

CJM Connection

The bi-monthly newsletter of Criminal Justice Ministry -St. Louis

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Volunteer-Led Classes at CJM

by Fatema Medhat

Criminal Justice Ministry (CJM) has an active volunteer base of over 300 volunteers who serve as Pen Pals, teach classes in correctional facilities, and lead prayer services for justice-involved persons. Paul Faust is one of the many volunteers CJM works with to offer incarcerated and released individuals services to help them achieve successful reentry and regain their dignity and trust in the community.

Paul has been volunteering with CJM for over six years. He teaches the Making It Work program and is one of the mentors in the Release to Rent (R2R) Peer Mentor program at CJM. The Making It Work program is an employment readiness class inside the Transition Center of St. Louis. It teaches individuals the unwritten rules and behavioral norms of the workplace environment. This program is therapeutic for participants and affords them the opportunity to step into the teaching role, with an interactive format that encourages them to share experiences and talk about their present problems so they can learn how to take responsibility for their actions and handle conflicts in a positive way. Paul also helps run the R2R Peer Mentor program. A structured incentive based housing related program that consists of four CJM housing clients and four peer mentors. It is a goal oriented program that requires clients to come up with a creative plan to complete thirty hours of community service, as well as setting and accomplishing personal goals. As the clients achieve their goals, they are rewarded with monetary incentives, with a larger group reward upon completing all the tasks required and graduating. Paul shared a recent success story:

"One of the guys started with a part-time job, put out his resume and ended up securing a full time job with what he really likes to do. Now, he has been moved into a management position and he has actually been on the news. This happened in a seven months' timeframe..This is a client who initially was told that he was never getting out of prison. It has been just a wonderful transformation."

Paul expressed that volunteering at CJM has been a very empowering experience. It has made him a better husband, a better grandfather, and a better person in general. Paul shared that he is grateful to be a part of CJM, and to be able to create change in his community:

"I've become much more empathetic to what formerly incarcerated individuals go through. The lack of family support many of those guys' experience makes me aware of how fortunate I am to have that support. But it also encourages me to put myself out there to provide some kind of support. I feel more connected to my community now than I have ever had in the past.. It is such a rewarding experience."



Upcoming Events

CJM's Recognition Dinner

Registration is now open for the 2019 CJM Recognition Dinner, April 25, 6-9PM. Tables will fill up quickly!

Join us in celebrating all those who support Criminal Justice Ministry with dinner, cocktails, fund-a-need and presentation of the 2019 Beacon awards.

Click here to RSVP:
<https://CJM2019.givesmart.com>

Incarceration Forum

Join CJM at our fourth incarceration forum as we discuss the topic of innocence in the criminal justice system.

Thursday, March 28 5:00pm to 7:00pm
II Monastero Banquet Center
3050 Olive Street, St.Louis, MO

Click here for your **free** tickets:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-injustice-of-innocence-tickets-55666568204>

FREE Class At CJM

Anger Management:
6 consecutive Thursdays
9am-12pm
The next class starts
February 14, 2019

Advance registration is required:
To register, visit our website
at www.cjmstlouis.org
or call us at (314) 652-8062



A CJM Christmas

On December 20, Criminal Justice Ministry hosted a Christmas Dinner party for clients, staff, volunteers, and supporters. Everyone gathered at the Il Monastero Banquet Center to celebrate Christmas with a variety of food that was made by staff, volunteers and supporters to give CJM clients a time to feel welcomed back into the community and a chance to connect with others, since most clients have no families to celebrate the holidays with.

CJM would like to thank those who attended, brought food or desserts, and donated to the first of many Christmas Dinner parties. Our staff is so grateful to have volunteers and supporters who are committed to improving the lives of justice-involved individuals.

Although the Christmas Dinner party was a simple gathering, it meant the world to some of CJM's clients. They were happy to feel accepted and welcomed in the community without being judged. If you would like to help clients get on their feet, please consider stopping by our office to donate, or visiting our website to become a monthly supporter of CJM.

News & Updates

Our supporters have continued to help CJM grow and assist more clients. CJM also celebrates ongoing criminal justice reform at the state level. The following developments will expand CJM's impact:

- With the help of several supporters, including Berges Family Foundation, CJM recently purchased a building at 4648 Gravois. This will help dozens of post-incarcerated Veterans and other individuals with affordable, rent-controlled housing.
- State Representative, Ron Hicks, R-Weldon Spring, is sponsoring legislation to expunge misdemeanor marijuana possession offenses for people that get state-issued medical marijuana ID cards.
- New Cash Bail reform policies will go into effect on July 1, 2019. These policies mandate that courts consider non-monetary conditions of release before considering any monetary conditions or pretrial detentions. Pretrial detentions will not be used unless there is convincing evidence that it is the only way that would ensure safety of the community.
- CJM needs items for our new Food Pantry. With your help, we can open soon and start helping our food-insecure neighbors. Please check out the list of items needed, on our website.

Ways To Give

Activate
a CJM Partnership, the easiest, most effective way to give.

Attend
a CJM event and learn more about the criminal justice system.

Shop
using AmazonSmile and designate CJM when purchasing items

Volunteer
at the CJM office or a prison/jail.

Donate
money, food or in-kind items for clients.

OR
Make a purchase on our website store to support CJM clients.

Click on the "**Get Involved**" button on CJM's to learn more...

