The Center assists women in the criminal justice system in making a successful transition to their families and communities through practicing and promoting restorative justice.
As I look back on the past year, I see a momentum shift in public attention to the criminal justice system. St. Louis was the unfortunate epicenter of this shift, with the death of Michael Brown and the ensuing spotlight on our law enforcement and municipal court systems. There has been much discussion of the impact of these systems on poor, predominately black, neighborhoods. There are nation-wide conversations being had about the ways the criminal justice system is failing our communities and families, as well as the criminal justice system’s adopted role as a de facto social service system for the country’s mentally ill and drug-addicted population. More Americans than ever can define the term “recidivism,” and they understand that most people who have gone to prison will eventually return to incarceration due to a lack of resources and support. They understand the potentially devastating impact on families of having a parent behind bars, and the difficulties the badge of a criminal record brings to a person attempting to re-enter society. Today, there is bipartisan support for criminal justice reform.

In the meantime, the Center for Women in Transition has continued its mission of serving women returning to their communities and families after incarceration. The vast majority of women who live in Center-supported housing are poor, they are mothers, they suffer from mental illness and/or addiction and traumatic pasts, and they face significant hurdles in becoming economically stable and locating safe, affordable housing--two critical components of a successful transition. They prove the statistics true. But they are much more than statistics. Shelly is fabulously crafty and upbeat, and has sewn drapes and tablecloths from donated fabric scraps to beautify her apartment. Lynette grew up on a farm and can fix anything. She keeps framed pictures of her daughter around her as daily motivation to stay sober and get to her job on time. Becky reunited with her husband and children after many years of struggles with alcoholism. Many women have successfully completed the ARCH’s culinary program through St. Louis Community College, and have gone on to obtain full-time work and promotions in fields that they enjoy. The women of CWIT are funny, talented, and motivated, and with the supports we are able to provide, we see successes and personal transformation on a daily basis.

The recidivism rates of Center clients are a fraction of state-wide averages: last year, only 6% of our women returned to prison or jail, while the most recent reported statics for women in Missouri shows 19% returned to prison within one year of release. In addition to remaining out of incarceration, the women we serve are becoming employed, tax-paying citizens; they are obtaining treatment for medical, mental health; and substance abuse issues; they are reconnecting with children; they are learning how to problem solve; they are becoming self-confident and self-directed.

We could not do this without the support of our many dedicated volunteers: mentors, board and committee members, office volunteers, holiday and toiletry drive volunteers, and one-time project volunteers. Nor could we survive without ongoing financial support from our donors. I hope you will continue to support this important mission! You can feel confident that your support will go to help a woman transform her life.
MENTORING AND ADVOCACY

Mentee Spotlight: Laneisha

Laneisha joined the Center’s Mentoring and Advocacy program 6 months ago, after spending 18 months in jail. Laneisha was matched with a volunteer mentor who acts as an emotional support and guide. Laneisha says she sees her mentor as a second mom, someone who helps her put her best foot forward. She always looks forward to talking with her mentor, even if it is just a check-in about how their days went.

Laneisha characterizes her incarceration as a learning experience, and she left determined to get her life on track. She appreciates that the Center has given her a second chance, and has helped her see that she still has opportunities. She is currently a student at Ranken Technical College and hopes to participate in Arches’ culinary training program.

Mentoring and Advocacy by the Numbers

- Total clients served in FY15: 44
- Percentage of employable women who obtained employment: 73%
- Percentage of women who had no relapse during program: 64%
- Recidivism: 0%

DIVERSION

Barbara Baker, Advocate Director, manages the Center’s diversion program. She works with judges and attorneys to advocate for women to be sent to the Center instead of prison or jail. Every year, approximately 30 clients come to the Center through this program. Last year, as a result of the diversion program, 29 women were able to remain connected to their families and communities while they fulfilled court-mandated requirements.
Sheila has been mentoring her first mentee, Annee, for the past year. Sheila knew she wanted to be part of furthering the Center’s mission, and she chose mentoring because of the direct impact it would have on a woman’s life. Sheila was worried she might not be able to offer the right support for a woman leaving the criminal justice system, but she went in with an open mind, and learned that mentoring is as rewarding to her as it is helpful to her mentee. Her favorite part of being a mentor is seeing Annee succeed and grow into the person she wants to be. “It is heartwarming to see Annee reach milestones, such as finding a job or getting a promotion,” Sheila says. Sheila knows that “but for the grace of God” she could have ended up on a similar path as Annee. Together, they are working to make sure Annee and her children have what they need to live a fulfilling and healthy life.

**Here but for the grace of God go I**

2015 Mentors
Thank You to our long-time mentors! Sharon Bertram, Yvette Boozer, Renee Dingman, Kathy McGinnis, Florine Levy, Trenay Overlay-Wallace, and Terry Tate.
And Welcome and Thank You to our new mentors! Catherine Bradford, Trace Carney, Sharon Dardeen, Julia Nesselhauf, Lisa Rokusek, Sheila Sweeny, and Aimee Wehmeier.

The Center’s Step Out program provides support for clients as they transition from the Center’s core programs to independent housing. Through this program, clients can receive an additional year of case management and limited financial support to help with the transition to full independence.

In 2015, 62 women were enrolled in the program. Of those, 53 maintained or found employment, 54 maintained stable living conditions, and only 1 returned to prison.

Stefanie Moore (pictured left) has worked as the Case Manager for the program since it began in 2013.
Project Reconnect is an innovative collaboration among area service providers that delivers reentry services to men and women leaving prison without any supervision of probation or parole. The Center is the administering agency for the project, and also serves the women who are in the program.

The Center served 8 women in FY 2015 through Project Reconnect, connecting them to housing, employment resources, and resources for medical and mental health. Of those, 7 have remained out of prison/jail.
This past year has been exciting for restorative justice initiatives. The Missouri Restorative Justice Coalition, which was developed by the Center and became its own agency in 2009, and the St. Louis Area Restorative Justice Collaboration have been working to end the school-to-prison pipeline across our region. In Columbia, the school district, police, and juvenile court have entered into an agreement that promotes restorative options for students who commit minor offenses at school. In the St. Louis area, the Rockwood school district is emerging as a leader in ending zero-tolerance policies and out-of-school suspension. Jennings school district is also making strides in restorative discipline, and the St. Louis Area Restorative Justice Collaboration has been coordinating trainings for educators. Restorative processes are being used more and more for community building across our region: Truth and Reconciliation St. Louis has been holding truth-telling sessions about a myriad of community issues, and many neighborhoods are holding formal and informal discussion groups about race and race relations in St. Louis. Trauma awareness is another critical part of building a restorative community, and a new effort called Alive and Well STL is working to make St. Louis a trauma-informed city. The Center is beginning the process of becoming a fully trauma informed agency and the staff is excited to embark on this educational journey. There has never been a better time to get involved with restorative change in St. Louis.

NAP TAX CREDITS

Center for Women in Transition has been awarded Neighborhood Assistance Program tax credits to be distributed and used by eligible individuals and businesses in Missouri through June, 2016. NAP credits allow qualified donors to reduce their Missouri tax liability by 50% of their total contribution.

Examples of how tax credits can be applied:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Your gift</th>
<th>$1,000</th>
<th>$2,500</th>
<th>$5,000</th>
<th>$10,000</th>
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<td>State tax deduction assuming 6% tax bracket</td>
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<tr>
<td>Additional federal tax due to reduction of state tax (35% of $500 credit)</td>
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<td>+438</td>
<td>+875</td>
<td>+1,750</td>
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<tr>
<td>Total out of pocket cost to donor</td>
<td>$265</td>
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<td>$1,325</td>
<td>$2,650</td>
<td>$5,300</td>
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- Individuals with income from royalties or rental property
- Sole proprietors
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- Partnerships
- Limited liability corporations
- Farm operations

Eligible Donations

- Cash
- Stocks
- Bonds

Credits may be used to offset individual income taxes, corporation franchise tax, tax on gross premium receipts of insurance companies, and financial institution tax.

To redeem, please request tax credits at the time of your donation. Credits are not transferable or refundable. Visit www.cwitstl.org/donate_now/naptaxcredits for more information or contact Carrie Coats at (314) 771-5207 or by email at carrie.coats@cwitstl.org.

*Please consult your financial advisor for the tax treatment of your donation. The Center cannot provide tax advice.*
The Center had a strong year financially in FY 2015, despite reductions in some government grants. The net income for the year was $85,891. Thanks to our generous supporters, income from fundraising and general donations was up 20% from last fiscal year!

*Unaudited

Total Revenue: $1,337,092

HELP US MAKE 2016 EVEN BETTER

Your donation can make a difference in the life of a woman, her children, her family, and our community.

Your gift of $100 will help provide food for a month for one woman in the program.
Your gift of $500 will allow a woman to live in safe, affordable housing for one month.
Your contribution of $1,000 gives transportation to one woman for 12 months, allowing her to attend treatment programs, search for and maintain employment.
Your gift of $7,000 will provide services to one woman for her entire year in the program.

Please consider us in your year-end planning. We can accept donations of stock, and it is easy to set up a recurring gift through our website.

To make a financial contribution, mail a check to Center for Women in Transition at 7525 S. Broadway, St. Louis, MO 63111 or visit our website at www.cwitstl.org/donate_now.
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CHAN Healthcare donated food for clients during their April Showers drive.

Girl Scouts donated toiletries for clients during their April Showers drive.

Thank you to Mike Smith and Miken Technologies for the donation of computers and IT services for the Center!

Miken Technologies has generously donated upgraded computer systems and IT support for the Center’s offices and client computer labs. Miken staff have also begun providing basic computer literacy classes for clients, which have been enthusiastically welcomed!

A huge thank you to Kirberg Company, McCarthy Construction, Murphy Company, Runge Painting, and Old Monroe Lumber Company for the donation of a new roof at Baker House!

The Center could not have had such a successful 2015 without the support of its many great volunteers, donors, friends, and staff.
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Center for Women in Transition

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Certain project costs have been underwritten by the Missouri Department of Economic Development, Neighborhood Assistance Program.