

The Progress Report



Issue 14 · Fall 2013

U.S. Dept. of Justice Funds "CLICC" with \$295k Grant

Connecticut Appleseed Board member Arthur White exuberantly announced the October award of a \$295,000 Second Chance Act grant from the U.S. Department of Justice for CT Appleseed's Connecting through Literacy Incarcerated Parents, Children and Caregivers ("CLICC") program. The grant, to be paid over a 2-year period, will specifically help bring Appleseed's CLICC program to two of Connecticut's state prisons in collaboration with CT's Dept. of Corrections. Having been encouraged by the U.S. Bureau of Prisons since 2004 for possible replication throughout the federal prison system's 115 facilities, Arthur admits that bringing CLICC to fruition has sorely tested even his extraordinary patience.

Winning a grant of such size is a fitting tribute to a man who invested so much of his energy and inventiveness on an unshakable belief in human redemption. But it further reflects Arthur's ability to leverage his unique experience in founding Reading is Fundamental ("RIF") with his longtime role as Educational Advisor to the U.S. Bureau of Prisons.

Devastating Educational and Emotional Toll on Children with Parents in Prison

CT Appleseed's CLICC program mitigates two pressing challenges: 1) below-average literacy rates of incarcerated parents and their children, and 2) strained, often destructive relationships among families which include an incarcerated parent. Many inmate parents are severely depressed due to parent-child separation, do not want their

children to know they are in prison and avoid both visitation by and communication with their children.

Sadly, it's the children of the incarcerated who are the innocent victims of our justice system; in the absence of their inmate parents, their educational and emotional development stagnates or regresses. Children and family members suffer during the incarceration period itself, and then again upon inmate reentry, as the family must readjust to its new structure. Reinforcing the literacy skills of re-entering inmates and their children will help to ease their transition, help the family move forward more cohesively and better equip former inmates to enter the workforce.

Our Project Partners

Key partners in CLICC include "RIF", Family Services Woodfield (FSW) of Bridgeport and Family Re-Entry, Inc. of Norwalk. Our program is based on a successful 2010 pilot at the Danbury, CT Federal Correctional Institution, which houses low-security female offenders.

CLICC supports learning and personal growth with e-mentor role models who can help provide stability and a positive learning experience. To date, volunteer e-mentors have been recruited from employees at large Connecticut employers such as Northeast Utilities and Pitney Bowes. With this grant in hand, Arthur's project team will now begin greatly expanding our mentor recruitment efforts for both the incarcerated parents and their children.



Mission Statement

Our Mission is to develop solutions for the causes, rather than the symptoms, of our state's social problems. We will deploy volunteer lawyers and other professionals to achieve systemic changes through legal and legislative advocacy, negotiation, education and other initiatives.



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Disciplinary Strategies that Help Districts to “Keep Kids in School”

In 2011 CT Appleseed released our report titled “*Keep Kids in School: Improving School Discipline*” which documented innovative disciplinary practices in 9 diverse school districts. Based on dozens of interviews with school administrators and teachers, as well as focus groups with both parents and middle school students, we reported our finding that a highly structured in-school suspension environment can deter misbehavior better than can traditional discipline.

Response to *Keep Kids in School* was so positive that an anonymous donor printed copies for mailing to every school board member, administrator and principal in the state. A request from a Bloomfield Public Schools administrator for a follow-up study is prompting us to revisit this subject in more detail, searching further for Best Practices that explain more recent district success in reducing disciplinary incidents and improving school climate.

Led by Appleseed Board and General Assembly Education Committee member Michael C. D’Agostino, Appleseed will study school districts whose declines in out-of-school (OSS) and in-school (ISS) suspension are the greatest. As with *Keep Kids in School*, we will train a team of pro bono attorneys to interview administrators in these districts to find out just how they managed to drive their numbers down.

So How Do They Do It?

After identifying 10-12 districts that have most significantly reduced disciplinary incidents over the past few years, we

anticipate finding and sharing the approaches used by individual districts and schools. In addition to early intervention programs which de-escalate student issues that result in ISS, we plan to identify those elements that achieve success and reduce the need to even assign ISS in the first place. We want to examine closely the effectiveness of various disciplinary measures – including ISS – in deflating the issues and situations that often lead to disciplinary sanctions.

By showcasing the salient characteristics that foster a successful school climate with low ISS and OSS statistics, we plan to develop a tool that will help school districts throughout the state to assess the effectiveness of their disciplinary programs, overcome their school climate challenges and improve their related statistics.

Bolstering Connecticut’s Leadership on Discipline

Connecticut has emerged as a leader in recognizing that repeatedly using OSS for violations like insubordination and truancy can be counterproductive, often leading students to remain out of school and get into trouble with the law. Since July 1, 2010 Connecticut students have been disciplined for typical acts of child or adolescent misbehavior with ISS alone.

In addition to giving visibility to districts and schools whose techniques merit replication, Appleseed’s 2014 report will burnish Connecticut’s reputation in this important area.

Creating Entry-Level Health Jobs in Connecticut with Career Advancement Potential

All too often, the relatively low-skilled home health care providers (“Medical Assistants”) who assist patients at home are trapped in dead end, low-paying jobs. High turnover,

which is chronic among these workers, presents a headache for the community health centers trying to improve patient care quality. Worse yet, these Medical Assistants,



the frontline workforce for community health centers, typically lack the skill sets and technological literacy to effectively support patient self-management at home.

Connecticut Appleseed responded by launching in 2012 the CT TeleHealth and Workforce Partnership (CTWP) to provide training so that these workers could remain in the health field and grow their skills. The CTWP is designed to demonstrate the health benefits of integrating workforce and academic training with evolving care team models and new mobile technologies. The CTWP will increase the health care system's capacity for preventive care and patient self-management, and importantly, reduce healthcare system costs by preventing hospitalizations and expensive re-hospitalizations.

Partnering with Optimus Health Care and Norwalk Community College

This initiative involves working with the state's community colleges to devise

training tracks and coursework for Medical Assistants that will upgrade their skills and provide them with mobility and income growth while improving patient care quality. Initially, CTWP partners with Norwalk Community College (NCC) to design and deliver coursework that will enable frontline workers to grow into higher-skilled, better-paying roles. NCC's curriculum is intended for possible replication in a statewide community college health career ladder education program.

Academic training leading Medical Assistants toward certification for roles as Care Coordinators is supplemented by work-based learning at community health clinics. Our Phase 2 pilot will therefore empanel all patients at two Optimus Health Care test clinic sites in southern Fairfield County into redesigned provider care teams. Each clinic will incorporate mobile ("tele") monitoring and care management technology to support the care of diabetes and cardiovascular patients whose health outcomes will be

measured. Unless frontline workers are able to perform skilled tasks that exploit these efficient new technologies, community health providers will be hard-pressed to increase health access and quality at affordable cost.

Pilot Training Program Creates Jobs and Leverages Technology to Improve Care

With significant and greatly-appreciated support to date from Verizon and Aetna, the CTWP is structured to demonstrate that integrating work-based clinical training with academic pathways can enable community health organizations to retain, motivate and reward their employees. We are certain that the next phase of our pilot will prove that integrating advanced technologies into versatile and lower-cost care team models will improve patient self-management, reduce expensive re-hospitalizations and satisfy patient care metrics.

Connecticut Appleseed thanks our 2012 Supporters...

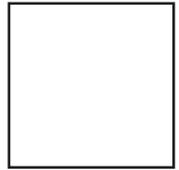
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Four Years of Pro Bono Legal Help to Hartford's Homeless

Early each Tuesday morning since October, 2009, teams of volunteer lawyers and students from UCONN Law School have provided free legal clinics for Hartford individuals at either the Mercy Shelter on Main Street or the House of Bread on Chestnut Street. With volunteer attorneys already lined up for this Fall, Connecticut Appleseed is scheduling "Hartford HELP" clinics at both shelters beyond year-end and into early 2014.

To date, HELP attorneys have assisted roughly 600 people on a single consultation, advice only and/or limited representation basis. Typically, HELP attorneys address the small, finite, more readily fixable causes of homelessness, but they occasionally provide referrals to other lawyers

when actual representation or more intensive legal work is needed. CT Appleseed coordinates their training, provides them with necessary legal forms, schedules the clinics and then reminds shelter staff of the lawyers' Tuesday morning arrival. Our organization also assesses the project's impact by maintaining records and gathering reports on the types of assistance our volunteers are asked to provide.

What Types of Issues Are Handled at HELP Clinics?

HELP clinics currently serve an average of 5 or 6 individuals each Tuesday, helping those individuals to obtain missing identification documents, apply for social security disability and clear up minor criminal matters that prevent a person from getting housing or applying for a job. An additional broad category of assistance has been with housing issues such as landlord/tenant, Section 8 and liens/evictions. The attorneys are able to address such a broad spectrum of issues only because they're ably assisted at each clinic by student volunteers from UCONN Law School.

A Committed Cadre of Volunteers

The Day Pitney, Murtha Cullina and Axinn Veltrop & Harkrider law firms and the George

W. Crawford Black Bar Association have reliably stepped forward to staff the Hartford HELP clinics, and each has recently provided volunteer teams for a number of different months. But over the years HELP has also been fortunate to attract participation from additional Hartford law firm offices, including Brown Rudnick, Bracewell & Giuliani and Reid and Riege. Also filling in importantly have been the CT Bar Association's Young Lawyers Section, the CT Hispanic Bar Association and retired U.S. Administrative Law Judge Joyce Krutick Craig.

