

Transition and Support Committee

Annual Report

March 2022 to March 2023

Due to the pandemic this report covers greatly reduced activities in providing support to men transitioning from Orange Correctional Center (OCC) to the community, and provision of support to formerly incarcerated men living in the Chapel Hill and Durham communities.

ORANGE CORRECTIONAL CENTER INVOLVEMENT: Because of corona virus restrictions, Tuesday evening meetings at Orange Correctional Center (Yokefellows) were suspended March through August. During that time, T&SC members were unable to develop pre-release relationships with OCC residents. When reopened, three T&SC members, along with other volunteers, attend Tuesday evening Yokefellows meetings. Three T&SC members are waiting to attend the next OCC orientation which will give them the necessary clearance to become OCC volunteers and Yokefellows attenders.

Given the inability to develop pre-release relationships, no T&SC support was provided to men transitioning from OCC to the community. Assistance was provided in locating a transitional residential program for one OCC resident.

Prior to the coronavirus, another opportunity for relationship building was OCC's Community Pass program. OCC approved volunteer sponsors taking residents on community visits, e.g., attendance of CHFM, transportation to job interviews, meeting with T&SC support team, transportation to weekly recovery meetings. The Community Visits program has not been reinstated.

Since there is limited opportunity for T&SC members for relationship building, three T&SC members met with Josh Leroy, OCC chaplain, to discuss a procedure to determine an OCC resident's appropriateness and readiness for partnering with a T&SC support team upon release. Decision: The chaplain will be involved in identifying and interviewing residents who are requesting T&SC support. Since the reinstating of Yokefellows two OCC residents have requested T&SC support.

T&SC recommended that Josh Leroy make a Forum presentation. Josh presented in Forum on February 5. He shared his personal radical Christian spirituality and how it provides a foundation from which he draws in his relationships with OCC residents.

Sally Freeman, an Eno Friends Meeting member, was granted permission from the OCC Superintendent to schedule a monthly on-site Quaker Meeting for Healing. Three T&SC members met with three Eno Friends Meeting attenders to discuss and develop the proposed Quaker Meeting for Healing and to plan the first meeting. This meeting was held on January 26 with subsequent meetings in February and March. The focus of the Quaker Meeting for Healing is introduction of a silent worship experience and provision of an opportunity for participants to

lift up friends, family, themselves for healing. Attendance was 8 to 10 men and 4 to 5 volunteers.

A monthly book club meeting was re-initiated by Tom McQuiston and several OCC residents in December. These monthly meetings are held on Tuesday evenings during Yokefellows in the OCC Peace Center.

Richard Miller collected 89 calendars which were given to the chaplain to be distributed to the residents.

The chaplain identified the need for dental hygiene items. These items were purchased and given to the chaplain for distribution.

FORMERLY INCARCERATED MEN: The coronavirus pandemic also limited contacts with previously incarcerated men to telephone contacts and occasional person-to-person contacts. Men called to request assistance with securing housing, technological assistance with application for employment, custody and parenting issues, support related to pending court hearings, relationship problems, and calls sharing joys and other concerns, or just to talk with a friend.

T&SC members called previously incarcerated men to encourage voter registration and voting.

COMMUNITY MEETINGS: Friday morning meetings, initiated by Tom McQuiston and Josh Leroy, continued throughout this past year. These meetings, attended by T&SC members, other volunteers, and community residents, were held at the Weaver Street Market in Hillsborough. The focus of the meetings was community building between previously incarcerated persons and community persons who support them.

FINANCIAL SUPPORT OF ALAMANCE ORANGE PRISON MINISTRY: Alamance Orange Prison Ministry is solely supported by donations. In October and November Astra Crowe coordinated this annual fundraiser to support the chaplain and the ministry's activities at OCC. The sale of pecans netted \$1,470.

COLLABORATION: Several T&SC members collaborated with the Peace and Justice committee to invite Walter Naegle, long term partner of Bayard Rustin, to make a presentation at the Chapel Hill Library of Bayard Rustin's biography and contributions.

TRANSITION AND SUPPORT COMMITTEE MEETINGS: From March 2022 to August 2022 the T&SC met via Zoom on the last Tuesday of the month and from August 2022 through March 2023. T&SC meetings were scheduled for the first Monday of the month.

T&SC committee membership includes Buzz Borchardt, Annette Broadwell, Asta Crowe, Hank Elkins, Nancy Fisher, Tom McQuiston, Richard Miller John Pilgrim, Bonnie Raphael, David Schneider, and Byron Stevens. (Co-clerks: Tom McQuiston and Nancy Fisher)