



CALL TO ACTION

FIRST YEAR OF PARTNERSHIP BRINGS HOPE, HELP TO D.C. OFFENDERS COMING HOME FROM PRISON

By **JOYCE MCGINNIS**

In July 2001, a small group of public servants and spiritual leaders had an inspiration: to connect offenders returning from prison to the District of Columbia's faith institutions. Such a connection would give returning offenders a sense of belonging and connection they had previously lacked and help them in their struggle to leave crime and drugs behind and start a new life.

That inspiration led the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA) to issue an invitation to the city's faith community. CSOSA asked all interested clergy to come to a meeting and discuss what might be done. That first meeting sowed the seeds of the CSOSA/Faith Community Partnership.

Under the leadership of Rev. Donald Isaac of the East of the River Clergy/Police/Community Partnership, the Faith Community Partnership's Advisory Council began work with CSOSA to develop a program model that could realize our vision.

The idea behind the initiative was simple: Link the returning offenders to the city's strongest, most vibrant sources of support, spiritual guidance, and positive values. CSOSA's clients typically have

long histories of destructive relationships, disconnection from society, and unhealthy habits.

The program grew out of CSOSA's innovative approach to community supervision, which has a dual focus on enforcing accountability and providing opportunity. CSOSA's community supervision model seeks to address the root causes of crime—the conditions of substance abuse, lack of opportunity, and social dysfunction that lead individuals to make bad choices.

But as a public agency, CSOSA recognized that it must work in collaboration with the community to ensure success. While CSOSA has expanded its range of available programs and treatment, the demand for services far exceeds the supply.

The faith community has an established history of providing support and services to prisoners. The CSOSA/Faith Community Partnership decided to focus on expanding those ministries to include

offenders under supervision in the community. If a church sponsored a computer training class, why couldn't some parolees take it? If a mosque provided a support group for those in recovery from substance abuse, why couldn't a parolee join it?

Throughout the autumn of 2001, the CSOSA/Faith Community Partnership worked to define the structure of this new initiative. The decision was made to issue a call to action in the city's houses of worship, inviting congregations across the city to embrace the cause of offender reentry and join the partnership's work. The call went out in January 2002 to join in a weekend of worship around the issue of reentry.

Momentum gathered: D.C. Mayor Anthony Williams and Delegate Eleanor Holms Norton provided support and inspiration at a press conference announcing Reentry Weekend.

(See "First Year," Page 7)





REENTRY POSES VARIED CHALLENGES

By **JERMAINE COOPER**

Imagine that you have spent years away from home, maybe many hundreds of miles away, in an institution. Your departure strained your relationships with the people you care about most. Now you're coming home—you don't have anywhere else to go—but you have no job, no skills, no money, and all the problems you had before are bigger now. The world has changed, but you were locked away, unable to change with it.

That's the reality of reentry for the 600,000 men and women who will be released from prison over the next few years (according to the Bureau of Justice Statistics). About 2,000 of these released offenders will return home to the District of Columbia in 2003.

On average, individuals leaving prison have served just over two years, though the proportion who served much longer sentences rises every year. Prisoners released today are more likely to have failed previously on probation or parole. They are less likely to have received drug treatment, job training, or education programming while in prison.

Since the closing of the Lorton facility in Virginia, the Federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) has assumed responsibility for housing District of Columbia felons. Although BOP has attempted to house these offenders within 500 miles of the District, some are placed as far away as Texas. At this distance, the offender cannot remain connected to family, friends, and the world he or she left behind.

Research indicates that most returning offenders face the problems in three areas: housing, employment, and health care. The offender leaves prison, a highly controlled and regulated environment in which all basic needs are met, for the street—where everything is uncertain, opportunity is scarce, and op-

tions appear to be few.

While the offender may need to provide an address in order to be released, and while that address may be viable at the time of release, the arrangement often doesn't last. Family members find that they can't cope with the offender's behavior, or his or her presence puts too much stress on already fragile relationships. The offender may not be able to stay with family members in public housing. One offender recently summarized his situation: "I am the guy who burned every bridge that he ever crossed....I made parole but had nowhere to go. I had nowhere to go—my sister, my daughters, nobody wanted me because of my past."

Offenders often need to obtain employment to be released from a halfway house, but they can quickly become discouraged with the type of low-wage, unskilled jobs they often find.

Many offenders leave prison with some chronic health problems. Access to public health care may be slow; the system may be difficult to negotiate and may require documentation the offender has no way to produce.

In the District of Columbia, these challenges are intensified by changes that have occurred in the city. Many District of Columbia offenders return to neighborhoods that look very different than they did just a few years ago. City services have also changed. For example, the procedures for obtaining a driver's license have been modernized; DC General Hospital has closed; revamped public transit has altered bus routes. All of these factors make the process of reentry a daunting task.

CSOSA realized that in order to reduce the likelihood that returning offenders will go on to commit new crimes, the root problems had to be addressed. Substance abuse, lack of opportunity, poor behavioral control, and all of the other destructive behaviors and circumstances that contribute to the criminal lifestyle had to be tackled.

To that end, CSOSA has expanded services available to returning offenders. Treatment and educational programs are more widely available than ever before. CSOSA is actively pursu-

ing partnerships with the community to increase job opportunities, housing availability, and services in other key areas. Community Supervision Officers now begin work with offenders during the transitional period of halfway house confinement.

The District of Columbia is developing a citywide strategy to coordinate services available to returning offenders. Over the next few years, with the aid of a \$2 million grant from the U.S. Department of Justice, the District will begin implementation of "wrap-around" services to address the many problems returning offenders face. Housing, jobs, health care, substance abuse and mental health treatment, problems with obtaining appropriate documentation and identification, family problems, legal issues—the District intends to tap the resources and expertise of a variety of public and private partners to address these needs.

But no matter how well public agencies do their work, the returning offender needs the personal support and encouragement of a friend. He or she needs to develop constructive relationships and strong values to replace the destructive influences that contributed to criminality.

That's where the CSOSA/Faith Community Partnership's Reentry Initiative is making a difference. By linking the returning offender to the faith community, the initiative fills a critical need. Offenders on supervision are learning to negotiate the demands of life without turning to substance abuse and crime. They are learning skills to cope with life's demands and finding new sources of hope, inspiration, and resolve.

Reentry is a difficult process. In the end, it is about each individual's choices and journey. But with the help, support, and welcome of our city's faith community, as well as increased access to critical services, those who come back can gain the sense of belonging that is so crucial to their continued success.

Jermaine Cooper is a Program Analyst with CSOSA.

ASSESSMENT HELPS MENTORS MEET THEIR MATCHES

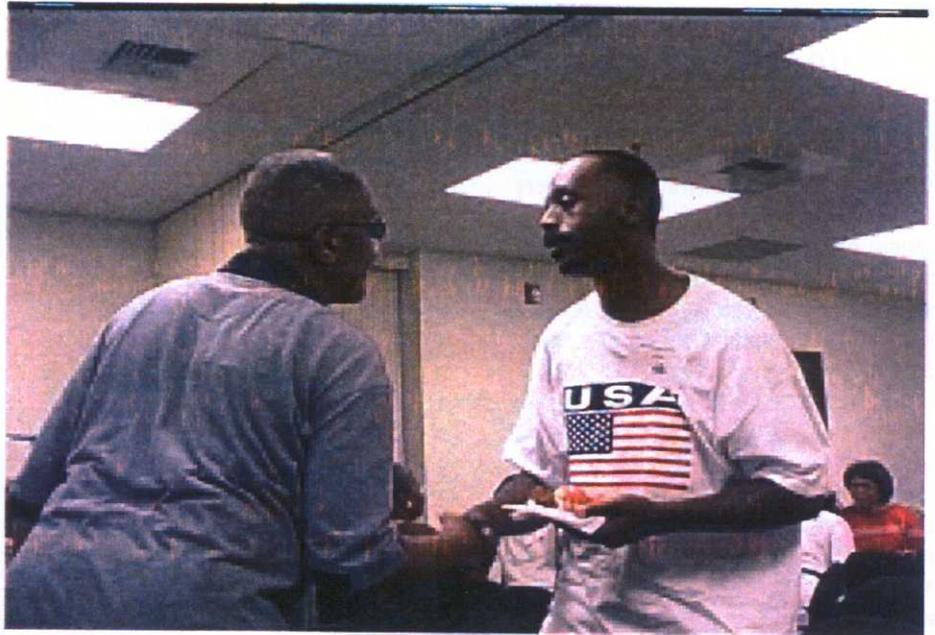
By **MARY ANNA PORTNER**
and **SHARON MAYS-JACKS**

How are mentors and mentees brought together? What makes a good match? Through the cluster coordinators, CSOSA works closely with participating faith institutions to achieve the best match possible.

The process begins with offender assessment. CSOSA's Transitional Intervention for Parole Supervision (TIPS) Teams, located at the city's four Federal Bureau of Prisons community correctional facilities, or halfway houses—Hope Village, Fairview, Efforts for Ex-Offenders, Community Care and Shaw II—administer a battery of screening and assessment tools to identify those offenders who are appropriate candidates for the mentoring initiative. Some offenders cannot participate in the program due to the nature of their criminal history or current offense. If the offender meets basic eligibility criteria, he or she is then assessed in the following eight life areas, or domains: Personal Health, Psychosocial Functioning, Educational/Functional Literacy, Vocational/Career Development, Substance Use Severity, Criminality, Community Support/Social Networking and Leisure Time Use. Each domain yields important information about the offender's history, experience, and needs.

Offenders most likely to benefit from the program typically have little family and few non-criminal friends. They may need help establishing positive recreational interests. They often need help with a job search. While they may have a substance abuse problem, they are not actively using drugs.

After the screening and assessment process, the TIPS Community Supervision Officer (CSO) reviews his/her findings with the offender. The offender and his or her officer talk about the strengths, needs and goals that the assessment revealed. The offender also shares his or her goals, plans, and self-assessment. The TIPS CSO will work closely with the offender to ensure real-



istic goals are established with specific timelines for completion. This process results in an Initial Supervision Plan, which will be revised throughout the offender's halfway house stay and will remain in effect for the first 90 days of general supervision.

Mentors are also given an assessment, consisting of an application and a personal interview, to determine their particular skills, interests, availability, and they are also assessed in each of the domains. In addition, mentor candidates must complete basic training before they are matched.

Mentors and mentees come together in a Team Matching Meeting. The TIPS CSO presents the offender's case during this matching meeting, or staffing. The TIPS CSO, General Supervision CSO (who will receive the case once the offender is released from the halfway house), Cluster Coordinator and/or prospective mentor review the Functional Assessment and the Initial Supervision plan. Each participant offers input into the Initial Supervision plan. The offender is then matched to a mentor team based on compatible strengths and needs.

In each case, the objective is to make the best match possible—to place

the offender with the mentor(s) who are most likely to be able to assist him or her. The offender receives a dedicated mentor team of two or three mentors, access to social services, job and housing referrals, and additional supportive services.

Good matches are starting to produce good results. One of the first offenders placed in this program, "Richard," revealed during his assessment that he had graphic arts skills and wanted to pursue this area. He had spent many years while incarcerated developing this skill, but he was afraid that he would be unable to find a job in the field. He thought a mentor could help him develop confidence to pursue his goal.

His mentor was able to make his dream come true. The cluster coordinator identified a mentor who works in the graphic design field. This mentor was added to Richard's team, and as a result Richard obtained employment in his chosen field.

Mary Anna Portner and Sharon Mays-Jacks are Supervisory Community Supervision Officers in CSOSA's Transitional Intervention for Parole Supervision Program.

EVALUATION WILL PROVE THE EFFECTIVENESS OF PROGRAM

By AIDA HASABALLA

The CSOSA/Faith Community Partnership's reentry initiative is based on the idea that returning offenders need more than the criminal justice system can offer them. While supervision and accountability are essential to public safety, these activities do not address the offender's social and spiritual needs.

Returning offenders need to be connected to the social support structures and services of their communities. They need to feel that the community embraces and will help them. In that way, the offender can begin to build a sense of belonging and attachment.

The CSOSA/Faith Community Partnership Initiative seeks to tap into the natural systems that already exist in the community. Faith institutions have a long and well-established history of helping those in need and providing the kind of social support and moral guidance that are essential to the returning offender.

But while CSOSA and the participating faith institutions believe very strongly in the program model, a formal evaluation process must be completed in order to demonstrate that the program does in fact make a difference in the lives of returning offenders.

Because this program is new, the evaluation will look at both the program design—that is, how the program is set up, the procedures that govern its operation, etc.—and its outcomes. Did participating offenders benefit? Are they less likely to commit new crimes than offenders who did not participate?

The goal of evaluation is to ensure that the program can be replicated and that it is effective. If both of these aspects of evaluation are successful, this initiative will indeed be a national model for other communities that want

to improve offender reentry.

There are two major thrusts within the research and evaluation component of the Faith Based Initiative: process evaluation and outcome evaluation.

Process evaluation is designed to evaluate the program design and implementation from three very distinct aspects. The first component of process evaluation involves monitoring the referrals and tracking activity within each cluster's Lead Institution. Were referrals received and processed effectively? Did offenders have to wait too long to start receiving programs or services? Can the cluster model be improved? Data for this aspect of evaluation are collected from monthly Progress Reports submitted by each Cluster Coordinator.

The process evaluation also tracks data relevant to the identification and assessment of offender needs and case plan development. Is the offender assessment adequate? Are needs being identified accurately?

The final component of process evaluation captures the various aspects of the mentoring relationship. Mentors will record their activities in a log, or diary, to document the date, time, location and nature of the interaction between the mentor and mentee.

The goal of this design is to determine the connection between the mentoring program activities and services, and specific outcome goals and output expectations.

Outcome evaluation will seek to answer the question, "Did this initiative 'work'?"

If the program is successful, offenders should both demonstrate positive developments (job stability, housing stability, family reunification, etc.) and avoid negative behaviors (drug use, technical violations, rearrest).

To answer the question of program effectiveness, data will be collected to



Measures such as educational achievement and job retention will be used to track the program's success.



measure the mentee's progress on a performance matrix that captures drug test results, technical violations, housing and employment changes, improvements and general stability. These components would serve as the variables for measuring outcomes.

Aida Hasaballa is a Program Analyst with CSOSA's Office of Research and Evaluation.



Join Us for Reentry Weekend II

The following is a partial listing of institutions that will hold Reentry Weekend II activities on January 31 through February 2. Most services are Sunday at 11 a.m. Please call the individual place of worship to confirm time and event.

- Pilgrim Baptist Church
- Israel Baptist Church
- New Commandment Baptist Church
- Zion Hill Baptist Church
- Upper Room Baptist Church
- Johnson Memorial Baptist Church
- Morning Star Baptist Church
- Greater Mt. Calvary Holy Church
- St. John's United Methodist Church
- Foundry United Methodist Church
- Community United Methodist Church
- Faith Tabernacle of Prayer
- Praise Redemption Worship Center
- Founding Church of Scientology
- International House of Prayer for All People

If you are already involved in this effort to help break the vicious cycle of drugs, crime, violence and victimization, we thank you. If you have not yet become involved, we welcome your contribution.

CSO PERSPECTIVE: TRAINING

The following essay was contributed by Tosha Trotter, a General Supervision Officer who has been active in development of the mentoring initiative and presented at all training sessions.

From the onset of the Faith Based Initiative, I was excited to know of a new collateral contact that could assist in reinforcing compliance conditions. Collateral contacts, such as family members, work information, and significant others, are essential to the supervision officer. They help us keep track of the offender in the community.

When the training began I was surprised to learn of the faith community's enthusiasm and interest. There were many people from various backgrounds wanting to know how they could help CSOSA and their communities. Many participants expressed willingness to assist in redirecting someone's life and providing services.

At the beginning of the training there was a panel presentation on Transitional Intervention for Parole Supervision (TIPS), Central Intervention Team (CIT), Vocational Opportunity Training Education (VOTE) and General Supervision. Each component discussed the services that are provided to the offender to assist in maintaining compliance. During the discussion the staff helped to dispel many myths, one of which was that CSOSA was setting the offenders up for failure. The mentors asked many questions and were surprised by many of the answers. The panel presented copies of the graduated sanctions; the accountability contract and an overview of the probation and parole conditions to the mentors.

During the planning stages, my division, Community Supervision Services, discussed and selected four real life examples of offenders and their day-to-day activities. These scenarios were presented to the mentors in small groups and, with the help of a CSO, they decided on what areas of the individuals' life they could assist. This activity gave the mentors a better idea of the type of services needed and how they could assist the Community Supervision Officer.

The enthusiasm shown by the Faith Based Community was reassuring and contagious. The training helped to build a relationship between the mentors and CSOSA, coming together with one goal in mind: to assist both the offender and the community.

MENTOR GUIDEBOOK:

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE ACCOUNTABLE?

(Each issue of the Call to Action will contain a short article on a principle of mentoring. This material is adapted from "Principles for Effective Mentoring of Ex-Prisoners" copyright Prison Fellowship Ministries, 1998)

Most ex-offenders have lived their entire lives with the attitude: "I don't need anyone telling me what to do or how to live." Many have a problem with authority figures.

What does "being accountable" to someone mean?

- Being honest, truthful, genuine, and having integrity (even when it

hurts);

- Being humble and willing to submit my life to the inspection of another person to obtain spiritual growth and development;
- Being humble enough to ask another person for advice;
- Being open enough to give another person the freedom to honestly observe and evaluate me;
- Being teachable and approachable, willing to learn;
- Being willing to allow another person to enter into my personal life;

- Being transparent, willing to be vulnerable and share fears and weaknesses;
- Being available, willing to invest time, accessible.

Accountability should be reciprocal within the mentoring process. As mentors are called to keep the mentee accountable, they will find the mentee keeping them accountable.

If you try to keep a mentee accountable before you build a solid relationship, he or she may become defensive and resent your confronting them. This is why relationship-building is the first and an ongoing crucial task in the mentoring process.

CLUSTER NEWS

ERCPCP VISITS RIVERS FEDERAL PRISON

By ABUBAKR
MUHAMMAD KARIM,
Cluster A Coordinator

East of the River Clergy/Police/Community Partnership (ERCPCP), the Cluster A lead institution, visited the Federal Correctional Facility at Rivers in Winton, North Carolina on November 26.

ERCPCP accompanied several members of the U.S. Parole Commission Supervised Release Working Group to Rivers. The purpose of the visit was to explore whether D.C. inmates in the federal prison system could be assessed for participation in the faith-based initiative prior to placement in a halfway house.

The delegation included USPC Chairman Edward F. Reilly, Jr.; Nancy Ware, Executive Director of the Criminal Justice Coordinating Council; and Cedric Hendricks, Associate Director for Legislative, Intergovernmental, and Public Affairs for the Court Services and Offender Supervision Agency (CSOSA). Staff from the National Institute of Corrections also attended.

As part of the visit, CSOSA staff demonstrated the offender assessment process to case management staff at Rivers. Discussions were initiated as to whether the institu-

tional staff could conduct these assessments so that inmates could be matched with mentors before leaving prison.

Such a task would involve close cooperation with institution staff in the facility housing the inmate, including unit managers, case managers, counselors, and treatment staff, to identify the needs of the offender and to coordinate contact with a mentor.

If face-to-face meetings between the inmate and the mentor are not feasible, the plan is to utilize video conferencing available at both the Rivers facility and USPC headquarters in Chevy Chase, MD.

The Rivers Facility, opened in 2001, is operated by the privately owned Wackenhut Corrections Corporation.

The facility houses more than 1,300 inmates, of whom at least 1,000 are from the District of Columbia. The visit included a full tour of the facility, which is modern, state-of-the-art correctional facility with housing units branching off a main core.

Two inmates offered statistics on the Muslim population of the facility. This includes 200 Suni, 150 to 200 Moorish American, 50 to 75 Nation of Islam Muslims, and 5 to 10 African Hebrew Israelites. The population as a whole is nearly 40 percent Muslim. These numbers were later confirmed by a staff case manager.

The facility chaplain, James Brown,

indicated that he had tried hard to get representatives from the various Muslim denominations to visit, but the application and approval process is lengthy. Inmates have expressed concern over the lack of Muslim clergy.

Several Muslim clergy have recently received approval to visit. At least two of these are from Cluster A of the CSOSA/Faith Community Partnership Reentry Initiative.

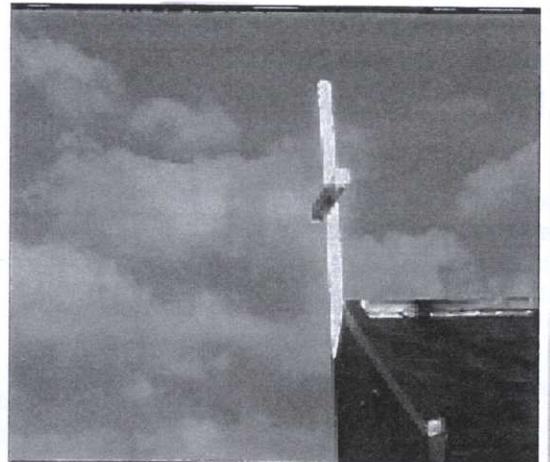
A free charter bus runs from Washington, DC to the Rivers facility for family visits. It is hoped that similar bus services could be available for mentor visits.

As the next step in matching mentors and mentees prior to release, CSOSA staff will join the Bureau of Prisons in a meeting with Wackenhut corporate staff. The work group also plans to visit a federal prison housing female District of Columbia inmates in Danbury, CT.

In the fight against recidivism, contact with mentors will inspire returning offenders with strong moral values and may better prepare them for reintegration to the community. Many strong faith-based institutions are eager to help returning offenders with mentoring and other vital services. It is to be hoped that federal correctional facilities can facilitate this connection as early as possible.

*The glory of friendship is not the
outstretched hand, Nor the kindly
smile nor the joy of companionship;
it is the spiritual inspiration that
comes to one when they discover
that someone else believes in them
and is willing to trust them.*

- Ralph Waldo Emerson



scrapbook



FIRST YEAR

(Continued from Page 1)

President George W. Bush issued a letter of support. More than 40 churches, mosques, and temples around the city dedicated part of their services to the topic of reentry.

The initial call asked the city's faithful to step forward to mentor returning offenders. Two weeks after that weekend, more than 300 participants attended the initial program meeting at Israel Baptist Church to learn more

about returning offenders' needs and how this initiative will help to meet them.

The tremendous response to Reentry Weekend led CSOSA and the Faith Advisory Council to divide the city into three service areas, or clusters. A lead institution was selected in each cluster. CSOSA and the lead institutions established a formal relationship in May 2002 to provide referrals to faith-based programs and mentoring.

During this period, CSOSA staff designed and began to implement a training program for the volunteer mentors. The program included information about community supervision, CSOSA, and most importantly, the dynamics of working with the returning offender. The first training session was held at Pilgrim Baptist Church in April 2002.

After the initial training, a second session was developed to enhance mentors'

To date, more than 75 mentors have received full training, and over 30 more are partially trained.

The first mentor/mentee matches were announced in July 2002 at CSOSA's South Capitol Street Field Unit. This Family Night event began a new chapter in the story of reentry. Since then, more than 70 mentees have been placed.

Joyce McGinnis is a Management Analyst for CSOSA.

CSOSA FAITH-BASED PARTNERSHIP CLUSTERS

CLUSTER C



Cluster Coordinator:
Rev. Sharon Best
(202) 291-5513

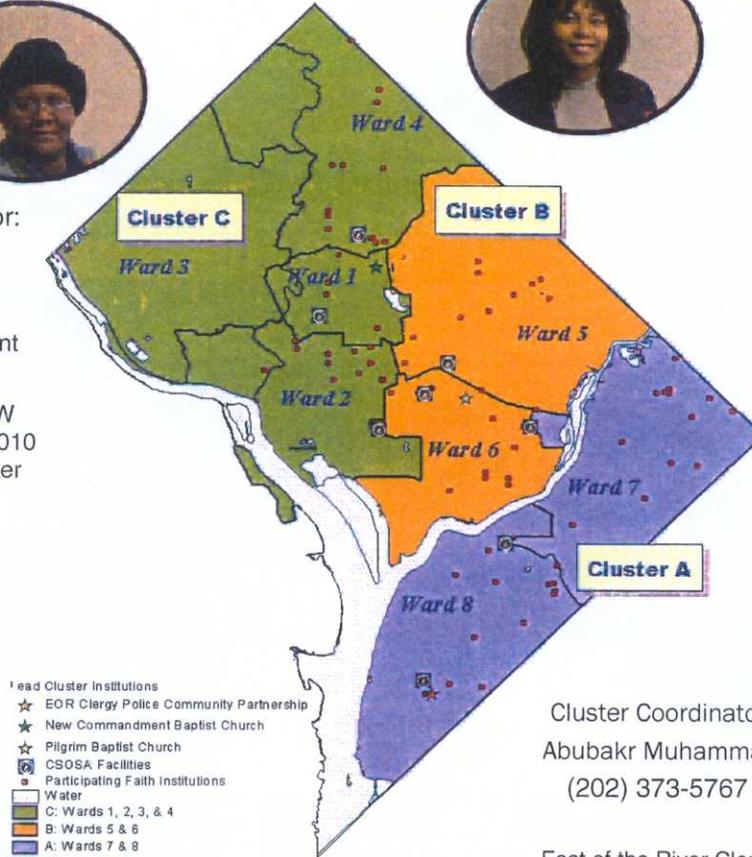
New Commandment
Baptist Church
625 Park Road, NW
Washington, DC 20010
Rev. Stephen Tucker

CLUSTER B



Cluster Coordinator:
Rev. Lisa Fiddemon
(202) 547-1090

Pilgrim Baptist Church
700 Eye Street, NE
Washington, DC 20002
Rev. L.B. Jones, II



CLUSTER A



Cluster Coordinator:
Abubakr Muhammad Karim
(202) 373-5767

East of the River Clergy/Police/Community Partnership
4105 First Street, SE
Washington, DC 20019
Rev. Donald Isaac

CSOSA/Faith Community Partnership Advisory Board

Chairman: Rev. Donald Isaac,
East of the River Clergy/Police/Community Partnership
Co-Chairman: Rev. Lester James,
Zion Hill Baptist Church

- Rev. Walter Fauntroy, New Bethel Baptist Church
- Rev. Robert Cochran, D.C. Baptist Convention
- Rev. Anthony Motley, Redemption Ministries
- Min. Marvin Muhammad, All Faith Consortium
- Rev. R. Smith Withers, Pavilion of God
- Rev. Morris Shearin, Israel Baptist Church
- Rev. Henry Gaston, Johnson Memorial Baptist Church
- Rev. Steven Tucker, New Commandment Baptist Church
- Rev. Louis B. Jones, Pilgrim Baptist Church
- Rev. Veronica Roderick, Judah Baptist Church

For more information on the CSOSA/Faith Community Partnership, contact:

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or visit

www.CSOSA.gov
and click "Offender Re-Entry"