



NWRRC Community Newsletter 09/24/2024

Director's Message

Brian Martinek - Director

On October 22nd, 2024, the Northwest Regional Re-entry Center (NWRRC) will be achieving 60 years as an organization. NWRRC obtained its original incorporation “on or about” October 22nd, 1964, as the Oregon Halfway House (OHH). At that time serving as a sober living house for men in the Portland area started by the Catholic Arch Diocese of Portland.

In June 1976, the Oregon Halfway House re-opened its doors in S.E. Portland, with the support and assistance of Oregon’s federal courts, and with the leadership of Walter Evans, then-Chief Probation Officer for the District of Oregon, securing its first contract with the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP). Since then, OHH/NWRRC has continued to provide residential re-entry services to federal offenders through contracts with the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP), U.S. Probation and U.S. Pre Trial services.

In 2005, the Board of Directors for OHH expanded its services from the original fifteen bed program, by relocating to our current facility in Northeast Portland, where we now have 150 beds. The organization legally changed its name from “Oregon Halfway House” to Northwest Regional Re-entry Center (NWRRC) in January 2011.

Two primary categories of clients are referred to NWRRC by the BOP: federal prisoners who are completing the final period of their incarceration and individuals who are out of incarceration, on supervised release, monitored by Federal Probation, who are ordered by the court to reside and participate in the programs of NWRRC.

In 2019, NWRRC started a contract with the State of Oregon, Health Authority, to provide community based, restoration services, for criminal defendants who are experiencing mental health issues, determined to be unable to aid and assist in their own defense. The following year the Department of Community Justice for Multnomah County also started using NWRRC’s community restoration resources.

Today, regardless of the referral source, the role and mission of NWRRC remains the same: to assist and support residents who are re-entering the community, teach and model acceptable behaviors, and to protect the community through accountability measures and diligent operation of our programs; at the same time we recognize that this work could not be done without the ongoing support from countless community organizations and the deep partnerships fostered over the years, while working towards creating meaningful and lasting change.



NWRRRC Staffing

Jessica Dietz – HR Manager

NWRRRC is on the look out for a Training Coordinator to further develop, implement and manage our staff training curriculum. Please reach out for more information or pass this opportunity along to someone who might be interested!



OHA / DCJ Programs

Joel Robison – Program Manager

Our 370/Aid & Assist program continues to help all 36-Oregon counties with their ever increasing 161.370 cases. We are very close to increasing our capacity from 30 to 35-beds very soon. The program is now fully staffed with 2-Case Managers and 8-Resident Support Specialist positions. The Resident Support Specialists work from 7am-11pm, 7-days a week. We are excited the program is continuing to grow and is helping a population that really needs the support. Our 7-bed contract with Multnomah County Department of Community Justice (DCJ) continues with 7-beds for their probation clients living with mental illness. Recent NWRRRC construction has added a private shower for our Aid & Assist and DCJ residents. This is important because many people living with mental illness struggle with daily living skills especially in a setting with other people.

Mental Health Services

Karen Bassett – QMHPC

DID YOU KNOW? Crying is a way to regulate overwhelming human emotions; cortisol is contained in your tears, so the stress hormone is literally being washed from your body as you cry. Crying also causes the human body to release the “feel good” hormones of oxytocin and endorphins which is why we often feel better after a good cry. So, let’s normalize crying as a human strength and a healthy way to regulate an overwhelmed psyche because it reduces anxiety and helps you to function better emotionally.

Case Management Corner

Ben Percival – Case Management Supervisor

We have seen an increase in adults in custody who arrive with release addresses out of state, specifically Idaho and Montana. There are various reasons for this but it’s partly to do with the lack of space in most Regional Re-Entry Centers. This has required our team to develop connections and resources in these states when we previously had none. I’m happy to say that we’ve been able to develop professional connections with the various US Probation offices, coordinate with them to develop solid release plans and have so far seen successful resident releases to those areas. We hope to continue to earn our reputation in the Bureau of Prisons system as a Re-Entry Center that can adapt to their changing needs.

Employment

Michael Garcia – Social Services Supervisor

I’m very happy to share our recent successes through Portland Opportunities Industrialization Center’s (POIC) Construction Pre-Apprenticeship and Chef Academy programs. 1 individual graduated from the culinary program and 3 individuals graduated from the construction program. Of the 4 graduates, 3 are already employed and 1 is actively job searching. I’d also like to do a shout out to Urban League. We had a record 18 people register and began attending their Career Construction Training Institute (CCTI). Successful completion of this program greatly increases the opportunities for our residents to be accepted into pre-apprenticeship programs in various vocational trades. Finally, I’d like to introduce a new program that we are very excited about called The Rebel Academy. This organization’s roots started in carceral settings. Lauren Zavrel Is a GED educator with 15 years of teaching experience in Community Colleges and correctional facilities. Lauren recognizes the unique educational needs for those who have experienced justice involvement and incarceration. She created a nonprofit program with specialized curriculum to meet those needs. We formalized a partnership where The Rebel Academy’s trained tutors who have lived experience to meet with our residents one-on-one to support their GED success. I am happy to report that we have 3 residents referred to The Rebel Academy at this time. We look forward to continuing our outreach to amazing employers and organizations in the tri-county area.

Security

Jim Speciale – Security Operations Manager

The NWRRRC security team and accountability team are finally fully staffed. We continue to provide a safe and structured environment for NWRRRC residents. Maintaining facility safety is our priority; creating an environment where residents have the best chance to make positive changes. We strive for an environment of support, building trust and offering resources when we can. “Know how to win by following the rules.” ~ Arnold Palmer