



# CRP California Reentry Program

## Letter from the Director

Our clients often come into the program and ask about the reentry advisors that help them. They ask me how much they're paid, if they're students who are "getting something" out of volunteering by doing a project, or benefiting in some other way. When I explain to them that they are local community members who simply have an interest in prisoners' welfare, they are amazed. They are not accustomed to their community offering them support and, more importantly, interest in their success.

CRP brings in approximately 50 volunteers per year, with 25-30 volunteering at any point in time. As they move on to other endeavors, they make room for new volunteers eager to help. They are IT people, nonprofit workers, students, teachers, entrepreneurs, retirees, paralegals, nurses and social workers. They come to help, to make their communities safer, but also to learn.

Our philosophy is that every citizen should experience time in a prison to better understand our criminal justice system, to see what happens when the judge sentences someone to time behind bars. One of our missions is to educate the public about incarceration in California through volunteers coming into the prison and working with

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## When They Don't Parole to CA

By Tom McCarthy

A significant number of inmates who come from other countries are subject to federal deportation proceedings after completing their state prison terms. Some who arrived in infancy have little or no knowledge of the language of their country of origin, and no good contacts there. We have tried to help in various

ways. In one case, we were able to get information about whether the conviction was serious enough to warrant deportation.

We gave out addresses and phone numbers of the federal detention facilities where potential deportees would be processed for deportation, along with instructions on how inmates and their families might deal with these facilities. Since deportees are not provided with funds or identification, we drew up lists of possible resources which might be helpful to them in their countries of origin. In Mexico and Central America these are usually centers which ordinar-



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## CRP Goes Healthy AND Green!

2012 has been an exciting and productive year for CRP. In January, we co-hosted San Quentin's second Green Career Fair with our partner, the Insight Garden Program. This year, despite a significant drop in the population at San Quentin, we had greater attendance by outside organizations and nearly the same attendance of our San Quentin clients. Twenty six agencies representing green job training, gardening, construction, grocery, advocacy, biofuel, and ecotourism convened in one of the dining

halls and clients were able to go from table to table to discuss green careers and opportunities in areas of their interest. This year we also provided written materials on green jobs and training programs across California for our clients going home

outside the Bay Area.

*"One thing I learned from the computer age is that people don't keep up. Green is big and I want to learn as much as I can because it's big."*

*-Henry, Green Fair attendee*

2012 Green Career Fair

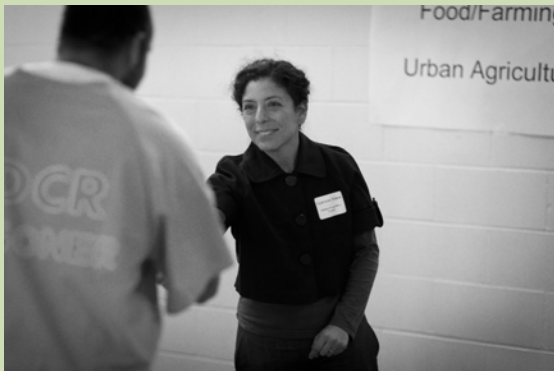


Photo courtesy Kirk Crippens

In August, we participated in San Quentin's Health Fair, providing mental health information and advice - something we are making an annual event. One of our tables was specifically devoted to providing literature regarding depression, anxiety, PTSD, bi-polar disorder, ADHD, and schizophrenia. We had experts there to discuss signs and symptoms, and to coach visitors in relaxation techniques. Our second table had physical and mental health resources for

three Bay Area counties, as well as several reentry advisors to help those being released to other counties to encourage them to sign up for reentry advising for individual help.

We also provided three health workshops in 2012: a blood pressure information session, a "how the body works" class, and a "healthy muscle" workshop.

We hope to be expanding our health and mental health information resources and classes in 2013, so stay tuned for updates. If you are interested in being involved, please contact us at [volunteer@ca-reentry.org](mailto:volunteer@ca-reentry.org). Thank you!

2012 Green Career Fair



Photo courtesy Kirk Crippens

*When They Don't Parole to CA, continued from page 1*

ily serve economic migrants going toward the United States. We helped one inmate obtain a visit from the Consulate of Mexico.

One client wanted immediate admission after discharge into a certain facility which would help him with his alcohol problems. Both the parole agent and the facility knew the inmate. We contacted the facility, which was agreeable if the parole agent also agreed. We contacted the parole agent, who wrote a letter on his behalf. On his parole date, the inmate was able to go directly to the facility.



A Typical Night at Reentry Advising

Photo courtesy Ryan Smith

Many think that our work is limited to those being released to California, but we do our best to support and inform our clients regardless of where they are returning. We do not give legal advice, but there are many resources available related to out-of-state and foreign organizations and we assist our clients in reaching out to them to prepare for success in any location.

Have you "liked" us on Facebook yet? Go here to check us out:

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/California-Reentry-Program/172253632891?ref=ts>

Following us on Twitter? Go to: <http://twitter.com/CAreentry>

## A Sampling of our Work

Two clients I've worked with stand out when I think about what I've been able to accomplish working with CRP.

In my work with Richard, I was able to help him get a letter of acceptance from Fresh Start in San Francisco, confirming his acceptance upon release into their transitional housing program. This was an important accomplishment for Richard because it will greatly improve his chances of being approved for release by the parole board.

*"I'm excited to get back to the community and get back to my life and not make the same mistakes."*

*—A sample of what CRP volunteers hear each night*

When Rudy first came to see me, he was incredibly stressed about the prospect of reentry and the challenges he will face. Meeting with him every week, we slowly worked through his questions. I helped him build his resume, and get information on several potential job opportunities. On his last visit, the only thing he wanted was a copy of the 49er's season schedule. I take that to mean he feels comfortable enough with the preparation we've done to not have any more questions for me.

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clients. They then go home, go to church, to school, to work; they talk to their children, their siblings, their parents, their friends and their coworkers. Word spreads that humanizes our clients, describes the system that they experience, and their lack of options when they are released.

I want to thank each and every current and former volunteer - including CRP's past and present board of directors - for taking the time to make such a difference both at San Quentin and our community. Our work would not be possible if not for your efforts.

-Allyson West, Executive Director

### Ways to Help

- Volunteer: Volunteers are a crucial part of CRP's work. The more volunteers we have, the more people we can help reenter society. We ask that volunteers commit a year and about 6-8 hours per week to the program.
  - ◆ Reentry Advisors are our primary need. Reentry advisors meet with inmates and research their specific questions or help develop long-term plans for their successful reentry.
  - ◆ Our Parole Clothing Program is also in need of volunteers.
- Donate: As a non-profit, CRP depends on donations to run. Money goes towards gathering resources and materials that assist prisoners in reentry, and towards the parole clothing program. We also appreciate donated clothing.
  - ◆ Donate online at [ca-reentry.org/donate](http://ca-reentry.org/donate), or
  - ◆ Donate by mail to P.O. Box 483, San Quentin, CA 94964

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