



# CJM Connection

The quarterly newsletter of Criminal Justice Ministry – St. Louis

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## PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT

### Shoes to keep moving: CJM starts with the basics

“My mother is 89 years old, and she bought me this pair of shoes,” Doyal said, pointing to his athletic shoes, “but I have been walking the streets to find a job for five months. They are worn through and you can’t fix this kind!” This 61-year old man, returning from prison and having difficulty finding a job, was referred to CJM Direct Services by his parole officer. “I can use anything you can provide,” he said.

“Why can’t I find a job?” Besides his criminal record, Doyal points to two reasons: his age, 61, and the fact that he has an injury that prevents him from projecting his voice. “I used to work mixing chemicals, but nobody will hire me because they can’t hear me. I am willing to do any kind of work to stay free, but I have trouble checking on employment openings by phone. My voice doesn’t register enough to work those mechanized phone systems.”

CJM’s Direct Services are giving Doyal some hope. First of all, staff member Geraldine Neier, SSND, gave him a pair of new shoes, pointing out that they have “Tredsafe” soles which will allow Doyal to find a dish-washing job. She also provided Metro bus tickets to help him search farther for work. For the long-term, S. Geraldine gave him information on how to check about a disabled pass for Metro. Because Doyal, a tall man, has rarely found clothing that fit him, he was delighted with receiving extra-large inner and outer wear. He was pleased to put all his new items in CJM’s signature “Welcome Backpack,” which is full of



*Doyal (right) is amazed at how much assistance he is receiving from CJM Direct Services Staff Member Geraldine Neier, SSND. He smiled even more when he received a pair of new shoes in his size!*

basic necessities and provided to all Direct Services CJM clients.

“I used to have my own home and land—until I went to prison and my wife divorced me. I’m glad I am able to stay with my 89-year old mother, but she is on a fixed income. Getting this help from CJM gives me hope that I can make it!”

Since January 2015, CJM’s Direct Services assisted 665 persons with about \$39,900 in transitional items, often including birth certificates and Missouri State IDs. These were provided through Lutheran Foundation, the Missouri Community Reentry Funds, Knights of Malta, St. Joseph Cottleville, CACE, and many generous groups and individuals.

*CJM seeks to serve, not to judge, by improving the safety and well-being of individuals affected by crime and the criminal justice system, their families and their communities. . . .*

## From the Director

### When is a term not a term?

A five-year warranty lasts exactly five years. A gift certificate good for one year expires after one year. On the other hand, a five-year prison sentence lasts a lifetime. Even a one-year sentence never ends.

The Quakers, who developed the first “penitentiary” (based on the Latin word for “remorse”), intended to give time and place (a cell) for the offender to “repent,” then to return to regular life. No further penalties!

Today—at first glance—a five-year sentence indicates five years in prison or on parole. The reality is that every sentence is a life sentence. Consider the facts:

- Public housing for the poor generally excludes the poor who have completed a prison term.
- Many private landlords will not rent to any person with a felony.
- Most employment applications still carry a “check for felony” box—which often eliminates applicants before they even have a chance.
- Some employers exclude persons from jobs that are unrelated to their crimes, e.g., a waste recycling company will not hire an offender to sort trash.

In the 18th century, when the Quakers were trying to provide a place for “penitence,” another group—the Philadelphia Society for Alleviating the Miseries of Public Prisons—was addressing other abuses. Prison issues continue today. Criminal Justice Ministry is trying to help persons move on after their terms are completed. Please join us in our efforts.

*Carleen Reck, SSND, Ph.D.  
Executive Director*





*The 2015 Spirit of Justice Award*

## CJM proudly accepts 2015 Saint Louis Bar Foundation’s Spirit of Justice Award

The Saint Louis Bar Foundation honors those “who in some significant manner, reached out to their fellow man and woman” with the Spirit of Justice Awards. In 2015, CJM was chosen

based on the nomination of former board member Olivia Rasp. In her words, “CJM is a leader in establishing effective programs that reduce recidivism in Missouri. . . The success of both R2R programs [Release to Rent and R2RVets] clearly demonstrates that CJM contributes significantly to fostering and maintaining the rule of law.”

Executive Director Carleen Reck, SSND, accepted the award for CJM in the Grand Hall at Union Station on October 16.

Foundation President Paul S. Venker assessed, “This year’s Spirit of Justice Award winners are all in that very special group of people: they are not on the national news and do not care a bit if they are.” S. Carleen agreed, “It is true that CJM is rarely on national news—and that we use most of our time with clients. We do, however, greatly appreciate the Bar using this opportunity to make known to the community how CJM promotes justice.”

Since the inception of the SOJ Awards in 2009, the Bar Foundation has honored more than 40 worthy recipients. Although many awardees are individuals, selected agencies include Legal Services of Eastern Missouri and Arch City Defenders.

Visit [cjmstlouis.org](http://cjmstlouis.org) for link to video of S. Carleen’s acceptance speech.

## Remembering Carolyn Gremmler: Nearly 20 years as a volunteer

Most CJM volunteers communicate with persons who are incarcerated or recently released. Carolyn Gremmler made a major contribution to CJM—mostly by dealing with paper—during the last twenty years of her life. She began by helping to prepare newsletters for mailing, always bringing friends along to help.

At some point, based on her extensive bookkeeping experience at Dierberg’s, she offered to help CJM’s Direct Services staff. She began when Eugenio Pastorik, RSM, coordinated Direct Services. S. Eugenio loved working with the persons who were reentering and giving them bus tickets, clothing, and hygiene items to help them, but she did not value keeping track of the items given or the cost. That’s where Carolyn took over the “numbers,” letting S. Eugenio enjoy the “people.”

“Direct Services continues to benefit from Carolyn’s precision with numbers—balanced by her kindness to all staff and clients,” adds staffer Geraldine Neier,

SSND. “Our computers still have a file folder named ‘Carolyn.’”

Over the years, the job grew—from dozens to hundreds of clients, from hundreds to thousands of dollars, from one grant to several funders—who all required different forms of reporting. In every season, Carolyn would come to CJM once or twice a week to handle the behind-the-scenes but essential numbers. She would often bring along some of her home-baked goods. When she was battling cancer, she would plan to help at the “better” time of her chemo cycle.

Volunteer Coordinator Rose Rita Huelsmann, SSND, remembers, “Carolyn came in faithfully and knew she was an important part of the Ministry. Sometimes she had to change her regular day so she could sub on another bowling team, but she came. It was always important to her.”



*A volunteer from Our Lady of Lourdes converses with a CJM client during the parish’s Day of Service.*

## A Day of Service and Connection

In October every year, millions of volunteers across the nation take part in a national day of service called “Make a Difference Day.” This year, on October 24, CJM welcomed a team of volunteers from Our Lady of Lourdes Parish in University City for a day of service. The volunteers connected with persons in CJM’s long-term housing programs.

Volunteers brought and served barbeque dinners and huge pieces of cake, and even brought along carved pumpkins for the tables. The volunteers enjoyed conversing with the clients and graduates of CJM’s Release to Rent and R2RVets programs. A special attendee was Kiely, a former canine client of Puppies for Parole, a program in which Missouri prisoners learn to train rescue dogs.

Joan Kiburz, who organized the event with Olivia Rasp, connected her day of service with another recent event: “I hope you all saw the incredible message that the Pope had for the prisoners he visited in the Philadelphia Maximum Prison. You are so much on the same page with him. How timely that we’re doing the BBQ at CJM as our Day of Service.”

# CJM in the Community

The CJM board and staff tirelessly advocate on the behalf of the incarcerated and recently released. Sometimes they are joined by program participants and graduates as they address criminal justice issues.

Board Member **Dr. Fred Rottnek** gave presentations in Correctional Health Care in the Washington University Medical Plunge; on Interprofessional Education and Collaborative Practice in a Large Urban Jail for the National Commission on Correctional Health Care; on HIV Criminalization Laws: Fact or Fiction for Empower Missouri; on Trauma and Reentry for the St. Louis Alliance for Reentry and the Higher Education Collaborative.

R2R Vets Coordinator and Director of Client Services **Aaron Laxton** staffed the Resource Fair at Algoa/Tipton Correctional Centers; spoke on the Pulse of St. Louis, KPLR 11; served on a panel on Reform of Missouri's Criminal Justice System at Lindenwood University; and gave a student lecture at Washington University.

Executive Director **Carleen Reck, SSND**, participated in the invitational conference on Decarceration at Washington University; also met with representatives of the Jewish Federation of St. Louis and the Jewish Community Relations Council about potential sharing of services and resources.

**Rose Rita Huelsmann, SSND**, CJM Volunteer Coordinator, met with the Mission Shift Institute at Concordia Seminary to help minister in diverse settings; with the St. Ambrose Social Justice Committee to help move from social justice issues to action; with volunteers who minister inside prison and jail on the many ways ministers give gospel joy to (and receive it from) inmates; with pen pals to share their experiences.

## Neighborhood Assistance Program Tax Credits: Valuable for Missouri Taxpayer and CJM

Are you an individual or corporation with business, royalty, rental or farm income in the State of Missouri? If so, you may receive a 50% Missouri tax credit in addition to a federal charitable deduction that may be applied in the next five years.

Criminal Justice Ministry (CJM), a Missouri non-profit and 501c3, may accept contributions which will provide 50% in Missouri tax credits. You save the 50% Missouri credit, your normal federal and Missouri income taxes (as high as 45%), and you never have to pay the 20%

state and federal capital gains tax.

If you contribute appreciated investments, such as stocks and bonds, you are allowed to take a deduction for the fair market value of your contribution. What a great way to multiply the value of your gift—or give a larger contribution.

Why contribute to CJM? Many returning prisoners are from neighborhoods that present many opportunities to return to criminal ways, but few resources to help ex-prisoners to begin again. CJM services hundreds of ex-prisoners who need help to become contributing

	Without NAP Tax Credits	With NAP Tax Credits
<b>Your Gift</b>	<b>\$1000</b>	<b>\$2100</b>
Benefit of federal deduction*	\$ 263	\$ 259
Benefit of MO deduction	\$ 60	\$ 126
<b>Benefit of MO credit</b>	<b>\$ 0</b>	<b>\$1050</b>
<b>Actual cost of gift</b>	<b>\$ 677</b>	<b>\$ 665</b>

*In this example, a \$2,100 gift with NAP credits applied actually costs you less than a \$1,000 gift without the credits! \*Assuming 28% bracket, federal deduction is 28% of the gift, less 28% of reduction in MO taxes.*

## By Their Works

*"You will know them by what they do."  
Matthew 7:16*

As incarcerated and released persons get more attention in the media, CJM is proud to have been providing services to these often-forgotten people since 1979. Last year, CJM provided over **22,734** services:

- Inside prisons/jails: **13,789** visits, attendance at classes or services, pen pal letters, etc.;
- When released **4,556** persons served with Welcome Backpacks filled with entry essentials, vital papers, Anger Management Classes, support groups, etc.;
- Long-term help with community connection for **112** in a supportive housing program: Release to Rent, R2RVets, or Project ReConnect;
- Educating the community and collaborating with other agencies: **4,277 contacts.**

CJM is beyond promises and plans—our works make a difference to persons who are locked up or walking out as well as their families and neighbors.

## Not-So-Trivial Results!

More than 300 people participated in the 2015 Trivia Night at St. James the Greater, providing over \$12,000 in support for CJM. Co-Chairs Jeff Finnegan and Christina Syberg thank all the workers, especially the many from St. Vincent DePaul Parish.

members of the community. The future of the St. Louis Area depends on how we treat these persons.

Ready to participate? Here are the simple steps: Begin now by sending your check to CJM, clearly indicating "NAP." CJM will send you a one-page application for NAP credits and help you to complete the process with the Department of Economic Development which will review and issue the tax credit.



**Criminal Justice Ministry**  
P.O. Box 15160  
St. Louis, MO 63110

**Need to pay Missouri taxes?  
CJM can help while you help CJM!**

*Details inside.*



*Volunteer Jeff Goldone teaches anger management class. The course plan is approved by the Missouri Department of Corrections to fulfill a requirement for many parolees. CJM offers the course at no cost, using classroom space contributed by St. Vincent Parish. The next course will begin in January.*

**Ways to Give**

There are many ways you can help CJM improve the safety and well-being of individuals and communities :

- Use the enclosed return envelope or contribute online at [www.cjmstlouis.org](http://www.cjmstlouis.org) .
- Designate CJM when ordering from Amazon. Search for AmazonSmile and designate CJM or simply go to <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/46-2647318>, then order as usual. Amazon will donate 0.5% of all eligible purchases to CJM.
- Become a pen pal. Volunteer at [roseh@cjmstlouis.org](mailto:roseh@cjmstlouis.org) .
- Contribute and receive Missouri tax credits (Details inside).

**Words from a Pen Pal**

*Volunteer Marlene Lischwe writes many words to her CJM pen pal in prison. Here are the words she used when discussing her experience with other CJM pen pals:*

“It is amazing to me the different levels everyone is at on writing to an inmate. I feel I am fulfilling the need in keeping in touch with Eddie and he seems to enjoy communicating with me. It has been such a learning experience for me to really understand what things are like in prison. It’s not just what you see for an hour on TV or a couple of hours at the movies, but it is someone’s life, 24/7.”

**WHO WE ARE**

**OUR MISSION**

CJM seeks to serve, not to judge, by improving the safety and well-being of individuals affected by crime and the criminal justice system, their families and their communities in the Greater St. Louis Area through person-to-person assistance rooted in Jesus Christ’s inclusive ministry of love, reconciliation, and hope.

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