

Covenant Prison Ministries (CPM)
DBA Safer Communities Ministry (SCM)
Annual Report and Future Vision
6/30/08

For over 23 years Covenant Prison Ministries (CPM), a non-profit organization, has developed areas of ministry to fulfill its MISSION to exhort, equip, and mobilize its partners to be more effective in changing the lives of prisoners, ex-offenders, and their families. CPM partners with churches, faith-based organizations, community and government service providers, businesses, and civic groups to break the RECIDIVISM cycle.

Eagles Fellowships. Eagles Fellowships are weekly discipleship fellowships where volunteers meet with inmates in small group discussions building relationships & giving guidance. There are 6 Eagles Fellowships in 3 prisons /jails & in 1 youth facility in Union, Mecklenburg, and Cabarrus counties.

Crusade Teams. CPM conducts weekend services evangelistic several times a year at 7 South Carolina prisons.

Serve as Jail Chaplains. CPM staff and volunteers serve as Chaplains in the Union County Jail.

CPM comprehensively creates total care initiatives for transitioning inmates and ex-offenders on four levels. CPM has developed and implemented interacting strategies, tools, and programs for all the following levels.

1. Countywide
2. Individual partner sites
3. Individual cases
4. An individual's character and motivational issues: especially with options for faith-based groups

1. County Wide Level

In April of 2006, CPM initiated the Second Chance Re-Entry Network. SCREEN is a network of organizations and individuals in Union County who wish to help ex-offenders successfully transition back into the community. There are monthly meetings and collaborative methods to work with ex-offender clients.

Currently there are approximately 24 such organizations plus several housing property owners and managers, and some individuals willing to work together. The organizations are:

Adept, DA Office in Union County, Chemical Dependency / Court Services, Christian Woman's Job Corp, Covenant Prison Ministries, City of Monroe HR dept., House of Pearls, Daymark Recovery Services, Federal Probation & Parole, Monroe Police Violent Crime Task Force, NC DOC community Development Office, NC DOC Office of Transition, NC DOC Probation & Parole in Union County, NC DOC Union Correctional Center Prison, NC Employment Security / Job Link, Oakland Mentoring, Operation Reach Out, South Piedmont Community College, Restoration House, Union County (UC) Sherriff and UC Jail, UC Community Shelter, UC HR, United Way office in UC, Vocational Rehab.

SCREEN also networks with similar organizations in adjoining counties. CPM was awarded a Governor's Crime Commission grant and hired a SCREEN Coordinator who focuses on job readiness and placement, housing needs, and assists CPM staff with mentor recruitment, training, and oversight. The SCREEN Coordinator also works directly with employers and housing owners / managers. Since July 1, 2007 105 potential second chance employers have been

identified and 58 businesses have been confirmed as Second Chance Employers. The SCREEN Coordinator has had contact with 61 of these businesses.

Additionally CPM has developed a Volunteer Certification Process which SCREEN partners can use. There are training conferences and on-going, audio and written training materials. These include: a Saturday initial training conference, "Do's and Don'ts," goal setting, character / spiritual growth, substance abuse, and other issues. Since July 1, 2007 there have been recruiting efforts in person to 40 churches or community organizations along with county wide mailings and PR notices in the media. 43 volunteers have attended 5 training conferences for a Volunteer Certification Process. 12 are actively working on their certification and 10 are certified.

2. Individual Partner Sites

A SCREEN site is any partner organization's specific program to help ex-offenders. CPM is dedicated to helping build each partner's capacity to be more effective. CPM offers its strategies, tools, training, agreed on personnel assistance roles, and custom systems for tracking progress. Specifically, there are: custom program design and implementation assistance; intake, case file systems; mentor recruiting, training, client match-up and oversight; back office administrative support; client progress computer tracking systems; and evaluation.

Site #1 is CPM's own direct cases with CPM staff and volunteers. This site includes CPM's Union County Jail Life Skills program (see description below) and CPM's *Total Care and Support* program that follows clients as they prepare for transition and are released. Currently, for clients in the community, Tommy Belk, the Ex-offender Program Director is contacting or working with 36 clients, Lee Little, the SCREEN Coordinator, is contacting or working with 23 clients, and Terry Merritt, CPM's Life Skills Teacher / Coordinator, and Al Lewis, CPM's Executive Director, are contacting and working with several.

Site #2 is Restoration House (RH) which is mostly for ex-offenders with a SCREEN mentoring and reporting system in place. Currently there are 13 clients. We worked with 18 former RH clients.

Site #3 is Union County Correctional prison with a re-entry program for its inmates, especially within one year of release. Currently there are 14 inmates involved and more are scheduled. We are working with 1 ex-offender from this site and several more are due to come out soon.

3. Individual Cases

CPM's comprehensive Total Care and Support (TC&S) program focuses on key outcomes for ex-offenders' lives such as jobs and job readiness, housing and transportation, and mentoring if possible. Education, certification for employers, and substance abuse are addressed. Then, TC&S systematically includes additional life areas and issues. Additional areas include: medical, legal, agency situations, finances, credit, taxes, spiritual growth, church, positive peers and people to turn to, family relations, and healthy recreation, exercise, diet, etc. At the initial interview, the program is explained, a written commitment obtained, and a case file is set up.

We developed a Four Point Plan.

1. Get the **P**icture – an assessment of life areas to be addressed
2. Make a **P**lan – Set goals for the next 90 days
3. Get any needed **P**eople and resources
4. Support **P**rogress – meet at least monthly to evaluate and adjust goals

CPM's Life Skills Program inside the Union County Jail – Annual Highlights

CPM's Life Skills (LS) program is a 7 week, 5 day a week program conducted in a 14 man separate cell block. Each week a different teaching module is covered such as: identity, substance abuse, anger management, goal setting, budgeting, jobs, family relations, etc. The Program is now back in E block with only Life Skills students. It moved back into E block in January which is much more conducive to teaching. Graduates may be held over from the previous class to act as mentors to the new class. More inmates come into the Life Skills program for shorter periods of time due to being released from the jail, sentenced to DOC, or they decide they do not want to continue to participate in the Life Skills Program. The numbers of participants should increase again due to having Life Skills in the (E) Education Block

Life Skills teaches the men to deal with negative character issues. Anger management is a crucial part of the Life Skills teaching. After being in the Life Skills class for 3 weeks Total Care and Support (TC&S) is offered to each Life Skills participant. This program follows the participants out into the community.

Year End highlights inside the UCJ include:

- 68 inmates were active students in the Life Skills program; 50 were newly enrolled
- 33 inmates graduated from the full seven-week program
- 28 inmates are still in custody at UCJ
- 20 were sent to the DOC
- 20 were released into the community, 7 of those are working

Total Care & Support (TC&S) Program – Annual Highlights

- At the end of the year, June 30, 2008, 137 were enrolled in TC&S which includes SCREEN clients (80 ex-offenders; 57 inmates).
- 96 of the 137 were enrolled in the SCREEN project during July 1, 2007-June 30, 2008 (56 SCREEN ex-offenders; 40 SCREEN inmates)
- 79 of the 137 enrolled were involved in the Union County Jail Life Skills program (53 Life Skills Graduates; 26 participants)
- 48 ex-offenders had gotten jobs out of the TC&S program; 33 ex-offenders in SCREEN had gotten jobs
- Since July 1, 2005 until June 30, 2008 the TC&S program worked with 90 ex-offenders. Out of the 90, 11 went back to jail or prison because of a new conviction of crime resulting in a 12% recidivism rate (11 divided by 90 = 12%). We employ the NC State recidivism rate based on re-incarceration resulting from committing a new crime. That rate is 36% within a three year period. $90 \times .36\% = 32 - 11 = 21$ who did not return to jail. The cost of re-incarceration for 21 inmates is \$441,000 (\$21,000 / year times 21). Our contract with Union County was \$60,000 per year x 3 years or \$180,000 for the 3 year tracking period. Therefore \$261,000 was saved for Union County taxpayers.
- Since July 1, 2007 until June 30, 2008 the SCREEN program worked with 62 ex-offenders, which are included in the 90 total. Out of the 62, 7 went back to jail or prison because of a new conviction of crime resulting in an 11% recidivism rate (7 divided by 62 = 11%).

4. An Individual's Character and Motivational Issues: especially with options for faith-based groups to use

If an ex-offender's hope level and motivation is not high, then even if the community supplies help opportunities such as jobs, housing, etc., the client can sabotage the communities' effort. 80% of inmates have an addiction problem. CPM has developed teachings field tested from its Life Skills program in the Union County Jail that can also be used by staff and volunteer mentors

in the community. Some of these have been recorded on CD's with associated written materials for mentors and ex-offenders to use. Teaching events are done in the community on a regular basis. Negative character issues such as anger and bitterness, fear and anxiety, rebellion, rejection, addictions, etc. must be recognized and removed, like what Steps 4-9 talk about in 12 Step programs. There are relationships that need to be reconciled. Positive attitudes and relationship skills must be developed to break the recidivism cycle.

Where We Are Going

CPM will continue to grow more effective with more clients centered in Union and Mecklenburg Counties, NC. Our vision is to build safer communities by transforming the lives of prisoners and ex-offenders. Our communities will be much safer when losers become winners, takers become givers, and tax liabilities become tax payers and law abiding citizens. Men and women, boys and girls can change but the results are usually temporary. However, when God transforms a life the change more often becomes permanent. In the first six months of 2008 CPM has been working to make all of its programs transferable through the SCREEN project. For CPM, SCREEN not only includes county level SCREEN work, but all the options from UCJ Life Skills and Total Care and Support programs applied to partner sites, individual cases, and the transformation of the character and motivation of clients.

Recently CPM began a new partnership with Aimee Sickels with Custom Evaluation Services. She is helping CPM improve its current operations. This collaboration will produce a SCREEN model which can be duplicated in other counties through a copyrighted package.

The strategy for working in new county consists of:

- PR efforts to communicate the SCREEN model opportunity
- A Community Assessment for that whole county (with a packet of tools and resources)
- Locate lead organizations with people committed to create a custom, county wide SCREEN model to improve services for ex-offenders. That county's local organizations are to drive the reforms from inside that county, and not from the outside using a preset program.
- Design specific new or improved programs that are beginning pieces of the whole change for that county.
- Process Implementation of each phase of change with assistance from CPM / SCREEN. Each phase is to have its own designed programs to implement or to be upgraded.
- Evaluation implemented by a professional evaluator that is built in from the beginning and done all along the way