



Turning a Negative into a Positive: Inmate Gunn Success Story



Inmate P. Gunn (left) and Inmate E. Pritchard (right) pictured in the programming orientation room at VSP.

➔ Valley State Prison (VSP) life term inmate, Paladin Gunn, found the facility orientation room lacking real feeling and function. The room is used by inmates for a variety of reasons including clearing one's head before a parole board meeting, getting reassigned to another program or counselor, or preparing to go into a new program. Gunn began to see inmates going in and out of the orientation room frustrated or angry on a regular basis. This prompted him to transform the orientation room into a more positive and functional space.

"The In-Prison Programs are the foundation to my change and the man I am today." — *Paladin Gunn, inmate at VSP.*

THE CHANGE

After obtaining appropriate permission, Gunn turned the blank walls of the orientation room into a collection of informational resources. He categorized and color-coded materials including personal resources he accumulated over the years as a life term inmate.

Materials found in the VSP orientation room include:

- DRP rehabilitation posters and other information explaining how to help inmates become more employable
- legal information including social security, disability, taxes and financial assistance contacts
- color-coded maps with jobs/vocational work, education, medical and transitional homes
- training centers, unions and companies known to hire ex-felons
- victims impact poster displaying consequences of criminal activity
- reentry housing options and free clothing resources once on parole
- free education, grants, loans, scholarships, and website contact information

THE JOURNEY

Gunn's transformation and positivity did not happen overnight. He came to prison at 22 years old, serving a 15-to-life sentence for committing a murder in 1997. For years, Gunn tried to change his behavior and way of thinking that led to his incarceration, only to relapse multiple times. It wasn't until Gunn began In-Prison Programming that he heard his same story from other inmates and realized his story was not unique, and thus began his transformation. With the help of dedicated staffers, whom Gunn referred to as "Agents of Change," he began his rehabilitative journey. Gunn was scheduled for release to parole in July 2015 and will utilize Community and Reentry Services specific to his needs. He will enter the community with three Career Technical Education certificates in welding, automotive mechanics,

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OCE IN THE CLASSROOM



The eight-week Inside Out program at California Rehabilitation Center (CRC). Professor Tessa Hicks and Andre Wakefield in class with Pitzer College students and CRC inmate students. Pitzer College is a private liberal arts college located in Claremont, CA. Pitzer is working in collaboration with CRC for this program.



eReader training by Phylance Nashe of Innertainment Delivery Systems (IDS). IDS is the company providing the eReaders to CDCR, including training and support. The eReaders are part of the growing collection of DRP's rehabilitative advancements.



Inmates in the new CRC General Education Development testing lab.

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“Today’s inmate is tomorrow’s neighbor”

— Ralph Diaz, Deputy Director, Division of Adult Institutions

Academic Education

Increasing an inmate’s proficiency to the 9th grade reading level, and achieving a GED or high school diploma. Access to college courses also available.

Arts in Corrections

Programs in theater, dance, music and art instill pro-social behavior, self-esteem and problem solving skills.

CAL-ID Card Program

Assists in obtaining state-issued California identification cards used to secure employment, housing, bank accounts, travel, and more.

Career Technical Education

Prepares inmates for viable vocational career paths upon release by training to industry certification levels.

Cognitive Behavioral Treatment

Provides evidence-based treatment for substance abuse, anger management, family relationships and criminal thinking.

Long-Term Offender Pilot Program

Provides evidenced-based treatment programming in criminogenic behavior to inmates serving long-term sentences.

Offender Mentor Certification

Trains and certifies long-term inmates as interns to assist as mentors in various substance abuse treatment programs.

Transitions

Provides job readiness skills, including job search, resume, interviewing, financial skills and access to career centers.

Reentry Hubs

Provides relevant training and services to eligible and interested inmates within four years of release.

Step Down Program

Provides alternatives to a criminal gang lifestyle to reduce confinement in Security Housing Units (SHU).

Single Level and Multi-Level Substance Abuse Treatment

Promotes positive social behavior and helps inmates develop the knowledge and skills necessary to avoid substance use relapse and successfully reintegrate back into the community, through single and multi-level substance abuse treatment programs.

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and electrical construction. Gunn’s long term goal is to work as an alcohol and drug counselor at a hospital once he is released from parole, as well as mentor juvenile youth. Gunn arrived in prison an angry young man without any hope for the future only to transform into his own “Agent of Change.” Inmate Gunn handed over the reins to inmate Eric Pritchard, who assumed the orientation room responsibilities in June. VSP is committed to all the Correctional Education, In-Prison Programs, and Community & Reentry Services, including the orientation room, which answers many inmate questions and concerns regarding reintegration. ■

Transitions Gives Life Term Inmates New Hope



Pictured from left to right, inmate G. Glasper, facilitator Jamie Corley and inmate C. Romero.

➤ The Transitions Program prepares near-release inmates with tools that will successfully help them reintegrate into the community. DRP has expanded the Transitions Program to include life term inmates who have been found suitable by the Board of Parole Hearings and are currently under the Governor’s review for release. Avenal State Prison (ASP) will have its first group of Lifers complete the program. These inmates were able to gain valuable knowledge and techniques to assist in their transition to the community after serving long-term sentences of 15 years or more. Inmates are grateful for this opportunity.

The inmate feedback has been extremely positive and described as “life changing.”

“...it’s the best decision I have ever made in my life; I changed into a better man and I feel more equipped with the tools needed and proper resources to make my goals a reality.” — *Cuahutamec Romero, inmate & Transitions graduate at ASP.*

They are able to ask questions and seek guidance on how to properly explain to potential employers their felony convictions and lack of employment history. They also participate in mock job interviews. Despite their lengthy incarceration, life term inmates stated they were able to gain the tools and confidence for the current job marketplace. Inmates learn what jobs they may be qualified for and what jobs are currently in high demand.

“I am over my fear of attending my first job interview... No matter how well-rounded you believe your plans are, *Transitions* helps you reevaluate your goals. I recommend this course if you desire success after prison.” — *Joseph Glasper, on parole since mid-June and Transitions graduate at ASP.*

The Transitions Program video may be viewed at www.cdcr.ca.gov/rehabilitation/videos.html. ■

Inmate Journey Video

➤ The new *Inmate Journey* video illustrates DRP’s rehabilitative process in a simple and short format. This video follows an offender’s rehabilitative journey from the day they enter an institution through their parole. Designed with a combination of media, it communicates the steps taken by an inmate through Correctional Education, In-Prison Programming, Reentry Hubs, and Community & Reentry Services while on parole. This video also includes descriptions of services offered and eligibility time frames. The video may be viewed in the video section of the DRP website at www.cdcr.ca.gov/rehabilitation/videos.html. ■

Click on photo below to play video!



Multicultural Awareness at CCI

➤ On May 15, 2015, the Multi-Level Substance Abuse Treatment (SAT) program at California Correctional Institution (CCI) held the first Multicultural Awareness Fair. The GEO Group is contracted to operate the SAT program at CCI. The SAT program provides innovative evidence-based rehabilitative and reentry services to the inmates in the program. The Multi-Level Substance Abuse Treatment program is a 120-slot treatment program at CCI that has three intensity levels, with program durations ranging from 90 days to six months.

“For many inmates, this is the first time that they have ever participated in this type of activity. It provides them experience as well as increases their self-esteem.” — *Diane Clayton, Program Director, Substance Abuse Treatment program at CCI.*

A crucial element of each intensity level is the enhancement of interpersonal communication skills and relationships. A critical part of interpersonal communication is the ability to communicate and interact with people of various cultures and ethnicities. The program hopes to provide inmates with knowledge of various cultures and ethnic groups to aid in enhancing their interpersonal communication skills. Inmates play an integral role in setting up the event, giving presentations on various cultures, and hosting the event. Due to the event’s success, CCI plans to conduct regular multicultural fairs in partnership with the GEO Group in the future. ■



Inmates pictured giving presentations during Multicultural Awareness Fair at CCI:
1. Culture in song **2.** Mexico **3.** Italy **4.** Africa **5.** Hangtown (Placerville, CA) **6.** Vietnam

The right inmate, in the right program, at the right time:

Computer Literacy Learning Centers (CLLC):

Offers computer-based courses provided by certified instructors for basic reading, writing and math.

Day Reporting Centers (DRC) and Community-Based Coalition (CBC):

Addresses parolees’ needs through assessment and placement in classes and support services. One stop shop for education, life skills, financial and employment training, substance abuse and counseling. Some transitional housing available.

Female Offender Treatment and Employment Program (FOTEP):

Provides gender-responsive residential treatment services for women and their children.

Parolee Service Centers (PSC):

Provides group and family reunification, life skills and employment skills in a residential program.

Residential Multi-Service Centers (RMSC):

Helps at-risk parolees transition back into the community with housing, substance abuse treatment and independent living skills.

Specialized Treatment for Optimized Programming (STOP):

Provides comprehensive residential and outpatient programs and services supporting parolees needs for housing, substance abuse treatment, cognitive behavioral intervention, employment, education, family relations and community referrals.

Substance Abuse Treatment and Recovery Program (STAR):

Provides substance abuse treatment education by certified instructors in select parole offices.