

Criminal Justice Task Force / Criminal Justice Ministries
Joint Meeting
2/10/20
Ellen Stubbs Apartments Community Room
396 Hudson Ave, Rochester NY

Present: Chris Peoples, Michael Tomb, Shanique Byrd, Howie Kirschenbaum, Shirley Bond, Ellen Asperooth, Mark Jackson, Shawn Greenlea, Ana Martinez (CORE), John Keevert, Stanley Martin (CORE, speaker), Penny Townsend-Quill, Roberta Buckle, Betty Hancock, Cheryl Avery, Jo Cone

1. Welcome and Introductions (5 min)

2. Speaker: Stanley Martin, CORE, one of City Newspaper's "Rochester 10," describing her work and community activism commitment. See: <https://www.rochestercitynewspaper.com/rochester/rochester-10-stanley-martin/Content?oid=11203233> Stanley is the Project Director at the CORE Center, a peer organized and led center to help people in recovery and achieve wellness. One to one peer support and accessing treatment, finding safe secure housing and other resources are the focus for those who are formerly incarcerated and/or dealing with substance abuse. There is a monthly calendar of events solely guided by consumers. Help is available for the challenges people face as they come out of incarceration, such as help with food through a partnership with FoodLink, and access to capital needed for fines, etc. There is a grant to supplement these funds, and CORE is fully funded through NYS, OASAS. Clients are connected through outreach efforts. CORE is not a clinical service, so it is flexible in terms of what they can offer, such as rides to places and recreational activities. The larger agency has attorneys who can assist with advocacy. CORE links with other community and state services as well. A certificate program that values people's lived experience is available, with tuition paid and supervision with Stanley to get the required hours. All services are provided to consumers without fee. There are about 108 individuals currently involved in the program. There is no limit to length of involvement in CORE. There is a strong program culture of being family, being there for each other. Not all participants are employed; some have other goals for recovery, such as mental health, housing, maintaining benefits, volunteering. Ana is a peer who was helped a lot in the process of recovery. CORE welcomed her with open arms and supported her to get what she needed. They worked with her through complex processes and helped her feel cared for. Subsequently, she took a position of outreach coordinator. Participants a CORE represent a variety of walks of life, people just getting out of incarceration, etc. and CORE helps support one's self-esteem and allows one to shine. Currently, she goes to places like the Center for Employment Opportunities, makes presentations, goes to Rochester Regional for meetings and other community centers and shares what they do so other care managers can refer clients. CORE offices are next to the Salvation Army and see the population that needs housing,

referring to the various agencies in the area that meet those needs, and helping people through the process. The space is available for community events and there is no charge. You can follow CORE Center 1 on Facebook, where the hours of operation and other information are available. CORE is working on presenting their program to the Monroe County Correctional Center to better coordinate with people being discharged. Shanique and Stanley connected around the letters she receives from incarcerated people because CORE has people who will help respond. There are also people who volunteer for Raise the Age Court Watch. Betty notes that the 16 and 17 year olds are not being treated as juveniles under RtA. She mentions a 14 year old who was charged as an adult who might have been considered for RtA but was not. Shirley notes that these situations happen every week. CORE peer volunteers are participating and their lived experience helps them know what to look for when observing in court. CORE is based in Syracuse and is focused on collaborating with the local efforts, such as bail reform. Katy Schaffer is now working for Center for Community Alternatives, previously with other agencies, and in Rochester, Syracuse, and NYC. CORE has a treatment center in Brooklyn. People can come in to the center if they want to volunteer. Stanley has a Master's degree in Mental Health Counseling and works with PABA on the executive committee with Betty. A press conference is in the works to address the stripping of the disciplinary and subpoena powers of the PAB, and the negative press being generated against PAB and Miquel. Chris suggests finding ways to connect with people in prison before they are released to help supply those crucial services needed as they come out. Penny mentions the issues around people who have been in solitary. Betty notes that incarcerated people are counted in the census; how does this funding filter into supporting organizations like CORE? The next training for RtA Court Watch might not be coordinated by Children's Agenda and Katy might be the contact for that now. CORE's process is very informal so that there are few to no barriers to participation. Stanley used to work with SMART and is now on the Board; SMART has a booklet listing community resources. Betty notes that there is a need for research help for the effort to address the negative effects of Project Exile and CORE has access to interns who can assist. How can we partner together more effectively?

Betty mentions that the local organizers are meeting to coordinate and stay in touch. We are very "siloed" here; we need to develop the connections better. Chris notes that we need to overcome our territoriality so that we can build our numbers by coming together, not just in Rochester but also in Buffalo and other nearby cities. Michael notes that PABA demonstrates that. Betty notes that we are working with VOICE in Buffalo. EiE has been looking at plans for the current Monroe County Correctional Facility become a "shelter" or transitional facility, but with corrections officers staffing it. This is something to be alert to in terms of advocacy. There is a press conference coming up with the Sheriff. Chris asks about the Quakers. Wilma Campbell is a member. Shirley will connect with them. What's the plan going forward? Shanique will make this connection, follow up and update us.

3. Plush Dozier update, Shonda: Plush has another hearing date, Thursday, 2/20 at 3:00 pm, Batavia Court House. Shonda is seeking someone who can perform an arson investigation

and/or a private investigator to assist in the defense. Funding support for a new attorney is also needed.

4. Shanique presents on Tocsin Magazine, an online and print magazine she edits and produces. If you are interested in responding to letters that are received at Tocsin, please send Shanique your email. She will also provide language to use for FAQs. Some letters are available to take now. Use the PO Box for Tocsin for the return address. Use only your first name and avoid identifying information. Make sure that Shanique has the addresses on the envelopes if you take a hard copy letter.

5. Black History Month: Heroes of the Struggle: Homer Plessy is featured in the New York Times "Overlooked No More" project. He bravely boarded a "whites only" train car in 1892, was promptly removed and charged for violating the 1890 Louisiana Separate Car Act. Four years later, his case, Plessy v. Ferguson was heard by the Supreme Court, which ruled against him, 7-1, in 1896. Read more at <https://www.nytimes.com/2020/01/31/obituaries/homer-plessy-overlooked-black-history-month.html?searchResultPosition=1>

And

Mary McLeod Bethune, b. 1875, d. 1955, "an American educator, stateswoman, philanthropist, humanitarian, and [civil rights activist](#) best known for starting a private school for [African-American](#) students in [Daytona Beach, Florida](#) and co-founding [UNCF](#) on April 25, 1944 with William Trent and [Frederick D. Patterson](#). She attracted donations of time and money and developed the academic school as a college. It later continued to develop as [Bethune-Cookman University](#). She also was appointed as a national adviser to the president [Franklin D. Roosevelt](#) as part of what was known as his [Black Cabinet](#). She was known as "The First Lady of The Struggle" because of her commitment to gain better lives for African Americans.^[2] Read more at https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mary_McLeod_Bethune

6. Reminder: Roll Up for Black History Month: People's Choice, 575 Brooks Ave, Feb. 4 through the month (also our next meeting place in March); The French Quarter, 130 Spring Street, Feb. 12 – 16; Arnett Café, 332 Arnett Blvd., February 18 week, Tues, Wed, Thurs, 8:00 am – 2:00 pm, then Taste of the Bahamas, 4705 Lake Ave., Feb. 20 to end of the month We are hoping folks will patronize these black-owned businesses to celebrate Black History Month. When you visit, be sure to tell them you are with RocACTS! There are many other events taking place in the area, noted in previous emails, so please come out!

7. Howie is available as a speaker to share his experiences being a Freedom Rider in 1964. Please contact him at: Hkirschenb@aol.com. He will talk to groups or classes about his experiences in the civil rights movement.

8. John will connect us with training for non-partisan training for voter registration in May.

9. Michael will send a report on the H.A.L.T. Advocay Day and this will be distributed.

10. Feedback

11. Betty notes that there is an error in last month's meeting notes, which will be distributed again with correction asap.

We meet the second Monday of each month. Next meeting: March 9, 6:00 pm, People's Choice restaurant, 575 Brooks Ave at Thurston. We hope to have speakers on Bail Reform (TBD). In April, we plan to meet at CORE, 803 West Ave., Suite 196.

Respectfully submitted,
Shanique Byrd and Kathleen FitzPatrick, Co-Chairs
With Penny Townsend-Quill, Roberta Buckle, John Keevert
Criminal Justice Ministry, First Unitarian Church