



CJM Connection

The quarterly newsletter of Criminal Justice Ministry – St. Louis

Issue 4

cjmstlouis.org

Spring 2016

PROGRAM SPOTLIGHT: CJM Counters Dangers of Heroin

“I was checking on him all night. . . relieved that he was still breathing. I thought the heroin effects would lessen over time, that he would live. I had to go to work in the morning. When I came back at noon, he was dead.” Eric and his friend had both used heroin. “He died because of my lack of knowledge,” says Eric.

Later he learned from his friend’s dad, an anesthesiologist, that the breathing he heard was too shallow to keep someone living. “Had I been aware of that, I would have known I needed to call for help, but I would have had to admit that I was using too.”

When Eric was in high school, drug abuse was a hidden problem, a stigma reserved for junkies. Now drug use—especially heroin—is an epidemic that devastates families of every class. Heroin doesn’t care if a panhandler scrapes up \$10 for one button (capsule) or if an executive tosses a \$20 bill for three. Eric had three friends who overdosed: one owned a landscaping company, one worked in a prestigious salon, and another ran an international pharmaceutical business. Heroin knows no boundaries.

CJM applied for and received the Missouri Safe Project grant. This grant allows CJM to address two important goals:

1) To educate the community about the heroin epidemic and promote Good Samaritan laws to protect people who try to help those in need (i.e., persons with training will be able to carry Narcan, a medication used to block the effects of



Aaron Laxton (right), CJM contact for the Missouri Safe Project, demonstrates to Eric Schultz the use of Narcan, the drug that instantly reverses heroin overdoses.

opioids, especially in overdose). As a result, lives will be saved, and fewer bodies will be found in dumpsters.

2) To prevent the spread of Hep C or other disease by exchanging infected needles. When users are on heroin, they don’t care about infection. They figure they won’t be around for long anyway. An exchange program can lower the risk of infection to others.

“When I got out of jail,” says Eric, “I was lucky enough to experience the support of a CJM staff member who helped me to change my life.” Eric Schultz, a former Release to Rent client, now works as a case manager for the same program. “If this new grant saves even one person, it will be worth it.”

CJM’s two-year grant is funded through the Syringe Access Fund which is supported by the Levi Strauss Foundation, Open Society Foundation, Elton Jon AIDS Foundation, Irene Diamond Fund, and AIDS United. Coordinating CJM involvement in the Missouri Safe Project is Director of Client Services Aaron Laxton (AaronL@cjmstlouis.org).

From the Director

If persons choose to use deadly opiates, why should the community try to save them? Because change requires a new response. Thrill-seeking youth used to experiment with marijuana—and life went on. They are now trying opioids the same way—and not living to try again. Drug overdose deaths have tripled over the last four years—with heroin-related deaths up 26%.



CJM’s mission includes protecting community safety. Today CJM needs to help bring life support on site and to urge lawmakers to protect persons who want to save those who have overdosed. Some may not agree, but CJM is responding to this change with the Missouri Safe Project.

Since beginning in 1979, CJM has responded to change, expanding service

- from jails to prisons.
- from inside visits to meeting basic needs outside.
- to housing for long-termers and homeless vets.
- to helping returning prisoners develop in areas from anger management to work skills.

For 37 years, CJM has been adapting to changing needs. I am proud to have been part of the last 17 of those years, but—one more change—I will be moving from CJM this summer. Please support our Board’s search for a new Executive Director who can lead CJM through the next years of change. Thank you!

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

Statistics: Centers for Disease Control, 12/31/15

iBONES provide puppy treats, client job skills

iBONES have two groups who receive—the puppies who enjoy treats and the CJM clients who are learning valuable work skills. This unusual combination occurred because Joan Kiburz shaped a recipe for gourmet dog bones in two flavors—Beefy Best and Peanut Butter. Originally she offered the opportunity to make the treats to school students, but recently passed on her social entrepreneurship project to CJM.

So, several CJM clients are learning how to mix the recipe, roll out the dough, cut out tiny squirrels, package, and sell the treats at local festivals and markets. They are learning business skills and practicing them with a real product and actual customers. Some CJM clients are earning their first dollars by making and selling iBONES.

For years Joan has been involved in promoting the squirrel-shaped treats she calls iBones (a riff off of iPhones). Her “cover” dog for the bag of treats, Kiely, is a rescue dog who completed Puppies for Parole, a program of the Missouri Department of Corrections. Joan has been involved with other service to CJM clients and is now pleased that CJM is carrying on iBONES.

Coordinating iBONES at CJM are Volunteer Coordinator Rose Rita Huelsmann, SSND, and CJM Board Member and volunteer Dan Sescleifer. Anyone who would like to provide a market for selling iBONES (bags ranging from \$5 to \$10) should contact info@cjmstlouis.org.



Cornell expands and practices his work skills while making gourmet dog treats, a new CJM project.

CJM speakers reflect empowering trend

For years CJM staff and volunteers have been featured speakers at community gatherings. Today CJM's featured speakers are ex-prisoners, and the staff and volunteers merely facilitate their presentations. This change reflects national movements like JustLeadership USA that empowers people most affected by incarceration to speak about prison issues.

A CJM Release to Rent client, Brian, recently met with the 180 General Assembly meeting, a group comprised of parole officers, clergy, and nonprofit leaders to talk about his experiences and challenges. R2R Coordinator Latrice Tate, who talked about CJM and the R2R program, commented that the attendees appreciated hearing Brian's view as a client and applauded him on his transition.

Two other clients spoke with three groups of students at Trinity High School during their day on “Life Issues.” Andrew, a client of CJM's R2RVets program, described his participation in Drug Court as an alternate to seven years in prison. Using his Toastmaster training he received inside prison, Charles started with the abrupt question, “Have you ever met a bad guy? You have now! I used to



Charles, a CJM client, tells his story to high school students.

rob banks.” He then described his 17 years in prison and his current efforts within Release to Rent to stay out. The pair were accompanied by CJM Volunteer Coordinator Rose Rita Huelsmann, SSND, who commented on how much more comfortable the men became as they talked with the three groups.

Because clients often need to miss work to give presentations, CJM secured a grant from the Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis to provide speaker stipends. Anyone would would like to request a CJM speaker for a group may contact info@cjmstlouis.org.

Class is in session: First three complete “Makin’ it Work”

The fact that three people completed a class does not ordinarily make news. But the fact that three men who are based at the St. Louis Community Release Center completed the first CJM Makin’ It Work class is a special achievement. For them it is a challenge to attend five weekly classes—learning about employer expectations, communication skills in the work place, and problem solving skills.

Participants address a major problem that faces persons who are looking for employment after their release from jail: namely, they were not working when they were incarcerated and had no help preparing to work while locked up. For that reason, CJM Volunteer Coordinator Rose Rita Huelsmann, SSND, was part of a group that became certified to teach Makin’ It Work classes. The first class was taught by volunteers Paul Faust and Pat Poehling and S. Rose Rita. The program, created by Steve Parese, Ed.D., is designed to help men and women who have spent time in jail or prison, on probation or parole, to successfully make the transition to the world of work.

New classes will begin on April 7 and May 26 at 1:00 pm and continue for five Thursdays. Advance registration is required by calling CJM at 314-652-8062.

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.

CJM Board Member Deacon Andrew Daus is preparing to represent CJM as a guest speaker for the Annual Catholic Appeal.

R2R Vets Case Manager Doug Evans met with new parole officers to help them understand what persons experience who reenter with alcohol and substance abuse issues and how they can best assist.

CJM Volunteer Coordinator Rose Rita Huelsmann, SSND, talked with a group of SLU students about prison life and death row at Potosi as well as about a party that CJM traditionally provides for the special needs persons who are imprisoned there.

Attorney Timothy Noelker of Thompson Coburn LLP gave a pro bono presentation on the Board's Role and Responsibilities to the CJM Board of Directors.

In its editorial, "Mercy meets criminal justice," the St. Louis Review included a section by **Sister Carleen Reck, SSND, CJM Executive Director**, urging people to "walk with" persons who have made mistakes and served their time in prison.

Direct Services Staff Member Brandon Reid carried services to one of the local parole offices to introduce and help connect clients with CJM.

The Post-Dispatch printed a Letter to the Editor by **Release to Rent Case Manager Eric Schultz**. Eric's letter was prompted by the article, "Shame and joy behind 149 exonerations."

Coordinated by **CJM Board Member Dr. Fred Rottnek** of St. Louis University, twelve SLU students in Inter-Professional Education will meet five times this semester to build partnerships with CJM, incorporating their health background with the services provided by CJM.

As part of this initiative, **CJM Staff Members Eric Schultz and Christina Syberg** met with SLU Physical Therapy students to explain what CJM does and to discuss long-term collaboration. These students in Inter-Professional Education will identify areas that would benefit CJM, such as health screenings for clients when released, health insurance information, guidance for healthy eating within a moderate budget, etc. In return, CJM will provide the students with the opportunity to apply public health academic theory and acquired skills to a community-based service setting.

Aaron Laxton, Director of Client Services, advocated for Narcan and Good Samaritan Laws in Jefferson City.



CJM Volunteer Coordinator Rose Rita Huelsmann, SSND, (center) receives flowers and a certificate from the Metropolitan Volunteer Management Association to recognize her commitment in promoting volunteerism. She invited two CJM volunteers to join her for the luncheon: Mildred Loddeke, SSND, (left) and Sharon Rose Terbrock, SSND.

Mayor Slay recognizes CJM's important work

St. Louis Mayor Francis Slay recently featured CJM in his Affordable Housing Commission's Report to the Community. An excerpt is below.

One program I would like to highlight that invests in people and gives them a second chance at life is the Criminal Justice Ministry's Release to Rent. Teaching the power of love, reconciliation and hope, Sister Carleen Reck, CJM staff, and more than 250 volunteers provide person-to-person assistance to transition formerly-incarcerated men and women back into society. The Ministry's structured, supportive residential program helps affirm clients' dignity by giving them essential tools, such as toothbrushes, bus passes and clothing, while helping to restore their self-worth and value by providing mentoring, life skills, and job placement. By reintegrating returning ex-offenders into our community, this restorative justice program empowers people to take responsibility for themselves, helps redirect former inmates to legal productive work, reduces the risk of recidivism and heals our community.

Grants awarded to CJM

Recognized with gratitude and appreciation:

Affordable Housing Trust Fund
Annual Catholic Appeal
Central Pacific Province
School Sisters of Notre Dame
Conrad N. Hilton Fund for Sisters
Federal Probation
Knights of Malta
Lotta Fund
Lutheran Foundation of St. Louis
Mangrove Foundation
Mission Ministry, Inc. (MMI)
Missouri Reentry Funds
Missouri SAFE Project
NAP Tax Credits
ReConnect through the City
of St. Louis
St Joseph Catholic Church of
Cottleville Tithing Outreach
Veterans' Administration Per Diem
Wells Fargo

Also many generous individual donors!



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

**SAVE
THE DATE!**

CJM's
Annual Trivia Night

August 20,
2016

Ways to Give

You can help CJM in many ways:

- Use the enclosed return envelope or contribute online at cjmstlouis.org.
- Designate CJM when ordering from Amazon. Search for Amazon Smile and designate CJM or simply go to <http://smile.amazon.com/ch/462647318>, then order as usual. Amazon will donate 0.5% of all eligible purchases to CJM.
- Be a pen pal. Volunteer at rosch@cjmstlouis.org.
- Contribute and receive Missouri Neighborhood Assistance Program (NAP) Tax Credits (50%); for info, contact info@cjmstlouis.org.
- Donate old cell phones. CJM will recycle and use proceeds.
- *NEW!* Shop at Schnucks with eScrip, and Schnucks will donate at least 1% of the purchases to CJM! Just pick up an eScrip card at a customer service center and register the card to help Criminal Justice Ministry.
- Plan to attend CJM's annual Trivia Night on Saturday, August 20 at St. James the Greater Gym.
- On May 3, GiveSTLDay, visit GiveSTLDay.org, choose Criminal Justice Ministry, and make a credit card gift—earning special or matching funds.



Volunteering is expected by CJM—from its clients too. Here Steven (left), an R2RVets client, has talked some family members into helping him to move into his new apartment.

New no-cost classes starting

Makin' It Work

Classes begin on April 7 and May 26
5 consecutive Thursdays
1:00–3:30 pm

Anger Management

Classes begin on April 7
12 consecutive Thursdays
10:15–11:45 am

Advance registration is required.
Call CJM at 314-652-8062 between
9 am and 1 pm for registration and
information.

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.

OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Mary Abkemeier, President
Andrew Daus, Vice-President
Joseph Burgoon, Secretary
Jeff Finnegan
Judith Hebert, DC
Linda S. Hemmer
Kyle S. Klosterman
Andrew Malloy
Fred Rottnek, MD
Derrick Ross
Dan Sescleifer
Bill Siedhoff
Matt Witte
Durwood Woolridge
Carleen Reck, SSND, ex officio

