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**President's Message**

KAREN EVANS  
MCA President  
Wright County Community Corrections



August already! For me, this always signals the end of summer and of course the thought of fall and winter. Having a change of seasons, I believe, is one of the benefits of living in Minnesota, and fall can be a wonderful time of year. Fall also means that the MCA Fall Institute is just around the corner. This year's conference is scheduled for October 23 and 24, in Rochester MN. The Fall Institute Chairs and

sub-committee members are working very hard to ensure another great MCA event. Please check out the information about the conference on the MCA Website at [www.mn-ca.org](http://www.mn-ca.org) . On behalf of MCA board and committee members, we hope all members consider attending and look forward to see you in Rochester.

The Fall Institute is also a time for Minnesota Corrections professionals to network, learn and acknowledge our hard work and accomplishments. Fortunately corrections professionals are also recognized year round nationally as well. Since 1984 National Corrections Officers and Employees week takes place the first full week in May. As noted in NCJRS, "Supervising offenders in the community and preparing offenders for return to their communities are critical to protecting public safety. Community supervision officers must balance the time required to manage growing caseloads and their desire to provide offenders with the services they need to become law abiding citizens."

This year the week of July 21 -24<sup>th</sup> was National Probation, Parole and Community Supervision recognition week. This week is intended to recognize the dedication and professionalism field agents constantly emulate, and their commitment to being Change Agents.

National corrections organizations such as NCJRS and NIC recognize that public safety is the primary mission of corrections; yet also identifies that public safety includes supporting and encourage

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offenders to make positive changes and become productive citizens. Minnesota is in the fore front with this philosophy. The Department of Corrections actively promotes and supports Evidence Based Practices throughout all the delivery systems.

Thanks to the hard work of the legislative committee, Mark Haase, and liaison, Cal Saari, and many other service organizations, Minnesota became the first state to adopt a statewide "Ban the Box" law. One provision of Ban the Box legislation requires public employers to wait until a job applicant has been selected for an interview before asking about criminal history. We all know that criminal history can be a barrier to employment and success for our clients. We should be proud that MCA was a part of this initiative.

All the good things that Minnesota accomplishes in corrections would not happen without the dedication of correction's employees. One of the ways we can recognize each other's accomplishments is by nominating those deserving individuals for one of the multiple awards given to corrections professionals by MCA. If you have submitted a nomination for a 2013 award we thank you, if not, it's not too early to start thinking of next year. Help MCA acknowledge all your hard work and dedication to this profession.

Sincerely, *Karen Evans*

## Spotlight on: MCA Annual Training Institute

MONTY VIKDAL

MCA Annual Training Institute Chair

Program Manager/Community Corrections Supervisor

DFO Community Corrections



The Minnesota Corrections Association (MCA) Annual Training Institute Committee is working hard in preparation for the 2013 Annual Training Institute. We are hopeful you will join us as MCA celebrates its 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary at the Annual Training Institute in beautiful Rochester, Minnesota on October 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup>. Conference and exhibitor registration is now open. An Early Bird option for conference registration has been extended until September 15<sup>th</sup>. Please visit our website to register: <http://www.mn-ca.org/>

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The Annual Training Institute Committee has the following goals:

- Plan and organize an annual training institute that will meet the needs of the membership.
- Provide training that will attract a diverse population of participants.
- Promote teamwork in order to arrange a conference that will attract new members to participate in the planning process.
- Offer a conference with quality programming within budgetary parameters.
- Provide a venue for the annual Association business meeting.
- Provide network opportunities for corrections professionals.

Committee members include:

- **Monty Vikdal** – Chair
- **Tom Redmond** and **Tom Jungman** – Arrangements
- **Dan Raden** and **Marcie Koetke** – Program
- **Vicki Lanners** – Registration
- **Amy Moeckel** and **Shannon Fette** – Resource Fair / Hospitality-Networking

A complete list of sub-committee members can be found on the MCA website.

We are excited to have the Mayo Civic Center as our venue for the Annual Training Institute. The Mayo Civic Center is close to downtown and connected to wonderful shops and lodging options. The Kahler Grand Hotel was selected as the contract lodging option to offer overnight accommodations at a group rate. Please visit their website for details: <http://kahler.com/group/minnesota-corrections.php>

The schedule of events/program will be posted to the MCA website soon. Training tracks will include programs related to: Juveniles, Public Interests, EBP, TPC, and Special Programming. The committee is excited about a robust list of training options, a new approach to the awards ceremony, our Keynote Speaker and the possibility of a visit from our Governor to present the Corrections Person of the Year Award.

# Reconnect

LAUREN LISNER  
Amicus Intern



Hi. My name is Lauren. I live in Minneapolis and I'm currently pursuing my graduate degree in Social Work through the University of Southern California. I am completing my internship at Amicus because I'm interested in helping people clients seeking services through the Amicus *Reconnect* program. Additionally, I also work with women at MCF-Shakopee by meeting with them individually and participating in the *Sisters Helping Sisters* program. I really enjoy working at Amicus. Mark asked me to write an article about my experience for the MCA *Forum* newsletter to share with others, especially other young people who might be interested in volunteering their time in a community corrections program. So . . . here goes . . .

Think of the worst thing you have done that you don't want anyone to know about. Now imagine what it would be like to have to tell everyone about it and be judged for it every time you need something. This is what ex-offenders are up against on a daily basis. When an offender comes out of prison truly wanting to change, he needs resources and help to make it happen. If he does not get these, he has nowhere to go to except back to where he came from, which means it is going to be difficult for him to follow through on his commitment to change. This is the problem that Amicus' clients face daily as they transition back into society, determined to change themselves and their lives.

Amicus supports offenders by offering respect and programs that they need. The primary vehicle for helping clients is a program called *Reconnect*, which is a referral-based program that offers support and assistance in obtaining the basics that an individual needs to be successful in his re-entry into the community. *Reconnect* helps ex-offenders obtain services like housing, transportation, employment, hygiene products and interview clothing, to name a few. One of the great things about *Reconnect* is that services are not limited to clients only at a certain point in the criminal justice system. The expertise and care of *Reconnect's* staff is available to anyone with a criminal background whether they are awaiting release and wants to plan ahead or they have been out for a number of years and finds that their old felony charge is holding them back.

*Reconnect* staff members are experts in the hurdles that offenders need to jump and only want to see them get past these and lead a fulfilling life. Through partnerships within the community and intense involvement with clients, *Reconnect* staff is able to provide the encouragement and practical services that so many clients need in order to be successful.

Amicus is one of the few places where having a criminal background is a good thing and can get a client careful planning and compassionate service. When ex-offenders

are able to meet their basic needs through *Reconnect's* services, they are less likely to recidivate and instead have the opportunity to become productive members of society.

## Legislative Affairs – August 2013

CAL SAARI

MCA Legislative Liaison



As most of you already know, The MCA Legislative Committee is busy working on the 2014 edition of our Legislative Agenda. There is still time for all of you to participate in this process, and if you only want to make suggestions on items that should be considered, just contact a member of the legislative committee. The draft of the 2014 agenda will be completed in time to be considered by the membership at the Fall Institute in Rochester on October 23-24.

This is usually a pretty slow time in political circles although there appears to be a lot of interest in Congressional seats this year and candidates seem to be coming from everywhere expressing interest in seeking party endorsements. Also, the Republicans are working very hard to find a viable candidate to run against Senator Al Franken. On the state level, it is predicted that Republicans will be busy this fall shoring up competition to seek legislative seats as they hope to re-gain the majority in at least one of the state chambers. Because of this, don't look for any controversial issues to get a lot of attention during the next legislative session.

The 2014 Session will be what they call, "a short Session"; It's primary objective to just pass a bonding bill, that is sure to take up a lot of time since there are already approximately \$2.2 billion in requests. It is expected that the DFL majority and the Governor will submit proposals for a little under \$1 billion. The new health insurance package is also scheduled to go into effect, and we'll surely see a lot of fine tuning in that area.

Although we were pretty happy with the legislative results we had last year with our primary areas of interest, there is still a lot of work to be done and we will continue to work closely with our Corrections/Public Safety partners in pursuing those unfinished agenda items. Each of our organizations are now in the process of developing their new agendas; once this is done, we'll start serious group discussions and try to agree upon the top three or four issues we feel we can jointly pursue with the Legislature. I am anxious to have our MCA legislative agenda as soon as possible so I can start discussions with some of our key legislator supporters in how we might address some of these issues prior to the start of the 2014 Session.

Legislative Affairs will again play an active role in the MCA Fall Institute. In addition to pursuing an appearance by Governor Dayton on the opening day, we will also be presenting a Legislative Update workshop on the opening morning, featuring several key legislators in an open discussion with us on expectations for the next Session.

Although attendance has not yet been confirmed, invitations have been made to Senator Ron Latz, Chair of the Senate Judiciary Division, Senator Warren Limmer, Republican lead on that same Committee, Rep. Michael Paymar, Chair of the House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee, Rep. Steve Drazkowski, Assistant Minority Leader and member on that same House Committee and Rep. Tony Cornish, the Republican lead on the House Public Safety Finance and Policy Committee. Other invitations may also be considered depending on the hot topics that may arise just prior to our conference, but you can be assured we will have another lively and productive forum with several key legislators. We'll look forward to visiting with you at the Fall Institute.

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## 2013 Midwest Mentor Forum

MARK GROVES

Rehabilitative & Veterans Services Director, Volunteers of America – Minnesota

MCA Vice President

Mentoring programs for offenders/ex-offenders typically involve community volunteers or other ex-offenders who provide guidance and support to individuals exiting incarceration. The primary goal of mentoring focuses on addressing offenders' needs for pro-social relationships and engaging them in the community.

The professional literature indicates positive outcomes associated with offender/ex-offender mentoring programs, including:

- Misdemeanor courts utilizing volunteer mentors found that only 15 percent of probationers recidivated within 5-years as opposed to 50 percent of the probationers supervised by other courts.
- Offenders who received mentoring services in the Ready4Work Initiative were more likely to find a job and stay employed, and recidivated at a lesser rate than expected.
- Interviews with Generation 1 Prisoner Reentry Initiative (PRI) sites indicate that mentors positively impact offenders in readjusting to society and dealing with the many challenges associated with the transition.
- Circles of Support and Accountability (CoSA) programs employ groups of community volunteers to provide daily support to high-risk sex offenders transitioning from prison. These efforts to increase offenders' pro-social ties to the community have shown positive results – as much as a 70 percent reduction in sexual recidivism.

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to see there is a link between mentoring and recidivism reduction. To this end, a group of us have been quietly meeting to develop an annual Mentor Forum. Our idea is to provide a low-cost, dynamic, enjoyable forum for professionals and mentors to come together and learn the latest evidence-based



practices, promising practices and skills needed to be an effective mentor with criminal justice populations.

Watch for details on the Mentor Forum.

**Save the Date!**

**2013 Midwest Mentoring Forum**

*Equipping and Supporting Mentors for Adults Reentering After Incarceration*

**Thursday, November 7, 2013**

**1 p.m. - 7 p.m.**

**Calvary Church, 2120 Lexington Avenue, Roseville, MN**

- *Dynamic workshops for both volunteers and professionals*
- *Recruiting, training, volunteer support, boundary setting, the latest tools, and wisdom from experts in the mentoring field*
- *Network with many organizations*
- *Find the reentry mentoring opportunities right for you!*
- *We've waived the registration fee for the conference thanks to our sponsorship support, but you must still pre-register. Limited capacity!*

For more information: [www.facebook.com/2013MidwestMentoringForum](http://www.facebook.com/2013MidwestMentoringForum)

Brought to you by:  
Volunteers of America-Minnesota, Amicus, Goodwill-Easter Seals MN, IFI, R3, RAIN Homes, Twin Cities Ministries, MN Adult & Teen Challenge, Life Rebuilders, the Minnesota Department of Corrections, Calvary Church, and others!

## Evidence-Based Practice: Minnesota Department of Corrections

ALLEN GODFREY  
EBP Coordinator  
Minnesota Department of Corrections – Central Office

On any given day, there are over 116,000 individuals under some sort of correctional supervision in Minnesota's communities, with an additional 9,500 offenders housed within the state's prison facilities. Regardless of whether we represent a probation agency, a prison facility or a treatment provider, our core mission is to enhance public safety and we all have a vested interest in reducing recidivism.

To achieve the goal of a safer Minnesota, correctional agencies have shifted efforts toward implementing Evidence-Based Practices (EBP) principles. For almost the past

two decades, correctional agencies have been privy to research and training on the most effective interventions for reducing recidivism. We know “what works.” We understand the need for training on fundamental EBP principles that include offender engagement, use of Motivational Interviewing, use of validated risk assessment tools to guide decisions around supervision and effective interventions, working collaboratively with offenders on goals and strategies around change and addressing offenders’ critical thinking skills. Lastly, we also understand the importance of using data to help guide our decisions on the effectiveness of correctional practices and where to shift resources that truly make a difference. We know what to do. The larger question that now faces Minnesota’s correctional agencies is the importance of implementing those EBP principles with fidelity.

Collaborating with other correctional agencies is essential to successfully implementing EBP practices and reducing recidivism. Correctional agencies rarely have all of the resources and expertise to effectively implement core EBP practices. This is mainly due to the fact that most agencies must rely on line staff to train others on EBP principles while this same staff also maintains full-time correctional responsibilities. Training is above and beyond an agent’s normal duties. Correctional agencies are also faced with tight resources and often do not have in-house trainers in all areas of EBP. To fulfill training needs, the agencies must rely on staff from other agencies to provide that training. Thus collaboration and sharing of trainers across correctional agencies is essential for EBP to be implemented successfully.

To assist in this endeavor, the focus of my position as the Minnesota Department of Corrections’ EBP Coordinator is to provide a focal point for technical assistance in establishing and coordinating training opportunities for EBP across the state, enhancing support for quality assurance efforts and collecting data to show the value of our correctional system interventions. We then can demonstrate that we are creating a safer Minnesota by implementing EBP principles.

To coordinate EBP training, the Minnesota Department of Corrections, along with the trainers across the three probation delivery systems, have been working together to offer trainings regionally on a wide variety of EBP-related topics. This increased coordination helps ensure that EBP trainings are being offered and are accessible regardless of your agency’s location. To better understand the need for EBP training, a survey was used to determine which areas are in need of specific EBP trainings. Once training options have been established, we will work to increase communication on training availability. This process greatly assisted in rolling out training for the LS/CMI, and YLS/CMI 2.0 risk/need assessment tools. Case plan training should commence this fall and will be offered to correctional agencies to meet the requirements of their staff being trained in Motivational Interviewing and risk assessment instruments.

The State of Minnesota has also been partnering with correctional agencies in coordination of quality assurance efforts that can be measured across the state and providing data on our proficiency in implementing EBP practices. A good example of



this work is in the area of LS/CMI. For the first time, all of the state's correctional supervision agencies will be participating in a single process for measuring accuracy in scoring the LS/CMI for risk and needs for adult offenders. The plan is to measure yearly, and in 2014 juvenile probation agents using the YLS/CMI 2.0 will also be participating in this proficiency scoring exercise. The data from the scoring exercise is being used to help guide future booster trainings in risk assessments areas identified as the most problematic in scoring. As part of the case plan trainings commencing this fall, correctional managers across the state will also be participating in forums to understand the case planning process that will be taught to their staff. The forum is designed to define quality assurance methods for tracking staff's process for setting and tracking offender goals.

For the future of corrections, quality assurance and implementing EBP with fidelity is the key. With the development of outcome measures to define our level of proficiency in implementing EBP, we will have increased confidence in staff's understanding of EBP principles. However, for corrections, the goal is not just knowing that our staff understands EBP-related concepts, but rather ensuring that the concepts are truly being integrated into our work with offenders. This level of fidelity comes with ongoing measurement of the delivery of EBP practices with offenders based on observation, staff receiving feedback, coaching and ongoing practice.

Providing this level of support is the next critical step for the state to implement EBP with fidelity. This support includes the development and implementation of quality assurance trainings and ongoing discussion forums specifically designed for staff that monitor or supervise EBP implementation within an organization. In addition, feedback on the delivery of EBP practices should not be just a yearly event connected to a performance review, but incorporated into daily practices so that feedback happens continually throughout the year. Staff members will receive ongoing feedback on their progress and will continually be learning to enhance their skills.

Lastly, increased efficiency for obtaining quality assurance data on EBP implementation regardless of an agency's size is needed. Most agencies do not have their own research staff or dedicated resources to track EBP implementation. To provide ease in data reporting on EBP quality assurance across the state, our current data management systems need to be evaluated, and based on suggested changes, modifications will need to be made so data entry captures EBP fidelity within standardized reports. In addition, the creation of specific recidivism data that is directly linked to our EBP implementation efforts will be needed. This data will help provide further support on the need to enhance EBP efforts statewide and the value of correctional services.

This is an exciting time as we move towards implementing EBP with fidelity. If you have questions on EBP-related implementation practices, I can be reached at [Allen.Godfrey@state.mn.us](mailto:Allen.Godfrey@state.mn.us) or 651-361-7295.

# Career Website Helps Job-Seekers with Records STEP AHEAD

DENISE FELDER

Content & Outreach Specialist

iSeek Solutions

Finding employment and becoming financially stable are important parts of transitioning back into the community. So are having self-awareness and positive personal goals. Job seekers with criminal histories can gain these success indicators by investing in their own career planning, and not only focusing on short-sighted employment goals.

The STEP AHEAD website and workbook address the career planning and job search needs of recently released job seekers.

- Incarcerated job seekers can access STEP AHEAD on the Offender Network inside Minnesota Department of Corrections (DOC) state facilities.
- Recently released job seekers and anyone with Internet access can go to the STEP AHEAD website on ISEEK ([www.iseek.org/exoffenders/index.html](http://www.iseek.org/exoffenders/index.html)).
- A PDF of the 68-page workbook is linked on the front page of STEP AHEAD ([www.iseek.org/iseek/static/STEP-AHEAD-Workbook.pdf](http://www.iseek.org/iseek/static/STEP-AHEAD-Workbook.pdf)).

STEP AHEAD is organized around six career-planning steps to find employment choices, discover job-training options, make positive decisions, or learn how to advance in a career. The website uses data from ISEEK.org and the Minnesota Department of Employment and Economic Development (DEED), along with information from DOC, the Minnesota WorkForce Centers, Goodwill/Easter Seals, and other trusted career sources to give job seekers with criminal records the information they need to make good choices.

A cross-agency workgroup met for several months to discuss what information and resources were most pertinent to newly released job seekers. The result of those conversations and other analysis led to STEP AHEAD, which launched in summer of 2012. It's one of the only comprehensive career information website in the United States specifically for people with felony convictions.

In the spring of 2013, the Minnesota Career and Technical Education unit (CTE) helped Goodwill/Easter Seals to collaborate with iSeek Solutions to create the STEP AHEAD workbook to assist with immediate job search activities, and to add career resources for people with disabilities to the website. iSeek Solutions is a joint-powers organization of education and workforce development agencies.

Highlights of STEP AHEAD's content, data and resources include:

## **Assess Yourself**

- Identifying work skills and strengths
- Matching interests to work options
- Why values matter

### **Explore Careers**

- Wages and education requirements for more than 500 career
- Green careers and other career options
- “Caution” indicates occupations not open to those with felony convictions

### **Create a Plan & Set Goals**

- How to disclose a criminal history or a disability
- Career plan timetable
- SMART goals and other decision-making exercises

### **Expand Skills**

- Skills gained in prison
- Financial aid eligibility
- Job training, college, and apprenticeship search tool

### **Find a Job**

- Barred occupations and work restrictions
- Common jobs for the newly released
- Vocational Rehabilitation and other employment services

### **Manage Your Career**

- Dealing with setbacks
- Managing your finances
- Success stories

Job seekers can use the STEP AHEAD website or workbook on their own, or with an adviser. The organization and content were created for job seekers not familiar with using websites; all content is written at a 6<sup>th</sup> grade reading level or lower.

## **Life Rebuilders**

GARY PARKER

President/CEO, Life Rebuilders

Midwest Challenge, Inc. began in 1972 when the mayor of Minneapolis commissioned a police officer, Al Palmquist, to put together a program that would be effective in changing lives of hurting and desperate people. Today Midwest Challenge doing business as Life Rebuilders (LRB), a 68-bed residential program for men 18-years and older located in Minneapolis, Apple Valley and Lakeville. The program’s urban location is conveniently situated near main bus lines into downtown and out to suburban areas. The program consists of a variety of services and functions together with 24-hour supervision and monitoring of all residents.



The mission of Midwest Challenge is to transform lives through the application of Biblical principles and practices. This is accomplished through group and individual life

coach/mentoring sessions that focuses on assisting the residents to take responsibility for their actions, to change faulty thinking patterns and develop more adaptive coping skills. In addition LRB works with the men to develop skills in obtaining and maintaining employment, to practice responsible money management, to develop and maintain a healthy support network in the community, to learn more healthy use of free time, and to deepen their spiritual lives.

**The program objectives of Life Rebuilders are to:**

- Assist clients in becoming responsible, contributing members of the community, while providing the community a safe, low-risk, well-monitored vehicle for re-integrating residents inmates into their midst.
- Provide the state and county correctional systems a well-structured, cost-effective, high-quality reentry program with effective monitoring and reporting systems.
- Employ and develop quality staff who are trained and equipped, and who have the necessary resources to carry out their tasks.
- Monitor the effectiveness of the program by an ongoing evaluation system.

Life Rebuilders helps the men focus on their faith, family and finances by stressing a need for the men to:

- Find a church home.
- Find a healthy support group like AA, NA or Celebrate Recovery.
- Find a stable men's networking or Bible study group to attend.
- Give back to the community through tasks of service and work on re-uniting the men with their family members. Mainly their children in an effort to break the cycle of incarceration in families. A majority of men in prison today come from fatherless homes!

For more information about Life Rebuilders, please contact Keely Perry at: 763-772-7285 or [keely.perry@mwcmn.org](mailto:keely.perry@mwcmn.org).

## 3D Printing Advancements and Amazing 4D on the Way

DAVID HEATH

MCA Technology Committee Chair



It seems 3D printing is finally coming into its own with more and more products made by 3D printers in the news. It all started with making plastic trinkets and small knick knacks and has evolved to automatic weapons and jet engine parts to life saving medical devices. A 3D Printer builds up an object layer by layer using a variety of methods to deposit and harden the "ink," which is not really ink but any number of different types of materials.

3D printing started with plastics but now metal can be printed in an environment that prevents oxidation. The resulting properties of the metal are almost identical to bulk metal. Aircraft technology has complex parts produced in small quantities where this technology is useful. At the University of Washington they are working on using glass-ceramic composites that could be used in everything from armor to building materials. One concept is a disposable ceramic flak jacket with custom tailored inserts which would be a big improvement. Medicine is also putting the technology to great use.

In May 2013, surgeons saved the life of a person with a biodegradable plastic tracheal 3D splint they expect the body to absorb in three years. Other medical innovations are breathable light plastic splints for broken bones instead of the traditional hot bulky plaster casts. Other areas of use in the medical field are "Cell Printers" which spray a precise stream of gel containing living cells. They hope to produce body parts that can grow with an individual such as a heart valve in a child. A traditional plastic heart valve would have to be replaced as the child matures. The medical hope is a valve made of a patient's own cells might grow with them. On the other side of the coin, there are handguns and automatic weapons being made by 3D printers in the news causing a stir in how they would be regulated in gun control. Our world is changing from 3D printing.

Just for the record, to make things with a 3D printer, you need to be well versed in Computer Automated Design (CAD) or, purchase a download file with the printer instructions to create the object desired. As one CAD engineer described, just like printing a letter you need to write it first. The same is true with CAD, and not everyone is an engineer, designer or artisan that can create the program to make the object or part.

Young students are creating a number of new ideas for the 3D technology as they are not pre-programmed to think within the traditional engineering box. They see a need and say, "I can make that," and produce the code to create it with less restrictions on what is designed. In terms of cost, 3D printing is dropping in price with a high end 3D printer making specialized parts in manufacturing costing \$30K a few years ago has now fallen to about \$20K. Desktop 3D printing at home making simple quirky knick knacks is much cheaper, but there are now warnings coming out that it might be hazardous to your health. Some studies have said it may be as bad as smoking cigarettes from breathing small particles of plastics during the print process. Maybe stick to spraying baking powder and making fancy edible cookies which incidentally is also being done. Plastic trinkets aren't worth getting sick over.

With that being said, I will move to Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) which is developing 4D printing with molecular self-assembly. This is truly amazing stuff. This technology aims to enable 3D printed materials to be programmed to self-assemble into pre-defined shapes and structures. The 4D printing process involves the use of materials that change their shape in response to movement or environmental factors such as the presence of water, air or temperature changes.

It could make it easier to build in extreme environments or other planets where construction is expensive or dangerous. Currently, MIT demonstrates the process with a small strand of smart material that folds into the MIT logo when placed in water. Here is the future thought process on 4D technology. Just imagine buying a flat carton of furniture at the store, bringing it home in a small car and watch it assemble itself after you take it out of the box. Future products may no longer say assembly required on the cartons like almost everything you buy is now a days.

I want a camping tent that will set itself up when it starts to rain. Just throw it out of your car window and watch it turn into a shelter complete with cot berths and all. All this stuff seems pretty far-fetched but maybe it isn't. At least the geniuses working on this stuff are making progress for sure. If I recall correctly, there was supposedly a metal foil object that would spring back into its original shape when crunched up in the infamous Roswell incident that disappeared during the investigation. It makes a person wonder...

I guess us humanoids are pretty smart, too, when given enough development time. Check out the reference links for more detailed reading:

<http://whyfiles.org/2013/3-d-printing-wave-of-the-future/>  
<http://www.gizmag.com/4d-printing-self-assembly/27734/>

## MINNCOR Industries: Better Products - Safer Communities

DAVID RESCHETZ  
Print Account Manager  
MINNCOR – Minnesota Department of Corrections

MINNCOR Industries is Minnesota's state prison industry program. Although prison industries have been around in Minnesota for over 100 years, MINNCOR was formed in 1994 to integrate and centralize the administration and sales functions for the various



industry operations. Financially self-sufficient since FY 2003, MINNCOR has demonstrated its ability to coordinate and maintain prison industries that are efficient, productive and safe. Receiving no state subsidies, taxpayer dollars or grants, MINNCOR offers premium products and services to various markets and industries. MINNCOR operates over 18 different business units which are located in 6 of Minnesota's

Correctional Facilities including the women's prison in Shakopee.



MINNCOR currently employs more than 1,200 offenders accounting for over 13 percent of the total incarcerated population of 9,200.

MINNCOR produces license plates, wood and metal furniture, custom cabinetry, seating and upholstery, garments, laundry services, cleaning chemicals, metal work and welding (including fishing piers and snow plow parts), offender canteen, sub-contract labor services and custom printing.



The MINNCOR Industries Print Division is a full service printing and bindery operation located at our Minnesota Correctional Facility in Moose Lake. We specialize in high quality one, two and four color printing. We print for state agencies, cities, counties, schools (K-12), colleges, universities and private non-profit organizations. Our mission includes teaching offenders useable skills while

using the latest in printing technology available so they become skilled, experienced workers. These skills are easily transferrable to the printing industry upon offender release. MINNCOR Print is fully financially self-sufficient just like all of the other MINNCOR business units.

MINNCOR is also very proud of its EMPLOY Program. EMPLOY was started in 2006 and designed to reduce recidivism by helping released offenders to locate, gain and retain employment. Participants are taught work ethics and how to utilize work experience and skills during their incarceration. Employ helps the offenders to utilize what they have learned and use that positively to secure and maintain employment. EMPLOY offers support for one year following an inmate's release. EMPLOY is proud of the fact that counting the offenders who have worked for MINNCOR and participated in EMPLOY, Minnesota has one of the lowest recidivism rates of any prison industry in the country.



MINNCOR's newest initiative is a new program called MINNCOR Bridge. This is a 3 month program that will give a selected group of work release offender's employment with MINNCOR in a non-correctional setting. They will learn work skills and ethics, and EMPLOY staff will work with them daily on job search and resume building skills. All of this will be to aid in their successful transition back into

the community and private employment.

# Strangers in a strange land

DAN CAIN  
President, RS Eden



Over the past 30 years, the amount of time served for criminal activity has risen dramatically. This is particularly true for those who have served time for serious crimes. At the same time, the world has changed dramatically. Freedom used to mean that, once released, the only people who had access to your status were those who you told, your parole officer and law enforcement. Now anyone with a computer and ten dollars can find out virtually anything about anyone. Land line telephones are on their way to becoming obsolete. Cars talk to their driver.

At the same time, a life sentence does not necessarily mean the offender will die in prison. Increased numbers of people being released to the community after decades of incarceration requires that we rethink some aspects of correctional practice.

## Background

People sentenced to life imprisonment for 1<sup>st</sup> degree murder in Minnesota, are required to serve a minimum of 30 years incarcerated. This was increased from a 17 year minimum in 1989. After the minimum term of incarceration, parole may be granted by the Commissioner of Corrections, upon recommendation from an internal review team with victim input. Prior to 2010, parole was rare. Since 2010 there have been a number of offenders serving life sentences who were paroled into the community.

In response to the reentry needs of long term offenders, in January 2013, I offered our space to a group of ex-offenders, all of whom had served a long period of incarceration for some type of homicide, for the purpose of mutual support. Participation in the group is totally voluntary with no contractual arrangement with the Department of Corrections for this service, although the Department was involved in preliminary planning and helpful in identifying potential participants. While initial planning limited participation to those serving a life sentence, further consideration resulted in allowing those who served a sentence for 2<sup>nd</sup> degree murder, generally incarcerated for 16-24 years, to participate as well. My role as facilitator has been essentially to buy the pizza and get out of the way, allowing the group to take whatever direction the participants choose and offering limited input and direction.

A poll of likely participants determined that the last Friday evening of every month was the most convenient meeting time, despite the fact that they worked all week.

To date there have been 13 participants who have served anywhere from 16 years to 36 years incarcerated in a single block of time. They have been in the community for as long as 6 years, and as short as 60 days. There have also been two additional participants who have not yet been released and who call in on speaker phone. At this point, all are men.

### **Initial Observation**

First and foremost, this group has reached a level of cohesiveness in a very short period of time. Even though they are extremely diverse in terms of their criminality and history, they are motivated and committed to each other. Having the shared experience of serving a long period of incarceration, many at the same time and in the same institution, they are reminiscent of people who have served together in combat situations, sharing camaraderie across personality types that are usually not seen in offenders. Some have been addicts, some career criminals, some whose crime was one of passion, some whose crime was precipitated by the belief that they were protecting themselves or their family, and some whose crime was their one and only contact with the justice system.

In the course of serving their time in prison, they matured to where they avoided the people and behaviors that many engage in our correctional institutions. They came to the realization that they could spend the rest of their lives in prison and as such, found a way to do so with a minimal amount of conflict or involvement with prison gamesmanship. Some were active in gangs, drugs and violence early in their prison careers, even rising to a level of notoriety in the prison pecking order, but virtually all came to shun such things as they got further into their sentences. Most, but not all, had at some point in their incarceration, participated in some type of treatment or other Department of Corrections directed service or intervention.

Because they had adopted a resolute mindset that they may never get out of prison, when they were notified that release was an achievable goal, they developed a sense of anticipation and excitement over the prospect. Once released this was tempered by disappointment and frustration over the familial, social, housing and vocational situations and challenges they faced on the outside.

### **Isolation and Alienation**

In listening to the participants, there was universal agreement that a feeling of isolation marks the biggest challenge. This relates back to the observed similarity to combat veterans. Their shared incarceration experiences, as well as their crimes, leave them feeling as though they are different, and they only feel normal when they are with those who share those experiences. Like combat veterans they have things they do not want to talk about with anyone else. But it's important to note that those things do not necessarily relate to circumstances of their crimes or imprisonment, but more frustration of trying to fit in and the physical and emotional challenges they face. It would be easy to chalk this up to not wanting to appear weak or inadequate to others. But it appears to be more a reflection of the intimacy they have developed with each other and their belief that their uniqueness means that only those who share those experiences will empathize and understand.

The isolation extends to family as well. Most recognize the fact that their families love and support them, and their homecoming was generally described as joyful. But after

the initial exuberance wore off the feeling of isolation returned and there was a real or imagined separation, with some group members expressing that their families didn't know how to talk to them, treated them as though they were overly vulnerable and were overly cautious around them. This last reaction was not seen as an attempt to protect family members as much as a fear of the offender returning to potentially problematic behaviors. In addition, there is the obvious issue of changing family makeup. While the individual was incarcerated, some family members had died, some had been born, some who were children at the time the offender was incarcerated were now adults and had their own families, there were marriages and divorces, and what may have been an intimate family unit now included people that were largely strangers to the offender.

Families and social groups can be intertwined and at times in conflict with each other. Several participants were familiar with an ex-offender who is currently in the news accused of murdering and dismembering his wife. One individual spoke of how he had had the accused over to his house for dinner. After the account in the newspaper, his family expressed concern and outrage over the fact that he had brought this person into their home. As stated earlier, group members had over time developed a familiarity and intimacy with each other that was missing once they were released. Several spoke about how their closest friends, if not their only friends, were people with whom they served time. In retrospect, after living next to someone for as long as 30+ years, that's to be expected. The group provided feedback that, having affection and connectivity for other offenders was common, but that firm boundaries needed to be set, and accepted; essentially acknowledging that they would always care about those they shared the experience with, but that actual contact needed to be limited to those who were serious, in both their attitude and behavior, about being pro-social and law abiding.

### **A Job and A Place to Live**

The lack of options for jobs and housing for ex-offenders is well documented. With offenders who have been incarcerated for long periods of time this is even more frustrating. Many of them undertook educational or vocational enhancements while in the institution, only to find that once they were released, opportunities to utilize their skills were extremely limited. Perhaps the best illustration of this is the individual who served the most time, who took advantage of educational opportunities to become certified as a computer programmer and software engineer. As a result of universal background checks and systematically imposed collateral sanctions he is unable to find employment in his chosen field. In addition, since work release requires him to be employed within 30 days or return to the institution he, like most others, is limited to sub-standard employment or temporary employment agencies. The difficulty with these types of employment is they usually require a substantial physical effort. And many of these individual having spent long periods in prison have aged to where the effort is beyond their ability.

Housing is also problematic, because of the wide use of background checks and lack of rental history, many move in with family. Even this is prohibited in some cases, such as where the family lives in public housing and their continued tenancy prohibits allowing the offender to live there. The family is forced to either move, and likely lose subsidized housing, or to deny the offender access to shared housing. In other cases landlords, faced with multiple applicants for rental housing and the potential liability, simply refuse to rent to any felon, much less to one who took a life.

In addition to the obstacles to employment and housing, the mere technological and societal advances of the past two to three decades prove to be a challenge. Think about the world in 1983 and contrast it with today. Commodore computers, \$1.00 a gallon gasoline, land line telephones are all a thing of the past, The availability of background information, then limited to the judiciary and law enforcement, is now readily available to anyone. In addition to longer incarceration time, many States, including Minnesota, have instituted multiple collateral sanctions.

### **Change Can Lead to Crisis**

Change does not come easy to anyone. Imagine yourself in a strange land, with strange customs, and an unfamiliar language, faced with finding a way to blend in. At every stage of the release process there is a change, and for most, every change becomes a crisis, at least temporarily. For instance, most are released through a process that begins with minimum security in the institution, followed by a work crew, followed by release to a half-way house and work release, followed by a less structured living environment while continuing on work release, followed by intensive community supervision.

- In the institution, many of these offenders have risen to a position of trust and familiarity with those who supervise them. They often have good institutional jobs and enjoy as comfortable existence as is possible under the circumstances. When they move to minimum security they are supervised by new, unfamiliar people. They may also be on electronic monitoring. In one case, a participant was living outside the perimeter and the battery on their electronic bracelet went dead. Officers from inside the institution came out, in the middle of the night, and returned him to the secure part of the institution without explanation. Once the mechanical malfunction was identified he was returned to minimum security, but not until the next day. **Crisis.**
- Also in minimum security offenders participate in work crews where work can be physically challenging. As mentioned earlier, many do not have the physical ability to do this type of work, but fear if they don't they will be placed inside the walls. **Crisis.**
- Once sent to the half-way house, they find themselves with the very offenders they have learned to avoid in the institution. Most do not interact well with young offenders, many of whom are involved with gangs, listen to loud music and exhibit less than pro-social attitudes. **Crisis.**



- The half-way houses have restrictions and rules that are often more restrictive than minimum security. For instance, when they're out job seeking or otherwise away from the facility, offenders are required to call in and acknowledge their whereabouts at scheduled intervals. Yet possession and use of cell phones is prohibited. With the advance of cell phone technology pay phones have become largely non-existent. So an offender seeking employment can find themselves in a position where they need to ask their prospective employer to use a land line phone to call the half-way house, at a specific time, or risk being in violation of the rules and potentially their release. **Crisis.**
- Light rail and rapid bus transit were not part of the transportation menu until the last decade. Getting on a bus or train that does not stop at every corner can result in being late for your return to the half-way house, potentially resulting in a rule violation. When faced with this situation some offenders have relied on cabs, which severely affects their financial situation. **Crisis.**
- When the offender moves from the half-way house, they often do so while still on electronic monitoring. But in addition to being on GPS or RF monitoring, they may also be on remote alcohol testing that results in a phone call being made at random intervals, and them being instructed to blow into a device that is connected to their telephone line. In the case of those who move in with family, this can result in calls during nighttime hours when the family is asleep. A sympathetic family member, regularly awakened from a deep sleep by an early morning call, may reevaluate their hospitality. **Crisis.**
- Throughout the process outlined above, the offender is supervised by the Department of Corrections. In the half-way house, work release and community phase this supervision is done by the same individual. Once they complete the second phase of work release, their supervision is usually transferred to a supervised release agent in their county of residence. Given differing supervision philosophies in different counties this can influence where an individual chooses to live. For instance, one individual was offered a lucrative job in rural county that would have required a move to that county. They feared the more aggressive supervision and surveillance policy of the new county so chose to turn down the job. **Crisis.**

As each of these experiences become more familiar, they become less stressful and over time evolve into the offender's "new normal." But until they do they are often a source of anger, fear and trepidation. Most of the time in prison was marked by a certain level of consistency. Adapting to inconsistency and the unknown, until familiar, is a source of stress and frustration.

### **If to Tell, When to Tell, How to Tell**

Whether or not to share one's criminal and correctional history with others became the topic of discussion on a number of occasions. The range of input went from don't tell unless you absolutely have to, to tell after you've developed a relationship with



someone, to one person who felt they should throw it out simply for shock value. At this point, virtually all of the participants see themselves as different from “normal” people. Most expressed a desire to simply be normal. One of the most interesting examples of sharing came from an individual who had been out of the institution for about 2-years. He had worked next to an elderly man for nearly the entire time he was in the community and had a friendly relationship with him. One day there was a news story on the radio about an offender and the elderly man opined that, “those people should never get out.” The group member said, “I’m one of those people”. The elderly man asked him what he did, “steal something?” The group member responded, “no, I took someone’s life.” Instead of creating a barrier or separation, the familiarity previously established resulted in a change in the old man’s attitude. Now he affectionately refers to the group member as “Killer.” They have their own little secret.

The group seems to have an appreciation for honesty, but they still cautiously wrestle with openness.

### **Commitment to Each Other, to Victims and to the Process**

There appears to be a sense of responsibility and commitment to each other that is often missing in offender groups. Support for each other is a given and taken for granted. This despite the personality difference noted earlier.

Some group members have taken to providing care packages and critical information; bus routes, how to get a driver’s license, where to seek help with housing; to others when they are released.

Some, usually those with connections who have been in the community for longer periods of time, have found gainful employment and housing. To the extent possible, they try to pass on to the others the opportunities they were given.

While reluctant to involve Department of Corrections staff in the group process, there is an appreciation for some of the people who have worked with them and recognition of the opportunity they have been given. They are particularly struck by the integrity of the current Commissioner and his willingness to take calculated risk.

One individual spoke of how, during a time of extreme loneliness and frustration, he considered doing something that would return him to prison. He reluctantly shared that what stopped him was not concern for his family, but concern over the debt he owed to his victim and their family, along with the fact that he would be letting those who are coming behind him down, and possibly make it harder for them to win their release.

### **Conclusion**

It is too early in the process to draw any meaningful conclusions, but preliminary indications are positive. As a former offender and convict, I know that people can present one way and ultimately act a different way to please their service providers.

But in this case it is difficult to see an incentive for doing so, unless they just like free pizza. They are already in the community, they are all presently in good standing with their release plan, and participation is voluntary. Furthermore, they give up time that is normally set aside for recreation and rest to participate.

Early indications are, that they view participation the way an alcoholic might view participation in Alcoholics Anonymous. Participation provides fellowship with a group of people they share an accomplishment with; support, empathy; accountability and advice for how to continue; and a release valve from the stress and feelings of isolation they may experience outside the group.

## The *Lighter* Side

It seems a man, wanting to rob a downtown Bank of America, walked into the branch and wrote, "This iz a stikkup. Put all your muny in this bag." While standing in line, waiting to give his note to the teller, he began to worry that someone had seen him write the note and might call the police before he reached the teller window. So he left the Bank of America and crossed the street to Wells Fargo. After waiting a few minutes in line, he handed his note to the Wells Fargo teller. She read it and, surmising from his spelling errors that he was not the brightest light in the harbor, told him that she could not accept this stick up note because it was written on a Bank of America deposit slip and that he would either have to fill out a Wells Fargo deposit slip or go back to Bank of America. Looking somewhat defeated, the man said "OK" and left. The Wells Fargo teller then called the police who arrested the man a few minutes later, as he was waiting in line back at Bank of America.

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45 year old Amy Brasher was arrested in San Antonio, Texas after a mechanic reported to police that 18 packages of marijuana were packed in the engine compartment of the car which she had brought to the mechanic for an oil change. According to police, Brasher later said that she didn't realize that the mechanic would have to raise the hood to change the oil.

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Drug possession defendant Christopher Jansen, on trial in March in Pontiac, Michigan, said he had been searched without a warrant. The prosecutor said the officer didn't need a warrant because a "bulge" in Christopher's jacket could have been a gun. Nonsense, said Christopher, who happened to be wearing the same jacket that day in court. He handed it over so the judge could see it. The judge discovered a packet of cocaine in the pocket and laughed so hard he required a five-minute recess to compose himself.

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Clever drug traffickers used a propane tanker truck entering El Paso from Mexico. They rigged it so propane gas would be released from all of its valves while the truck concealed

6,240 pounds of marijuana. They were clever, but not bright. They misspelled the name of the gas company on the side of the truck.

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### ***The Special Mike Tyson Award:***

*Oklahoma City:* Dennis Newton was on trial for the armed robbery of a convenience store in a district court this week when he fired his lawyer. Assistant district attorney Larry Jones said Newton, 47, was doing a fair job of defending himself until the store manager testified that Newton was the robber. Newton jumped up, accused the woman of lying and then said, "I should of blown your [expletive] head off." The defendant paused, then quickly added, "-if I'd been the one that was there." The jury took 20 minutes to convict Newton and recommended a 30 year sentence.

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R.C. Gaitlin, 21, walked up to two patrol officers who were showing their squad car computer equipment to children in a Detroit neighborhood. When he asked how the system worked, the officer's asked him for a piece of identification. Gaitlin gave them his driver's license, they entered it into the computer, and moments later they arrested Gaitlin because information on the screen showed Gaitlin was wanted for a two year old armed robbery in St. Louis, Missouri.

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### ***Mega Moron Awards***

*Ann Arbor:* The Ann Arbor News crime column reported that a man walked into a Burger King in Ypsilanti, Michigan at 12:50am, flashed a gun and demanded cash. The clerk turned him down because he said he couldn't open the cash register without a food order. When the man ordered onion rings, the clerk said they weren't available for breakfast. The man, frustrated, walked away.

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*Kentucky:* Two men tried to pull the front off a cash machine by running a chain from the machine to the bumper of their pickup truck. Instead of pulling the front panel off the machine, though, they pulled the bumper off their truck. Scared, they left the scene and drove home. With the chain still attached to the machine. With their bumper still attached to the chain. With their vehicle's license plate still attached to the bumper.

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*Kentwood Michigan:* A fellow filled out an application to attend the Kentwood Citizens Police Academy, which educates citizens about police procedures, the criminal justice system, how to avoid being a victim of crime, etc. etc. In a routine background check, this fellow was found to be wanted on an outstanding warrant. Rather than attend the Academy, he went to jail.

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***And the funniest one of all time.....***

*Florida:* A thief burst into the bank one day wearing a ski mask and carrying a gun. Aiming his gun at the guard, the thief yelled, "FREEZE, MOTHER-STICKERS, THIS IS A F\*\*\*UP!" For a moment, everyone was silent. Then the snickers started. The guard completely lost it and doubled over laughing. It probably saved his life, because he'd been about to draw his gun. He couldn't have drawn and fired before the thief got him. The thief ran away and is still at large. In memory of the event, the bank later put a plaque on the wall engraved "Freeze, mother-stickers, this is a f\*\*\*up!"

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*FORUM* is published six times a year by the Minnesota Corrections Association, a nonprofit professional association incorporated in Minnesota. Articles submitted by our membership do not express the views of MCA or the board of directors.

Articles may be submitted to the 2013 *FORUM* editor Mark Groves at [mark.groves@voamn.org](mailto:mark.groves@voamn.org). Articles should not be of the nature of a commercial solicitation of products or services; rather, they should be informative on topics of interest to MCA membership at large.

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