Center. As Department of Corrections Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Albert was instrumental in helping to develop the AIC in Connecticut.
- CSI is in collaboration with respective Sheriff’s Departments to submit applications for Second Chance Act Adult Mentoring Grants in both Santa Barbara County and Orange County in California.
- The Santa Barbara Foundation awarded CSI funding to be used for client flex funds at the Santa Maria Day Reporting Center.

CSI Denied Zoning



Attorney Charles Willinger, representing Community Solutions Inc., which was proposing the project, argued that the West End neighborhood fits the proposal and that his client didn't miss a deadline for the appeal. Photo: Tim Loh / Connecticut Post

At the most recent meeting of the Bridgeport Zoning and Planning Commission, Community Solutions, Inc. was denied a second one-year zoning extension for its proposed Federal Reentry Center at Norman Street and Railroad Avenue in Bridgeport. The vote against the plan was 5-1. CSI won the commission’s approval for the project in 2008. But the federal and state funding had not yet materialized. So CSI went before the commission asking for the extension.

Many CSI employees as well as community supporters testified at the hearing in support of the project and the zoning extension. Several protestors opposed the extension, most of them members of community action groups called Neighborhood Revitalization Zones, arguing that nearby suburbs rely too heavily on Bridgeport for social services without offering a helping hand.

Community Partners

Families in Crisis, Inc. provides an on-site social reunification program for Community Solutions. This program provides family education to ex-offenders in four weekly group sessions that address many of the challenges facing families in reentry. The fifth and final session provides an opportunity for a family visit with activities for clients and their families to engage in. Cheyney House, Watkinson House and Chase Center clients have participated in the program with high praise from clients and staff.

Clients are also rendered an opportunity to engage in the agency's Family Counseling program where they can receive individual counseling provided by a Families in Crisis, Inc. caseworker addressing issues such as anger management, parenting, re-establishing relationships, reentry, and coping skills.

Families in Crisis, Inc. (FIC) helps at-risk children, offenders and their families learn how to constructively succeed as individuals, as members of a family and as members of our society. For additional information, contact FIC Program Director Radiyyah Hasann at 860-727-5830.



100% Employment



Adonica Talbert

Hartford House has created a goal and made a commitment to obtain 100% employment with their clients. Human Service Worker Adonica Talbert is leading the charge with her extensive work in the community securing new employers for the program as well as keeping current employers happy and manned with clients. Hartford House reached their 100% goal in November and are currently maintaining at a 90% employment rate. With Connecticut's unemployment rate hovering at 9%, this is a tremendous feat.

President's Award Goes to Lisa Pitts



Manny Tirado (left) and Diane Patterson (right) present Lisa Pitts with the President's Award

Lisa Pitts, Case Aide for New Haven Reentry, was recently honored with Community Solution's President's Award for her commitment to CSI and her ability to function well beyond her job description during a recent program staffing shortage. Lisa willingly took on additional roles and responsibilities as they surfaced keeping newly assigned Area Director Diane Patterson informed every step of the way. Diane said, "I could not have brought this program to where it is today without her unsolicited assistance and steadfast work".

Alternative in the Community (AIC) News and Highlights

Emilio Ortiz, Case Manager with the **Bridgeport AIC** is especially proud of his work with a particular client, John. John's motivation and accomplishments helped to launch him towards a successful discharge and the potential for a job even when dealing with the death of his brother. When John came to the AIC, he was unable to read, had vision problems, no place to live and little hope for employment. Emilio was able to send him to Literacy Volunteers where John was helped to improve his reading skills which gave him the confidence to consider going for his GED. He was also referred to DSS and then to an optometrist for glasses and Bridgeport Housing was able to find him a place to live. Through Emilio and other's efforts, John was able to stay on track as his self-esteem grew and his future improved.

The New London AIC moved successfully to their new location at 555 Bank Street and the Open House on March 11 was a wonderful event attended by CSSD and Court officials, CSI staff, community members and friends. All were impressed with the new facility and look forward to continued success in the new location.



Above: Bob Pidgeon, CSI CEO welcomes guests to the new New London AIC. Kyle Jones, New London Lead Bail Commissioner (far left), Bill Carbone CSSD Executive Director (left) and Ann Block, New London AIC Program Director look on.

Left: Jack Brooks, Director of Administration CSSD (left) and Cynthia Theran, Assistant Director of Program & Staff Development CSSD speak with Sherry Albert, Vice President CSI Adult Division.



Kyle Jones, Lead Bail Commissioner, Mickey Amanti, Bail Supervisor and Tim Gilman, Bail Commissioner



Ann Block and Steve Grant, Director of Family Services for CSSD

AIC News continued . . .

CSI Intervention Champions Tyler Griffin, Kristina Schaeffer, Emilio Ortiz, and Eileen Cunningham were honored at a recent CSSD Quality Assurance (QA) Forum.



Tyler Griffin, Case Manager New London AIC and Ann Block, Program Director



Emilio Ortiz, Case Manager Bridgeport AIC and Sally Guy, Area Director



Kristina Schaeffer, Case Manager Torrington AIC and Peter Melendez, Program Director



Ed Keeley, Program Director Norwich AIC, Sally Guy, Area Director, Eileen Cunningham, Case Manager Danbury AIC, Amy Anderson, Program Director Danbury AIC



CSI staff among all of the Intervention Champions.

Patrick Odell, Case Manager for the **Torrington AIC** reports success with Brian, a client who was transferred from the Waterbury AIC/Transitional program after successfully completing the Employment Skills program and enrolling in the Porter and Chester Institute. The transfer was the result of an opportunity for Brian to enter a CSSD funded apartment in the community where he had lived before incarceration.

Brian was hesitant to be around his old friends and family but accepted the challenge to better himself and change his former lifestyle. Some of Brian's challenges were: filing ten years of back taxes to comply with Child Support court, obtaining a birth certificate and driver's license, maintaining sobriety, reuniting with family, and finding a job (his main goal). Through Brian's perseverance and hard work, he landed an entry level job and was promoted to supervisor within one month with a raise in pay. He currently leads a team of employees and manages the day to day operations of his department. Brian moved to a larger apartment, purchased a car, and has begun parenting classes with the hope of someday seeing his kids again.

Bridgeport AIC Valentine's Day Luncheon



Van is Donated



The Berman Treatment Center recently purchased a new van which left the issue of what to do with the old van. Jackie Wise, Senior Financial Analyst put the call out for information about donating a vehicle.

Her call was answered by Barbara Lazarski who had just attended a Greater Hartford Reentry Council meeting where a representative from the Good News Garage had provided information about vehicle donation. The mission of Good News Garage is to create economic opportunity by providing affordable and reliable transportation options for people in need.

The person who received the van wrote in a thank you note, "I'm blessed to have a van. I am able to find a better job now and can pick up my sons from college . . ."

Training and Resource Department



Tiffany Parkhouse (left) and Cindy Peterson

CSI's Tiffany Parkhouse and Cindy Peterson presented at the recent New Jersey Prevention Network Annual Substance Abuse Conference. This is the second year that the Training Center was asked to present at the conference. They were asked back again this year and facilitated a workshop on providing evidence based treatment with dually diagnosed clients including cognitive restructuring, cognitive skill building and coping skills training. The workshop was well received with a total of 225 attendees.

The "Solution" is a publication dedicated to keeping CSI employees connected. If you have a story, event, or news you would like to submit for consideration of publication, please contact Barbara Lazarski at blazarski@csimail.org or Susan Pribyson at spribyson@csimail.org. We look forward to your news.

The Art of Justice

Santa Barbara Day Reporting Center Program Director, Katie Ward, recently participated in the Art of Justice presented by Poetic Justice at the Veteran's Memorial Community Center in Santa Maria, California. Art of Justice offered a way for members of the Central Coast community to engage in a soulful debate about alternatives to our current criminal justice system, with its high rates of incarceration and recidivism. Events included a community forum, a luncheon and a performance of the play *Off The Hook*, set in a California prison with a cast of formerly incarcerated actors.

The 90-minute Art of Justice Forum featured Drug Court Judge Rogelio Flores, Santa Barbara County District Attorney Joyce



Former inmates perform in Off The Hook

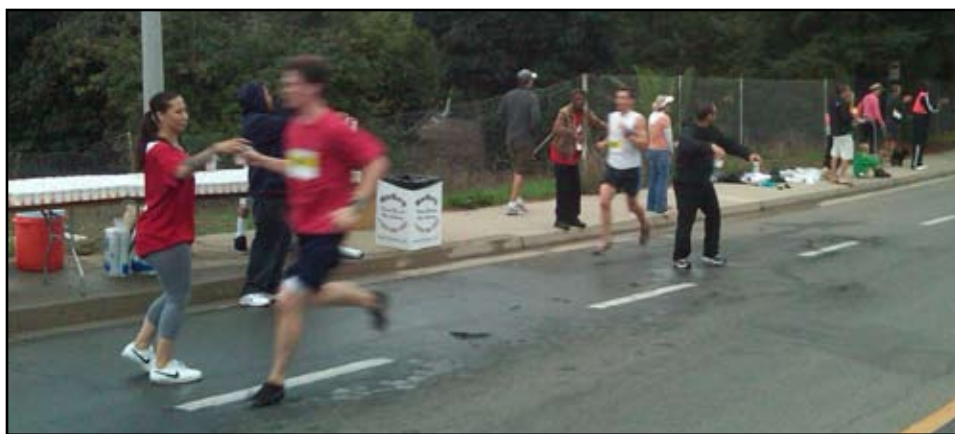
Dudley, Artist Guillermo Willie and Community Builder Efen Gorre, from [City Corps](#) in Oxnard. They discussed creative ways to address incarceration, rehabilitation and reentry in a state with a 70% recidivism rate. The Art of Justice Forum was moderated by retired Santa Barbara County Public Defender Greg Paraskou. The forum was followed by a

luncheon during which attendees had informal dialogue with community leaders including Assemblyman Katcho Achadjian, Hilda Zacarias, Robert Burrs, Restorative Justice Program Developer; Mike Cordero, Santa Maria City Council Member; Bull and Marie Chaney, owners/managers of Gryphon Society recovery homes; Katie Ward, Program Director of Community Solutions, Inc.'s Santa Barbara Day Reporting Center; Beverly Taylor, Santa Barbara County Deputy Chief Probation Officer; Jeff Ford, Acting Assistant Unit Supervisor with the Santa Maria Parole Department; Sister Theresa Harpin, member of Central Coast Clergy and Laity for Justice, and Billi Jo Starr, of Toastmasters Soldiers.

2010 Santa Barbara International Marathon

The Santa Barbara International Marathon was held Santa Barbara. This race is a qualifier for the Boston Marathon. This year the Santa Barbara DRC was proud to be able to offer their services to the SB Marathon Committee. Two staff and seven clients provided a total of 45 man hours in the preparation and operation of a water station along the Marathon route.

This event was inspirational for all involved. The station was set up along the 1.4 mile point, and again, after a loop in the course, at the eleven mile marker. Staff and clients met at the DRC at 5:00 am before heading out to the location to set up. The race started at 7:00 am, with the first runner arriving by 7:04 am, leading the pack by



Volunteers from the Santa Barbara DRC hand water to marathon runners

almost seven minutes. When the rest of the runners arrived it was pure pandemonium. It took all hands on deck to keep the water cups filled and positioned for smooth handoffs. The second rush came an hour and a half later as the runners were approaching the eleven mile marker. The runners

were more spread out this time, but the volunteers remained very busy. The spirit of the day was captured in a comment by one of our clients, Lindsay, after saying hello to the third runner she knew. She said "I can't believe I actually know people who do this. I must be doing something right."

Family Helped by Nutmeg Big Brothers and Big Sisters

In the early 1980s, Rose Brown was divorced and living in East Hartford's Columbus Circle housing project with her two young sons. "It was an extremely difficult period of time," she recalls, "both financially and emotionally."

Rose's major concern at the time was for her boys, Tom and Mike. With a father no longer in the picture and with her working long hours to support them, she wanted to insure that the boys had a consistent male role model in their lives. "Tom and Mike had their grandfather," Rose says, "and their relationship with him was always warm and supportive, but he had passed away."

Rose heard about Nutmeg Big Brothers Big Sisters. She researched the youth mentoring organization and liked what she learned. Sensing it was exactly what was needed to help unleash the raw potential she'd been noticing in both her boys, she enrolled Tom and then Mike in its community-based program. "The case workers at Nutmeg matched 12-year-old Tom with a young attorney named Frank Cathcart," said Rose. "Later they matched Mike, who was 9, with Tim Ruart, a businessman. Frank and Tim seemed to be ideal candidates. I knew almost from the start that they'd be excellent friends and sounding boards to my boys."

Rose's optimistic feeling about the matches seems to have panned out. Today, Tom is a father of two children and the President of his own business, Electrical Energy Systems Voices & Data. "I've come a long way from where I was," Tom says. "A great deal of my



Rose Brown, CSI receptionist (middle) of South Windsor is pictured with her sons. Mike Mascaro (left) lives in East Windsor. Tom Mascaro (right) live in Ellington.

success can be traced directly to my mentor and my years with the Big Brothers Big Sisters program."

"Enrolling my boys in Nutmeg was probably the best thing I ever did for them," said Rose. "Second best thing," Tom adds. "The first best thing is that she's our mom."

Tom's brother, Mike, is a Senior Manager of Engineering at Comcast Cable. Last year and again this year, Mike volunteered to be a mentor in the "Beyond School Walls" site-based mentoring program, managed by Nutmeg, that Comcast sponsors at its Berlin, CT facility. "You could call it paying it forward," Mike said. "I believe the mentoring experience I had with Nutmeg when I was shaping my values was a major factor in helping me achieve in life. Now, in

"Beyond School Walls", I'm trying to offer the same type of positive opportunity to other kids."

"Enrolling my boys in Nutmeg was probably the best thing I ever did for them," said Rose. "Second best thing," Tom adds. "The first best thing is that she's our mom."

Nutmeg Big Brothers Big Sisters, Connecticut's premier youth mentoring organization, is an affiliate of Big Brothers Big Sisters of America. It creates and maintains one-on-one relationships between at-risk children and professionally-screened adult volunteers. Based in Hartford, Nutmeg was founded in 1966. It is funded, in part, by United Way organizations. It currently offers services to thousands of youngsters in 111 of the state's 169 cities, towns and villages. For more information, call: 1-800-237-KIDS (5437). The organization's website is: www.nutmegbigbrothersbigsisters.org.