



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

Three months ago, hundreds of men and women at the Bradenton and Broward County Bridge facilities feared they were going to be sent back to prison due to state budget cuts. Instead, this month they celebrated their completion of educational, professional and life skills programs that put them one step closer to becoming successful members of the community.



We are so thrilled at the progress these men and women have made to turn their lives around. Our goal is to help our program participants gain the professional and life skills they need to ensure that they never return to prison.

Typical of the successes that happen frequently at our Transition Centers is the story of Trina Vaughn, a 36-year-old grandmother who earned her GED. Trina dropped out of school at age 14 after running away from home. She had her first child a year later, and by the time she was 21 she had four children and no prospects. While working at age 23, Trina began attending night school - getting her GED was something she always wanted and knew she needed. Unfortunately, the lure of drugs was too strong to resist, and she ended up with a three-year prison sentence following a drug trafficking conviction. As soon as Trina was incarcerated in February 2011, she signed up for GED classes.

At the Bradenton Bridge, GED Teacher Dawn Sudbury and her tutors kept Trina focused, encouraged her and helped her believe the GED was possible. Through her Bridge classes, Trina realized that she wants to be a photographer and now believes her dreams can come true. Her children, now ages 20, 19, 18 and 14, are very proud of their mother and are following her positive example - the 20- and 18-year-olds earned their high school diplomas, and the oldest is now in

UPCOMING EVENTS

Jacksonville Bridge

Re-Entry Fair
Friday, June 15th
10AM - 12PM

Orlando Bridge Non-Secure

Family Day
Saturday, June 24th
12PM - 3PM

Bradenton Bridge

Alumni Reunion
Saturday, July 7th

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Criminal Justice Reform in the News

[Justice 2.0: How we can reduce crime, save money and heal people, right now](#)

college. Trina will complete the transition program and move into work release, learning skills and earning money that will help her when she is released next May.

I would like to thank each and every one of you who is vested in making our men and women's lives better. Our programs would not be a success without your hard work and dedication to the belief that people can change.

Sincerely,

Lu Costantino Brown

President and CEO

GRADUATION & COMPLETION CEREMONY Broward County & Turning Point Bridges



Department of Transportation work squad receiving certificates from Wavy McCoy, Florida DOT Engineering Inspector

On May 4, 2012, program participants from the Broward County and Turning Point Bridges were honored in a Graduation and Completion Ceremony. The 79 men earned a total of 114 certificates in Culinary Arts, GED, Forklift Operation, A+ Computers, Commercial Drivers License, Toastmasters, Wall Street, Nurturing Parents, National Career Readiness, and Bridge Builders.

The Chef and Culinary Apprentices usually prepare the graduation meal, but Chef Frank Boyd had just joined the Bridge team a week prior. Facility Director Iana Patterson had the event catered by an alumnus of the Broward County Bridge, Shawn O'Neill. He and his company, New Creations Catering, served up a delectable meal that was enjoyed by all. How wonderful it is to see our alumni prosper!

NEW Jacksonville Bridge Construction Progress



Orlando Bridge Graduation



DR. JEFFERY JOHNSON VISITS The Broward County Bridge



Program participant and Lois Astern of the Dave Thomas Educational Center, talking to Dr. Jeffery Johnson

On May 10th Dr. Jeffery Johnson, President/CEO of the *National Partnership for Community Leadership* and Program Manager Jack Johnson visited the Broward County Bridge to learn more about the programs and services we provide. Michelle Rogers of Family Central Broward, who teaches our men parenting and communication skills, has seen firsthand what a difference community involvement can make in our programs.

Dr. Johnson and the National Partnership for Community Leadership are focused on obtaining funding for community-based responsible fatherhood programs, funding to assist with permanent employment, prisoner re-entry and criminal justice reform, just to name a few.

We are so proud of our five program participants who will be recognized as "Favored Fathers of 2012" at the 14th Annual International Fatherhood Conference, June 12th -

15th in Ft. Lauderdale.

We look forward to our new partnership with Dr. Johnson and his team. Special thanks to Facility Director Lana Patterson and Cecilia Denmark, Corporate Quality Management, for developing this relationship!

GRADUATION & COMPLETION CEREMONY **The Bradenton Bridge**



On May 24th, 82 women were recognized at the Bradenton Bridge Graduation and Completion Ceremony for earning a certificate in the following areas: GED, Connect Your Community computer proficiency course, 1000-hour American Culinary Federation Fundamentals, ServSafe Food Handler Certifications, and 380 hours of classes in Family Development, Victim Awareness, Anger Management, Criminal Thinking/Thinking Errors, Addiction Education, Budgeting, and Employment/Re-Entry skills.

Pictured above is Sherry Knowles, Connect Your Community Program Administrator for Manatee County School Board, with the 35 program graduates and volunteers. Connect Your Community (CYC) provides training in Basic Computer Literacy, Digital Literacy,

Microsoft Office Suite, and Electives in Finance, Jobs, Health, and Education. The program is funded through a two-year grant of \$18.7 million from the U.S. Department of Commerce's Broadband Technology Opportunities Program and supports 26,000 low-income individuals and their households in the seven communities of Cleveland, Akron, and Appalachian, Ohio; Detroit, Michigan; Lexington, KY; Manatee County, FL; and Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

The Bradenton Transition Center is very thankful for this partnership and opportunity for the women to become comfortable with technology in preparation for their reentry into the community as productive, law-abiding citizens.

ASSOCIATION OF PAROLING AUTHORITIES INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE VISITS The Orlando Bridge Facilities



On May 23rd we had over 40 visitors from as far as Africa and New Zealand visit our three Orlando facilities. This tour was a continuation of the two-day Association of Paroling Authorities International Conference held in Orlando. Under the leadership of Chef Mike Schnitzer, the Culinary Arts apprentices prepared and served delicious appetizers.

Our International guests enjoyed learning about our programs and what makes them effective.

www.bridgesofamerica.com

Bridges of America is a nonprofit organization founded in 1972 with the mission of changing criminal behavior through a practical, comprehensive approach that includes intensive substance-abuse counseling, parenting classes and work-release programs. Bridges' core value is a belief that people can change.

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