

2007-08 Leadership Academy Fellows Project Legacy

Two years ago, the Leadership Academy Fellows held a symposium entitled “Beyond the Bars: A Symposium on Reentry in Maryland.” The Symposium attendees consisted of those who create, oversee, manage and participate in state and local public and private offender reentry programs. The Leadership Academy Fellows, in conjunction with the Center for Substance Abuse Research (“CESAR”) at the University of Maryland, provided marketing and support for the fledgling internet database which lists resources and programs available to newly-released offenders for use by the government agencies, parole and probation, and other public and private service providers. The purpose of the Symposium was to bring together public and private entities to raise awareness of what programs existed, were in the works and to forge relationships and partnerships.

More than 120 people attended the all-day program. The morning consisted of the keynote speaker, Dan Rodricks, a panel discussion by government representatives regarding programs and services available and the introduction to the Maryland Community Services Locator (MDSCL) website. The afternoon consisted of six break-out sessions covering different topics such as new trends in reentry programs, addressing the issues of reentry for women and how the legal community can help with reentry. Twenty-five speakers and moderators participated in the all-day program. A copy of the agenda is attached.

The evaluations turned in at the close of the program by attendees demonstrated that the Symposium was a tremendous success. For more detailed information on the program and the evaluations, a copy of the Fellows final report is attached.

Tracy L. Steedman of last year’s fellows sent out a follow-up survey after the event to discern if the purpose of the Symposium had been achieved. The question asked was: “I am writing to follow up on how, if at all, the event may have impacted you, your company, your service to the community and your relationships with other service providers, governmental and private agencies.”

In addition to the comments below, at the request of three judges who attended the Symposium, Judge Bell has recently given permission to form an ad hoc judicial conference committee on reentry, alternatives to incarceration, and sentencing best practices. The Committee will be chaired by the Honorable Phillip Caroom of Anne Arundel County.

The Fellows believe that the purpose of the Symposium was indeed achieved.

Attendee Comments.

From: Jessica Statesman, Program Director, Marian House

With regard to last year's symposium our staff members from our agency, Marian House, were able to have a display at the event which provided opportunities for networking and for communicating our program services. Additionally, the panel discussion was interesting, specifically as it related to the barriers that ex-offenders face upon re-entering society. Overall, the symposium was informative and it continued to raise the pressing questions about how we can better assist ex-offenders to successfully re-enter society.

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From: Katina M. Chew, Division of Parole and Probation, 251 Rowe Blvd, Annapolis, MD 21401

First let me thank you and the Academy for allowing me to attend the symposium. I thoroughly enjoyed the experience, and was amazed at how much people did not know about the reentry/rehabilitation programs for inmates coming out of prison. The guest speakers were excellent choices, and the entire set-up was appropriate.

In my professional life, I have utilized a few of the contacts I made last year and ideas I learned to help me guide my probationers to successful completion, in hopes to reduce the recidivism rate. . . . Actually, I have spoken with Mr. Rodericks on a few occasions, and we have set up appointments for a few of the previously incarcerated on job interviews to establish steady employment. In addition, I have introduced those in my office to the MDSCCL website for resources throughout the community; it has proven to be a helpful tool, and I've contacted treatment providers in the Annapolis/Anne Arundel county area to update/add their information for public use.

Personally, I attend UMUC and I used a lot of information concerning rehab and reentry for an assignment I had—got an A!!

Overall, the symposium proved to be a great necessity for those of us in the law enforcement field— corrections, parole and probation, legal, and more-to help those in need of help. I enjoyed it, and once again appreciate the opportunity to attend.

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From: Grace Fendlay, Manager of Special Programs, Baltimore County Workforce Development System

First let me say thank you for having been given the opportunity to attend the event. The Leadership Academy did a great job and the presenters were wonderful. I found Dan Rodericks' comments to be least helpful. It became clear that he had been "out of the game" for too long to be relevant. Too bad. I like his column and he had done a lot of good bringing the issues to the public. On the flip side, any opportunity to hear/see/work with or in anyway to interact with Felix Mata on the subject is so worthwhile. I was lucky enough to be at a conference with him last week. I miss him and his great work. If he had to leave Baltimore, thank goodness it was to move things forward on the federal level.

I think I was most impacted by the breakout session on How the Legal Community Can Help with Re-entry. It was enlightening in that our program had previously little exposure to the legal community. Though I come from a family of lawyers and harbor no bias against the legal profession (but do know some good jokes....), it had not occurred to me that the legal community wanted to be a resource in re-entry efforts. Since that time, we have made much better use of legal resources in the community.

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From: Officer Ryan Taylor #2506, Reentry Coordinator/Classification Officer, Corrections Division, Charles County Sheriff's Office

I very much enjoyed the Beyond the Bars Symposium that I attended last May. The reason I attended the symposium was to gain ideas for a reentry program that we were creating for the Charles County Detention Center. Reentry programs in jails are not very common. We began our faith-based reentry program called S.T.A.R.S. (Successful Transitioning And Reentry Skills) in November 2008 and so far...it has been a success. We have provided released inmates information on how to use the Maryland Community Services Locator, we have created a Charles County Reentry Guide, and we have established relationships with many community agencies including the Maryland Workforce Exchange (who were in attendance at the symposium).

The symposium was great - everything from the guest speaker, to learning about the Maryland Community Services Locator and apprenticeships, to the breakdowns and learning about what others are doing in their respective programs, was enjoyable and knowledgeable. It was very easy to see how much thoughtfulness and hard work went into making this symposium a success. Everything was orderly, professional and well thought out. I actually wanted to be a presenter if there was going to be a 2009 symposium because most of the focus was on prisons and probation and not county jails. A job well done!

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From: Anita Rozas, LCSW-C, Social Work Supervisor, North Branch Correctional Inst., Cumberland, MD 21502

Although our correctional facility is located in far western MD, most of our inmates are from the Baltimore area. Because we are so far away, it makes release planning more difficult and it is especially hard to keep up with available resources in that area. Your seminar was very helpful in giving us vital information as well as the opportunity to network with service providers there.

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From: Thomas Chleboski

Thank you for your follow-up to the "Beyond the Bars" symposium. It helped me to see that there are many parties in the state's criminal law system that are interested in reform of the system and the rehabilitation of offenders. I am particularly glad to see that non-violent and drug offenders are being helped.

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