



The Deuce Club

SPECIAL ANNIVERSARY ISSUE

NOVEMBER 2009

Special points of interest:

- 140,610 (1 in 11) in prison in the U.S. are serving life sentences
- 41,095 have life without parole
- 6,807 individuals serving life sentences were juveniles at the time of the crime

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CPR Turns Ten on November 8th— The History of CPR

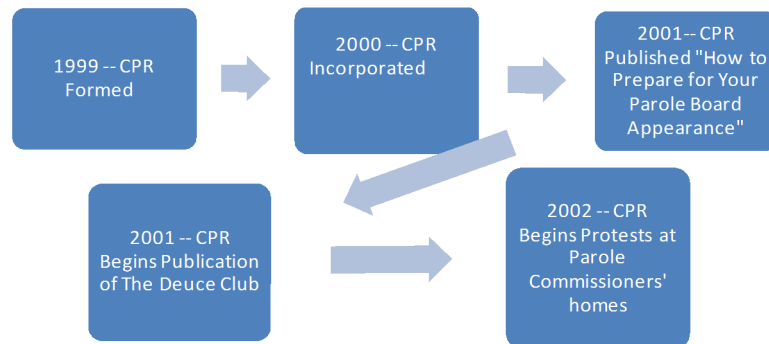
Ten years ago I attended the Annual Roundtable for Women in Prison in California. One of the tasks they gave us to do when we returned home was to convene a local meeting to discuss issues affecting people in our prisons. In early September 1999, I chaired the meeting that was attended by a few Legal Aid attorneys. As we considered what issues to discuss, I stated, "If we want to do something to help people in prison, we need to do something about people being denied parole." As a wife of a person in prison doing 25 years to life, and a Prisoners' Rights attorney, I had heard many stories and received numerous letters from people in

prison about men and women being denied parole over and over again solely "for the nature of the crime." Since my husband was scheduled to appear before the board in September 2003, I also had a personal interest in the issue being addressed. All of the people at the meeting agreed to call a meeting to discuss what could be done to address parole denials. Although only about twenty people from various organizations in New York State were invited to the meeting, letters were also sent to a few individuals in prison that had written to Legal Aid about the parole denials to inform them about the upcoming meeting.

Through the prison grapevine that was probably one of the fastest ways to spread information before the Internet, word spread that a meeting was being held to address the issue of parole denials. Weeks before the meeting, Legal Aid began receiving phone calls about the meeting from relatives of people in prison that had been told by them that it was imperative they attend the meeting. Although it quickly became clear that more than twenty people would be attending the meeting, we were still unprepared for the approximately 300 people that showed up at the Legal Aid Society at 90 Church Street in Man-

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Milestones in CPR's History



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Report from the President — CPR: Ten Years and Beyond...

I am proud and privileged to be able to share our tenth anniversary with you, a milestone that I believe speaks to our commitment and dedication to the cause of advocating for fair parole policies and practices. Our first ten years have been primarily focused on seeing to it that your voice and the voices of those who care about you were heard and the issues that most impact your lives were addressed. At times this has been a daunting task, however, with every parole release we find the strength to carry on.

If you have been a faithful member or at least paid attention to what CPR has been doing over this past decade then you will note that we, along with the help of others, have been steadfast in holding the Division of Parole accountable for a parole system that is as good as its promise. In the furtherance of that goal, and having been attentive to what has transpired, we have learned a great

many lessons; getting out only being the beginning. Staying out, no doubt, is equally important, and what we are learning is that the current re-entry services are inadequate and don't speak to the very specific needs of the formerly incarcerated person and their families.

In the work I have done with reentry task-forces across the state, I have found that one of the things that is not lacking is

"Family is what sustains many of the men and women in prison, yet the alarming rate of divorce, separation and breakdown of the family unit during and immediately following release is a sure indicator that the services now being provided does not speak to one of the most essential elements of a successful reintegration — a strong family bond!"

the desire to do good, however, knowing what needs to be done is a key missing piece. We, as family members, know what we need, but we're not the ones making decisions about what matters to us most. We need to be represented at any table which holds a stake in our lives; this will be at the top of our agenda for the coming year.

Family is what sustains many of the men and women in prison, yet the alarming rate of divorce, separation and breakdown of the family unit during and immediately following release is a sure indicator that the services now being provided does not speak to one of the most essential elements of successful reintegration—a strong family bond! CPR sees as our mission for the next 10 years bringing attention to, addressing and resolving, some of the issues that lead to this breakdown that impacts the life of everyone directly involved and by consequence the community at large. We will continue our fight for fair parole and broaden our focus to include any area which threatens our very existence.

Thank you for all of your support and we look forward to the next ten

Susan Wright



The Recission Game

The Appellate Division, Third Department, unanimously ruled, in *Raheem v. New York State Board of Parole*, 506184, that the state Parole Board is not prohibited from considering impact statements from crime victims made after an initial decision to grant parole.

The court ruled that 9 NYCRR 8002.4(d) gives parole boards the authority to waive filing deadlines to ensure that crime victims are

treated with fairness, sensitivity and dignity" when people are up for parole.

Shua'aib Raheem had been granted parole in November 2007 by a two-member parole panel at his sixth parole board appearance in connection with a 1973 hostage-taking at a Brooklyn sporting goods store in which one policeman was shot and killed and two others were injured.

After Mr. Raheem was granted parole, several relatives of the city police officer who had been murdered and two of his fellow police officers came forward to offer statements about the crime and its lingering effects on their lives.

The full board accepted their statements and suspended Mr. Raheem's scheduled release in December 2007 and ordered a hearing for February

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Realities of Reentry — Our Children are Dying

“What gift has Providence bestowed on man That is so dear to him as his children?”

- Cicero

I know I'm supposed to be writing the third installment about relationships, but today my feeling is that the real “relationship” issue we're being confronted with and negatively impacted by is the lack of relationships that we have with our children. Today our children are dying in the streets or ending up in prison and one of the main factors is the lack of guidance, love and positive interaction we have with them. There's a statistic that says about 85% of the young women and men in prison come from a “fatherless” home. Important to note, the same study predicts that most of the more compelling social ills in our society (i.e., teen pregnancy, drug/alcohol use, suicide, depression, truancy, drop-out rates, criminality, mental disorder, etc.), are a direct result of the lack/absence of a positive male role model in the life of a child.

As I go about my day trying to make a difference in the lives of the children I encounter, I have come to the awful realization that most of them will be doomed because their parent(s) have very little in the way of a “relationship” with them. Our children are looking for love in all the wrong places because the place that they should be receiving it is woefully lacking. It is bad enough that we go to prison and leave them for years on end without any love or interaction in some cases, but then we get out and become so consumed by our own desires, goals, dreams and fantasies that we again consign their lives to failure because we refuse to step up to the plate and be the parent we are supposed to be! Getting out of prison does not “free” you from the responsibility of rear-

ing, caring and being a part of your child(ren)'s life.

The problem I see other than the fact that our children don't ask to come into the world, is when they get here for most guys it's a woman's responsibility to raise them, or we just turn into cash machines which does absolutely nothing for the child's true growth and development. All over this country particularly young men and now at an alarming rate young women are being killed both physically and emotionally because of the enormous disconnect between them and their parents. There is a saying that “children don't always do what you tell them, but they sure do what they see you do,” and in this case that is part of the problem. We tell them we love them, especially while incarcerated, then we get out and show them just how much they mean to us by spending most of the time not doing the things with them we *promised* or should be doing. No wonder these kids would just as soon kill each other or any one else for that matter; don't you get it-- “hurt people, hurt people!”

I really don't care what type of a relationship you have with the other parent, what type of relationship you have with your child is most important. It is said that the best thing you can do for your kid is to love their mother, but that's another story altogether and not one for this particular time. Suffice it to say, that if we care about the well-being of our children, which actually equals the well-being of the future of this society, then we have to confront this issue of not taking care of and rearing them. What

type of relationship do you have, if any, with your children? Or are you just following in the footsteps of the parents before you who may not have given you the right amount of love and guidance. This thing is surely becoming generational in scope and that frightens me more than anything else, because we're fighting decades of parental neglect and have been steadily losing ground. You should want more for your children than you had for yourself, even if that means actually learning a thing or two about parenting, especially if you were never taught or experienced informed parenting. Notice, I didn't say “good” parenting, lest I be called every ungodly name in the book for calling someone's parent not a good one! I truly believe that my parent did everything in her power at the time to be a good parent, but we've both come to know and appreciate so much more about being a parent—a better one at least.

“If your release plan does not incorporate how you intend to be responsive to and responsible for your children, then please tell me what is more important?”

I don't care to preach or criticize, but when are we going to start to address the issue of why we are losing some of our youngest, best and brightest to

death, prison, disease and futures so bleak they'd rather die young!?! Re-Entry is the industry buzzword of the moment; however, little or no effort has been made to synthesize it with the problem of parenting and reunification. Too many of us are missing the boat on this one, too often more concerned with ourselves than those who depend on us to be responsive to them (our children). Isn't that the same recipe that got us in this trouble to begin with, caring only about ourselves and not others or doing “me” without concern for the “mini me's” we bring into this world. If your release plan

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The History of CPR

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hattan on November 8, 1999. Since there was not enough space in the largest conference room to accommodate the crowd, the overflow was sent upstairs to participate by video conference. The group included spouses, children, parents, grandparents and friends of people in prison, formerly incarcerated persons, attorneys that had represented or were representing persons denied parole and even a former parole commissioner. These people stood up at the meeting and testified about the frustration they faced when their loved ones were denied parole over and over again. Many of those denied parole met all of the criteria listed in the parole statute that should have qualified them for release.

The Coalition for Parole Restoration (CPR) was formed at that meeting to advocate for fair parole practices and to publicize the plight of people in prison being denied parole. The acronym CPR was used to signify that parole needed to be given CPR. After the meeting, there were many people anxious to work on this issue and we formed Legislative Reform, Legal Redress, Fundraising and Prison Liaison committees. For a few months after the meeting, committee meetings were held and ideas were exchanged. Unfortunately, many of those people thought that we would come up with a magic solution that would result in their loved ones being released at their next parole board. When that did not occur, they lost interest and stopped attending the meetings. We then began holding Action Committee meetings every month. Since some people were attending CPR meetings from locations north of New York City, we also formed an Upstate CPR which operated out of Wappinger Falls and Poughkeepsie. We no longer

have an Upstate CPR but we continue to work with people in that area.

Many people consider me the founder of CPR, but I did not do it alone. The other persons that have to be considered the founders of CPR that assisted in making that first meeting a success are Susan Wright, Dori Lewis, Sarah Kerr and Milton Zelmeyer. The latter three are all attorneys of the Prisoners' Rights Project (PRP) of the Legal Aid Society. At that time, I was working for PRP and the administration of Legal Aid was extremely supportive of CPR. All of the CPR meetings were held at Legal Aid until the building was closed down after the World Trade Center terror attacks in September 2001.

About the same time we were meeting to discuss parole, people in prison also decided to take action to protest unfair parole practices by

"The acronym CPR was used to signify that parole needed to be given CPR."

staging a strike at the beginning of the Millennium on January 1, 2000. Since protests in prison are illegal, CPR discouraged people from striking because it would only result in the participants being disciplined. We asked them to allow people on the outside to work to affect changes in parole policies. We believe that the forming of CPR convinced many people in prison not to engage in the strike because very few did. Sing Sing probably had the most persons taking part in the strike and many of them were disci-

plined and transferred from the prison.

CPR was incorporated in 2000 and we received our tax exempt status in 2001.

After learning that some people were paying astronomical sums of money to attorneys and other people to help prepare them for the parole board, in 2001 CPR published a manual on how to prepare for the parole board. The manual contains information on how to prepare materials to highlight the accomplishments of the individual in prison with particular emphasis on academic and vocational achievements, participation in therapeutic programs and other factors showing how the person has been rehabilitated and is ready to be released. It also contains tips on how to answer questions posed by parole commissioners, records that should be obtained before the appearance such as a pre-sentence report and instructions on how to obtain these documents as well as sample letters that family members and friends can send to the board on behalf of the person in prison to show support for his/her release. The manual was revised this year and now also includes summaries of parole decisions.

After the manual was written, CPR began conducting parole preparation workshops. Although the workshops were intended to be conducted for people in prison, CPR was labeled by the Department of Correctional Services as trouble makers and we were not allowed in the prisons. Thus we began conducting the workshops for families of people in prison so that they could pass the information on to the persons scheduled to appear before the board. We also sent the manual into the

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From the Outside Looking In — Reunification: Salt & Pepper Shakers , and TV

Jay came home four years ago and I figure it is about time I reported on how life has been for us. Since I don't want to share too much on the personal side, let me say that through the agency that I direct, Prison Families of New York, Inc. (PFNY), I have worked with tens of thousands of families who were/are trying to make it through the incarceration experience, and hundreds of those who have reunited with their released loved ones.

Hmmm—why only hundreds? I can tell you that we families overall believe that when you all come home, everything is going to be wonderful. I remember a woman I worked with in the 1980's (yeah, that long ago). She had attended our Albany weekly support group for years. When her husband came home, we did not see her or hear from her for months. Then one day she called me to ask me how I was doing. I knew she really wanted to tell me how she was doing—and it was not good. She told me they were fighting about the salt and pepper shakers. So I asked some questions....

While her husband was in prison, she had moved to another apartment, with their son, who was a baby when dad went away. Hubby

came home and could not find a job, so he went out early to pick up cans and bottles and then was “Mister Mom” while she went to work. When she came home from work, she would find that he had moved the salt and pepper shakers “from where they were supposed to be” to another place in the kitchen. She was tired from working so hard, he was frustrated from not being able to find a job, and the nitpicking became an argument that grew into a fight.

“...we know that prison families want support and the chance to interact with others who understand them.... Groups and other resources really do help.”

You will have your own salt and pepper shaker issues.

We got her to come back to group where she realized that she felt like the new apartment was *hers* and that although she was happy to have hubby home, she was used to being independent and in control of everything. Neither one had much understanding of what the other was feeling—let alone their own emotions. She worked on it, but he never did come to a group—so I don't know if he talked it out with anyone but her, and I don't know if they stayed together. I do know that we taught her how to get below the

superficial issues, the salt and pepper shakers.

After Jay had been home a few weeks, he was reading in the bedroom. The TV was on. I turned it off—after all, he was not watching it, we pay our own electric bill and I had been talking for years about all the ways I tried to save money. He immediately yelled at me, “That is totally disrespectful!” I explained why I had done it and he calmed down—but that could have turned ugly.

You will have your own TV issues.

What has really helped us is talking. Jay works with other formerly incarcerated people and they talk prison, release, parole, failure and success. For ten years, I have run a weekly support group for Albany-area prison families. Jay attends that group sometimes, and has been a guest speaker about what really happens in prison (you all often don't tell us families the whole truth). But I need the group now just as much as I did while he was in prison. It gives me the opportunity to complain, cry, laugh, worry and hope—with other families, in a confidential setting—and it keeps me going when married life to a man who did 25 years really sucks. Fortunately, it is much better than it was and most of our issues now

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Of Crime & Punishment — The American Spectacle

The Governor raises his cup and toasts the condemned prisoners that will soon fight to their deaths. The father of an American middle-class family watches attentively and asks his wife and children to “watch this” as two prisoners knife it out in the prison yard on one of the many reality TV prison life programs that flood our cable channels. Whether

in ancient Rome, the Coliseum, the Amphitheatre or a modern American living room, prisoners (those convicted of violating laws) have often been viewed as less than human. By having committed a crime they have somehow given up their rights to be treated as fully human. Condemning them to each other's

barbarity makes for quite the spectacle.

Today we champion the marvels of modern science and pride ourselves on how far we've come; however, when it comes to how we treat those who violate our laws, little has changed. Little of modernity has made its way into our administra-

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Of Crime and Punishment — The American Spectacle

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tion of criminal justice. Aside from the obvious primitive nature of our administration of justice in America's prisons and how it contradicts our definition of ourselves as a civilized society, is the abject failure to reform those convicted of crimes.

A quick snapshot tells us that across the U.S. about 660,000 prisoners are released from incarceration annually with two-thirds of them being rearrested within three years. According to the Pew Center, over the past 25 years our prison population has grown by 274 percent to 2.3 million in 2008. Likewise, the Center reports that over the past two decades spending for prisons has increased by 300 percent. In New York the last Correctional budget was 2.5 billion, the costliest of any executive agency to operate. We squander valuable re-

sources on our antiquated ineffectual systems of punishment while our schools, healthcare and other vital systems remain poorly funded. With all that we spend on incarceration, 51.7 billion in 2008, we owe ourselves a better system in which individuals are only reformed one-third of the time.

There are things that we should be investing in that we know increase the likelihood that someone will become a law-abiding contributing member of society upon release. Primarily, we should be investing in educational and training programs in prison that impart marketable skills which prisoners can utilize to obtain employment immediately upon release, and paid transitional employment that has shown to also decrease the likelihood that a person will recidivate.

A Correctional Association study found that obtaining a college degree while incarcerated in NYS, when prisoners were eligible for TAP and Pell funding, reduced an individual's chances of recidivating once released by 59%. Employment has also been found to produce reductions in recidivism. A recent MDRC study found that participants in New York's The Center for Employment Opportunities (CEO) transitional jobs program had significant reductions in recidivism in the second- and third year post-release (third year numbers are pending). Similarly, graduates of The Doe Fund's Ready, Willing & Able transitional employment program showed recidivism rates of 4.9% one year post-release (second year numbers are pending) com-

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Reunification: Salt & Pepper Shakers, and TV

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are those of married couples in general—not so much about prison anymore.

I think that one of the best things you can do for your family is urge them to attend a support group. If they have access to the Internet, then we can help them join an interactive website just for families of New York State prisoners. And the Osborne Association in Brooklyn has a hotline for prison families **1-800-344-3314**. I get calls from people who tell me they wish they had called years ago. So we know that prison families want support and the chance to interact with others who understand them. Mostly, they want you home—but we families need to be strong and healthy when that time comes. Groups and other

resources really do help.

While Jay was away, I bought a house in Albany. Hard as I tried, there were so many things in the house that I could not get done before he came home. At first, he would ask why I had not painted the hall...repaired something in the kitchen...landscaped the yard. I felt so defensive. But one day he said, "You know, I really understand why you could not do more in the house...days are so busy, we get so tired, the kids need so much attention, there is so much to do...you really did great keeping everything together." That was just what I needed to hear from him.

Tell your families they are doing great. Tell them there are groups to

attend (we can help start one if there is nothing in their area) and that you will go at least once when you are released. Ask them to call me or the Osborne Association. I don't answer letters from prisoners—your families will have to take the initiative and if they do, we can assist them. I will be glad to hear from them.

Best regards from both Jay and me.

Alison Coleman
Executive Director, PFNY
518-453-6659

www.prisonfamiliesofnewyork.org



The History of CPR

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prisons upon request for a small fee that basically covered the mailing costs. To date, we have held many workshops throughout New York State. In March 2009, we held our first workshop in a prison at Eastern NY Correctional Facility. Our goal for 2010 is to conduct additional workshops in prisons throughout New York State.

In 2001, we also began publishing the newsletter, *The Deuce Club*. The term “deuce club” was coined by people in prison. Most persons denied parole are given the maximum hold of two years or a “deuce,” as it is called, before they appear before the next board, so persons that were denied parole and given two years began saying that they joined the “deuce club.” The newsletter is mainly used to disseminate information about parole and many of the articles are written by people in prison. We also publicize information about upcoming conferences, workshops, and other events being held by various criminal justice organizations throughout New York State. The newsletter was initially published four times a year but we now publicize four bulletins in addition to the four newsletters. The newsletters and bulletins are now sent to all prison law libraries and to all current members of CPR.

Since most parole decisions are unreported, making it very difficult for persons to use them as precedents for their own appeals, we include summaries of parole decisions in the newsletter. In 2005, after receiving a grant from Resist, CPR began running a series of articles on parole preparation and appeals. The first article dealt with preparing for the parole board. The second article dealt with identifying issues for the appeal brief and marshalling the facts and the final arti-

cle in the series dealt with identifying the law to support the appeal, incorporating the facts into the law and writing an effective conclusion.

One of the significant articles published in the newsletter was about the case of *Chan v. Travis*. In 2003, the Supreme Court in Albany County ruled that the petitioner Chan was denied parole in furtherance of an Executive policy to deny him release because he was among the class of persons convicted of violent felony offenses and without due regard, as statutorily required, to petitioner’s rehabilitation and other factors set forth in Executive Law 259-i. This was a groundbreaking decision because it supported what CPR and others had been saying about Governor Pataki’s policy to keep people convicted of violent felony offenses in prison longer despite evidence that they were rehabilitated and ready for release. After that decision was published, CPR began distributing Chan materials to persons requesting it. (These were the materials that were submitted to the court in Chan to support his argument.)

In 2002, CPR began conducting protests at the homes of parole commissioners. One purpose of the protests was for these commissioners to see the faces of the family members affected by their unfair denial of parole to deserving individuals. At the first protest held in April 2002 in Manhattan at the home of Former Parole Commissioner Vernon Manley, I recall my pregnant

daughter marching with us. Several months later, after my granddaughter Imani was born, she joined us in her stroller at the home of a parole commissioner in Long Island to call for fair parole practices that would allow her grandfather, that she would later come to adore, to be released when it was his turn to appear before the parole board. The second purpose of the protests was to educate the neighbors of the commissioner and others in the community about the unjust policy of denying parole to deserving persons was served by the distribution of informational leaflets at the protests.

Over the years, our mission has changed. Our initial mission statement was: “CPR was created to inform, organize and bring to light all aspects of the prison industrial complex as it affects our communities, families and people in prison. Parole is one part of a larger issue that affects everyone. Our current primary focus is to obtain the just administration of parole for all prisoners. CPR is committed to providing support and assistance to prisoners, former prisoners, their families and loved ones in dealing with prison issues and policies. CPR’s aim is to advocate for humane and fair prison conditions and policies that will contribute to the total rehabilitation of prisoners and help them to make a smooth transition back into society and to their communities.”

In 2005, we amended the mission statement to include providing re-entry services. Our current mission statement is: “CPR is a broad-

“In Chan v. Travis the Supreme Court I Albany County ruled that Chan was denied parole I furtherance of an Executive policy to deny him release because he was among the class of persons convicted of violent felony offenses...”

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The History of CPR

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based grassroots organization created to inform, organize and bring to light all aspects of the prison industrial complex as it affects our communities, families, people in prison and formerly incarcerated people. Our mission is two-fold: (1) to assist people in prison in obtaining parole release and (2) to assist formerly incarcerated persons and their families with transition and re-entry.”

In keeping with our new mission to assist with re-entry, we initiated an internship program for formerly incarcerated persons in 2007. We also sponsored a Summer Internship for children of people in prison. Thus far, we have had three formerly incarcerated persons intern for CPR. Our most recent intern, James Rivers, is now employed with CPR as a Program Assistant. Earlier this year, we began the Prison Leadership Training program and now have 15 participants. The program is designed to train persons as leaders in the prison and to become leaders for CPR when they are released. One component of the Leadership Training program is to provide the participants with assistance in preparing for the parole board so that they can be released on parole.

CPR has struggled financially for

the past ten years. But through the assistance of many dedicated Board members and supporters, we have survived. We hope to have an anniversary celebration early next year to honor the founders and loyal supporters of CPR. We have also had assistance from many organizations that allowed us to hold meetings and workshops in their offices, including the Legal Aid Society, Center for Constitutional Rights, the Osborne Association, and the Fortune Society. Through the generosity of the Fortune Society, we now have office space in Long Island City. We also have to thank the Resist Foundation and the North Star Fund for providing funding to CPR, but would like to particularly mention the New York Foundation for providing funding to us for the past three years.

After Governor Pataki left office and Governor Spitzer was elected in 2006, the number of people convicted of violent felony offenses released on parole increased. However, after the publication of these statistics, conservative Republican legislators called for action to address the increase. One upstate Republican accused the Governor of “promoting policies that endanger the welfare of law-abiding New Yorkers while pandering to law-breakers.” Senator Michael Noz-

zolio, Chairman of the Crime Victims, Crime and Correction Committee held a hearing on parole policies in January 2008 that led to his sponsoring legislation requiring that at least three parole board members conduct parole hearings for persons convicted of class A-1 felony offense and that would require a unanimous vote for parole to be granted to these individuals. Passage of this bill would result in numerous people being denied parole but thus far it has not passed. However, it is a constant reminder of why CPR is needed because we are the only organization that has been steadfast in its commitment to advocate for fair parole practices in New York State.

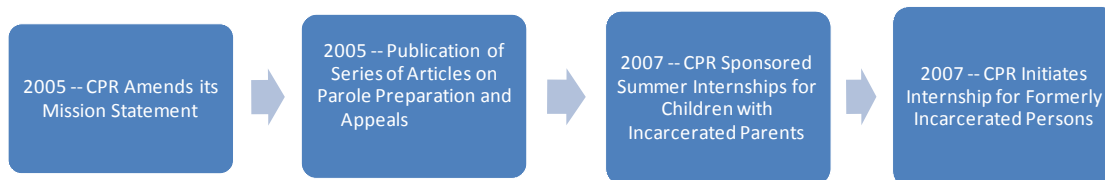
As we enter our 11th year, we renew our commitment to all of you still behind the walls and your loved ones to continue our primary mission of assuring that every individual in New York State prison is given a fair parole hearing that will allow him or her to gain their freedom. We only ask that you do your part to help us help you.

Claudette Spencer-Nurse



Milestones in CPR's History

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Inside the Parole Numbers — 2007-2009

Initial Class A-1 “violent” felony (A1VF) releases have been better this year, but reappearances have been worse. The sad thing about using the word “better” is that a handful more seems like such an improvement. In 2007 there were 41 A1VFs released at their initial boards. This prompted a Senator Nozzolio to hold a hearing to investigate the “opening” of the “flood gates.” Not surprisingly, initial releases dropped the minute notice of the hearing went out, and by the end of 2008 there were only 25 released on their initial boards. The rates went from 13% in 2007 to 8% in 2008. Actual interview totals were 316 and 310 respectively. This year, through the end of September 2009, 31 A1VFs have been released, making it a better year and nearly comparable to 2007, depending on what happens with the last quarter. See Chart 1.

On A1VF reappearances, the numbers getting released have gone

down. In 2007 there were 194 releases out of 1029, a 19% release rate, but after the Senate hearing only 176 out of 1314 were released, and that’s a much larger interview pool to have a shrinking number. 2008 saw only 13% get released. Through the end of September 2009, only 126 have been released thus far. Doesn’t sound as bad at the moment because in September 30 were granted approval whereas in July and August it was single digits each month. 2009 is running at 17% releases for both types of hearings. See Chart 2. Two reappearances have gone into rescission hearings, one already having been rescinded. We’ll find out if we’re still in the Pataki years when the

year is done, but it doesn't look any different for reappearances.

Of the total interviews in 2008, 57% were in mediums and 79% of the releases were from mediums, so it doesn’t take a brain surgeon to see the rates are a lot lower for max’s where 43% of the interviews take place but where only 21% are released. Ethnically, 58% of the 2008 A1VF releases were black, 23% were Hispanic, and 17% were white.

Only 1 release was Asian and 1 was listed as other. In a recent 28-month study of A1VF releases by facility, the odds of getting out of a max on initial boards was 7% versus 17% for mediums. Females beat the males with a 21% initial approval rate. On reappearances the odds were 10% for max's, 22% for mediums and 32% for the ladies. In the 28-month study, 88 hearings out of over 2300 hearings were *de novo* hearings. 15% of those were successful.

“in a recent 28-month study of A1VF releases by facility, the odds of getting out of a max on initial boards was 7% versus 17% for mediums.”



Chart 1

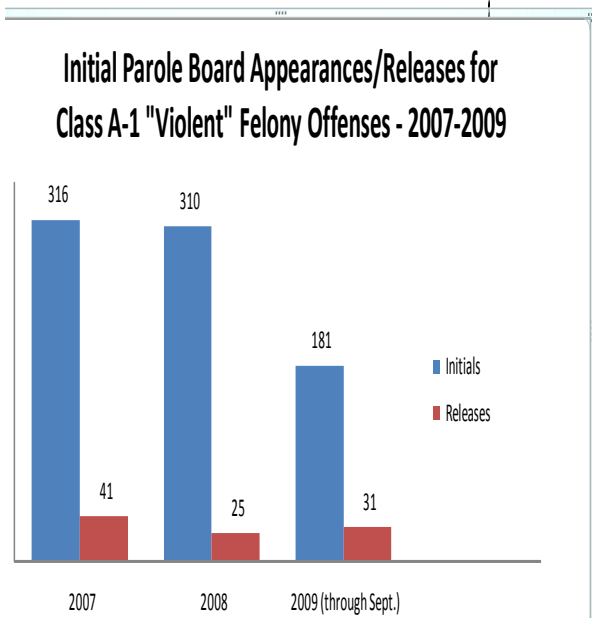
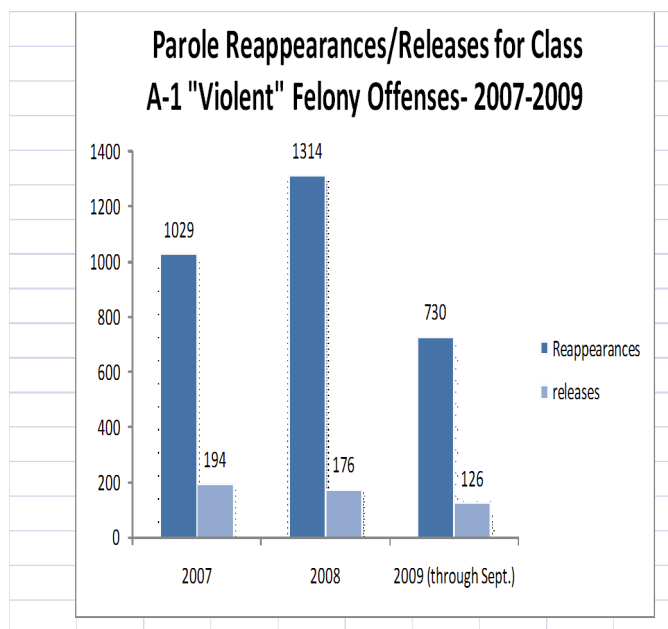


Chart 2



Of Crime & Punishment — The American Spectacle

Continued from Page 6

pared to the national rate of 44%. On the other end, The Independent Committee on Reentry and Employment reported that of those that violate the terms of their release, 89% are unemployed at the time of the violation.

Models based on education and employability have shown outcomes that indicate that they should be the chief tools in our treatment of those who violate our laws. Ap-

proaches that produce poor outcomes need to be abandoned and replaced with those that have shown to be effective. Modernity and progress dictate that we do so

lest we continue to subject those who violate our laws, and ourselves by extension, to brutality and archaic practices. By allowing our prisons to operate the way they do, in what is supposedly the most advanced civilization the world has ever known, we have all become part of a public spectacle for the entire world to see.

“Whether in ancient Rome, the Coliseum, the Amphitheatre or a modern American living room, prisoners...have often been viewed as less than human....”

to

Felipe Vargas

Our Children are Dying

Continued from Page 3

does not incorporate how you intend to be responsive to and responsible for your children, then please tell me what is more important than that? Let's get this straight re-entry is also about taking care of your parental responsibilities, like you address your other concerns upon release.

The reality is that your children are waiting for you, pining daily for the time when you come home and make life for them not only better than it was for you, but just as importantly, providing them with what they need: love, guidance, support and an example of what a real parent should be so that they can pass that on to the next generation. Love as “they” say is an action word, so you don't say how much you love; *you show how much you love!* What are you showing your children and what kind of life are you setting up for them?

Successful “Re-Entry” is really re-parenting; a chance to undo damage, prevent further damage and build a better future. And you thought relationships would only cover topics regarding you and another significant other....

“Every child comes with the message that God is not yet discouraged of man.”

-Rabindranath Tagore

Jerome Wright



Poetry Corner — We Are Not Our Past

Behind these walls they say pain is constant and abounding.

Yet when I travel these hopeless paths, I witness love surrounding.

Though there is a loneliness that comes from being here,
There is as well togetherness from sharing loss and fear.

A sisterhood of hopes and dreams, together we light the way,

Let us not be stagnated by what others think and say.

I see each day a smile, a tear, that shows we've yet a lot of feeling.

And in this, a strong belief, there is a process to our healing.

Women who are the end product of all the aspects of a world gone mad.

Judged by those that know us not and believe we're all so bad.

It is what I see in all of us that drives me towards each day.

I know without a single doubt we're all needed in our own special way.

So when you see a traveler on a road going nowhere fast,

Let her know you've been there too and we are not our past.

Starr Ferrer



CPR Thanks Its Funders

CPR, its Board and members, would like to thank the following groups and individuals for their financial as well as other support, including the donation of their space, donated art for our fundraisers, during the ten years of CPR's existence. It is because of the generosity of these groups and individuals that CPR has been able to continue the work it began ten years ago for fair parole practices. There are other individuals, including Board members as well as people in prison, that have financially contributed to CPR that are not mentioned here. You know who you are. We thank you, too.

Groups

- FREE
- Fortune Society
- New York Foundation
- Nonprofit Finance Fund
- North Star Fund
- Presbyterian Church Self Development of People Fund
- RESIST

Individuals

- Annette Johnson
- Safiya Bandele



Life Sentences Examined in New Sentencing Project Report

In July 2009, The Sentencing Project released an examination of life sentences, *No Exit: The Expanding Use of Life Sentences in America*.

No Exit finds a record 140,610 individuals, or 1 of every 11 people in prison, now serving life sentences in state and federal prisons. In addition, 29% of those serving a life sentence (41,095) have no possibility of parole. There are 6,807 individuals serving life sentences who were juveniles at the time of the crime, and of those, 1,755 have no possibility of parole.

This increase in life sentences is not a direct result of higher crime rates, but of policy changes that have imposed harsher punishments and restricted parole consideration.



The Recission Game

Continued from Page 2

2008 to reconsider the parole decision.

Under law, the Parole Board may temporarily suspend or rescind a decision granted an individual release to parole supervision based on "significant" information not known to board commissioners when they made their determinations, the appellate court noted.

"This Court has previously concluded that victim impact statements can constitute significant information which, when submitted to respondent even after its determination, may justify the temporary suspension or recission of parole and, thus, respondent did not exceed its jurisdiction by scheduling a recission hearing here," Justice Edward O. Spain wrote for the court, citing *Matter of Pugh v. New York State Bd. Of Parole*, 19 AD3d 991, (2005).



U.S. Supreme Court to hear life-without-parole sentences for juveniles cases

On Monday, November 9, the U.S. Supreme Court will hear oral arguments in reference to the constitutionality of life-without-parole sentences for juveniles (JLWOP). The two cases are *Sullivan v. Florida* and *Graham v. Florida*. Specifically, the Court will decide if it violates the 8th Amendment to sentence a 13-year-old (Sullivan) or a 17-year-old (Graham) to life in prison without the possibility of parole for non-homicide offenses. There are at least 109 such cases around the nation, of which 77 are in Florida.

The Sentencing Project submitted an *amicus* brief in support of the elimination of JLWOP sentences because we view them as cruel and unusual. In our brief, we called attention to the Court's decision in *Roper v. Simmons* in which it was determined that the death penalty is inappropriate for juveniles due to their reduced culpability and their unique capability for reform. We argued that these considerations are equally pertinent to JLWOP sentences. Our brief also documents that many of the cases which result in JLWOP deny juveniles any opportunity to have their age and diminished culpability considered by a sentencing court because of laws which automatically transfer certain youth to the adult system and thus make them susceptible to mandatory sentencing laws such as JLWOP.



CPR'S MISSION STATEMENT

The Coalition for Parole Restoration is a broad-based grassroots organization created to inform, organize and bring to light all aspects of the prison industrial complex as it affects our communities, families, people in prison and formerly incarcerated persons.

Our mission is two-fold: (1) to assist people in prison in obtaining parole release and (2) to assist formerly incarcerated persons and their families with transition and re-entry.

COALITION FOR PAROLE RESTORATION

POST OFFICE BOX 1379

NEW YORK, NY 10013-0877

718-786-4174

www.parolecpr.org

Membership & Dues Structure

* FAMILY OR INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP - \$10.00 PER YEAR (PERSON IN PRISON INCLUDED)

* PERSON IN PRISON MEMBERSHIP - \$2.00 PER YEAR

* BENEFACTOR MEMBERSHIP – MORE THAN \$100 PER YEAR

YEAR WILL BEGIN IN THE MONTH THAT THE MEMBERSHIP DUES IS RECEIVED AND END IN THE SAME MONTH THE FOLLOWING YEAR

(STAMPS ARE NO LONGER ACCEPTED TO PAY MEMBERSHIP DUES)

MEMBERSHIP ENTITLES YOU TO RECEIVE CPR'S NEWSLETTER, WHICH IS PUBLISHED FOUR TIMES A YEAR, AND NOTICE OF ALL CPR-SPONSORED MEETINGS, RALLIES AND EVENTS.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO SUBMIT AN ARTICLE, POEM, ETC. TO THE NEWSLETTER, YOU SHOULD SEND IT BY EMAIL OR U.S. MAIL BEFORE THE FIRST OF THE MONTH IN WHICH THE NEWSLETTER IS BEING PRINTED. SUBMISSIONS SHOULD BE 750 WORDS OR LESS AND WE RESERVE THE RIGHT TO EDIT ANYTHING APPEARING IN THE NEWSLETTER. ALL WORKS MUST BE ORIGINAL. WE WILL NOT PUBLISH ANYTHING WITHOUT THE PERMISSION OF THE AUTHOR.

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