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Maricopa County Adult Probation Newsletter

Voice.

July/August 2016

Focus On Reentry

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Every month our Department receives hundreds of individuals for supervision who have been released from the Arizona Department of Corrections and hundreds more who have been released from the Maricopa County jail. The initial return to the community is a critical time that involves risks for the reentering individual and for public safety. We witness the many challenges of community reintegration for these individuals and are actively involved in strategies to smooth the transition from incarceration to the community. Our goals are both to help individuals succeed and to enhance public safety.

Prison Reentry

There are currently more than 12,000 individuals in the Arizona Department of Corrections (ADC) with a term of probation in Maricopa County following release from ADC. Roughly 250 offenders per month are released from ADC with a consecutive probation term in Maricopa County. Approximately 130 are assigned to the Prison Reentry units, 25 to IPS, 17 to Sex Offender, and the balance to various units including Drug Court, DUI Court, Out-of-County, Out-of-State, ICE, Unsupervised, and Transferred Youth.

In 2009 the Department sought and received a \$2 million federal grant from the Bureau of Justice Assistance for a Prison Reentry Initiative. At that time, there were 8,500 inmates in ADC pending release to probation in Maricopa County. For various reasons, 23% of the ADC releases at that time absconded right away; they never reported to probation following release.

CHIEFLY SPEAKING

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Historically, our staff had not supervised individuals releasing from prison and officers did not always understand the complex needs of individuals returning to the community after being removed for a significant period of time. The Sex Offender Program had pioneered a process to identify sex offenders with complex needs releasing from ADC and to coordinate transition planning with ADC and other key partners. Building on this concept and these partnerships, the Reentry Program was developed and implemented in response to the large number of ADC releases coming our way. The grant funded a supervisor, seven probation officers, and seven surveillance officers for two years. The primary elements of the Reentry Program were established: 1) pre-release interview with offender and identification of critical needs, residence verification and probation overview with family, and development of the release plan; 2) specialized supervision during the initial post-release period that includes seeing the probationer within three to five days following release, identifying and addressing critical needs, and assessing risk and developing a case plan; and 3) a designated re-engagement officer(s) to find and re-engage missing offenders or to proceed with a petition to revoke and appropriate court action for those who cannot be re-engaged. After two years, the Reentry Program demonstrated a 90% reduction in initial absconders, a 54% decrease in filed petitions to revoke, a 36% increase in successful completion of probation, a 29% decrease in the rate of new felony convictions, and a 21% decrease in revocations to prison.

Due to the success of the Reentry Program, the County has fully funded the program since December 2011. Today, we have two Reentry Units with two supervisors, 21 probation officers, and seven surveillance officers. In Fiscal Year 2015, the Reentry Program provided pre-release services to 1,420 inmates and received 1,261 new cases (an average of 105 per month or 7 per officer per month). The initial absconder rate was 1.45% and the program continued to demonstrate significant decreases in petitions to revoke filed and new felony convictions when compared to outcomes before the Reentry Program.

Available data indicates that the average length of time served by individuals releasing from ADC to MCAPD supervision in the past year was slightly more than three years. Being separated from the workforce, family, and community for such a long period is a serious disruption in one's life and connection to the community. Typical obstacles and barriers faced by offenders returning to the community include: housing, employment, transportation, technology, identification (birth certificates, Social Security cards, and identification cards), mental health and/or substance abuse issues, chronic illness and communicable diseases, and the stigma of a felony. Reentry officers often see the following as individuals experience the challenges of reintegrating with family and the community: a mindset that my probation officer is out to get me and is waiting for me to fail; high anxiety levels; fear; family expects too much, too soon; the offender expects too much, too soon; limited coping and conflict resolution skills; and unpreparedness for independence and decision making. We can assist the reentering offender by understanding their challenges, having reasonable expectations, and offering hope and encouragement as well as practical assistance.

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For the safety of staff and the community, supervision strategies need to correspond to the offender's assessed risk level and be focused on the individual's criminogenic needs. An analysis and profile of individuals in ADC at the end of FY2014 with pending probation terms in Maricopa County showed that nearly 80% were assessed as medium-high or high risk. Our collaborations with law enforcement, stakeholders, and service providers are vitally important in working with this population and their complex needs. Honing our relationship skills and utilizing EBP tools will also be essential to our success with this higher risk population. The Reentry Program model includes transferring cases to a standard field or specialized caseload within 90 days after the individual's release from ADC. This means that field officers throughout the Department are supervising individuals who served time in the ADC. A Reentry Committee is developing training, reference materials, and other resources to share with the Department to create a more seamless transition from the Reentry Program to Standard supervision and to help everyone better understand this population, including the prison experience and reentry challenges.

Jail Reentry

Many probationers serve time in jail prior to sentencing, as an initial condition of probation, as a condition of reinstatement, following arrest for probation violation, or on other charges, sometimes from other jurisdictions. While we are accustomed to probationers cycling in and out of the jail, we do not have numbers on how many probationers reenter the community from jail each year. These individuals are removed from the community for shorter periods of time than those sentenced to prison. The time in jail is nonetheless a disruption in their lives and their return to the community involves transition and reintegration. The Community Reintegration Unit (CRU), which supervises both Standard and IPS probationers serving 60 days or longer in jail, has approximately 195 individuals releasing per month to field supervision.

Our Department has numerous processes, collaborations, and partnerships aimed at helping probationers transition smoothly from jail to the community and these continue to develop. The primary purpose of CRU is to address probationers' reentry needs while in custody and to facilitate transition to the community upon release. CRU coordinates reentry efforts with the Sheriff's Office's ALPHA program and facilitates the early release of ALPHA graduates. In FY 2016, CRU partnered with Maricopa County Healthcare Integration, Arizona Department of Economic Security, Maricopa County Sheriff's Office (MCSO), and Keogh to help probationers graduating from the ALPHA Program complete applications for AHCCCS in anticipation of their release from jail. CRU also joined forces with Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care and participating community providers to provide eligible probationers with appropriate behavioral health and/or substance abuse treatment referrals that would promptly connect them with intake appointments in the community after jail release. The CRU IPS team provides additional reentry services to their probationers, including face-to-face residence verifications and family orientations.

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A few more examples and certainly not an exhaustive list of our jail reentry efforts include:

- The Work Furlough Program collaborates with partner agencies to offer incarcerated probationers supervised reintegration into the community through a job readiness program, job search, and employment.
- SMI officers work closely with MCSO, Correctional Health Services, Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care, the Mental Health Court, and service providers to plan and coordinate services for probationers with serious mental illness who are transitioning from the jail.
- The Reach Out program clinically assesses probationers with a substance use disorder who are serving jail time and are eligible for early release to residential treatment. Reach Out works with Mercy Maricopa Integrated Care and community providers to find appropriate treatment in the community and facilitates the early release of eligible individuals to community-based residential treatment.
- Probation officers co-facilitate Thinking for a Change groups with MCSO staff in the jail. In addition, probationers who participate in T4C while in jail but do not finish the program before release are placed in a T4C group in the community to complete the program.

Reentry Services Division

We have continued to grow as an agency over the last several years and we have seen expansion across a host of populations including reentry. Since June 2009 the number of individuals in ADC who will release to probation in Maricopa County has increased about 60%. We anticipate continued growth in reentry as well as other areas. In May I announced that due to population growth, we would be adding another division and also replacing the division director position that we had lost in 2010. We decided to reorganize the agency and create the Reentry Services Division due to the continued emphasis placed on reentry services. In addition to the population growth in this area, the County has placed a strategic focus on reentry services and engagement with its Smart Justice initiatives. We wanted to leverage the new director position to strategically align with County and Judicial Branch goals. In July, we established the new Reentry Services Division and Jason Walker has assumed leadership of the new division. The new division is comprised of the following units: Reentry, Work Furlough, CRU, SMI, Garfield, and Education and Workforce Development. As previously announced, various units in the Department are also being moved between the divisions to align operations.

Reentry Services are an important aspect of our business and are critical to community safety and well-being. This is a positive and exciting change for our organization.



Jason Walker Promoted to Division Director

By Jennifer Biddle

Jason Walker was promoted to division director in July 2016 and he is leading the new Reentry Services Division. His office is located in the Downtown Justice Center. Jason has been with Adult Probation for 12 years. Over the last six years, he has supervised both Standard field and Sex Offender units at the Western Regional Center (WRC). During his time as a Standard field supervisor, he was involved in working with the Glendale Police Department to improve our relationship and enhance collaboration between our two agencies. Prior to becoming a supervisor, Jason was an officer in Standard field and IPS at WRC. He serves as an EBP/FROST/Case Plan trainer, Master Trainer, and Firearms Instructor and is currently the co-chair of the EBP Task Force. Furthermore, Jason has facilitated Appreciative Inquiry sessions for the Empathy and Understanding project and was part of a group that received a NACo Achievement Award for the Empathy and Understanding project.



In his new position, Jason is looking forward to working with the current supervisors and staff who work in these specialized and challenging assignments in order to develop the new Reentry Services Division. Jason believes that these are exciting times, both locally and nationally for reentry services, and it's inspiring to see the passion and commitment staff demonstrates to help improve the lives of the clients we work with and the communities they live in. He has two amazing kids, who keep him and his wife busy with their sporting endeavors and all their other activities. Jason's passion and commitment to the Department will be instrumental in the development of the new division!

Heather Preston's Promotion

By Jennifer Biddle

Heather Preston was promoted to supervisor in August 2016 and assumed leadership of a Standard unit in the Western Division. Her office is located in Glendale. Heather has been with Adult Probation for nine years. Her first assignment was to a Standard caseload at the Black Canyon Building (BCB). She supervised the south area which included the CASS homeless shelter. Her next assignment was at the Durango office to an IPS unit. After nearly four years in IPS, she transferred back to the BCB office and supervised offenders in the Domestic Violence unit. She spent a year working in the Domestic Violence unit then transferred into the Sex Offender DOC Reentry caseload.



Over the nine years with the Department, Heather has served on several committees/ workgroups including the CASS Outreach project and the South Mountain Clean and Beautiful Mentor program. She is currently on the TASC workgroup and the DOC Reentry committee. This past February, the Sex Offender DOC Reentry caseload was chosen as a topic for presentation at the APPA conference in Atlanta, Georgia, and Heather was a presenter. With her experience and dedication to the Department, Heather will be a great addition as a supervisor!



Achi Yapo's Promotion

By Tony Bidonde

Achi Yapo was promoted to supervisor effective August 15, 2016, with an initial assignment to Indirect Services at the Black Canyon Building. He leaves an IPS caseload at the Western Regional Center. Achi began his career with Adult Probation in January 2010. His first assignment was to a Standard caseload located in the Buckeye and Tonopah areas. The assignment provided an opportunity to work with the Buckeye Police Department and to strengthen the partnership between both departments. Partly due to that partnership, Adult Probation was able to set up the Buckeye satellite office. Achi points out that the assignment assisted him in gaining a better understanding of the challenges defendants living in a rural area face. It also led him to the realization that it is incumbent upon the officers and managers to adapt supervision strategies to “appropriately accommodate their needs.”

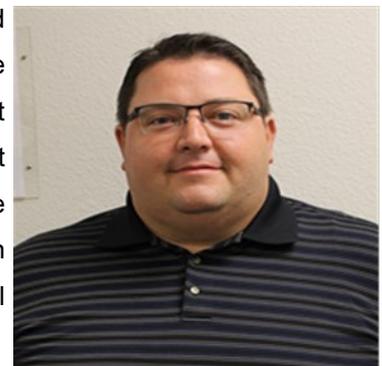


Achi has mentored new officers and served as an adjunct instructor to the training department by educating new hires on court forms. He also served as one of his unit's representatives for the IPS Voice Committee. In his new position, Achi is looking forward to joining a great team and working together to provide excellent customer service. He is also looking forward to learning something new as well as lending his experience to benefit the Department and clients.

Bill Peckham's Promotion

By Cathy Wyse

Bill Peckman has been promoted to supervisor. Effective August 15, 2016, he assumed leadership of a Pretrial Services Initial Appearance Unit. He is located at the 4th Avenue Jail and working the late shift. Bill has been with the Department for five years. His first assignment was a Standard caseload at Garfield followed by a Standard caseload at Coronado. He enjoyed working in these unique settings with veteran officers who were willing to help. Bill carried a Work Furlough caseload for a few years and then transferred to a Pretrial Services caseload where he supervised individuals on general pretrial release.



Bill has provided valuable feedback that helped with the development of Pretrial policies and procedures. He was also instrumental in the development of a video for the EBP Portal. Regarding his new assignment, Bill is very excited to be joining the Initial Appearance team. He noted that Initial Appearance is being discussed like never before and provides an opportunity to apply evidence-based practices to improve policies and procedures. Prior to becoming a probation officer, Bill had careers as a sales manager and as a stay-at-home dad.



New Officers Join the Department!

By Jim Sine

Please join Staff Development in welcoming the latest class of new probation officers and one surveillance officer to the department! On July 12, 2016, the new officers were sworn in by Judge Myers at the Downtown Justice Center. These officers completed nearly eight weeks of NOTES training and are ready to jump into their new assignments. The new officers participated in a slightly revamped Field Coaching Week in which they were able to work with two different officers during two three-day spans of coaching. The two separate spans of field coaching allowed new officers to not only work with two different officers, but to gradually put into practice the skills they learned in training. As always, a very appreciative THANK YOU is due to our many adjunct faculties for their ongoing contributions to training our new officers. We have many presenters who have been involved with training our new officers for quite some time and others who even teach more than one class. Another big THANK YOU goes out to our field coaches for taking time out of their schedule to work with our new officers in the field. Staff Development recognizes their immense contributions and knowledge in helping our new officers get ready for the job. Congratulations and good luck to our new officers.



Pictured from left to right: Alejandra Salazar, Ramon Grijalva, Cherry Irving, Barbara Valdez, Michelle Finlayson, Sunikia Bullen, Sedric Gant, Lorena Gutierrez, Aaron Bell, Jasmine Plummer, Saul Renteria, Illona Kevorkian, Jesarim Diaz, Melissa Grey, Alexandra Rivera, Avangelina Rogut, Justin Williams, Cecilia Cisneros, Cedric Johnson, Iris Cuevas, Brianne Guimaraes-Rosa, and Chelsea Wray.



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We'd love to hear from you!



2016 Crisis Response Officer of Distinction Awards

By Cathy Wyse

David's Hope, a nonprofit organization that leads the Arizona Mental Health and Criminal Justice Coalition, selected two MCPAD officers to receive 2016 Crisis Response Officer of Distinction awards. The awards are given to law enforcement officers who have shown exemplary response to individuals in mental health crisis. Kimberley Casey and Jazmaine Wilkins received their awards at the Step Up Arizona 2016 summit held on June 9 and 10, 2016, at the Mesa Convention Center.



Kimberley Casey was nominated for this award by her supervisor, Thomas Weiss, and the following is taken from his nomination. Kim focuses on the most important issue at hand and understands that her

efforts begin with the building of a trusting relationship with the person diagnosed SMI and involved with the criminal justice system. Kim volunteered to transfer to the Garfield office at a time when the unit was down two officers and although she was aware the area is known to have high recidivism rates and a higher percentage of homelessness. In particular, Kim demonstrated excellence in her dedication to the success of a young probationer who at 25 had spent most of his life in custody or institutions and was unprepared for and afraid of life in the community. She advocated for him and worked with the Mercy Maricopa Diversion Team when he had charges in city court, while simultaneously keeping the Superior Court informed. The probationer began to see her as an ally and she was the one he called when he wandered into a homeless shelter for youth needing medical attention for dehydration. Kim followed up at his residence and found that he was without food and basic supplies. She insisted on higher levels of care so that he could reside safely in the community. When his condition worsened a couple of weeks later, he walked eight miles to Kim's office for help. She was not there, but returned immediately to assess the situation. He admitted he had not been taking his medications and had used illegal drugs. Rather than call police to transport the probationer to urgent psychiatric care, Kim insisted on a response from the clinical team and stayed by the probationer's side for over four hours until the clinical team came out to meet with him and transport him to a hospital. She ensured that he received the care he needed and deserved.

Jazmaine Wilkins, who is no longer with MCPAD, was nominated for an award by her supervisor, Jessica Ethington. Jazmaine had prior experience as a case manager working in the mental health system. After joining the SMI unit at MCPAD, Jazmaine shared the case management perspective with her peers and this contributed to a more well-rounded approach to their supervision. Jazmaine worked with a challenging probationer last summer who refused to cooperate with probation and his clinical team. After a petition to revoke had been filed, the probationer called Jazmaine; he was clearly in distress and was making suicidal statements. She stayed on the phone with him for over two hours listening to his threats against himself, law enforcement, and those around him. As she listened and kept him calm, she coordinated with the Fugitive Apprehension Unit and police to calmly, quickly, and safely take him into custody. When police arrived at the residence, he refused to leave.



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Jazmaine was able to convince him to slowly exit his apartment and he was taken into custody without incident. A few weeks later, Jazmaine saw the probationer in court. He thanked her and told her that he had every intention of taking his life that afternoon and her efforts were the reason that he did not.

Martha Mays Selected for Statewide Probation Award

By Cathy Wyse

Martha Mays has been selected by the Arizona Probation Chiefs, a group comprised of all adult and juvenile probation chiefs in Arizona, to receive the statewide 2015 Line Officer of the Year Award. The award will be presented at the Arizona Probation Chiefs' award banquet in September. After Martha was selected as MCAPD's 2015 Probation Officer of the Year, Chief Barbara Broderick submitted the following nomination of Martha for the statewide probation award:



Martha Mays is an outstanding probation officer and an exceptional advocate for homeless probationers. After 21 years of dedicated service with the Maricopa County Adult Probation Department, Martha retired and went to work for an agency that provides transitional housing for homeless families. Martha helped hundreds of clients move from chronic homelessness to independent living. However, she decided to return to a career in probation. Since her return, Martha has helped the Department more effectively supervise homeless probationers. Martha's entire caseload resides at Central Arizona Shelter Services (CASS). One full day per week, she holds "office day" at CASS to see probationers. This arrangement helps homeless probationers meet their reporting requirements as they often lack the bus fare or transportation to report to the probation office. Signs are posted at CASS inviting individuals on probation to check in with "the probation officer" on Tuesdays. Martha also looks for probationers among the individuals coming into the overflow shelter in the evening. To assist fellow probation officers, Martha gladly sees their probationers at CASS and follows up with a contact note in APETS or an email to the probation officer.

Martha has earned a positive reputation at CASS for the assistance she provides and probationers actually refer others at the shelter to see her. Martha treats homeless probationers with dignity and respect. She gets to know them, helps them get the right services, and helps them see their potential. If needed, she will take a person by the hand and walk with him over to crisis services or detox. She doesn't pass judgement and she offers hope. With a blend of compassion, well-honed probation skills, and knowledge regarding homelessness, Martha is a very special probation officer who exemplifies the department's vision and mission.



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