

# *Lake County Adult Detention Facility*

*Sheriff Daniel A. Dunlap  
2016 Annual W.I.T.T.S. Report*

## **Women In Transition Through Support Program Annual Report for 2016**



### **Mission Statement**

Our mission is to assist women in reuniting with a positive and healthy environment that minimizes the circumstances that lead to their repeated incarceration. Our focus is to increase their employment skills, develop positive relationship values and support, elevate their educational level, build self-esteem, control choices through anger management, build strength through drug and alcohol treatment, as well as developing strong family structures.

### **Overview of Offender Reentry**

According to the National Institute of Justice (NIJ), in 2011, 688,384 men and women — approximately 1,885 individuals a day — were released from state or federal custody. According to the Bureau of Justice Statistics, 4.8 million offenders were under community supervision by the end of 2011.

Returning to the community from jail or prison is a complex transition for most offenders, as well as for their families and communities. Upon reentering society, former offenders are likely to struggle with substance abuse, lack of adequate education and job skills, limited housing options, and mental health issues.

Congress recognized the importance of this issue by passing the Second Chance Act of 2007 (SCA). SCA provides federal grants for programs and services that work to reduce recidivism and improve offender outcomes. Federal grants are also provided to support research and evaluation on a variety of aspects related to offender reentry.

Offender reentry, the transition from life in jail or prison to life in the community, can have profound implications for public safety. NIJ continues to support research and evaluation of reentry-related issues, such as statewide reentry initiatives and research that examines the process of reentering society within the context of the community, neighborhood and family into which the former offenders return.

Given the number of individuals under criminal justice supervision in the community, offender reentry continues to garner considerable attention from researchers and practitioners alike. Much of this attention has been paid to more traditional approaches to reentry programming — for example, job training and substance abuse programs. In recent years, several federal initiatives, including SCA and the Serious and Violent Offender Reentry Initiative (SVORI), have redirected research attention to coordinated approaches for offenders returning to communities (National Institute of Justice, 2015).

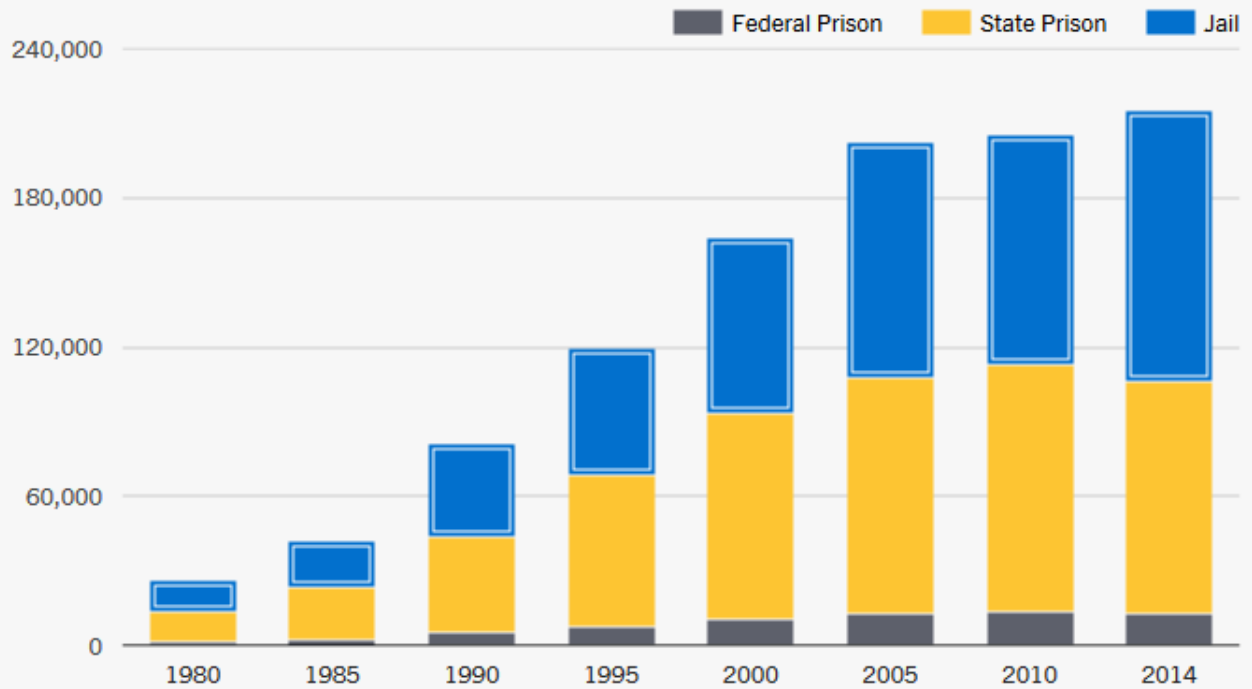
### **Women in the Justice System**

- Between 1980 and 2015, the number of incarcerated women has increased by 716%.
- Though many more men are in prison than women, the rate of growth for female imprisonment has outpaced men by more than 50% between 1980 and 2015.
- In 2014, the imprisonment rate for African American women (109 per 100,000) was more than twice the rate of imprisonment for white women (53 per 100,000).
- Of the 54,148 youth in residential placement, 14.3% (7,727) are girls.
- The number of women in prison, a third of who are incarcerated for drug offenses, is increasing at nearly double the rate for men.
- These women often have significant histories of physical and sexual abuse, high rates of HIV infection, and substance abuse.
- Large-scale women's imprisonment has resulted in an increasing number of children who suffer from their mother's incarceration and the loss of family ties.

Over the past quarter century, there has been a profound change in the involvement of women within the criminal justice system. This is the result of more expansive law enforcement efforts, stiffer drug sentencing laws, and post-conviction barriers to reentry that uniquely affect women. Women now comprise a larger proportion of the prison population than ever before; the female prison population stands nearly eight times higher than its population count in 1980. More than 60% of women in state prisons have a child under the age of 18.

Between 1980 and 2014, the number of incarcerated women increased by more than 700%, rising from a total of 26,378 in 1980 to 215,332 in 2014.

### Rise in Women's Incarceration, 1985-2014



Though many more men are in prison than women, the rate of growth for female imprisonment has outpaced men by more than 50% between 1980 and 2014. There are 1.2 million women under the supervision of the criminal justice system.

### Women Under Control of the U.S. Corrections System, 2014



Source: Carson, E.A. (2015). *Prisoners in 2014*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics; Minton, T.D., and Zeng, Z. (2015). *Jail Inmates at Midyear 2014*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics; Kaeble, D., Maruschak, LM, and Bonczar (2015). *Probation and Parole in the United States, 2014*. Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics.

## **Discussion**

After incarceration, individuals must find a place to live and obtain food and personal care products, usable identification, and, ultimately, a source of income, all the while being socially stigmatized, readjusting emotionally, managing debt, and being required and expected to disclose conviction information to everyone. It is difficult to plan such logistics during incarceration since contact with the outside world is so limited and costly. Many ex-offenders have mental health, chemical dependency, or medical issues as well. Then, the challenge of re-establishing one's outside life is often made difficult by a number of societal, systematic, legal, economic, and emotional factors. Barriers within one institution are often compounded with barriers in another. Thus, ex-offenders are often trapped in frustrating self-perpetuating cycles. Our societal systems should set one another up for success, not for failure, frustration, hopelessness, and bitterness—sentiments that do nothing to build our community. It is imperative that we begin to look at the barriers in our society that ex-offenders must navigate and try to increase their ability to secure—with a reasonable amount of effort—basic needs and avoid recidivism.

Many people believe it is the responsibility of individuals and their families to provide such assistance with these struggles. Surely these personal social supports are irreplaceable and invaluable; very few of us would be able to succeed with just the assistance of strangers. Unfortunately, though, many people do not have such support. When dealing with legal struggles, there are many burdens put upon the convicted person's loved ones: identifying available resources, forgiving what the person may have done, understanding the legal jargon, and navigating the often-incomprehensible social and justice systems at work. Friends and family may be uninformed or misinformed. They may have already helped their loved ones through drug addiction, mental illness, multiple incarcerations, or financial struggles and are simply exhausted. Whatever the reason, many people leave jail having burnt bridges or lost touch with loved ones, no matter how much they may have changed. In these times, people turn to their community. We need data-informed, just, efficient community systems to successfully reintegrate ex-offenders and offer a real chance to do right after they serve their sentence (Rochester Institute of Technology, 2015).

*"Women offenders have needs different from those of men, stemming in part from their disproportionate victimization from sexual or physical abuse and their responsibility for children. They are also more likely to be addicted to drugs and to have mental illnesses."* (National Institute of Justice, 2011).

### **Common obstacles to both male and female offenders' success include:**

**Education Barriers-** More than one-third of offenders in prison have not earned a high school diploma or GED and 4 out of 5 have not received any postsecondary education. While most prisons offer educational classes (e.g., Adult Basic Education, Adult Secondary Education), only a portion of inmates receive these services. In fact, between 2000 and 2005, the number of prisons offering these services decreased.

**Employment Barriers-** Furthermore, the lack of job skills, the deterioration of skills while incarcerated (1/3 of offenders receive vocational training while they are incarcerated), intermittent work histories, and the stigma of being in prison make finding legitimate and well-paying employment in the community difficult.

**Substance Abuse and Addiction-** Fifty-three percent (53%) of male state prisoners and 60% of female state prisoners meet the DSM-IV drug dependence or abuse criteria. This is four times the rate of addiction experienced by the general population. Yet only about one in every ten offenders participates in substance abuse programming prior to release.

**Mental Health Concerns-** Mental health problems affect the majority of both male (55%) and female (73%) adults in prison. Women offenders often suffer from depression, anxiety disorders (e.g., PTSD), and eating disorders, while substance abuse and antisocial personality disorders are more prevalent among men.

**Homelessness-** For offenders who may have been homeless prior to incarceration and struggle to find sustainable, affordable housing after release, fewer than ten percent will have the opportunity to live in a halfway house or other community release center.

**Caring for Children-** For the majority of offenders (55%) who have dependent children, reentry brings an increased responsibility for the physical, emotional, and financial wellbeing of others.

**Other Survival Concerns-** For offenders who are released from prison without the necessary identification (e.g., birth certificate, state issued identification) and transportation options (e.g., personal vehicle, a residence near public bus routes), obtaining appropriate housing, employment, and services can be quite challenging if not impossible. (Center for Effective Public Policy, 2010).

When the reentry process is successful there are benefits for the community in terms of improved public safety. Correctional and criminal justice costs are reduced in the long run as offenders are directed away from reoffending to more productive work and civic contributions. Successful reentry is important not only to the futures of offenders and their families, but also to the well-being and quality of life of families and neighborhoods throughout Ohio.

W.I.T.T.S. is a neighborhood example of a program that attempts to make Ohio a safer place for all. W.I.T.T.S. continues to strive toward the goal of reuniting women with a positive environment that minimizes the circumstances that lead to their repeated incarceration. Our goal is to instill a sense of hope and empowerment for incarcerated women so that they will be better prepared to reenter society and into the lives of their families.

## **W.I.T.T.S. Groups**

**Living with Trauma** is a class that explores what trauma is all about, and how it can impact your choices and decisions. Participants learn how to move their mind and heart to a place where they can begin to heal.

Topics of discussion include:

- Symptoms of trauma
- Effects of trauma
- Coping with trauma

**Creative Writing** is held twice a month and focuses on encouraging the women to use creativity to explore thoughtful self-expression. Varieties of writing forms are used, such as, poetry, short stories, and letter writing, to promote inspired discussion. This group is held by Jamie Himes and Wendy Kelley from Mental Health/Beacon Health Services.

**Vision Boarding** is a monthly workshop that encourages the women to identify and strive towards their goals. The women make a collage of words and pictures (cut out from magazines) that convey personal goals and what they value in their lives.

The **Yoga** program is provided by a team of certified yoga instructors who take turns teaching as volunteers each Thursday. Students are provided with yoga mats and yoga blocks to use for the practice. Students are instructed in yoga postures, relaxation, meditation and breathing. The women report being very grateful for the program as it teaches them to cope with jail life by learning relaxing techniques. Recently, one of the women expressed to one of the instructors that yoga is what helped her make it through her period of incarceration. So of the women have said they plan to continue with the practice of yoga upon their release. Books about the practice of yoga were donated by several of the teachers in the year 2011 for use by the women, since they have expressed an interest in learning more about yoga. The yoga teachers also report teaching yoga at the jail as being a very rewarding experience for them because the women are so appreciative.

The **“Victim’s” Of Domestic Violence** class is held on Tuesday afternoon. The session focuses on being a “Victim” and learning how to cope.

**Introspective Guide to Change** is associated with transitioning inmates into society after incarceration. It is especially helpful to those who are seeking mental health assistance and are trying to succeed at finding employment, caring for their children, dealing with domestic violence and being self-sufficient while living alone. The classes are continued through Exodus Clinical Counseling Services on the outside after the inmate is complete with their jail time.

The **Zumba** class focuses on using energy in a positive manner to release stress.

## **W.I.T.T.S. Statistics for 2016**

W.I.T.T.S. assisted a total of 104 women from Lake County and 197 women from outside of Lake County. The average daily population of females increased from 72.4 in 2015 to 87.7 in 2016.

- 12.04% of females had crimes of violence the year of 2016
- 65.4% of the participants are in county
- 16.6% of the charges are related to probation and fulfilling demands of the court
- 23.9% of the charges are drug/alcohol related
- 28.9% of the charges are theft related
- The average age has remained the same from past years and average sentences have increased from last year (age = 30 from 30 / sentence = 68 from 66)
- 4 women reported being homeless at the time of incarceration

## **Partnerships**

Forbes House: Paige Wilson

Lakeland Community College Women's Center: Mary Gross-Hill

Cleveland Clinic: Linda Baron

Lake County YMCA: Lana Niebuhr

Catholic Parish's Volunteers: Dorothy Trepal

Beacon Health: Wendy Kelley, Jamie Himes and Christine Vavro

We intend to continue to create a network of agencies and businesses designed to meet the needs of each individual. This network of professionals will assist these female offenders during incarceration by providing treatment and counseling services to help effect a positive change in their lives. Upon release these services will continue by tracking and maintaining communication and assistance with the program participants so that their continued rehabilitation and success will be better enabled to be achieved.