

FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

HAPPY ENDING

So, this has been a bit of a year-long, on-again, off-again, stop-start, bad news/good news story, but there's a happy ending. Although the Inside Out Network platform will not be deployed on Arizona inmate tablet computers in the next few years (as we'd hoped and expected), it is just about to be made available on a computer in every prison library statewide. Just as is happening in prison computer labs in Oregon, inmates will be able to reserve a time to directly register themselves on ION, search for help, and exchange messages with service providers. We expect that this new presence in Arizona prison libraries will at least double our annual registrations and lead to a tenfold increase in messaging and improved planning.

Despite strong support from the Director and other leaders at the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation, and Reentry (ADCRR), we were unable to reach an agreement with one of the large tech companies that handles ADCRR's computer tablets. Nevertheless, the department pressed ahead with our back-up plan to deploy ION on computer terminals. Not only that, they came up with the idea to use the prison library (and staff) as the location.

We're thrilled with this development, and we're gearing up to rewrite all of our training materials and getting ready to travel across the state for testing, training, and rollout. Stay tuned in the coming months for inspiring reentry story time from the prison library!

~Fred



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COMING SOON TO AN INBOX NEAR YOU:

COLOR ME YELLOW 24

Last fall we launched our first-ever fundraising campaign, dubbed "Color Me Yellow." The idea was to ask our friends and supporters to donate generously to help underwrite our efforts to expand to Mississippi and to migrate our ION platform onto inmate tablets. Thanks to over a hundred individuals and couples who gave over \$61,000 in donations (Whoo-hoo! We beat our target!), we were able to make really substantial progress toward both those goals. What a difference every contribution made!

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COLOR ME YELLOW 24

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This year, we're going even bigger and hoping to raise \$70,000 to expand access to the ION platform to inmate tablet computers and computers in prison libraries and to broaden our work in the state of Oregon.

We'll launch this year's campaign in early- to mid-November. But we wanted to give you a heads-up now so that, when an email from us hits your inbox, you can carefully and prayerfully consider giving generously to help us change the lives of those leaving incarceration. It's impossible to say it too often: We couldn't do what we do without you. Thank you for caring and thank you for your support!



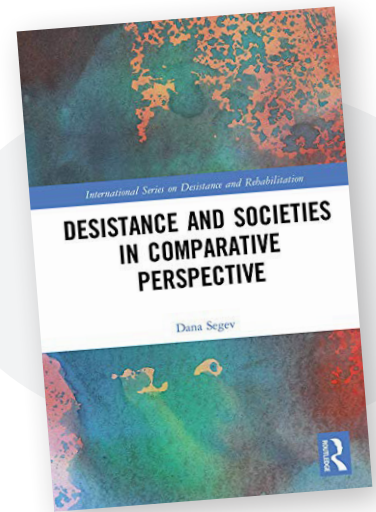
NASHVILLE:

GOOD CONTACTS, GREAT CONVERSATIONS, HOT CHICKEN

In the middle of August, I attended the annual conference of the American Correctional Association in Nashville. Thousands of correctional officials from around the United States attended the conference, which featured a solid lineup of speakers and workshops (including an interview and performance from Jellyroll) and a huge exhibition hall filled with companies offering a dizzying array of products and services. I skipped the tables displaying instant drug analysis, drone detection systems, and ankle monitors. Instead, I was able to network with a number of inmate computer tablet firms, reentry directors from states where we don't yet have a presence, and a variety of nonprofit reentry service providers.

Since then, many of these good contacts blossomed into great conversations on Zoom. Though it's too early to name names, we're excited and intrigued about a couple of potential partnerships. All in all, the conference was great, downtown Nashville was lively and fun, and the famous local hot chicken definitely lived up to its billing.

~Fred



WHAT WE'RE READING:

Desistance and Societies in Comparative Perspective. Dana Segev. New York: Routledge, 2020. 208 pages.

When my wife, Carol, saw the title of this book, she said it looked super-boring. She was certainly right about the title. But she was definitely wrong about the content. This book is a truly fascinating study of how the process of desistance (how people wind down their criminal careers) is significantly different depending on the culture and society in which it's happening. Dana Segev compares and contrasts how probationers in England and Israel experience life after prison. The widely differing social context plays out differently, for example, in how people are labeled in each country, in how employment functions as a social bond, in the different levels of social capital that they enjoyed, in the comparative age differences of peak offending (offending and desistance occurs quite a bit later in life in Israel), in relationships with family and peers, in the role of religion, and so on.

Segev writes clearly and well, and her study is loaded with lots of quotations from her interviews. The big takeaway for me is that desistance isn't just about the inner workings of the returning citizens themselves. It's also, to a remarkable degree, about the kind of society we've forged for ourselves that shapes the pathways for them to succeed or, far too often, fail. We can, and must, do better.

~Fred



MISSISSIPPI UPDATE



To be completely honest, progress in Mississippi lagged during the summer, and we struggled with our relationship with certain Mississippi Department of Corrections staff that had been assigned to work with us. Since then, the Commissioner has assigned new people to be our liaisons in the department, and things have improved. We've continued to plug away and are now at 21 registered service providers—over half-way to our launch metric.

We now have a team comprised of our executive director, our program assistant Madison Snider, and two of our interns, including Hannah Kreuz, who lives in Mississippi and goes to Ole Miss. Since she's our boots on the ground, Hannah was able to participate in a special training event at the invitation of George King, the MDOC Reentry Coordinator. Here's what she reported:

"Today I got the opportunity to join George King of the Mississippi Department of Corrections for a visit to the Mississippi State Penitentiary (Parchman). It was such an incredible experience to be able to see how change is being made in this facility. I felt so welcomed from the moment I walked through the doors. George had me sit in with him during his first day of training incarcerated individuals as field ministers within the prison. I had the privilege of interacting with around thirty incarcerated individuals who were all eager to listen and learn, and so was I. They told me about several of the new developments in the facility, involving hospice care, ministry, education, and so much more. I am so grateful to have been able to be a part of the movement that is happening within Parchman."



ARIZONA UPDATE



SPOTLIGHT- PERRYVILLE RESOURCE FAIR

The Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry (ADCRR) has begun hosting "behind the walls" community resource fairs for individuals who are incarcerated. In early August, we had the pleasure of attending one of these events that was hosted at Perryville prison in Goodyear, the only women's prison in Arizona.

Over the course of the day, we connected with more than 500 women who were nearing release to share information about ION and offer *Spiritual Survival Guides* to those who were interested. In fact, so many were interested in the book that not only did we give away what we had with us that day, but Fred had to return with additional copies. In all, we gave 12 cases (336 copies) of the book to the women at Perryville.

In addition to connecting with soon-to-be returning citizens, we were able to connect with other community partners who are doing incredible work to support this population.

ADCRR is continuing to host these events inside various institutions, and we are looking forward to attending two more later this month—at Lewis prison in Buckeye and at the Tucson Complex in Tucson.





OREGON UPDATE

In May of this year we launched returning citizen registration in Oregon. We started with a pilot launch at two Oregon Department of Correction (ODOC) facilities, Deer Ridge and Warner Creek, where both have allowed Adults in Custody (AICs) who are within six months of their release to register on the ION platform. Since then, *six* more facilities have gone live! Returning citizens are now eligible for registration at these additional facilities: Coffee Creek, Powder River, Santiam, Oregon State Correctional Institution, Snake River, and Two Rivers. Importantly, those registering are given the opportunity to schedule regular sessions to log in and use the ION platform to connect with providers in the community prior to their release.

We also continue to grow our provider network throughout the state. Total as of September 30: 79 providers, 97 total locations.

AN (OREGON) UPDATE ON 'DANNY'

In his opening letter in our summer newsletter, our executive director, Fred Nelson, shared the story of Danny and his excitement at receiving five return messages from service providers in the hours right after he registered on the site.

Things continued to go well for Danny. We got this message from Opportunity Oregon, a service organization listed on ION:

"I just wanted to share my gratitude and excitement for your program. If you recall, I may have been the first to sign up for it here in Oregon. A while later, I received my first message for services from Deer Ridge Correctional Institution. His name was Danny, a talented young man who made transformative life changes inside, and we started the application process to assist once he was released.

"I then met with him in person and started the job search process. He called a few days ago and got the bilingual customer service clerk position with one of our local fair chance employers. He starts tomorrow!

"I just wanted to thank you and the rest of the ION team for such a simple and helpful tool for service providers and adults in custody."

We love hearing these success stories! It's why we do what we do.

EAST CASCADES WORKS AND ORN (OREGON RESOURCE NETWORK)

A short while ago, one of our wonderful employment partners reached out with an interesting proposal. East Cascades Works, a workforce board in Oregon, truly loves the ION platform and how easy it is to use, so much so that they asked to partner with us to make a copy of our website to serve their clients who are looking for employment.

Instead of it being used for returning citizens to reach out to community partners, it will be geared toward jobseekers who are interested in connecting with employers, employment resources, and a few other support services such as childcare support and transportation services. And, in true ION fashion, of course, the community partners who register will be able to proactively reach out to the jobseekers as well.

Thanks to a substantial grant that East Cascade Works has received, they are able to contract with us to develop this online resource.

We are full-steam ahead, working on the duplication of the ION site and making the necessary changes for it to become ORN, aka the Oregon Resource Network. We are so grateful for the opportunity to use our platform to serve another population in need of connection and to have such a strong partnership with East Cascades Works.



SERVICE PROVIDER PROFILE:

ALL STAR LABOR & STAFFING

All Star Labor & Staffing is a staffing agency with a special focus on employing people who may have challenges finding work. Their mission to help previously incarcerated individuals led them to be one of the early service providers to register on the Inside Out Network in Oregon. "But," says Karen Cain, associate director for operations and training, "we don't discriminate against people with clean records." Of the 3,000 people All Star employs each year, roughly one-third have a criminal background. One staffer describes All Star as a "for-profit company with a non-profit mission."

We talked with Karen recently about her work at All Star Labor & Staffing and her involvement in incarceration and criminal justice work more broadly.

About twenty years ago a close family member of Karen's was incarcerated, leading her to immerse herself in volunteer work for various advocacy organizations. Her full-time work was in retail management, but she found herself longing to do work that would "feed my soul and my pocketbook." Encouraged by her incarcerated relative, in 2015 she did an online search, and All Star Labor & Staffing popped up at the top of the list.

All Star was having a grand opening at a new location the next day, so Karen showed up. They weren't looking to hire additional staff for the office, but she told them, based on her experience, that they would need another staff person. She believes they gave her an interview mostly because of her insistence. But, once they realized the depth of her background and experience, they brought her on board. Since then she has worked at the entry level, then as a branch manager, then as a training branch manager, and now in operations and training.

Karen appreciates the opportunity her position gives her to have a larger impact by "pushing the second-chance agenda in



training." Her job also includes going into prisons for job fairs and to connect with people who need a job plan ahead of their parole date.

We asked Karen to share an All Star success story, and she told us about a man we'll call "Bill."

Bill was serving a life sentence but was released on clemency in 2020 and came right to All Star to find a job. When he was placed, All Star got a call from the employer saying what a great match it was. But then, after just a few days, the employer called to say, "Don't let him come back." Bill, in his excitement about how things were going, told a coworker about his transition from prison to employment. And, although the company was a second-chance employer, not every employee agreed with that approach.

Bill was placed in another job. In November 2023 he got in touch with All Star with the news that he'd bought a house. The next month he graduated from welding school (the business owner had paid for his education) and got a promotion and a raise.

Thanks to Karen Cain for sharing her story and the story of All Star Labor & Staffing. All Star has five locations in Oregon and one in Arizona. Find out more at allstarlabor.com.

ION NOW ACCEPTING STOCK DONATIONS

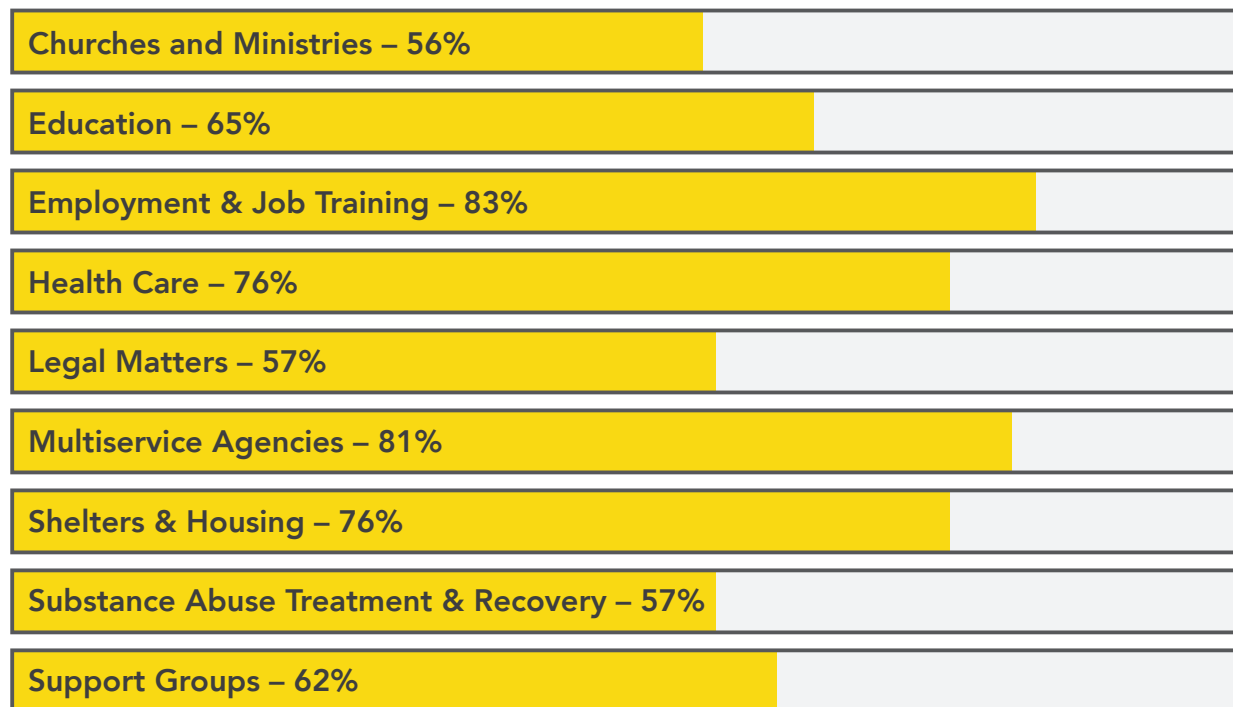
The Inside Out Network is now able to accept donations of stock. If you would like to support ION with a stock donation, please contact Executive Director Fred Nelson at fred@insideoutnetwork.net or 847-323-3774 for details.



STATS SNAPSHOT

We haven't talked about Sean Doyle, our awesome volunteer data analyst, very often, but that's about to change. After many months of analyzing the data we're collecting, we think we've finally hit upon a monthly statistical report that will provide the kind of data that will allow us to better evaluate the people using our platform and the impact we're having. In this newsletter, we're unveiling what we hope will be a regular feature, "Stats Snapshot." We'll share insights from the data that we find interesting or important—or both.

For our first Stats Snapshot, we're sharing which categories of help the latest group of returning citizens expressed interest in. Here's what September's registration cohort of 259 men and women wanted to be connected with, by percentage:



Interesting numbers, aren't they? And they get even more interesting when you break them down by state and by gender. More to come.

THE MORE YOU KNOW...

Not quite sure how the ION platform works? Or having trouble describing it to a friend? You can watch an explanatory video at insideoutnetwork.net/overview or on [YouTube](#).



INSIDE OUT
NETWORK

The Inside Out Network is always a free service for returning citizens

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