

PARTNER CONNECT



VOLUME 2, ISSUE 3

INTERNSHIP PROGRAMS



The back to school season means an increase in the number of interns we have and we always look forward to seeing the new faces around! We continue to use interns to assist us in running groups and offering 1:1 therapeutic sessions. New this semester are bachelor of social work (BSW) students and the addition of case management services. The BSW students will meet with participants from the Peace, Pride, and Substance Use Programs to assess client needs for resources related to housing, food, clothing, counseling, etc. Providing resource guides is something we have long been doing but having students focus on case management allows us to better assess client needs. We currently have two BSW students working on case management and we hope to expand the program as we move forward.

After leaving jail people often return to settings where they lack basic resources or support. For many, this can lead to a continued cycle of poverty and/or incarceration. By focusing on case management, we can help individuals returning to the community find the needed resources to live a more comfortable and secure life. As part of this process, we connect people with agencies in the community that people can access for continued support.

If you know of an agency that we aren't currently working with, let us know! We love establishing new relationships and learning about what others are doing to improve our community. We can often arrange for agencies to send representative to the jail to begin engaging with clients even before they leave the jail setting. If you have any questions about our internship program or information on an agency we could connect with, let me know! You can always feel free to stop by my office, email or give me a call.

Angela Blackwell, LCSW
Social Services Administrator

THE INDELIBLE PENCIL PROJECT



From Chaucer to Hemingway and Vonnegut to Tim O'Brien, our veterans are being given ways to bring their life truths to the masses while finding catharsis in exploring that truth. Every veteran has a story to tell. Down South Word of Mouth created The Indelible Pencil Project, a writing course designed to help incarcerated veterans find a way to tell their stories while learning to evaluate the truths expressed by others. Whether a veteran wants to write about the time the cook spilled diesel fuel into the green beans or about the trauma created when carrying a close friend to the MEDEVAC, their story matters. The Indelible Pencil Project gives veterans tools to evaluate literature, write about their experiences, and express the truths they have learned during a life built on service. Participants attend 8 writing and literature classes followed by participation in a small performance to showcase their work in front of their peers. The project will run through the month of September as part of the Military Veterans Program here at TCCC. It is made possible in part by a grant from Humanities Texas, the state affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities.

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TAME YOUR BRAIN



Do you feel stressed out, overwhelmed or frustrated? We all do and the "Tame Your Brain" curriculum is offered to help our maximum security females with those feelings. This secular, evidence-based curriculum is taught by three dedicated volunteers Meg, Daryl and Karen. Each brings their own expertise to help the students explore the intersection of:

- Social and Emotional Intelligence (self-awareness / self-management, social awareness / relationship management),
- Neuroscience (with a focus on brain evolution as well as neuroplasticity),
- Contemplative Practice (mindfulness, focused awareness, attentional training, and more).

Traditional school curricula doesn't typically offer information about the structure and workings of the brain, how to recognize and manage our emotions in healthy ways, or how to manage relationships in ways to foster success. When students have this information firmly rooted in science, they can make better decisions for themselves and make progress towards a more peaceful existence with themselves and the world around them.

WANTED: SUBSTANCE USE VOLUNTEER

The Substance Use Disorder Program is currently looking for volunteers interested in providing a 12-Step Education class within the P.O.W.E.R. program, weekly, during business hours. P.O.W.E.R. is a voluntary, pre-treatment program consisting of a series of weekly psycho-educational sessions designed to address substance use, criminal thinking, re-entry, anger management, and critical thinking. Inmates typically enrolled in the P.O.W.E.R. program have little to no previous substance use treatment experience and/or are ambivalent about the change process associated with their substance use and criminal behavior. The program is meant to be a first step toward continued treatment.

Due to some inmate's previous experience through the courts, participants have reported poor experiences when attending 12-Step meetings in the community, either because of misconceptions of the programs or because they weren't ready to attend and were court mandated at the time. Our goal is to demystify the 12-Step programs and provide participants with an open forum to discuss their past experiences attending 12-Step meetings. By providing participants information on different 12-Step traditions, types of meetings, how to find a sponsor and how to shop for a meeting best fitting them, the hope is that they will be more likely to fully understand what resources are being offered. They additionally will be more likely to access the meetings during their housing at Travis County Correctional Complex and upon their release.

We are looking for a volunteer who is comfortable facilitating a lecture-based, semi-structured session, and who will have the availability to provide weekly sessions to a group of male participants over on-going six week rotations. If you are interested in facilitating this class, please contact the SUD Program Coordinator, Jennifer Hernandez, LMSW: jennifer.hernandez@traviscountytx.gov



KITTENS 101



The Kittens 101 program is offered in partnership with the City of Austin's Animal Services office. Mother cats and their kittens are housed with female inmates and receive 24/7 care, socialization, affection, and training to help them find the best adopted homes. Amanda, one of our amazing volunteers, is an HR Assistant at a local marketing agency. She and her husband have four cats at home but because she missed taking care of kittens, Amanda started volunteering at the shelter in the Austin Animal Center nursery. She has since expanded her volunteer kitten duties and has worked at the Del Valle Correctional Complex for a year and half. Amanda reports that it is her favorite of all her charitable activities because of the positive ripple effects of TCSO's Kittens 101 and Dogs 101 programs.

Amanda's favorite part of working with the females here is creating and playing games that are used as teaching tools in our weekly Programs class. Amanda reports that "Back in college, my favorite part of student teaching in the theatre program was convincing sullen teenagers not to take themselves so seriously. I get that same glow when the ladies in class with us break down in giggles at the kittens' antics, and when they get so excited to answer Meowpardy questions to earn points and win candy. I wouldn't trade it for the world."

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WANTED: BALLOT BY MAIL ASSISTANCE



On October 12 at the Del Valle Correctional Complex, we will be offering our inmates an opportunity to vote via ballot by mail. If you are already an approved jail volunteer, we would love for you to assist!

There is no special training required, we just need a few hours of your time so that all qualified inmates are given the opportunity to vote. With enough assistance, we can reach our goal in one afternoon.

If you are interested, just contact tiffany.taylor@traviscountytx.gov.

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 12
11:45AM-2PM



PROGRAM NEWS

Our new Spanish language and youth programs are off to a great start. In August Libertad 1.0 Spanish had 12 graduates and there are currently 27 students enrolled in the new session. PURPOSE had 8 youth graduates in August with 10 new students currently enrolled. A new construction training program that will help our youth learn vocational skills will start in the near future.

The GED graduations continue to increase! In July and August, three students unlocked the key to their future after they earned their GED certificate. Not only will this increase their earning potential, they will have the confidence to set more goals and accomplish them.

GOOD TO KNOW



We will be sending out new training documents in the near future. Whether you are a new volunteer or a seasoned pro, it is always good to review best practices for working in the jail.



You must arrive in Programs 15 minutes prior to the start of your class. This gives you time to gather your supplies and set up your class. This gives you time to gather your supplies and set up your class prior to the students arriving. If you do not have managed holding inmates, classes must start on time. In order to safely manage 10 minutes before your class is scheduled to start, the on duty officers may be required to send the students back to their housing unit.

LET'S CONNECT.

PROGRAM SERVICES

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CHAPLAIN SERVICES

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CONNECT WITH US ON FACEBOOK

