



Spring 2011

Sponsors

A New Beginning

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The Times They are a Changin'

In 1964, Bob Dylan's raspy voice told a generation, "The times they are a changin' . . ." Fast forward 47 years and things at Sponsors are changing, too. Since Sponsors inception in 1973, 38 years ago, the organization has experienced exponential growth, witnessed over 5,000 men and women go through our residential programs, weathered many a budget crisis and two recessions, and is still standing strong. And for 23 of the last 38 years Ron Chase has been there to guide the agency.

When Ron took the helm in 1988, he started the agency's first housing program with 5 beds in a house owned by the agency on 8th and Monroe (now the site of our Women's Facility) that was being used as a drop-in center. At the time, the agency was struggling financially. Ron was given six months to turn things around. Twenty-three years later and the agency is still standing strong. Over the years Sponsors has grown in many ways, not the least in size. Incrementally, the agency

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Program Needs

Help us fill our new bookshelves. Do you have books you want to get rid of? We've got a home for them. Sponsors recently completed improvements to our warehouse that have allowed us to add bookshelves and carpeting to a space that will serve as a lending library for our clients. We are pleased to be offering more resources such as our library and new fitness center.



We are always in need of men's and women's work clothing and boots for new clients, as well as beds and household supplies for clients who have completed Sponsors program and are

moving into their new homes. Donations can be dropped off at 338 Hwy 99N between 9:00 am – 4:00 pm, Mon – Fri. If you have items you would like us to pick up please call Joseph Ches at (541) 505-5651. ■



Goodbye

After 23 years as Executive Director of Sponsors, March 31st will be my last day. Personally, what started out as simply a job evolved into a career and, ultimately, a passion. On that January day in 1988 when I first walked into Sponsors as Executive Director, I knew almost nothing about prisons, prisoners, the conditions under which they were released, or the fate that awaited them when they returned home. All I knew was what I had gleaned from the 3 interviews I had with Sponsors' Board of Directors prior to being hired, the 3 interviews indicating that they were just as uncertain as I was

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MENTORSHIP PROGRAM HAS LAUNCHED

After three long months of creating policies, debating policies, changing policies, abolishing policies; looking at best practices, and creating program materials; the Mentorship Program development phase is complete and we have launched!



The Man in the Maze is a symbol derived from the Tohono O'odham people that represents the journey of life and its decisions.

We are in operation full swing, have officially recruited and trained twelve mentors, and are in the process of training close to fifteen mentees. What does that mean for the mentees? We already have a waiting list and are seeking volunteers! You may wonder, what does volunteering as a mentor entail?

The Mentorship Program is an incredible opportunity to have an experience working first hand with recently incarcerated adults, and to help them navigate through the complicated maze of reentry. Although there are guidelines to follow that ensure the match is participating within the parameters of the program, each pair can determine how the time with one another is spent. Fortunately, with all the resources that Sponsors offers, including job search assistance at the Reentry Resource Center, guidance in enrolling in school, as well as help figuring out the complex system of getting social security cards, medical care, bus passes, id's, etc., the mentor's job is that much easier! The mentor is there to

serve as a friend, role model, and support person, and can spend time with his/her mentee ice skating, going out for coffee, taking walks by the river, playing basketball, creating art, or attending meetings or church together. We are looking for adults, 21 years and older, to commit for one year as a mentor, for 4-6 hours per month.

We are also offering an opportunity for matches to participate in monthly outdoor recreation excursions through the City of Eugene, including trips to Willamette Pass to go snowshoeing and river trips in the summer. There will be monthly potlucks, as well as discounted activity passes and bulletin boards where we advertise free events happening around the community. Each match will be supported with a small activity fund to support them in these endeavors.

Mentors are the key component in helping our clients safely reenter their communities. **Please contact Jen Jackson, Mentorship Program Director, at 541-505-5663 or email at jenjackson@sponsorsinc.org if you are interested in volunteering.** Join us in giving back to our community as this new and exciting program taps into the roots that Sponsors was founded upon over thirty five years ago—mentorship. ■

WOMEN'S PROGRAM IMPROVEMENTS

We recently completed over \$130,000 worth of capital improvements to our women's facility that included a new roof, siding, and windows. The good news is the repairs are complete and the building is better than new. The bad news is we had to spend over \$130,000 to get there. Fortunately, an anonymous foundation and community members came to the rescue and helped offset the majority of the cost for these much needed repairs.

We are happy to announce that at the end of last year we hired Denise Noice as a case manager at the women's program. Denise is former Sponsors client and executive board member. We are very excited to have Denise working with us!

We are also extremely grateful to Well's Fargo Bank for their generous gift of \$2,250 in February to be used for



Women's Transition Building

child care for women with children living at Sponsors who are working and to assist clients moving into permanent housing with rental deposits. **Thank you!**

Changing Times... *continued from front*

expanded capacity and developed new programs when appropriate. However, there is an art to managing a non-profit and Ron Chase has very effectively guided the growth and contraction by acting when opportunities were present and making tough decisions when the circumstances required it.

In the last couple of years, we have been in expansion mode. Not only have we increased our capacity, adding much needed beds to our men's program, but we have improved our service delivery and added programming that will-should enhance the outcomes and quality of service that we provide. Part of our success stems from being in the right place at the right time, and capitalizing on available opportunities. As a result, we were well positioned to go after grant opportunities for our Mentorship Program, Reentry Resource Center, and our new

Veteran's Grant and Per Diem Program.

Despite our recent successes, there is still a lot of work to be done. We recently launched our Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT) classes. MRT is an evidence-based, cognitive behavioral therapy that has been used extensively with criminal justice involved individuals. We have also recently begun to utilize a new, validated risk assessment tool, called the LS-CMI. The LS-CMI provides information about a person's "risk to re-offend" as well as a "needs assessment" that looks at all of the criminogenic factors and provides information that will guide our recommendations for acceptance into Sponsors and future client programming. These new tools (MRT and the LS-CMI) are but two of the ways that we are attempting to innovate and enhance our services.

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Recent Study by Oregon Social Learning Center

A recent study by Oregon Social Learning Center (OSLC) provided promising insights and data related to Sponsors' program. The study, headed by OSLC research scientist, Mark Eddy, looked at every person released from Lane County over a six month period from June 2006, to February 2007, and tracked them for three years.

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between services received by men and women following release from prison, outcomes due to those services, and criminal justice outcomes. We were particularly interested in what combination of services led to the best outcomes during the reentry period. More often than not, when looking at criminal justice studies, the focus is on predictors of failure. Conversely, we wanted to focus on what constellation of services led to success. While the study did not provide the level of analysis or statistical significance that we had hoped, there was useful information that was gleaned. Among the most notable findings, it was established that:

- Men and women who went to Sponsors tended to be more likely to have been convicted of committing more serious crimes, to have served more months in prison, and to have higher community risk scores.

- Outcomes for men and women who went to Sponsors tended to be as good as or better than for men and women who did not. This is a key finding given that people in Sponsors tend to not have a community-based support system.
- Men and women who went to Sponsors were more likely to be employed full time at the end of the follow up period. Men and women who were employed full time at the end of the follow up period were more likely to have no new criminal activity.
- Clients who spent more time at Sponsors did better by most measurements.

The results yielded some promising information and are being used to apply for national grant funding for a randomized control study of Sponsors programs. Ultimately, we want to refine our programs to reflect the best practices in the field and improve upon the things we are doing well, and eliminate the less efficient methods. Look for more about future research in the coming newsletter. ■

*Paul Solomon
Executive Director Designee*



Changing Times... *continued from page 3*

It is hard to imagine Ron Chase not being here, as he has been such a big part of Sponsors' success over the years. The good news is Ron, the Sponsors Board of Directors and I have been planning the executive director transition for quite some time. We are all confident that the transition will proceed smoothly.

While Ron's physical presence (literally) will no longer grace the doorways and offices at Sponsors, his mark on prisoner reentry in the region will be felt for many years to come. Ron has done so much for our community by insuring that services like Sponsors are an integral part of the continuum of public safety services in Lane County. The accolades and awards are many, but the true test of his legacy can be measured in the many lives that have been changed as a result of the programs that Ron has developed.

Roughly two thirds to three quarters of the people who have entered Sponsors' residential programs over the last 20 years have successfully completed the program. That's a lot of people who walked through Sponsors' doors homeless and indigent, and left with permanent,



sustainable housing, full-time employment or schooling, in compliance with their parole conditions, and drug/alcohol free. Indeed, Ron has given voice to a historically underserved population of disenfranchised people. Through his advocacy, Ron has helped to make prisoner reentry services a permanent part of the social service landscape and public safety continuum of services in Lane County.

On a personal note, working with Ron for the past 10 years has truly been a joy (most of the time). Ron will be missed, but I am confident that we will continue the work with the same passion and zeal that has helped to make Sponsors the agency that it is today.

Ron has ushered us into a new age for Sponsors, with a full array of services, but with the same guiding principles and philosophy that have served Sponsors since its genesis. Please help me in wishing Ron a well deserved retirement, which includes less work and more time listening to Bob Dylan, "for the times they are a changin' . . ."

Paul Solomon
Executive Director Designee

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