



Leaders of Innovation and Unconventional Community Collaboration

The Reentry Associates Applauds Central Wisconsin Community Members in Their Efforts to Strengthen Collaboration to Build Community Connection

WISCONSIN RAPIDS – The Reentry Associates applauds Central Wisconsin Community members for their active and engaging participation in the Community Soup Conversation today in Wisconsin Rapids.

Central Wisconsin Residents identified real issues of concern during the Community Soup Conversation, including but not limited to, access and knowledge of services addressing mental illness, substance abuse and employment, specifically for criminal justice involved individuals. Human connection was also a priority identified by the participants. The community also is requesting educational opportunities to become informed and identify the resources available to them.

A community member stated, “I’ve been in this area a long time and working with individuals providing peer support and hosting community events, however I do not know anyone in this room.”

“Communities effected by mental illness, substance abuse and co-occurring disorders understand and witnessing the intersect with criminal justice system. At some pivotal point our perspective has to shift to building community connections not cages. We as a Nation cannot jail mental illness and substance abuse.” Our top priority is to bring the voices of communities to the policymakers and stakeholders in our government agencies with compassionate and respect. We hope to bring awareness and discuss the issues not just nationally or state level, county and local municipalities have to be heard, they are the closest to the problem.” said Mishelle O’Shasky, Founder of The Reentry Associates.

Mishelle spent over twenty-two years in the system (incarcerated and/or on supervision). Mishelle credits organic peer support and access to community based, consumer driven services to her longstanding success after incarceration. She is a tireless advocate for the families and individuals still struggling inside and outside of institutions. Since her release in 2010 she has raised the awareness of what happened to people, not what is wrong with people. She credits her success to trauma informed care and peer support.

Mishelle has received Gubernatorial appointments to State Councils and Committees, including the State of Wisconsin Council on Mental Health and the State of Wisconsin Criminal Justice Coordinating Council. Mishelle identifies her role as a subject matter expert in reentry and the voice of the individual with lived experience of successful reentry and recovery.

“Our agency believe that we have to be smart and financially responsible in our approaches. Wasting money on the same system does not make sense and it is irresponsible. We only continue to perpetuate over incarceration and we are losing human life to this epidemic rapidly and it is only gaining more speed,” said Mishelle O’Shasky.

For more information and the results of the evaluations, please visit The Reentry Associates LLC at www.reentryassociates.com