

PRAASA CORRECTIONS minutes March 5, 2016

Chairperson: Tom Shropshire

Secretary: Christine Zerrer

Meeting opened with the serenity prayer.

Corrections General Service Conference agenda items 2016 reviewed.

National Bridge the Gap workshop announcement: Sept. 9-11 2016

26th Annual Hilton 7600 East Broadway Tuscon, Arizona 85710

Topics proposed:

BTG with Youth/BTG and pre release questions

Attracting new volunteers and retention

Clearance questions/issues with Correctional facility

Increasing Inmate participation

Corrections Correspondence

BTG with Youth/BTG and pre release questions

Area 72, District 46: Youth BTG implemented successfully,

Area 92: Youth re- entry program after incarceration. Cooperation with Corrections , CPC, parole, successfully working with youth BTG.

District 8: too short stay for Youth facility to effective BTG, background checks required.

District 6: treatment and corrections BTG seperate, no youth BTG.

Area 92 and Area 18 have designed their own BTG/Pre release forms.

Area 03: 300 bed youth facility, about 30 youth attending 2x month AA meeting. Transitioning to half way houses and Sober Living Environments. HIPPA laws presented problems with follow up of BTG. Problem solved with a google voicemail system for effective bridges. Pre release program is a sub committee of Area Corrections.

Area 18: most juvenile facilities too short stay. One long term youth facility NW Idaho.

Area 93, District 52 too short stay for Youth facility to effective BTG

BTG with Youth/BTG and pre release questions cont.

Are there state regulations regarding youth? Varies by facility, background checks required, 8 hr. to 20 hrs. training in some facilities, regulations vary.

Area 92: Sometimes challenges in finding bridges out of state. Central offices or DCM's can be helpful securing bridges when no Corrections or BTG committee is established.

Area 06: BTG implemented somewhat successfully, expanding to pre release correspondence for a trial period in certain prisons. AA PI at monthly parole office orientation for new parolees along with other services provided for re-entry. Cooperation and support for BTG from Correctional staff. BTG going into county jails for presentations. AA members inside San Quentin are now working on an AA re-entry program with possible title "The first 48".

Area 42, District 8: 2 ½ hr. Drive to Youth facility. Love going, effective program.

Missouri: BTG separate committee from Corrections.

Attracting new volunteers and retention

Area 92: 2 annual workshops held inside prisons with about 20 new volunteers cleared for one day pass. Inside AA members decide format of workshops. Usually a few one day passes convert to active volunteer. All day commitment 130-165 miles to prison 1x week group meets.

Area 17: When a homegroup member relapsed and was incarcerated, homegroup members would visit, one to one. Word spread and this practice is growing.

Area 06: Unity Day, all AA services present panels and have display tables. H&I panel at all Northern California Conferences of AA, annual H&I Conference. Invite previous inmates to speak at events and speaker meetings.

I was "voluntold".

Strong sponsorship, 4th and 5th Step workshops in prisons utilizing 1 day pass volunteers, several become interested in regular attendance.

Area 06 Spanish: Real need for more volunteers. Visiting spanish groups, informing them about and encouraging participation in H&I. At one Correctional facility, 70 women attended AA meeting. Every week fewer woman attending, losing about 10 per week due to lack of female volunteers.

10% doing, %90 of work. Some AA members working a program of convenience. Best experiences in AA service stem from inconvenient commitments. Sharing enthusiasm and joy of this type of 12 step work. The real joy comes from doing it.

Corrections workshops that involve volunteers, former inmates, Correctional staff, parole officers, judges, etc. Great opportunity for those that work together yet rarely are in the same room. Can also involve PI and CPC.

Share enthusiasm wherever possible, from podium, one to one, at meetings, AA events, etc.

Ask appropriate AA members directly, communicate need. Enlist the oldtimers, target 2-5 yrs. sober members.

Alka-thon hosted by Corrections, CPC, Grapevine, BTG with display tables and sign up sheets.

AA video "Carrying the Message Behind the Walls"

Clearance questions/issues with Correctional facility

Requirements for clearance varies. Usually minimum sobriety several years, background check required, 5-10 yrs. for felonies depending on charges and facility, sometimes staff will waive for an exceptional volunteer. Contact your local Corrections or H&I coordinator for specific facility. Do not contact Correctional staff directly. There is one Correctional staffperson for clearance contact with AA Corrections Coordinator.

Always be courteous and respectful to staff, regardless of circumstances- clearances suddenly vanish, meeting times postponed, meeting rooms unavailable, etc. Be flexible, considerate. Pre screen volunteers for appropriateness, felonies, availability, etc.

Within one state there may be some consistency and clearance at several facilities may be coordinated.

Invite Correctional staff to dinner with volunteers. Cultivate cooperative relationships with staff. Improves cooperation and let's Correctional staff know that we are "real people".

Weekly attendance by some effective volunteers very helpful in establishing cooperative relationships with Correctional staff.

Area 92: Annual meeting with key Correctional staff, preferably warden, to review AA Correctional program, iron out glitches, improve effectiveness. Fostering cooperative relationships.

Area 03: Host Annual Corrections Conference with volunteers, former inmates, Correctional staff, parole officers, judges, sheriff, etc.

Area 92, District 12 County jail only requires driver's license.

Area 06: Possible statewide clearance for CDCR in near future.

Area 17: 2 day 6 hr. Training. Be patient, kind and considerate with staff: regarding inconsistencies with volunteer clearances, access, meeting time changes and delays.

Clearance questions/issues with Correctional facility

Area 42, District 8: One facility froze clearance list for over two years. 85% of volunteers cleared were not attending. Staff changed to positive support of AA programs. Then clearance list was adjusted to active volunteers only with a cap on number of volunteers. AA Corrections coordinator carefully prescreening AA volunteers for solid commitment to ensure no further abuse of the clearance resource occurs.

Effective, cooperative relationships with Correctional staff established with ongoing efforts. Patient, persistent, yet kind and courteous. Spiritual Experience workshop held with Correctional staff and chaplains included, very successful.

Increasing Inmate participation

AA exactly the same on the inside. Utilize AA Group pamphlet, encourage inside members to take service commitments in their group. New members very interested in seeing inside members running the group and more comfortable participating. Let AA do it's "magic".

AA Group handbook, grapevines, other AA literature, video and pamphlet "It sure beats sitting in a cell"

Starting Big Book studies, step groups, traditions workshops, etc.

Encourage inside members to launch into action with the steps and sponsorship.

Some facilities allow outside 5th steps. Other facilities rely on literature and inside AA sponsorship.

Inside AA members have trust issues. Weekly attendance by some effective volunteers very helpful in encouraging more inside AA member participation.

AA members inside San Quentin designed a pilot Inmate Sponsorship Training Opportunity Program, I.S.T.O.P., 16 week program that includes all 3 legacies. For a copy email zerrerchristine@gmail.com

Corrections Correspondence

One inmate got AA pamphlets instead of a correspondent.

Recommend utilizing Corrections Correspondence form (can be ordered or downloaded from AA.org), trying again. Encourage use of PO Box, Central Office or Area service address rather than personal physical address. Correspondence guidelines for writing are given to volunteers when they sign up for this service from GSO.

Short term pre release correspondence utilized in some areas.

Roundtable ended with the “I am Responsible “ statement.