



## **STRIDE Testimony to the Appropriations Committee February 20, 2013**

I would like to publically say thank you to the Appropriations Committee for your leadership and hearing our testimony today. Our program STRIDE stands for Skills, Transition, Respect, Integrity, Direction and Employment.

The STRIDE Program provides incarcerated women and men (pre and post release) who are non-custodial parents of children in receipt of state assistance (TFA, SAGA/LIA, HUSKY, SNAP) from the state of Connecticut, with occupational and job search skills and resources necessary to enter competitive employment positions in CT.

STRIDE is made possible through the collaborative efforts of Connecticut's visionary state legislators and CT Departments of Correction, Labor, Social Services, Judicial Branch Support Enforcement Unit and Quinebaug Valley Community College.

In your packet in front of you, we have provided statistical and documented outcomes of our very successful workforce development reentry program.

Since the program's inception in 1999, we have gone from serving women at York Correctional Institution to now more than 1,400 women and men at four correctional facilities as follows: York Correctional and Niantic Annex in Niantic, Bridgeport Correctional Center in Bridgeport and Corrigan-Radgowski Correctional Center in Uncasville. Our recidivism rate is at 9.5% over a two-year period compared to recidivism rates in the state of CT which are as high as 47% without reentry programs in prison.

Repeat and prolonged incarceration is a great financial cost to CT taxpayers. Not only has STRIDE reduced recidivism rates drastically, we have saved the State of Connecticut millions! Approximately 2.1million per year. This number is based on the recidivism rates mentioned and the \$95.16 cost per day rate of incarceration in Connecticut from the Department of Correction statistics FY 11/12. It is also known that if repeat offenders recidivate, they will receive longer sentences resulting in even more costs to the state. Our program costs \$560,500 to fund per year. *It costs more money to eliminate the program then to continue it.*

**STRIDE is aligned with what the Governor emphasizes in his budget address focusing on education and employment.** Over the past three fiscal years, STRIDE has secured our participants 221 jobs in a variety of industries. STRIDE is located within Quinebaug Valley Community College and Gateway Community College. STRIDE has introduced participants to the educational opportunities available throughout the entire community college system and many have enrolled in credit program and career training.

The true key to STRIDE's success is our post-release component. Criminal justice statistics support that the critical components of a successful transition from prison to community are **a job and continuity of care**. STRIDE offers consistency of contact and committed follow-up, paves access to employers who are willing to consider ex-offenders for prospective employment and can offer them the first step in building a proven track record. The term "ex-offender" is truly a misnomer unless community leaders, employers, and the public at large grant these individuals the opportunity to leave their criminal history in the distant past. In order for an offender to do that, she/he must be groomed and guided, prepared and praised, reassured and redirected; all facets that are integral components of STRIDE. We become one of the few positive connections and support in their environment.

The STRIDE Program transforms individuals who might be hopeless and dejected to those who are empowered and believe in themselves. Through the curriculum and our honest but caring approach in the classroom, these men and women are able to identify their strengths, skills, and value, not only as potential employees, but as people, parents, and members of our community.

**Please continue to fund the STRIDE Program to enhance public safety and keep these women and men safe, healthy, employed and productive in our state and local communities. STRIDE makes financial sense for the State of Connecticut.**

**THANK YOU**

*Julie Scrapchansky*  
STRIDE Program Director  
Quinebaug Valley Community College  
(860) 412-7320 ~ [jscrapchansky@qvcc.commnet.edu](mailto:jscrapchansky@qvcc.commnet.edu)



**One of Connecticut's Only Pre and Post Release Program for Women and Men**

**Skills • Transition • Respect • Integrity • Direction • Employment**

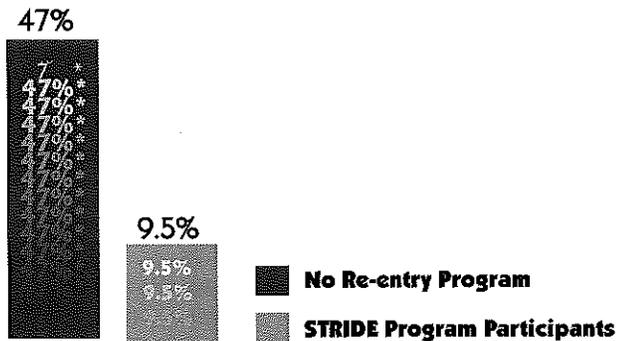
## **How Does STRIDE Benefit the State of Connecticut?**

### **SAVINGS**

In fiscal year 2011-2012, \$2,149,441 was saved in incarceration costs due to the lower recidivism rates of The STRIDE Program.

### **REDUCED RECIDIVISM**

Reentry programs, such as STRIDE, significantly impact the rate of recidivism\*.



\*Based on the 2011 Annual Recidivism Report from the State of Connecticut, Office of Policy & Management Criminal Justice and Planning Division. The calculation was based upon a two year period.

### **EMPLOYMENT ENHANCES PUBLIC SAFETY**

STRIDE provides continuity of service post-release with employment assistance, which lead to **86** jobs secured by participants in 2011-2012. Studies show that gainful employment leads to improved public safety due to income generation, maintaining a work schedules and commitmnet to responsibilities.

### **REUNIFICATION OF FAMILIES**

STRIDE, has served **1,319** participants since the program inception in 1999. **90%** of participants reunited with their families post-release.

### **EDUCATION**

STRIDE is funded through the Department of Labor, but is aligned with the Connecticut Community College system. Educational opportunities are introduced to participants and a Merit Award through Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC) is available to aid with college expenses.

#### **STRIDE**

A unique, state-funded reentry transitional support workforce development program, STRIDE operates within the QVCC Community and Professional Learning Division. Since the program inception in 1999, its staffing has grown from 1 to 10 in 2013 and increased services from 1 prison to 4. The STRIDE Program serves men and women who are non-custodial incarcerated parents, both pre- and post-release, from York Correctional Institution in Niantic, CT, Niantic Annex Correctional Institution in Niantic, CT, Bridgeport Correctional Center in Bridgeport, CT and Corrigan-Radgowski Correctional Center in Uncasville, CT. The class curriculum and post-release services are collaboratively designed with other state agencies to assist the women and men in successfully re-entering the workforce upon release, to resume their parental roles and become productive, employed members of their community.

#### **For Additional Information:**

Julie Scrapchansky, STRIDE Program Director, 860-412-7320 • [jscrapchansky@qvcc.commnet.edu](mailto:jscrapchansky@qvcc.commnet.edu)

**QUINEBAUG VALLEY COMMUNITY COLLEGE**

742 Upper Maple Street • Danielson, CT • 860.412.7320

[www.QVCC.edu/STRIDE](http://www.QVCC.edu/STRIDE)



One of Connecticut's Only Pre and Post Release Program for Women and Men

Skills • Transition • Respect • Integrity • Direction • Employment

SAVINGS

In fiscal year 2011-2012, an estimated \$2,149,441 was saved in incarceration costs due to lower recidivism rates achieved with The STRIDE Program.

YEARLY STATE COST OF INCARCERATION VS. COST OF FUNDING THE STRIDE PROGRAM:

\$34,733 vs. \$2,549

State of Connecticut

- Cost for daily incarceration: \$95.16
• Cost per person per year for non-STRIDE incarceration: \$95.16 x 365 days = \$34,733

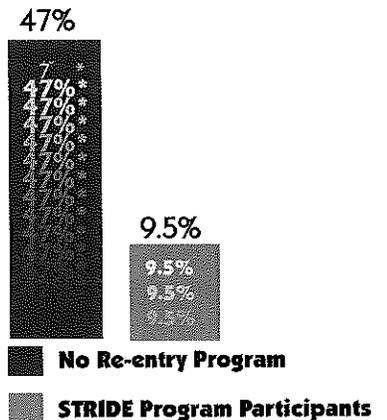
STRIDE

- FY 12 funding: \$525,000
• Participants Served: 206
• Cost per person per year for each STRIDE participant: \$525,000/206 = \$2,549

COST OF RECIDIVISM FOR THE STATE VS. COST OF RECIDIVISM WITH STRIDE:

\$3,369,101 vs. \$694,660

- DOC state recidivism rate: 206 participants x 47% = 97 return to prison
• Cost to the state for recidivism: 97 x \$34,733 = \$3,369,101
• STRIDE recidivism rate: 206 participants x 9.5% = 20 return to prison
• Cost to the state for recidivism with the STRIDE program: 20 x \$34,733 = \$694,660



COST OF THE STRIDE PROGRAM VS. COST SAVINGS WITH STRIDE:

\$1,219,660 vs. \$2,149,441

- Cost of STRIDE program: \$694,660 + \$525,000 = \$1,219,660
• Cost Savings to the State: \$3,369,101 - \$1,219,660 = \$2,149,441

\*Based on the 2011 Annual Recidivism Report from the State of Connecticut, Office of Policy & Management Criminal Justice and Planning Division. \*\*The calculation was based upon a two year period.

STRIDE Recidivism Calculations\*\*

FY10/11

- 106 Active Clients\*
• 13 Clients Recidivated
• 13% Recidivism Rate

FY 11/12

- 93 Active Clients\*
• 6 Clients Recidivated
• 6% Recidivism Rate

Total Active Clients: 106 + 93 = 199

Total Clients Recidivated: 13 + 6 = 19

Two-year Recidivism Rate: 19/199 = 9.5%

\* Released/working with STRIDE across the State

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Stepping into the Future with Pride & Purpose

# Breaking Down the Walls: A Pathway to the American Dream

The American Dream means something different to everyone but it is possible.

A Career

Choices

To Be Happy

Good Health

A Close Family

Sober and Clean

Giving Back to Others

Travel and See  
Other Places

Own a Home With Yard

See Children Happy,  
Grow and Succeed

Obtain Financial Stability

Educational Opportunities



## Susan

A return to school will continue to lead Susan to bigger and better things.

Addiction problems lead Susan down the wrong path. She lost her job and custody of her children. She landed in York Correctional Institution in 2005 for a year-long sentence. As a STRIDE participant, Susan starting gaining confidence and learned she was not her felony.

Upon release, Susan reunited with her family. She became a driving force in encouraging and supporting her three children in their educational goals and dreams for the future. Her oldest daughter is a college graduate, her younger daughter is a junior at Central CT State University studying social services. Her youngest son is focused on working. Career wise, she has excelled. Originally starting as a housekeeper in a local hotel, within six months she was promoted to a supervisor.

Seven years later, Susan received a promotion to sales coordinator and her next goal will be to become a sales manager. She knows to accomplish this goal she will need some additional education. She is **enrolling in Manchester Community College, Manchester, CT** to pursue her Associates Degree.



## Andre

In pursuit of his American Dream, Andre has found his opportunity through education.

In 2008, Andre was serving a sentence at Bergin Correctional Institution for sales and possession of narcotics. While still behind the walls, he applied to attend Capital Community College and submitted paperwork to obtain a Pell Grant. He learned he was accepted into college and was granted financial aid. STRIDE provided him with information on study skills and assisted him with preparing for his placement tests.

Once released from incarceration, Andre enrolled as a full-time student and found employment. He also opened a retail business with his brother. In December 2011, **Andre graduated with his Associates Degree in Social Services**. He plans to continue his education at Central CT State University. He hopes to find employment in the social service field in order to help others like himself.

Andre is turning his education into an opportunity to help others. The STRIDE Program continues to provide Andre with support and guidance as he continues on his journey.

**Through education, STRIDE participants  
are working towards their American dream**



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