

Transition and Support Committee
Annual Report
April 2018 to April 2019
Presented March 17, 2019 in MWAB

This report covers our activities as we continue to serve men in Orange Correctional Center (OCC) as well as those whom we support when they return to the Chapel Hill community.

1. **Yokefellows at OCC on Tuesdays:** We go to the prison to be with the men at the Peace Center, attending Tuesday night meetings of Yokefellows three times per month. While Yokefellows discontinued the practice of serving snacks at these meetings, we find we now have more time for extended conversations with the men at our tables.
2. **Other involvement in OCC events:** We continue to attend and support various events at OCC such as Parents Day, Black History celebration (now an annual event), and special meals for Fourth of July and Thanksgiving. We will host a birthday party on August 27 for men whose birthdays fall in that month, and all are invited.
3. **Extra Support at OCC:** Bonnie Raphael and Maria Darlington tutor men who are taking classes. Paul Munk and Richard Miller continue to take several men who plan to live in this area to addiction recovery meetings in town. Several former inmates also attend these Monday night meetings. This year Bonnie Raphael assisted one of the men in getting his life sentence reviewed by the Innocence Project at Wake Forest Law School; as a result of the Project's work, we are hopeful that there will be a change in his incarceration.
4. **Meeting for Worship at OCC:** We had two meetings for worship last year at Orange Correctional Center and have meetings for worship scheduled this year for Sunday, March 24 and Sunday, August 11 at 6 pm. Let us know if you would like to join us.
5. **OCC residents and returned citizens in Meeting for Worship at CHFM:** We bring OCC residents to join us here at the Meeting. Men from our Committee to serve as sponsors, bringing 1-3 men to Meeting for Worship, forums, and potluck. We also encourage former OCC residents who have returned to the community to join us, sometimes providing transportation. In our experience of our Committee, these men have become an integral part of our worship, and other members of the Meeting appreciate their participation. When it is not potluck Sunday, we go out together for lunch after Meeting.
6. **Current residents, returned citizens and T&S Discussion after potluck:** Following potluck each month we gather with current OCC residents, returned citizens and members of the committee and the Meeting at large for discussion of issues of interest and concern for the group. The insights of returned citizens have been useful for men planning their housing, employment, transportation and other details of their next steps after release and for us in our support of both groups. We understand that these gatherings and the Tuesday night Yokefellow meetings are helping the men break barriers among them in the prison.
7. **Book Club:** Our Crossing the Fenceline Book Club offers another opportunity for Friends to get to know the men from OCC. Led by Tom McQuiston, Nancy Fisher, and Richard Miller, eight to nine men from the prison join other Committee members in the discussions. Multiple copies of the books are provided by local libraries. This year the group read *Grapes of Wrath*, *The Namesake*, *Just Like Us*, *Death with Interruptions*, *The Sound and the Fury*, *The Book of Joy*, *The Great Influenza*, *The Warmth of Other Suns*, *The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down*, and *Nineteen-Eighty-Four*. We are currently reading *The Turner House*. In the past year Edward Harris has been the OCC internal coordinator for distribution of the

books, and Gregory Hawkins now taken on that role. One of the guards was recently observed reading our newest book. The Book Club now meets at Fly Leaf Book Store after the 11 am Meeting for Worship on the last First Day of the month.

8. **Support Teams with Returned citizens:** Since March 2016 TSC teams have provided support for 17 returning citizens, and we continue to enjoy friendship with and support of a number of these men. This year we have supported 4 men in their return to this community and reinitiated assistance to two men who have returned to IFC Community House. Through the work of Nancy Fisher and others we've developed a relationship with the Inter-Faith Council Community House that has facilitated the admission of men directly from OCC. When returning citizens are released, our support circles of 2-3 people assist them in obtaining necessary clothing from socks to winter coats, transportation to Social Security and government agencies, medical appointments, and job interviews. When more permanent housing is located, we assist in locating and providing furnishings; on rare occasion, members have assisted with loans for rent deposits and facilitated referrals to the Returning Citizens Financial Assistance Committee. Beyond this logistical support, relationship building is the greater part of our effort. Upon the occasion of re-arrest of a returned citizen, we provide support as circumstances indicate. Most of our time and energy goes to building friendships and offering support over coffee or meals.
9. **Annual Picnic:** This year we held our second annual Reunion Picnic at Southern Community Park in September, inviting 60 men with whom we have worked over the past several years. There were many we couldn't locate, but about 40 returned citizens came with wives, children, grandchildren, and a few pets. Our group pictures show that we had a good time. There was lots of hugging. We will repeat this event in the fall. Friends are invited.
10. **Returned Citizen Support Groups:** In addition, there are now two gatherings where some of the returned citizens are meeting in friendship and support of each other. Tom McQuiston has organized group for returned citizens who also work with young people in the community and a friend who returned recently also hosts a group.
11. **T&S Committee operation:** Finally, our Committee meets the last Tuesday of the month to coordinate support for individuals and to coordinate our interaction with other organizations and programs. We are currently developing a profile of re-entry programs and housing programs in the Chapel Hill and Durham area that might serve returning citizens that we support.

Our committee membership has remained stable this year and includes Asta Crowe, Maria Darlington, Hank Elkins, Timothy Fogarty, Nancy Fisher, Kuldip Kuwahara, Tom McQuiston, Richard Miller (clerk for 2018), Joyce Munk, Paul Munk, Bonnie Raphael, David Schneider, Monteze Snyder (current clerk), and Byron Stevens.

Respectfully submitted,

The Transition and Support Committee