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**OCCA AGENCY MEMBERS**

- Alternatives Agency, Inc. - Cleveland
- Alvis House - Columbus, Dayton, Chillicothe
- ARCA, Inc. - Cleveland
- Community Assessment & Treatment Services, Inc. - Cleveland
- Community Corrections Association, Inc. - Youngstown
- Community Correctional Center, Talbert House - Lebanon
- Community Transition Center - Lancaster
- Community Treatment & Correction Center, Inc. - Canton
- Crossroads Center for Change - Mansfield
- CROSSWAEH CBCF, Oriana House, Inc. - Tiffin
- Diversified Community Services, Inc. - Columbus
- Fresh Start, Inc. - Cleveland
- Nova House - Dayton
- Ohio Link Corrections & Treatment, Inc. - Toledo
- Oriana House, Inc. - Akron & Cleveland
- Pathfinder House - Lima
- Salvation Army Booth House - Dayton
- Salvation Army Harbor Light - Cleveland
- Southwestern Ohio Serenity Hall - Hamilton
- The Sheryl L. Kraner, Esq. Youth and Family Behavioral Health Campus - Newark
- Summit County CBCF, Oriana House, Inc. - Akron
- Talbert House - Cincinnati
- Turtle Creek, Talbert House - Lebanon
- Volunteers of America, Northeast and Northcentral Ohio - Mansfield
- Volunteers of America, Ohio River Valley - Cincinnati & Dayton
- Volunteers of America of Northwest Ohio - Toledo

**2009 OCCA SPRING NEWSLETTER  
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**

**The Best Investment for Ohio's Future**

As you may be aware, Governor Strickland and Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction Director Terry Collins increased funding for community corrections by \$20 million dollars over the next biennium.



Less than two months later, the Pew Center on the States issued a startling report entitled *1 in 31: The Long Reach of American Corrections*. Perhaps not surprisingly, at least to those of us in the field, Ohio ranked 6<sup>th</sup> overall. Unfortunately, 6<sup>th</sup> overall is not a good thing, rather it suggests that 1 in 25 adults in our state are under correctional control. In short these adults are in prison, jail or under the supervision of a parole or probation officer.

Much time can and will be spent analyzing the information found in this comprehensive report. Decisions will undoubtedly be made based on some of the findings. For now we know this:

**57% of offenders sentenced to prison in Ohio are serving less than a year, and the prison system is not able to provide rehabilitative services to this short term population.**

**Ohio's prison population is now 50,742 – our state prison system was designed to hold 38,320, this is 12,422 inmates over rated capacity.**

**Research shows that utilizing community corrections programs such as Halfway Houses and CBCFs can reduce future recidivism significantly.**

In times as difficult as these, Ohio cannot continue down the current correctional path. We are at a point where difficult and thoughtful decisions must be made regarding our current correctional climate. The Ohio Community Correctional Association applauds the decision of Governor Strickland and Director Collins to fund a less costly option with proven results. *1 in 25* is not a prize we want to claim.

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**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE Continued...**

The Ohio Community Corrections Association supports additional funding for community corrections as 98% of offenders in Ohio prisons will return to our communities, often times ill equipped to contribute to the economy and their families.

The following are benefits of investing in community corrections:

- **In state fiscal year 2008 offenders in community corrections programs throughout Ohio:**
  - o **paid \$4,538,927 in court costs and fines**
  - o **\$1,461,330 in restitution**
  - o **\$1,585,413 in child support**
  - o **\$7,970,276 in taxes and**
  - o **earned wages totaling \$79,702,769.**

Those participating in community corrections programs last year completed 617,099 hours in community services projects throughout Ohio.

**House Bill 1—Ohio's State Budget Excerpts from Ohio House Testimony**

Submitted by Denise M. Robinson — President & CEO of Alvis House

The number of individuals in the United States in the criminal justice system is at a staggering level. Just this month, the Pew Center on the States found that "One in 31 U.S. Adults are Behind Bars, on Parole or Probation" – that is 7.3 million individuals who are currently under correctional supervision. The rapid increase of the number of people involved in the criminal justice system is not the natural consequence of spikes in crime - it has been the result of state policy choices that sent more people to prison and kept them there longer.



In Ohio, one out of every 25 adults is under correctional supervision today, compared to one in 116 in 1982. As of March 11, 2009, Ohio's prison population was 50,742 according to Director Collins' testimony before this Committee, in a system designed to house 38,320. The increase in Ohio's correctional population is attributable to an influx of women in the corrections system, parole violations, and increased sanctions for a variety of offenses.

The corrections system must do two things: deliver appropriate sanctions for a crime **and** reduce the likelihood that those under supervision will commit a new crime. Providing effective rehabilitation and reentry programs are absolutely critical components of the system.

Prisons in Ohio are seriously overcrowded and 57% of offenders sentenced to prison are serving less than a year. Residential community corrections programs offer an effective and fiscally responsible option for low-level offenders in Ohio and this approach is supported by the Pew report.

"Violent and career criminals need to be locked up, and for a long time. But our research shows that prisons are housing too many people who can be managed safely and held accountable in the community at far lower cost," said Adam Gelb, director of the Pew Center on the States' Public Safety Performance Project, which produced the report. "New community supervision strategies and technologies need to be strengthened and expanded, not scaled back. Cutting them may appear to save a few dollars, but it doesn't. It will fuel the cycle of more crime, more victims, more arrests, more prosecutions, and still more imprisonment."

*One in 31: The Long Reach of American Corrections* provides states with a blueprint and specific case studies for strengthening their community corrections systems, saving money and reducing crime. Research-based recommendations include:

Sort offenders by risk to public safety to determine appropriate levels of supervision; Base intervention programs on sound research about what works to reduce recidivism; Harness advances in supervision technology such as electronic monitoring and rapid-result alcohol and drug tests; Impose swift and certain sanctions for offenders who break the rules of their release but who do not commit new crimes; and Create incentives for offenders and supervision agencies to succeed, and monitor their performance.

In the past, increased funding was used to provide additional halfway house beds throughout the state. Community Correctional Programs, which include Halfway Houses, Community Based Correctional Facilities, and Community Corrections Act Programs, provide effective treatment and sanctions. OCCA represents two of those programs, halfway houses and CBCFs.

Halfway houses can be used either to divert offenders from entering prison by giving the local judiciary the option of a direct sentence - or - they may be used to transition the offender back into the community after a period of incarceration. These programs offer services such as chemical dependency treatment, job readiness and job placement assistance, housing assistance, cognitive behavioral therapy, and other supportive services that provide individuals with tools to successfully reenter the community. The individuals in our programs work and are required to use their income to help defray the cost of their stay in the program and to fulfill their financial obligations, such as child support, restitution and fines.

Halfway house placements save taxpayers money and help to reserve prison space for the most serious and violent offenders. A typical prison stay costs the state \$22,580 for each individual, low level offender, compared to \$5,360 per stay at a halfway house, for a savings of \$17,220. Halfway Houses are evaluated by ODRC to ensure utilization of evidence-based practices and compliance with performance-based outcomes. During FY08, Halfway Houses provided services to 7,400 clients with 1,699 contracted beds.

Halfway Houses throughout the State of Ohio have available beds that are not funded through ODRC. We currently have the capability of adding approximately 653 beds without a capital expenditure. Both male and female beds are available if additional operational funding were made available. In addition, we can increase the number of transitional control clients and assist in lowering the prison population. The determination of the location of these new beds would be based on their potential contribution to Ohio's corrections continuum and with consideration for local area concerns, such as zoning.

OCCA represents 3 non-profit community based correctional facilities (known as CBCFs) that divert felony offenders in our communities from entering prisons. Chemical dependency treatment, employment assistance, and educational/GED classes are some of the services provided to offenders. We fully support the Governor's plan to fund previously constructed CBCF beds to divert low-level offenders from expensive prison beds.

At a time when Ohio must spend every taxpayer dollar with special care, community corrections programs offer appropriate sanctions at a lower cost. The services provided by community corrections programs have been proven to significantly reduce the chance of the offender returning to the criminal justice system. In addition, individuals in community corrections programs contribute to society in ways that inmates cannot. We feel that it is important that the General Assembly work together to find funding options for community corrections to expand our effective and fiscally efficient services without reductions to the current ODRC line items.

## Using Transitional Control to Increase Public Safety & Personal Responsibility

By: Gloria Nielsen Iannucci— Alvis House



Nearly 98% of all the individuals in prison will return to the community. Ohio's Transitional Control Program, or TC, is a highly structured program that provides individuals with tools such as employment readiness training, job search assistance, substance abuse treatment, and other services that have been proven to help these individuals return to their home communities more successfully. Inmates who have been reviewed and determined eligible may be placed in the Transitional Control program and transferred to a halfway house to complete up to the last 180 days of their prison term.

As members of OCCA have discussed Transitional Control with interested parties, it has become apparent there are some misconceptions about who is eligible and when an individual is eligible for the program.

- First and foremost, sex offenders, individuals serving mandatory sentences, individuals with a history of violent offenses, arsonists, and individuals with multiple convictions are not eligible for the TC program.
- Second, even though a judge may receive the notification stating an individual is eligible for TC within 30 days of sentencing; it does not mean the individual is going on TC immediately or even that the individual will be automatically eligible for the program. This notification is simply a part of the routine notifications made by the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction as part of the intake process.

Individuals who are on TC status are still considered inmates and are supervised by the Adult Parole Authority. Placement in a halfway house creates the opportunity for an offender to be able to work and pay their financial obligations, such as child support, restitution, fines, etc. If they are employed and doing well in the program, TC offenders may be stepped down to electronic monitoring in an appropriate home placement.

There are specific rules established under the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction and inmates are ineligible for the program if the offender:

- is serving a mandatory prison term
- is "subject to a detainer for any sentence of imprisonment imposed but not fully served for any PRC, parole or probation violation or subject to a wanted detainer or a notify detainer for any untried felony charge or for any US Immigration violation..."
- is serving a life sentence
- has more than 1 adult prison commitment, including the current commitment, for an offense of violence
- has more than 5 adult commitments, including the present commitment
- has a current or prior commitment for an ORC Chapter 2907 offense (sex offenses)
- The offender has a current violation of aggravated vehicular homicide (ORC 2903.06), vehicular homicide (2903.07) or aggravated vehicular assault (2903.08), escape or attempted escape (2921.34).
- has a current or prior adjudicated delinquent commitment / violation for arson or aggravated arson (ORC 2909.02-.03).
- is an ODRC security risk level of 3,4 or 5.
- is subject to a detainer for a felony offense, a notify-detainer from US Immigration or imprisoned for a violation of parole – first continuance – or post release control
- is currently confined in Local Control or Administrative Control.
- has less than 90 days from the date of transfer to TC to release or release eligibility.
- is not at least 80% medication compliant
- is unable to work full time or attend school full time or some combination of both.

At a time when nearly 50% of inmates in Ohio are released without any kind of post-supervision oversight/support, Transitional Control provides offenders with resources for employment, education, vocational training and treatment. These tools promote personal responsibility and help individuals transition to their home community more successfully: Research at the University of Cincinnati has proven that Transitional Control offenders were the most successful inmates once released. They are nearly twice as likely to stay crime-free when compared to the 38% recidivism rate of all inmates being released in Ohio.

The public expects the corrections system to do two things: deliver appropriate sanctions for a crime and reduce the likelihood that those under supervision will commit a new crime. Providing effective rehabilitation and reentry programs through structured community supervision programs such as Transitional Control are essential components to ensuring public safety.



### Alvis House Facilities in Chillicothe, Columbus & Dayton

## **Governor Strickland and ODRC Director Terry Collins Present a Sound Investment Plan**

By Phillip Nunes, OCCA President Elect

On Monday, February 2, 2009, Governor Strickland's budget submission may have paved the way for an additional \$20 million dollars in Fiscal Years 2010 and 2011 to be spent on community corrections. These dollars are targeted at funding diversionary programs aimed at keeping non-violent offenders from occupying expensive prison beds and, perhaps more importantly, treating these offenders for the contributing factors impacting their criminality. Research shows that dollars spent on community corrections could reduce recidivism and slow the revolving door syndrome that courts see today; at the same time enhancing public safety. These diversion programs will include opening existing but unfunded beds within community based correctional facilities and allow for an expansion of other residential and non-residential options for the purpose of prison and jail diversion throughout Ohio.



Beyond the investment in community corrections, Governor Strickland has also called for sentencing reform that will be needed to make these new investments work and curb the unsustainable growth to the prison population here in Ohio. In 2007, the Pew Charitable Trust released a report on our nation's prison system. Ohio's prisons are projected to grow from 50,073 (as of January 2009) offenders to 64,970 by the year 2016.

The Ohio Community Corrections Association respectfully requests that all members of the Ohio House of Representatives and Ohio Senate support the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) budget prepared by Governor Strickland. The Ohio Community Corrections Association applauds Governor Strickland and ODRC Director Terry Collins for their vision and leadership in realizing that an investment in community corrections is a viable option for many of Ohio's non-violent offenders. Additionally, taking action to initiate a comprehensive, thorough and thoughtful review of current sentencing practices and to "get smart on crime" is precisely the direction Ohio lawmakers should go.

## The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction's

### 2008 Clifford Skeen Awards

By *Alicia Handwerk, Chief of the Bureau of Community Sanctions*

*Ohio Department of Rehabilitation & Correction*

The Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction held the 16<sup>th</sup> annual Clifford Skeen Awards Ceremony on October 9, 2008 during the annual Ohio Justice Alliance for Community Corrections (OJACC) conference held at the Crowne Plaza in Columbus.

This award is given in honor of the late, eight-term Ohio Representative, Clifford Skeen, who sponsored the Community Correction Act passed by the Ohio Legislature in 1979. The purpose of this act was to reduce the number of non-dangerous offenders being sent to state prisons. Representative Skeen was instrumental in obtaining increased funding for many community corrections initiatives. The Clifford Skeen Award was initiated in 1993 to demonstrate commitment to community corrections as a viable alternative to incarceration.

Director Terry J. Collins spoke at the event and acknowledged the efforts that Ohio's Community Corrections programs have made in implementing evidenced based practices, which have resulted in Ohio being recognized as a national leader in community corrections. He also referenced the difficult fiscal times all corrections agencies are facing and stressed the importance of all agencies continuing to strive for excellence.



Talbert House — Community Correctional Center of Butler, Clermont, & Warren Counties



Halfway House: Oriana House

The selection committee was comprised of Warden Kay Northrup of the Franklin Pre-release Center; Kathy Lindsey, Director of the Shelby County Victim Services Program; and Doug Spencer, County Commissioner of Auglaize County who recommended the award recipients after conducting individualized interviews of the top scoring programs in each category. The panel selected the following programs as the 2008 Clifford Skeen Award recipients:

- Community-Based Correctional Facilities: Talber House — Community Correctional Center of Butler, Clermont and Warren Counties
- Halfway House: Oriana House
- Prison Diversion Program: Hancock County Adult Probation Department
- Jail Diversion Program: Tuscarawas County Community Corrections Program

As the state and national budget become tighter, local corrections programs become more and more important to the criminal justice continuum by providing alternatives to incarceration in prison and jail that still ensure the public safety. The Clifford Skeen Awards are the Department's opportunity to honor some of those programs that embody our mission to collaborate with community corrections programs that are highly effective and reduce recidivism.

If you would like additional information about the Clifford Skeen Awards or community correction programs, please contact Alicia Handwerk, Chief of the Bureau of Community Sanctions, Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction at 614-752-0605 or [Alicia.Handwerk@odrc.state.oh.us](mailto:Alicia.Handwerk@odrc.state.oh.us)



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