

Happenings

Minnesota Community Corrections Association

Institution Evolution

Editor's Note: This edition of the Happenings focuses on our local correctional institutions, be they detention centers, jails or "workhouses." Such correctional facilities have recently been receiving a great deal of coverage in the daily metropolitan newspapers. Recent articles have told of the overcrowding at the new adult detention centers in St. Paul and in Minneapolis, jails that have recently been built at great expense to the taxpayers and are both now outmoded.

Washington County has an extensive waiting list for those sentenced to serve local time. Hennepin County now is forced to employ a "get out of jail free" system whereby Judges, County Attorneys and jail staff regularly met to decide which recent arrestees should be released without bail in order to lower the jail census to an acceptable (read: legal) limit.

As our jails become more and more popular, due in large part to the crack epidemic, jail staffs are finding themselves in the unfamiliar role of releasing those arrested ASAP and of then expanding their services to include the electronic monitoring of their charges.

In order to alleviate current overcrowding and to save money, Hennepin County officials have recently requested funds to hire 28 new probation staff to begin a pre-trial release unit similar to Ramsey

County's Project Remand The following articles offer the readers a sampling of ongoing issues and innovative programs that some of our local lockups offer, while operating under tremendous stress.

-Peter Batterman

Private incarceration

The "privatization" of correctional programs is a concept which has recently received considerable press, both pro and con. In Minnesota, however, one such program has actually been operating successfully for six years.

The Volunteers of America Regional Corrections Center, located in the former Ramsey County juvenile detention center known as Woodview, opened its doors to a population of adult women in September of 1984, making it the nation's first privately-run corrections facility.

Woodview's transformation began when Ramsey County started looking for an alternative to the county jail for women sentenced to serve significant periods of incarceration, up to one year in length. Soon, the Federal Bureau of Prisons, which had been forced to send female prisoners to neighboring states, became interested. Eventually, Woodview was leased from the county by the VOA to serve four separate functions: work and school release, straight detention for offenders serving up to one year sentences, prison pre-release, and pre-trial detention. While

Private incarceration continued page 3

Volunteers pay off in juvenile setting

Boy's Totem Town, a residential treatment facility for 65 young men, ages 13 through 18, has benefited immensely from a 12-year open door policy welcoming volunteers into its juvenile institution.

Last year, a monthly average of 32 volunteers contributed over 6,000 hours of personal service to the BTT residents. The creativity and dedication of these volunteers in corrections show itself in the 18 roles/programs which volunteers are currently active in: arts and crafts, family counseling, no smoking programs, chemical abuse group, job skills program, sexuality group, job skills fair, religious program, tutoring for GED, peer group, gardening program, dorm work, contract work, individual counseling, recreation activities, mentor program, editor of Totem Times (residents are reporters!!), camping (summer/winter/fall/spring).

All volunteers first participate in the general 12-hour Volunteers in Corrections Individual Counseling orientation. Once choosing Boy's Totem Town, a specific orientation is given in the dorm of their choice. Julie Paul, VIC liaison worker, and Frank Hosch, BTT assistant superintendent, coordinate this specific orientation as well as provide ongoing support and encouragement.

Teamwork, cooperation and trust highlight the relationship between paid

Volunteers pay off continued page 6

People and Programs

Understanding assaultive behavior

"Why can't we have a group like everyone else around here to work on some of our issues?" This question was asked by some residents of the Hennepin County Adult Corrections Facility (ACF) back in 1981. The ACF staff began to ask the same question and formed a task force to study the feasibility of establishing a group for assaultive offenders in an institution.

During the next two years, meetings were held with representatives of the Department of Corrections, Hennepin County Court Services, the Jail Resource Center and a member of Community Resources. In addition, HCACF staff received extensive training in the counseling of assaultive offenders, read numerous articles published on the subject (some published by the National Institute of Corrections), and supervised a research project at the ACF to determine the type and frequency of offenses and length of sentences.

In 1983, we implemented a pilot project. The project consisted of seven men sentenced to the ACF for Assaultive Offenders. The group met one and one-half hours a week for six weeks, to discuss such issues as: 1) Anger; 2) Family Violence; 3) Fear, guilt and shame; 4) Communication Skills; 5) Stress; and 6) Self-esteem. The pilot project was an overwhelming success. Participants said, "It helped me know how to deal with my hate. It helped me think about other solutions. Someone said something nice about me... I have not heard something nice about me before in my life. I learned a lot about myself."

The current groups are considered more educational than therapy more informational than confrontive. We hope to create an environment for learning new ways to solve old problems.

The group meets three times a year for ten weeks and twice a week for two hours each day. It is staffed by ACF staff and community resource people.

The following is a list of the current groups: Orientation and Pre-test, Cycle of Violence, Communication Skills, Stress Management, Man in Transition, Sexual Fantasies, Spirituality, Anger, Self-esteem, Critical Errors in Thinking, Family Violence, Fear, Guilt and Rejection, Victimization, Psychodrama, Post Test and Party.

-Ken Pugh

EXCEL program

For offenders coming out of the institution, successful reintegration can be difficult. Finding a suitable job is often a key factor in whether or not they are able to succeed in the community. But what happens when that perfect job seems unobtainable? How do the bills get paid in the meantime? And what happens when child care issues, or problems locating housing interfere with a successful job search? All of these pressures and problems may seem overwhelming to the offender, unless they have adequate support and helpful services available.

Wilder's Community Social Services Program has combined its expertise with that of Reentry Services, Inc. in a new collaborative venture to help those who are both at risk, and at risk to the community. This new program is called EXCEL, and is designed to provide pre and post release transition services to men; - and women incarcerated at the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Lino Lakes, and the Minnesota Correctional Facility-Shakopee. EXCEL is funded by the Minnesota Department of Corrections, and will provide training in the areas of: employment seeking, job retention, career development, enrollment in educational/vocational programs, money management, and using community services. EXCEL counselors will provide 2 days/week of classroom instruction inside the institution during the weeks prior to the offender's release, and then will be available for on-going individual support once they are released. The counselors will also be monitoring job searches and assisting with the areas that the offenders may be

having difficulty with, such as child care, locating affordable housing, obtaining a driver's license, etc. Volunteers from the community will be used to help give more individualized attention to the offenders, and to help them feel more connected to the community.

EXCEL's program is designed to help reduce recidivism rates by providing intensive, practical training in the areas that have the greatest impact on whether or not an offender makes a successful transition back into the community.

For more information about EXCEL, please contact Kris Clendenen, Director of EXCEL, at (612) 221-0048.

Evolution of an innovation

It was an innovation when it began in 1973 and it remains one to this day. A new idea private-non profit agency which provides comprehensive pre-trial services operating within the Ramsey County Criminal Justice System. An agency with the capability of providing the adult courts with pre-trial jail screening conditional release and diversion services for selected arrestees. One of very few private non-profit agencies in the country which has been delegated judicial release authority by the county court system.

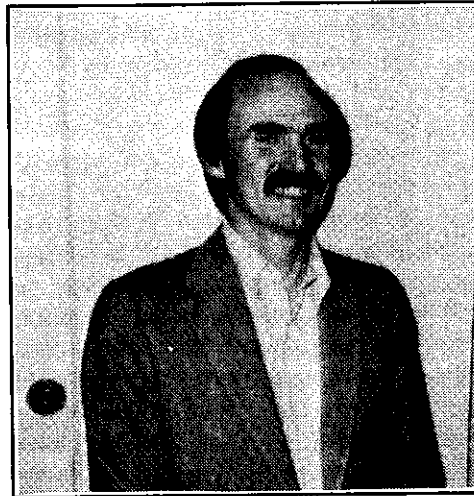
Project Remand has been operating in Ramsey County for so long that it is hard to think of it as innovative. But the very fact that it exists, and thrives, with the solid backing of virtually every player in the tangled political backstreets of a county court system speaks for its effectiveness. And, as the criminal justice system constantly changes in terms of numbers, types of crimes and types of offenders, so has the program changed in its methods and types of services offered. It remains in a sort of continuous evolution, adapting to the changing needs of the courts and its clients.

Project Remand began as a pre-trial diversion program for selected firsttime

Evolution continued page 8

We want you to know...

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Bruce Clendenen

This issue of Happenings is dedicated to correctional institutions in the Twin Cities metro area. We intend to inform our readers about these institutions and the programs operating within their walls. An integral part of the operation of an institution, such as the Hennepin County or Ramsey County Correctional Facilities, is sound programming within. "Dead time" without programming in a local correctional facility cannot only be extremely unproductive, but can lead to internal control problems. We are fortunate that most of the Twin Cities institutions operate good programs. These programs enable the offender to use his/her incarcerated time productively. A recent trend has seen the private sector contracting with local governments to provide programming in the institutions. This is an encouraging trend, allowing both the government and the private sector to do what they do best.

Another serious problem facing Twin Cities' institutions is overcrowding. Local incarceration rates have surpassed local government's ability to incarcerate in a timely fashion. Waiting lists of up to one year have forced counties to look at alternative methods. Sentence to Service, electronic monitoring, day reporting

centers, and residential treatment have helped to relieve overcrowding, while still dispensing justice. These alternatives have proven to be effective, while containing costs to a reasonable level. We at MCCA encourage the continued use of our excellent community resources!

Private Incarceration continued...

the VOA's main contractual relationships are with the Federal Bureau of Prisons (including the U. S. Marshal's Service), Ramsey County, and Dakota County, the Center is able to contract with other jurisdictions, as well.

As described by the VOA's Director of Correctional Services, William Nelson, the Center delivers a wide-ranging program of services for its residents, partly by acting as a conduit through which community agencies and volunteers provide academic classes, vocational training, tutoring, and leadership for self-help groups, as well as friendship and support for inmates. A typical week's programming, provided by staff, outside professionals, and volunteers, includes aerobics, gardening, yoga, NA, AA, book club, religious services, and classes in history, clerical skills, women's health issues, and self-esteem.

As a "new generation" jail, the atmosphere at Woodview might best be described as one of normalization. Staff mingle freely with clients, allowing them to anticipate and defuse problem situations. The facility is open, well lit, well furnished, and aesthetically appealing. Residents wear their own clothes and have access to telephones, a refrigerator, snacks, and personal televisions. Their daily program attempts to replicate the normal routine of life outside an institution as closely as possible.

Preparation for release is, naturally, a high priority. Toward this end, the Center not only offers a fully accredited program in typing and word-processing through Ramsey County OIC, but maintains a computerized job bank of

approximately 500 employers who have expressed a willingness to hire ex-offenders. IBCA, WHO, and DVR also play strong roles in making possible the residents' successful transition back to the community.

The VOA Regional Corrections Center offers living proof that privatization, when properly handled, can provide creative solutions to old problems. Further questions can be answered by contacting Bill Nelson at 721-6327.

-Ronnie Bouma
Lake Street VOA

DAP opens satellite office

The Domestic Abuse Project recently opened a small satellite office in the Pilot City Regional Center 1315 Penn Ave. North, adjacent to Hennepin County's misdemeanor and felony probation offices. This office's specific task is to provide intervention services to women who have been assaulted. The DAP staff will provide women with advocacy throughout the court process, assist in the filing of criminal complaints, assist in making and getting copies of police reports and provide women with appropriate social service referrals as well as providing general counseling and advocacy. The office is staffed every Wednesday from 9:00 to 5:00, or by appointment.

Those interested can call the DAP office at either 529-7477 or 529-6765. Day care is available in the Pilot City facility. If you would like additional information, would like a DAP speaker, or are interested in a volunteer opportunity, contact their staff at either of the phone numbers listed above or write to: Domestic Abuse Project—Pilot City Office, 204 West Franklin Avenue, Mpls MN 55404.

Family Focus

Have you ever watched your clients interacting with their children and wondered how to break the cycle that seems to condemn the next generation to the same self-defeating behaviors that brought their parents into the "system"?

Many of us have, and it was in

response to the need to change that pattern that the Minnesota Citizens Council on Crime and Justice, through its SOLOS (Sharing Our Lives of Separation) program, introduced a new project called Family Focus, aimed at inmate fathers.

According to Coordinator Shirley Stead, Family Focus, which is funded by the McKnight Foundation, got its start in 1989 at the "farm," Stillwater's minimum security unit, with a series of 12 sessions on such topics as building self-esteem in both parent and child, dealing with anger, using positive discipline, and "breaking the chain." Participants responded so positively to the classes (which are voluntary, but to which each student is expected to make a definite commitment) that the project soon expanded to a second location, inside the walls, as well as to Lino Lakes and to the VOA correctional facility for women in Roseville.

Another component of Family Focus is the Transition Program, funded by the DOC, a post-release support group for fathers which meets weekly for two hours at Re-Entry's Ashland facility. In addition, community-based classes for mothers of inmates' children are offered in Minneapolis.

Feedback from graduates of the program indicates that the men are finding the techniques they have learned helpful, not just in interactions with their

children, but with wives, employers, and peers as well.

Family Focus uses steering committees composed of inmate fathers at each of the institutions served, and an advisory board which includes corrections administrators, a graduate of the program, and professionals from the areas of child care, battering, early childhood education, and chemical dependency. In addition, the members of the advisory board different ethnic or cultural groups and are uniquely sensitive to the needs of their communities.

To many, the lack of parenting skills and options has seemed a significant detriment both to our clients and to their children. Family Focus seeks to fill a function that has been sorely lacking from our delivery of correctional services.

MINNESOTA COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS ASSOCIATION

650 Marshall Avenue
St. Paul, MN 55104

Name: _____

Program/Agency: _____

Work Role: _____

Work Phone: _____

Address: _____

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|------------------------------|-------------|
| Individual Membership | \$15 _____ |
| Program Membership | \$120 _____ |
| Student/Volunteer Membership | \$10 _____ |

Make checks payable to **MCCA**

Editor's Note: The following articles: "House Arrest Revisited," "Northwest Regional News," and "MAJPS News" are being reprinted here with the permission of the Editor of the News Express, the newsletter of the MN Association of Jail Programs and Services.

House arrest revisited

Last fall we put a man on house arrest. We hooked him up in his dining room. While I was checking out the equipment, I noticed a diploma framed and hanging on the wall. I was surprised to see it was a G.E.D. diploma from the workhouse. "A lot of good this did," I smirked. Quite a while later, I explored a little history about this fellow. What I found out made me reconsider my first, rather harsh thoughts about this lad. His employer thinks a great deal of him. He is a hard worker and is considered reliable. He pays rent to his landlord. He also tries to maintain his independence from his family by living in his own home and facing all his own bills. When I talked to the counselor who remembered him when he did straight time, I discovered that he didn't have much going for himself. Now, even though he is serving a good deal of time house arrest for traffic violations, he has come a long way from a cell in the men's straight time workhouse and making \$1.00 a day.

When my father and uncles were young, a lot of boys quit school and had to go to work to support their families. As many young adults of their generation, they became a part of a civilian conservation corps and most learned a trade.

I often draw a comparison from the 30's to today. There seem to be a lot of school drop outs without good work skills. In the 30's, we had the C.C.C.'s. In the 80's we seem to have jails and workhouses as places where many disadvantaged young people learn job skills and get high school diplomas.

The young man on house arrest, I setnk, is a lot like most of us in that change is difficult and slow. Yet he changed and I believe his high school

diploma helped him. Anyway, he has his diploma framed and hanging on his family room wall. I cannot even find mine.

Northwest regional news

Cooperation and coordination with resource people outside the education staff have provided a variety of program options for residents at NWRCC in Crookston, MN. Workshops on employability skills, parenting skills, self-esteem and anger awareness have contributed to the skill development of individuals involved.

Coordination with the Extension Division of East Grand Forks Technical College brings Career Smart workshops to our residents. This workshop runs for eight weekly sessions and includes topics on self-awareness, career preference, job sources and contacts, interviewing skills, creating a resume and self-assertiveness. Volunteer speakers from various agencies are brought in to make presentations and individuals are encouraged to build their own job file.

Other workshops available through the extension division include Self-Esteem and Parenting groups. These groups meet weekly for six sessions each and build awareness skills for self-enhancement and empowerment. The Anger Awareness Group grew out of a need of residents to learn more positive skills in coping with anger. These sessions are facilitated by one caseworker and two education instructors.

No new members are accepted to the group after the first session and the group meets for four sessions, sharing dialogue about anger producing situations, owning and expressing the feelings of anger and conflict resolution skills. The group decides if it wants to continue meeting weekly for no more than eight sessions total. Residents have found these workshops to be supportive and staff has been aware of more positive interactions among residents involved.

-Suellen Steinke
Northwest Regional Correction
Center, Crookston, MN

MAJPS news

The Minnesota Association of Jail Programs and Services (MAJPS) is a statewide organization of professional jail programmers. We would like the opportunity to show you how effective, well-coordinated jail programming can assist you in managing your inmate population, and thus enhance the safety and security of your facility.

Throughout the state, jail programmers are developing and implementing programs in areas such as: education, life skills, substance abuse programs, job seeking skills, recreation,...all of these offerings mean different things to different people. To the inmates, it means an opportunity for self improvement. To the sheriff and his staff, it means a safer and more secure facility since the inmate's time is occupied in constructive pursuits. To the county board, Sheriff, and jail administrator, good jail programming is an effective tool in reducing the risk of costly law suits as an active jail program plan can lead to reduction in incidents between inmates and attacks against staff. To the line officer, it means the opportunity to work with inmates that are better adjusted and may be less prone to aggressive or suicidal behavior.

Well-coordinated professional jail programming has proven to be an effective inmate management tool in jails.

We would like you to become a part of the network of information and resources we have developed. Learn what is being done in different counties throughout our state, and give us your input! If you are a sheriff, jail administrator, jail programmer, or a staff member that "wears many different hats;" if you have training needs, need input, or can share your experience with us, **WE WANT YOU AS A MEMBER!**

For further information, please contact Sandra Spigner, Hennepin County, 475-4215.

volunteers pay off continued...

staff and volunteers. Volunteers are active in each of the three dorms (Community I and II long-term and Special Project Unit - short term) and in the school program run by the St. Paul School District.

Of the 32 active volunteers, 16 (50%) are women and 10 (32%) are people of color.

"Volunteers are extremely valuable and appreciated here. Our program is dependent for its success upon the efforts of volunteers," said Hosch.

Next issue, we will highlight the use of volunteers at the Juvenile Service Center - Ramsey County Community Corrections Department.

Workhouse volunteers

In one section of the Adult Corrections Facility is heard the sound of the gate being slammed and locked throughout the day and night. In this same place on a weekly basis, enters a woman seventy-two years of age. She is a volunteer and her purpose is to facilitate a chemical health support group. For two hours she is on her own, with from seven to ten men, who have committed every sort of crime. She doesn't blink an eye at that challenge, she's too busy being the role model of a strong woman. Residents don't miss their group meetings with her, they also don't get by with "fuzzy" thinking about themselves or others in that group. They don't quite understand such a woman, but they believe her and respect her. She is just one of over 375 volunteers who serve in all areas of programs and services at the ACF in Plymouth. The facility has realized a significant increase in citizen involvement during the past twelve years through the development and expansion of Volunteer Services.

ACF is the third largest correctional institution in Minnesota. Constructed in 1930 as the Minneapolis City Workhouse, it was transferred from City to Hennepin County auspices in 1975.

It's a correctional institution for sentenced, adult offenders who have from one day to one year to serve. Residents (inmates) may have been

convicted of misdemeanors or felonies and received "workhouse" time as a condition of probation. On any given day, over 500 residents are housed at ACF.

Volunteers serve in all three of ACF's Sections: Men's, Women's and Work/ Study Release. Using volunteers in a setting where safety and security are primary concerns requires a special approach to volunteer services.

Volunteers are carefully screened and trained by the full time Coordinator of Volunteers. Their mission is to provide unpaid support services which will enhance the quality of life of the residents and facilitate staff's efforts towards assisting them in their reintegration into the community.

ACF volunteers serve as: AIDS prevention instructors; Canteen workers; Clothing coordinators; writing skills and dramatic literature teachers, medical clerical assistants; psychologist's assistants; basketball referees, softball umpires; arts and crafts Instructors, social work assistants and volunteer coordinators of 12-step groups. They also fill many varied positions in Chaplaincy and chemical health programs.

Volunteers provide services to the residents of ACF which otherwise could not be afforded. They bring with them a variety of talents, resources, fresh ideas and concerns. As enthusiastic, unpaid staff, volunteers also bring back to the community information about a program it supports; they increase community awareness of the criminal justice system and the needs of the incarcerated. For further information contact: Marilyn Schoonover, Volunteer Development Specialist, Adult Corrections Facility, 475-4223, or Kathleen Hartmann, Manager, Volunteer Services, Adult Corrections Department, 348-9245.

Drug Free Zone

If you've passed through the Stevens Square neighborhood of South Minneapolis lately, you may be wondering about the signs that have popped up on street corners proclaiming the area a Drug Free Zone. The signs, which also provide a phone number, have been erected by the Stevens Square Coalition, with the support of the

Volunteers of America. The words 'Drug Free Zone' refer to a state law passed in 1988 which provides stiff penalties for the possession or sale of drugs within 300 feet of any school, park, or school bus. The signs put would-be users and dealers on notice that the community will not tolerate illicit drugs.

Under a grant from ACTION, the Federal Program for Volunteer Services, the national Volunteers of America organization has undertaken a nationwide demonstration project in drug prevention, and has awarded funding for its implementation to nine VOA branches across the country, including the VOA Residential Center in Minneapolis.

Operating out of donated space on the "garden level" of the Center, two full time employees, Lisa Czech and Katie Gores, work with community organizations and residents at the grass-roots level to carry out the project's components, which include coalition-building, the formation of Neighborhood Watch Clubs, public education, the promulgation of a Zero Tolerance Standard, volunteer recruitment and training, and support for crime victims.

For its pilot project, the VOA has focused on the Stevens Square neighborhood, a densely populated area composed largely of apartment-dwellers. Networking with the Stevens Square Coalition, an umbrella group organized by the project, the VOA staff has provided technical assistance and leadership, as well as support and collaboration on special projects.

According to project coordinator Lisa Czech, the VOA's goal is to empower the community, allowing the neighborhood to take over the project's functions when the initial grant expires in August of 1991. The project will then seek re-funding in hopes of "planting a seed" in another area of the city.

-Ronnie Bouma, VOA

Neighborhood dealer

He passed me on the street today. I was coming out of my house and he was reeling on the opposite sidewalk and onto the porch across the way. He wore the same blue sweatpants and black tee shirt he wore Tuesday—the day I'd called and given his description to the cops that never came; the same afternoon he'd sat outside in a car parked in front of my house turning a bag of white powder over to a straight looking blond young man, possibly from a suburb, and sticking a roll of money in his waistband.

He probably doesn't even know I exist but I'm aware of him. He's a new one, only been around about a week and in the afternoon and into the night he sits on the porch with all the others from the yellow duplex. The woman who lives downstairs is the only one who has been there for a long time—she came sometime in the winter. I know her name, I recognize her kids, 3 little kids. Last month she was so concerned over an injured raccoon kit she called the Humane Society and left food for the missing mother. Her kids are usually on the porch or in the yard.

The kids are cute—3 variegated shades. The youngest, the toddler, has huge black Ojibwe eyes, he looks like my oldest son did at two. I worry about them. The men run through the house like waterfalls and cars pull up and stop all hours.

Her laugh is loud and she holds her kids a lot. They always wear clean bright shorts and drink Mendota Springs water, not pop and there are sandwiches in their hands with cut-off crusts, not Twinkies. She holds them and they nuzzle against her but then there's him—or them. This latest one is just one of many.

Two weeks ago a crack team came in at 7:30 on a rainy night. My husband saw them with their vests, the shotguns and we sat on our darkened porch and watched them spill out of the duplex while the tenants scattered.

"We're giving you a break this time," one officer shouts as he gets into

the van and the squads pull away. For a week things are quiet, for a week, until last weekend when it started up again.

And I call—again—I talk to gang hotlines, to council offices, and finally to a SAFE line, a community crime prevention officer. We talk about the system—the system I used to work for indirectly. We admit we are frustrated by the knowledge that CPS can't really help kids who just happen to live in dealing houses, not without documentation of abuse and neglect.

For four years I used to be someone who did that, document papers, try to work with troubled kids, with families. Most of my friends still do and we see the numbers rising and wonder when the explosion will happen where it becomes a priority instead of skyscrapers or parking ramps or getting a Super Bowl to our city. I thought I'd left that activist part of me somewhere back in the sixties or at least with the counselor title I moved from a few years ago, but I guess I'm wrong.

So tonight he passes me on the street and walks over to the house where children live and the waistband of his sweatpants look full perhaps with baggies or a roll of bills and all those on the porch greet him and offer him a beer. And he picks up a child and swings him laughing.

And as I go to get in my car the mother waves at me and I think about what I've heard about from kids, how I've put dimensions of scars on forms, how I've seen 11 year old addicts and their parents, and I feel helpless. I think about the 2 year old up the street that was taken last Friday night from such a family when Mama's boyfriend had beaten him with a 2x4 for wetting his diaper.

It was after midnight and the kids were still running up and down the street while adults sat on the porch stoned, getting rowdy. And how long it took for the squad to get there after a neighbor heard the sounds of the beating and the ambulance that took the baby away and how now he's at HCMC with blood in his urine and they've evicted that family but isn't it a bit too late?

But not across the street. They sit there and the same red van that a neighbor saw a drug deal go down in

Tuesday has been back twice since then. And I'll try again tomorrow or maybe just close my drapes so I can't see the kids eat sandwiches and wear clean shorts every morning nor see the cars stop. I'll try not to remember as the toddler with black eyes calls Mommie and runs to her and she leans down to kiss him while the man in the blue sweat pants and black tee shirt waits for customers from 3-11 like the second shift I used to work sometimes. Like clockwork—like nothing will ever stop him.

Editor's Note: Pat Simon is a writer and former counselor at The Bridge in Minneapolis who lived in Minneapolis for nearly two years. Within the past few months she and her husband gave up their house (after considerable pain and soul searching) and moved to safer (?) climes in suburbia. When she sent us this article she attached a note which read: "At the time this was written last August (1989), there hadn't been the five new murders within a mile of the house; but mostly I'm glad I'm not there to see the kids anymore and not be able to help them."



evolution continued...

adult misdemeanants. Those deemed appropriate were siphoned off the mainstream of the court process into a program which would assist them in meeting set goals. These goals, such as restitution, chemical dependency treatment, voluntary community service, counseling, employment, etc., would satisfy the requirements of the court as well as attempt to assist the offender to begin a crime free life. Successful completion of the 3-18 month process resulted in the dismissal of the charges.

As the needs of the court system have changed and expanded over the years, Project Remand has evolved to meet them. As the jails became more and more over-crowded, the program's jail screeners (on duty 20 hours a day) began screening virtually every arrestee in the Ramsey County Jail. Information gathered in these screenings is verified through the use of various criminal justice records sources, as well as appropriate community sources, and applied to the VERA Scale to determine eligibility for personal recognizance release, conditional release and public defender services. Under this process, 35% of all arrestees are released within a few hours of booking. Of these about 95% make their first appearance in court. Thus, up to 25% of jail beds are freed up daily which, if filled, would cost the county several thousand dollars more each year. Project Remand's budget is under \$1 million.

Another important component in Project Remand's expanding list of services to the court is pre-trial conditional release. Selected defendants who are not eligible for release on their own recognizance and who may require special services are conditionally released to the program in lieu of/ or in addition to cash bail. In return, the released defendant must agree to appear in court, remain law abiding, stay in contact with designated staff, maintain a permanent address and follow a designated case plan which may include chemical dependency treatment, psychological counseling or hospitalization, monitoring to ensure no contact with the alleged victim or assistance in the areas of employment, emergency housing or finances. So far

in 1990, more than 1500 people participated in the conditional release program of which over 75 fulfilled their obligations and did not re-offend.

What makes all of this work? Project Remand Program Director Raecene Buckman has a number of ideas. She points out that the program is a unique entity in that it is a private non-profit program funded entirely by Ramsey County Community Corrections. While the program is "tied to institutional changes in community corrections," and "part of the service is mandated by the state," it is also autonomous and "we can do our own programming." She notes that the program has "full backing from the bench" which, in fact, last year expanded its release authority. Yet, as an objective entity, has credibility with the defendant as well.

Ms. Buckman, who is completing her second year as director of Project Remand, also noted that the evolution of the program is continuing. Noting the increased dangerousness of its clients, she pointed to the use of electronic monitoring in cases such as the supervision of the now convicted murderer, Michael Scott Plaster. She discussed the possibility of setting up non-traditional diversion plans for certain more dangerous drug offenders which would couple intensive supervision with chemical dependency assessment and treatment when needed. Finally, she stated that an evaluation of the VERA Scale might be useful to determine its effectiveness as a risk assessment tool, since it has been the primary tool used for well over twenty years.

A new slant on community corrections

The citizens of Faribault are involved in "community corrections" in a way we usually don't think about. Sue Mann, Community Activities Coordinator for the new medium security prison in Faribault (MCF-FRB), has organized activities for approximately 70 volunteers.

The prison has been operating as a

minimum security facility for a year as building has continued and has had volunteer involvement throughout that time. Eighteen male volunteers served as escorts to inmates on special duty passes. The inmate and volunteer spent four to six hours of very structured time in the community, which included shopping, social services agencies visits, etc.; activities which helped the inmate to reintegrate into society before he was released. The escort program has been discontinued as MCF-FRB is now a medium security facility.

Approximately 45 men and women from Faribault and surrounding communities have participated as AA group leaders. Two female students from St. Olaf and Carleton Colleges coordinate a "Sesame Street Program" for children visiting their fathers and 14 local ministers volunteer their time to conduct church services in the prison.

Local churches have found other ways to be involved. One church provides a birthday card for every inmate. Another provides Bibles to inmates requesting them.

Ms. Mann partially attributes the community's willingness to be involved in the prison program to Superintendent Fred Holbeck. "Superintendent Holbeck," she says, "is honest and open with the citizens of Faribault and has communicated well with the public." Initially, a Task Force of citizens was involved in the process of establishing a prison on the State Hospital grounds. Currently, a Citizens Liaison Council meets regularly with MCF-FRB staff to discuss concerns and give information to the community about the prison. Growing interest has resulted in a waiting list of people who want to serve on the Council.

The local newspaper has been very fair in reporting the activities of the prison and has aided in keeping the public well informed. A recent article in the paper about inmate needs resulted in 28 phone calls from people wishing to become involved in the volunteer program. Ms. Mann says the prison has had a very positive experience with the community of Faribault. Community involvement in institutional corrections can be an essential ingredient for inmates to reintegrate successfully in the communities upon their release.

Upcoming training

November 14, **10:00 am to noon:**
MCCA Training. "Programs in State
Correctional Institutions," 650 Marshall,
St. Paul. A panel representing the
various institutions will describe
programs offered in Minnesota
correctional institutions.

December 19, **11:00 am to noon:**
MCCA Training. "Humor in the
Workplace," 650 Marshall, St. Paul. A
local stand-up comedian will perform.
For more information about MCCA
training, call Lisa Roberg at 227-6291.

February 14 and 15, **Wilder Forest:**
MCCA Annual Conference. More
details in the next issues of Happenings.

respond to the content of this newsletter
and to write on topics of interest to its
readers. The staff reserves the right to
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is the 15 of odd numbered months.

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