



NC Citizens United for Restorative Effectiveness
 NC-CURE
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On The Wire

July 2022 Volume 8, Issue 3

TAN program reestablished

Transitional Aftercare Network (TAN) program is a statewide organization of volunteer mentors and faith-based agencies, covering all 100 counties in North Carolina. This program assists formerly incarcerated individuals as they transition back into society. The trained mentors provides guidance and life coaching skills. Currently, there are 36 mentors trained and approved to mentor former offenders. TAN’s vision is to equip these individuals with the necessary skills and resources to make the post-incarceration transition easier.

About 6-12 months before an offender is released to their community, the mentorship process begins. In order to be eligible, they must be infraction free at least 90 days before applying for the program. If an inmate wishes to connect with TAN, they should contact their prison’s chaplain. Offenders who have been convicted of a sex offense or are classified as a gang member cannot apply.

Although there is not a mentor in every county, TAN does its best to match each released offender with a mentor in their county of release. Once a mentor is matched with a mentee, they contact the case manager and chaplain to do an initial assessment with the offender. Afterwards, the mentor creates a schedule to meet with the mentee once a week. The relationship continues for at least six months after release.

Chaplain Jerry Love is the TAN coordinator and has spent the past year reestablishing community relationships in the midst of the pandemic. His goal is to network with more reentry organizations across North Carolina.

Drama on solitary confinement in Winston-Salem

NC-CURE seeks to raise public awareness about issues of concern in the NC prison system, one of which is excessive use of restrictive housing/solitary confinement. We are proud to be a co-sponsor of *The Box*, an immersive, transformative play that underscores both the horror of solitary confinement and the humanity of people subjected to it. Inspired by Sarah Shourd’s experience in solitary confinement as a political prisoner, the performance offers “a rare glimpse into the deep end of our prison system.” This play is a one-of-a-kind experience to examine the intersection of art and incarceration.

Formerly incarcerated people and survivors of solitary confinement will be performing at the Ramkat in Winston-Salem from August 25-27. The price of tickets is \$20-\$50, and doors open at 6:30 pm. Tell your families and friends that tickets are now on sale, so make a purchase before they are all sold out. Go to <https://www.theramkat.com/events> and scroll down until you find The End of Isolation Tour.

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Special points of interest

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We want to be your VOICE

Send us your stories—the good, the bad and the ugly. We advocate against the wrongs, and share good news too. We read every letter and respond to as many of you as we can.

NC-CURE Executive Director's Report

NC-CURE was at the table when Senate Bill 889, Support Sick and Aging State Prisoners, was drafted by Senators Murdock and Waddell. The bill has provisions to both broaden and streamline the policies on early medical release of inmates. It also requests funds for a chronic care unit and staff training, and the re-enactment of ELC similar to the way it was used in the pandemic. **This bill remained in Committee in the recent legislative short-session**, meaning that it never reached the floor for a vote. We will be working with the Senators this fall to move it forward, along with HB625 and HB697, in 2023.

I'm sure you've heard about the \$30 million budget appropriation for air conditioning in the prisons. HVAC work in buildings that are 50+ years old is a challenge especially in the current environment of supply chain/workforce issues. According to John Bull, NCDPS Communications Officer, 62% of the bedspace in the prison system is fully air-conditioned. It will be a high-priority, multi-year initiative to provide air-conditioning for 40

prisons. Design plans have begun for the first five: NCCIW, Caswell, Harnett, Albemarle, and Dan River.

Thanks for all the letters!! We cannot emphasize enough that we need to hear from you to be your voice. We received over 175 letters in May and are answering as many of them as we can. When you write, please make it clear if you want us to contact prison officials on your specific concern. To my dismay, we cannot protect you from retaliation as it can come in many ways. We are finding it difficult these days to advocate for you on an individual basis. We can—and do-- use the stories from your combined letters, however, to help us advocate. If we get the media involved with an issue, we will get your permission to have them contact you. When it comes to legal issues, all we can do is refer you to other organizations that we hope can help. Please know that we may share our mailing list with people we trust who want to send you encouragement.

(continued on page 3)

"If we're doing it right, kids see us do right, and they'll do right" **Corey Parker**

Owner of a second-chance trucking company and a family man

Jimbo Perry, an attorney and member of our Board, introduced me to Corey Parker. Since he's been released from prison, Corey won custody rights of his 3-year-old child who is autistic. Now he is trying to get visitation rights with his 12-year-old son. He doesn't want his son to be "a statistic". He wants him to have a father and help break the cycle of crime in his home and community. He and a group of felons in his community do public service projects like getting bookbags and Christmas toys for kids and doing hygiene drives for the homeless. "If we're doing right, kids see us do right and they'll do right."

Corey began his criminal life as a drug addict at age 13. At age 17 he got involved with some guns and robberies and ended up in jail for 2 years, prison for 5 years, and probation for 3 months. He doesn't regret prison because otherwise he would be dead or in worse trouble. Unfortunately, he suffered heroine withdrawal several times, alone in the jail but in detox in prison. In prison, he completed his GED, took an electrician course, got involved in a Bible program. When he was there, he got to the place that he was determined not to get back on drugs because of his son, and never to go back to prison.

"Being a felon is not a barrier when you get out," he states. He settled far away from his hometown, in Kenansville. He knew he needed a change in his environment. He found new friends, got married and had a place to live. He found work pretty easily with a temp agency, in construction, electrical work, and retail. Then he got his CDL (The Unemployment Office pays for you to get your CDL.) and worked for a second-chance company, Western Express making \$800/week. He was a good employee—no accidents. He was hired on for more money at Howell's Motor Freight. There he made \$1500/week but was away from home 3-4 months at a time. Mr. Howell helped him start his own trucking company, Triple S Transport. He bought his first truck and hired a team driver. Today he has 4 trucks and 3 employees. He only hires felons. Last year he brought in \$292K, but he is still paying off \$53K in restitution for his crimes.

Corey offers some solid advice for people making the way in the world after prison. Change your environment. Realize you must WORK HARD! Persevere! DON'T GIVE UP! Hang on to the mindset that you will NOT GO BACK to prison. Find relationships and work that will help keep you out of trouble. Do what you can to break the cycle of drugs and crime in your community.

Now at age 30, Corey Parker is a family man, a second-chance company owner, and a public servant. He continues to work hard to take care of his employees and his family.

Second Chance Pell Experiment

The Second Chance Pell Experiment was first established in 2015 by the Obama-Biden Administration to provide Pell Grants to incarcerated individuals, which allows them to participate in postsecondary education programs. The program has since been expanded under the Biden-Harris administration. To date, students have earned over 7,000 credentials through the initiative, building new skills and improving their odds of success.

DOP Rehabilitative Services agrees our criminal justice system should provide inmates both accountability and the possibility for redemption through second chances for individuals with criminal records. It provides people with dignity and allows them to achieve their potential as contributing members of our community. Second chances can help an individual achieve closure from the past and from time served, providing them with the ability and support necessary to avoid future criminal behavior.

The colleges that have been selected to participate in this next cohort are working with NCDPS Education Services on designing and implementing credit-bearing curriculum classes for offenders who have met admission requirements.

For additional information on how the Second Chance Pell will be used for prison education programming, contact individuals at the selected three colleges (see panel).

Director's report *(continued from page 1)*

Thanks to the many of you who send us money orders, checks, and stamps as annual dues and donations. We don't have resources to thank each one of you individually, but please know that we greatly appreciate your sacrifice and your support.

By Sandra Hardee, Executive Director

Kudos to prison staff

One inmate notes, Thanks to the very good nurses at Pender, Ms. Herring and Ms. Masters. They care about helping us.

A woman from NCCIW is thankful for Officer Bobbit and Officer Revel who have positive attitudes, and "tell us to be patient and good so we can keep our honor grade status". They also bring cleaning supplies (Clorox wipes, disinfectant, Lysol) each time they work to allow us to use for our protection.

The state prison system honored Prisons staff for exemplary work on May 6, 2022. The two most prestigious awards, Warden of the Year and Correctional Officer of the Year, were presented to Warden Doris Daye of Caswell Correctional Institution and to Officer Michael Wyche of Warren Correctional Institution. Four regional Wardens of the Year were named: Mike Slagle of Mountain View; Kenneth Diggs of Albemarle; Morris Reid of Neuse; Doris Day of Caswell. The statewide Difference Maker of the Year award went to Alicia Norris, a security specialist at the Prisons administration headquarters in Raleigh. Regional Difference Makers of the Year are Wendy Helmig, Craggy; Valerie Trexler, Hoke; Jackie Rowe, Granville; Rachel Price, Craven.

Each prison named its Correctional Officer of the Year and awarded outstanding employee awards in other fields, limited space precludes our listing them in OTW.

Pell Programs in NC

Current:

Asheville-Buncombe Technical Community College

340 Victoria Road
Asheville, NC 28801
828-398-7900
info@abtech.edu
<https://abtech.edu/>

In process:

Robeson Community College:

Dr. Patrena Benton Elliott, PhD
Vice President for Instruction and Student Support Services
Robeson Community College
PO Box 1420
Lumberton, NC 28359
(910) 272-3300
pellriott@robeson.edu

Campbell University

Dr. Beth Rubin, PhD
Dean of Adult and On-Line Education
Campbell University
PO Box 265
Buies Creek, NC 27506
(910) 893-4377 brubin@campbell.edu

Shaw University

Vanessa Raynor, SLP.D., CCC-SLP
Dean-Academic Support
Shaw University
118 E. South Street | Raleigh, NC 27601
(919) 719-2284
vraynor@shawu.edu

If you don't leave your past in the past, it will destroy your future. Live for what today has to offer, not for what yesterday has taken away.

Anonymous

Reentry Resources

Freedom Fighting Missionaries

222 Church St
Charlotte, NC
Www.freedomfightingmissionaries.org
704-390-5614
freedomfightingmissionary@gmail.com

Locked Up To Living Life, Inc.

PO Box 1831
Durham, NC 27701
Www.lockeduptolivinglife.org
984-569-0569
Email: lockeduptolivinglife@gmail.com

New Life Connection

PO Box 24982
Raleigh, NC 2761104982
Www.newlifeconnection.org
919-578-3849
Email: info@newlifeconnection.org

On my knees

Dear Lord,

I'm down here on bended knees
asking you to save me please.

I know I don't deserve your kind of
love but it's a promise from above.

So I want to thank you for all you do
while I'm sitting here talking to you.

I want to ask for you to bless the
people of this world because your
love will make their heads swirl.

You are always there when I need a
friend. You are always there till the
end.

So while I'm down here on my knees,
I want to say Thank You Jesus for al-
ways being there for me.

Amen

By Ernest Butcher, Randolph CI

A transformed man

The only hope I had left when I came to prison was my precious mother, Hope. After getting on my knees in Unit 2 at Central Prison and asking God into my life, and for him to change the man I've been for so many years, little did I know how much that simple prayer would mean, or produce in my life. Once I transferred to Albemarle, God put Mr. Ron and Ms. Sandra in my life through reading OTW, and reaching out to NC-CURE.

Over this past 15-16 months, NC-CURE has truly been a light in my darkened days, and a major stepping stone in my life, helping guide me to Jesus Christ my Lord and Savior, as we have built a true friendship. Through our letters they've shown me how to forgive, and not to seek revenge against people who have wronged me or lied on me. My eyes have been opened to what part I've played in my ungodly life, 30 years of drug addition, 16 years of incarceration, and the fact that God has forgiven me. I need to forgive myself and seek a new way of life through Christ.

Mr. Ron and Ms. Sandra showed me, not only do they love me without ever physically meeting me in person, but also that God loves me as well! When Mr. Ron told me he was praying for me as in Colossians 1:9-14, it gave me a desire for Christ I never knew.

I've been part of a Bible Study we started in the pod at Maury Correctional, which we have for one hour four times a week. Today I know Christ lives in me, and I resist Satan in my thoughts, words, and actions. Mr. Ron and Ms. Sandra at NC-CURE, and Kristi Overton Johnson at KOJ Ministries/Victorious Living Magazine continue to give me hope I never knew! Romans 15:13!

By Andrew M. Toler, Pender Correctional Institution

Visit a Prison Project

NC-CURE partners with FAMM as it challenges policymakers nationwide

On July 11, 2022, FAMM launched the #VisitAPrison campaign to encourage local, state, and national policymakers to visit a prison or jail in their states or districts in the next year.

"Laws are written for prisons and jails across the country and voted on by people who've never set foot inside them," FAMM President Ring said. "This is such a simple step for policymakers to take, and anyone who visits will learn something by talking to the people who live and work in these facilities. Our message is simple: **"You don't know if you don't go."**

Our nation's prisons and jails are in crisis. Staff shortages, poor healthcare, crumbling infrastructure, and other chronic problems have resulted in prisons that are unsafe to live and work in for prisoners and correctional officers alike.

To assist in the effort, FAMM has mobilized families, advocates, allies, and public figures to share their stories via video using the #VisitAPrison hashtag and to challenge policymakers to educate themselves about the conditions of confinement in federal and state prisons and jails.

For more information, including a tracker of lawmakers who have visited a prison, visit [FAMM.org/visitaprison](https://www.famm.org/visitaprison).

NC-CURE will be reaching out to NC lawmakers to encourage them to visit NC state prisons.

For more than three decades, FAMM has united the voices of affected families, the formerly incarcerated, and a range of stakeholders and advocates to fight for a more fair and effective justice system.

They have led the fight to reform extreme mandatory sentencing laws and to promote rehabilitation and dignity for all people in prison, 94 percent of whom will return to our neighborhoods one day.

An idea from a Lumberton inmate

I have taken the initiative to seek out inmates with skills that will help better myself while I am incarcerated. For example, I can now speak Spanish because inmates have taken time to teach me. I also sought out inmates to teach me how to draw.

Many of us want to be better equipped to enter society. A Spanish-speaking American would be very valuable to the work force. A person able to draw would be valuable in a job that requires drafting, and a person with creative writing skills would be valuable to anyone.

Nash Correctional has programs where inmates teach other inmates. Why wouldn't that work for other camps that

have inmates willing to share their skills? As an inmate speaking to other inmates, I urge you to petition your facility, write Raleigh, and get your family to contact the Commissioner and the Governor about getting these types of classes introduced to the prison system.

You would not believe the difference it has made in my life. I can only image what difference it will make when I return to the outside.

I hope this article sparked an interest in you. If nothing else, seek out inmates that will take the time to teach you the skills they have.

By Christopher C. Harris, Lumberton CI

NC-CURE and Social Media

Watch for important articles on our social media sites, Facebook, Twitter, and Linked In. Our readership numbers are exploding. Many posts link to our new website, www.nccure.org. Tell everyone to check it out!



Attitude is a little thing that makes a BIG difference

Winston Churchill

Filing a Section 1983 federal civil rights lawsuit

In the last *OTW*, I shared information about which cases you can file in federal court under Section 1983. As a reminder this law is to ensure that rights existing under federal law and the United States Constitution are followed and respected by state and local government officials. In this article, I will share more about filing a federal lawsuit.

One of the first requirements before filing your federal lawsuit is that you have exhausted the administrative remedies. This means that you have filed and appealed a grievance through the third step. Additionally, in North Carolina, these actions need to be filed within three-years of the incident or injury.

You can file this action in 1) the judicial district where any defendants lives, if all defendants live in the same state, 2) a judicial district where a substantial part of the events occurred, or 3) a judicial district where any defendant can be found. The courts can also transfer a case to another district if they think it is proper to do so. In most cases, you should file your complaint in the judicial district where the incident occurred. We can provide a list of counties so you can determine if you should file in the Western, Middle, or Eastern District of North Carolina.

Court policy may require that you submit more than one copy of the complaint. The Eastern District requires that you submit the original complaint, one copy for the court, and one copy for

each defendant named in the lawsuit. Therefore, if you name two defendants in an Eastern District complaint, you are required to file the original and three additional copies of the complaint. The materials that the Western District sends to prisoners state that an original and one copy must be filed with the court to commence an action. The Middle District does not currently require that you submit more than one copy of your complaint.

If you have had three or more previous lawsuits dismissed as frivolous, malicious, or lacking a basis in law or fact, you will have to pay the full \$400 filing fee up front. This is called the "three strikes rule". The one exception to this rule is if a prisoner is under imminent danger of serious physical injury they will be allowed to proceed with the lawsuit.

In the next newsletter, I will write further about what happens after you have filed your federal lawsuit. If you have further questions or need examples to use as go-bys, please write to us so that we can help at: NCPLS, PO Box 27611, Raleigh, NC 27611. We are privileged to serve you and we thank you for the opportunity to continue to do so.

This article is written by an attorney and is intended for informational purposes only, and does not create an attorney/client relationship.

By Beth Thomas, Executive Director of NCPLS

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Commission**

PO Box 2248
Raleigh, NC 27602
www.innocencecommission-nc.gov
919-890-1580
Email: nciic@nccourts.org

Centurion

1000 Herrntown Rd
Princeton, NJ 08540
609-921-0334
www.centurion.org
Email: info@centurion.org

Duke Law School Innocence Project

Center for Criminal Justice and Pro-
fessional Responsibility
C/O Duke Law Innocence Project
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Durham, NC 27708-0362
www.web.law.duke.edu/ccjpr/
innocence
919-613-7006
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ject@gmail.com

**Wake Forest Law School Innocence
and Justice Clinic**

1834 Wake Forest Rd
Winston-Salem, NC 27106
www.innocence-clinic.law.wfu.edu
336-758-4950

TREC updates from Division of Prisons *(as of May 17, 2022)*

TREC #64: Screen incarcerated individuals for victimization and provide appropriate services Initiated a 30-day reassessment of risk screening for abusiveness and victimization. Implemented screening within 24 hours in lieu of the previous 72 hours that staff screen and review the DPS Dashboard to acknowledge new prisoner arrivals to determine if any have been identified as high-risk aggressors or high-risk victims. This information is used to make appropriate housing and job decision for prisoner safety.

TREC #96: Increase NCDPS flexibility on incarcerated individuals' release dates The total number of discretionary releases is 5,677 from April 2020 through December 31, 2021. Continuing to review through June 2022; Approval for early medical release has increased from 11% to 40% for 2021. Additional cases continue to be considered.

TREC #105: Transform the use of restrictive housing Eight Division of Prison Facilities are fully ACA accredited. Five additional facilities identified for the fall of 2022. 474 inmates went from Restrictive Housing to a Diversion unit utilizing RDU and TDU. Continue to work towards an additional RDU at Pasquotank.

TREC #106: Protect pregnant people in jails and prisons; Dignity Law passed effective December 1, 2021. All Dignity Law requirements implemented. Continue to review the Maternity Leave policy for revisions to include an automatic review of all pregnant prisoners upon arrival to prison.

TREC #107: Enhance prison personnel. The Governor's budget was approved for Step Pay Plan with payout in January 2022 paycheck. The budget also extended the High Needs Facility Salary Supplement for FY 21-22. Established a Diversity Equity Inclusion Manager and established a Prisons Career Division. Racial Equity Implicit Bias for Correctional Officer Basic Training began January 2022. Online implicit bias training continues to be assigned to existing staff for completion. Since the implementation of Crisis Intervention Training 8,144 staff have completed the training. Behavioral Health has developed new Correctional Crisis Training as a 2-hour annual in-service training administered for both certified and non-certified staff beginning in the 2023 training cycle. Currently offering a sign-on bonus of \$1,000.00 to \$5,000.00 for medical/nursing staff.

TREC #108: Increase funding for mental health services and programs in prisons. The proposed Outpatient Treatment Unit has been implemented at Maury Correctional Institution. This treatment initiative has already added three 48 treatment bed units. Developed psycho-educational resources for offender tablets that enhance Behavioral Health support services within Restrictive housing. Seriously Mental Ill (SMI) Alert implemented for utilization by Behavioral Health Staff. There are currently 5 Therapeutic Diversion Units with efforts for expansion to other facilities. Four hours of earn days credit given to prisoners that remain infraction free from a conviction or a disciplinary offense effective July 2020. Disciplinary Incentive Credit for Restrictive housing for Disciplinary purposes began in OPUS July 7, 2021. Earn time incentives of 3 days of time taken off their sentence for every month the prisoner remains infraction free, began April 29th, 2020, and increased to 4 days per month on July 9th, 2020.

TREC #109: Increase due process protections for people accused of disciplinary offenses. Currently reviewing potential revisions to the Disciplinary Infractions and sanctions policy. 474 incarcerated individuals were diverted from restrictive housing utilizing RDU and TDU in 2021. Field staff completed refresher training regarding the disciplinary process.

TREC updates, continued

(Continued from page 6)

Revised Disciplinary audit standards to review Disciplinary Hearing Officer Reports for potential bias.

TREC #110: Expand use of restorative justice and rehabilitation programming. Family Reentry Support and Help continues to be implemented. Currently there are 5 designated Reentry Facility locations that provide evidence-based services to approximately 405 incarcerated individuals who have one or more minor children. The programs include a program for high-risk families and a trauma curriculum for men and for women. Care Managers assist the 405 incarcerated individuals both inside and outside upon reentry to strengthen the bonds of the family and provide additional community resources. MATCH (Mothers And Their Children) continues at NCCIW, and may be expanded to Anson

CI and WCCW if funding sources can be secured. Expansion of Degree Programs has increased to offer prisoners educational opportunities. In 2021, 11 students at Sampson CI completed Campbell University's Associate of Science in Liberal Arts Degree, and 23 students at Pamlico CI graduated with Pamlico Community College's degree in Human Service Technology. Sessions with Restorative Justice Circles at CP and NCCIW were completed in December 2021 with continued efforts to expand additional sessions at Central Prison. The Tablet Project is now live at 7 facilities and 8 are scheduled to go live in the upcoming weeks. Thirteen facilities have infrastructure/cabling completed and 10 others are scheduled or working towards installation. Content on Tablets offer services for prisoners and is continuously reviewed to offer additional informational and educational services.

By NCDPS DOP Administration

Join today and let NC-CURE be your VOICE for CHANGE

NC-CURE is membership-driven and operated by volunteer staff. Annual membership dues help to offset the high cost of mailing our publication *On The Wire* (OTW). The newsletter provides news, resources, and encouragement for members. If you would like to receive OTW by mail or email, please tear off and complete the form below, and mail it to **NC-CURE, P.O. Box 5013, Kinston, NC 28503**. Make checks or money orders payable to NC-CURE.

2022 Membership Application

Name (Inmate and OPUS #/Family Member/Supporter)		Date
Correctional Facility	Mailing Address	
City	State	Zip Telephone
Family Member relationship to Inmate/OPUS #		Email Address
<input type="checkbox"/> Inmate (\$3.00) Indigent inmates may send stamps for membership providing they are not violating prison policy. Otherwise membership dues are waived.	<input type="checkbox"/> Individual (\$25.00) <input type="checkbox"/> Family & Inmate (\$30.00) <input type="checkbox"/> Individual Supporter (\$50.00)	Inmates will receive newsletters by TextBehind. PLEASE CHECK ONE: I prefer receiving OTW by <input type="checkbox"/> Direct Mail <input type="checkbox"/> Email
<input type="checkbox"/> I would like to serve as a volunteer for NC-CURE in the capacity of:		Contact NC-CURE at northcarolinacure@gmail.com



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"The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons." Fyodor Dostoyevsky

WHO WE ARE

NC-CURE (Citizens United for Restorative Effectiveness) is a non-profit 501(c)(3) grassroots prisoner advocacy organization established in 2007 and staffed by volunteers. Its mission is to advocate for the humane treatment of people in North Carolina prisons. Its vision is that North Carolina prisons will restore, rebuild and resource incarcerated individuals so they are prepared for successful reentry into the community.

WHAT WE DO

SUPPORT: Encourage and provide hope to people in prison and their loved ones

CALL ATTENTION: Intervene when prison practices deny people in prison dignity and respect as human beings, adequate medical care and nutrition

ADVOCATE: Proactively advocate for change in NC prison practices to protect the human rights of prisoners

EDUCATE: Provide resources that members and the general public need to understand the prison system

COLLABORATE: Team up with criminal justice reform agencies to promote fair treatment of people incarcerated in NC prisons