

YW HOUSING & COMMUNITY SERVICES NW - VANCOUVER

Partnerships that Work

The Clark County Re-entry Pilot Program is a personalized approach to services using an interdisciplinary, interagency team of professionals. Partners are:

~ YW Housing - serving female offenders. Offering case management, parenting, and life skill classes, and Ready-to-Rent classes.

~ Community Services Northwest (CSNW) - serving male offenders. Providing case management, medication distribution and management, co-occurring disorders and needs assessment, life skills classes, as well as treatment and support groups related to mental health, chemical dependency, anger management, self-esteem, eating disorders, grief, and gambling.

~ Department of Corrections (DOC) / Vancouver Community Justice Center (CJC) - providing structured supervision to offenders through the sanctions, community service programming and employment development.

Tracie and Kim have been participating in Clark County Re-entry Pilot Program since spring of 2008. Both attend Clark College part-time. Tracie is working on her Chemical Dependency Professional certification and Kim is working towards an Associate in Arts degree. Both ladies recently graduated from treatment and see their children regularly. Kim works full time at night, so she can attend school during the day.

Re-entering Society, Reclaiming Self-Sufficiency



Virginia Jensen works full time cleaning houses, apartments, and banks. She recently graduated from aftercare treatment and is a Volunteer with Hands Across the Bridge. She is working on obtaining her first drivers license ever. She has wonderful leadership qualities and works hard to help new program participants feel welcome. She even hops on the bus with them to help them get to their appointments the first few days out.





RHPP participant R.B. entered the program approximately three weeks ago. In that short period of time, the program participant joined a local sobriety group. He connected with other clean and sober group members who helped him in exploring construction certifications. He found a certification program that would improve his long-term employability and increase his earning potential. In addition to providing a stable place to live, the RHPP program provides him with transportation assistance and he received DOC approval to attend this certification program in Oregon. He attended 32 hours of training and graduated with his certification.

Landlords Inspired to Help

Both CSNW and YW Housing have worked closely with DOC to inspire landlords to rent to registered sex offenders.

"In order to increase the numbers of sex offender housing, we conducted a large-scale landlord outreach. Through meetings with landlords for information sharing about the purpose and goals of the program, our case management and house visits, we were able to inspire several landlords to connect with the program. The landlord outreach doubled our available sex offender housing."

Denise Stone, CSNW



Homes

CSNW and YW Housing's successful relationship with landlords has meant that all housing is located in residential neighborhoods in either houses or apartments.

Group living is an opportunity to learn how to live with others after incarceration.

Communication and working together are important skills in successful re-entry. Participants must leave the prison or jail culture and learn how to live with others.

Family re-unification is an important element to both programs. Reuniting children with parents is easier in a neighborhood. Access to services increase for both the children and the parent.

Neither CSNW nor YW Housing has utilized monetary landlord incentives. Outreach, good customer service, collaboration with DOC, and the promise of wrap-around services have done the job.

NE Washington Housing Solutions - Spokane

August 2008

COLLABORATION

Spokane Re-entry Housing Pilot Program (SRHPP) partners include:

- ~**Spokane Housing Authority dba Northeast Washington Housing Solutions (NEWHS)** is a housing authority that provides a variety of housing opportunities to diverse and disadvantaged populations.
- ~**Spokane Neighborhood Action Programs (SNAP)** is a Community Action Agency providing a continuum of nearly 40 services organized through 3 operational divisions: Housing Opportunities, Housing Improvements, and Community Services.
- ~**Goodwill Industries of the Inland Northwest (GIIN)** provides a variety of pre-employment, job placement, and individual and family services.
- ~**Department of Corrections (DOC)/Spokane Community Justice Center (CJC)** offers highly structured, non-residential programs in which supervision, sanctions, and services are coordinated from a central location.

PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

A steering committee consisting of 13 community organizations and members such as DSHS, DOC, Workforce Development Council, City Council Members, and the faith community meet monthly with the Partners and Re-entry team to provide feedback as to what programs they have available and offer suggestions.

PARTICIPANTS ARE BUSY!

Wrap-around services and programming map out the road to success. Programming includes:

NEWHS: Housing unit identification, assistance with executing the rental lease.

SNAP: Basic life skills including landlord-tenant rights & responsibilities, goal setting & prioritizing, learning to advocate for themselves, financial literacy, access to banking services, household maintenance & conservation education/living green, access to financial assistance to alleviate debts, and food.

GIIN: A full array of employment related services as well as adult and child mentoring.

DOC/CJC: Cooking, job hunters and employment education, moral recognition therapy, cognitive behavioral therapy, partners in parenting, parenting skills, mental health support group, relapse education programs, stress anger management, sex offender treatment program, victim awareness education program, and victim empathy program.

SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION

→ 1/3 of participants are working or working towards obtaining a GED or college degree of which two participants have never held a job. One participant was recognized as employee of the month and will soon receive a raise.

→ 464 hours of completed programming at the Community Justice Center. Participants are working hard to improve their lives!

→ One participant selected to attend the National Oxford House Convention in New Orleans.



INCREASING HOUSING STOCK

Twelve new private landlords have agreed to participate. Effective landlord incentives include:

- Non-refundable cleaning deposits
- Paying for application and background check fees
- First and last month rent paid up front
- Additional damage payments up to \$500 above the security deposit

The SRHPP's wrap-around services, accessibility of staff, and partnership with DOC and the Spokane Police Department help ease a landlord's concern over protecting other tenants and their property.

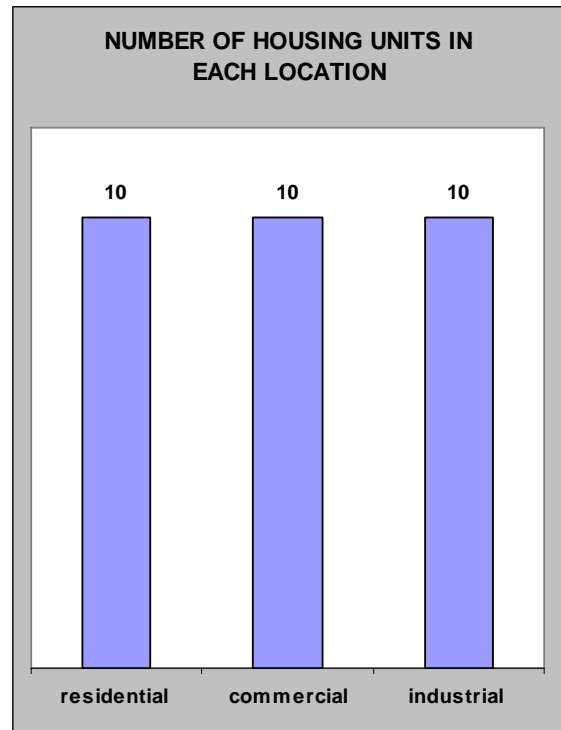
HELPING THE BROADER RECOVERING COMMUNITY

One landlord did not want to directly participate, but wanted to be involved in some capacity with the re-entry initiative. SRHPP staff connected this landlord with Oxford House which resulted in an additional seven clean and sober beds in Spokane County.



SHARING RESOURCES

Surplus housing stock is being used by other DOC supervised individuals.



Sound Mental Health Seattle

August 2008

Working Together to Reduce Recidivism: SMH & DOC

SMH, a certified mental health, chemical dependency and employment agency, has a proven history of providing services not only to mentally ill offenders but to those referred from the general population who need re-entry assistance.

Co-location and close collaboration with the King County Community Justice Center and Seattle Police Department provides a strong public safety focus.

The re-entry services and housing program is designed to meet each participant's individual needs, increase community safety, and decrease recidivism.

... "there has definitely been a refocusing in my life, and I attribute that to the foundation that the housing..."

Returning to Society with Support

This client has had numerous run-ins with law enforcement in addition to suffering from a mental illness. The client has struggled with staying on the socially appropriate and stable path in life.

"My experience with SMH has been a good and positive one. The weekly meetings have been a good one to keep me accountable in regard to my personal activities, and to help me keep short- mid- long-term goals in perspective. I find the SMH staff to be both reasonable and personable. The entire staff gives and demonstrates genuine interest in my life and progress while on probation."

This client was incarcerated for 15 years on the charges of murder second degree and theft second degree.

"I have been in this program for about two months now after a 16 year sentence... [RHPP] is giving me a healthy chance on getting my life back and my career started. I thank you, and I hope you continue to try to help people like myself who acknowledged their mistakes. A program like this will help people become productive members of society; a program that the people have needed for a long time."



Ending the Cycle of Incarceration

William G. has been in the system since he was a juvenile. His adult charges began in 1978 with a burglary II charge. Since then he has had 13 other charges which include assault, theft, burglary, and drug violations.

“My name is William G. and I am presently in the RHPP program. Now I have been a participant in the recidivism cycle in the justice system, and in the past when I was released from prison, I went back to doing the same activities that got me sent to prison in the first place and that enabled me more so because I went back to the same environment. But this time upon being released to this program, there has definitely been a refocusing in my life, and I attribute that to the foundation that the housing has afforded me and also the structure and guidance facilitated by the case manager. Lastly from my point of view, I really see this (RHPP) as a positive force and a catalyst for change in the lives of people who, like myself, have made some bad decisions but are still redeemable with the right help.”

Expanding the Offender Housing Stock in a Competitive Market

The Seattle housing market has presented special challenges to SMH and partners:

- Housing is highly competitive
- 3 percent apartment vacancy rate
- Less than 1 percent 1 bedroom and SRO vacancy rate
- Only three of 10 houses are within SMH's price range – not including utilities

Despite these challenges, SMH has expanded the offender housing stock by 16 units. They are poised to continue adding new units as participants move into housing.

Successful incentives include:

- Guaranteed monthly rent payment
- No vacancy loss
- Guaranteed 12-month lease
- SMH as the lease holder

24/7 access to SMH staff and a collaborative approach to safety between SMH, DOC, and the Seattle Police Department addresses landlord concern for protecting their investment and other renters.

Collaboration between DSHS and SMH puts participants on the fast track to identifying non-RHPP funding sources:

100% of SMH's participants receive some form of DSHS benefits.

Strong collaboration in King County between city, county, or state agencies and area providers ensure awareness and access to funding and resources.

The greater re-entry community benefits as these relationships are developed. Over 90% of incarcerated individuals will re-enter society.

