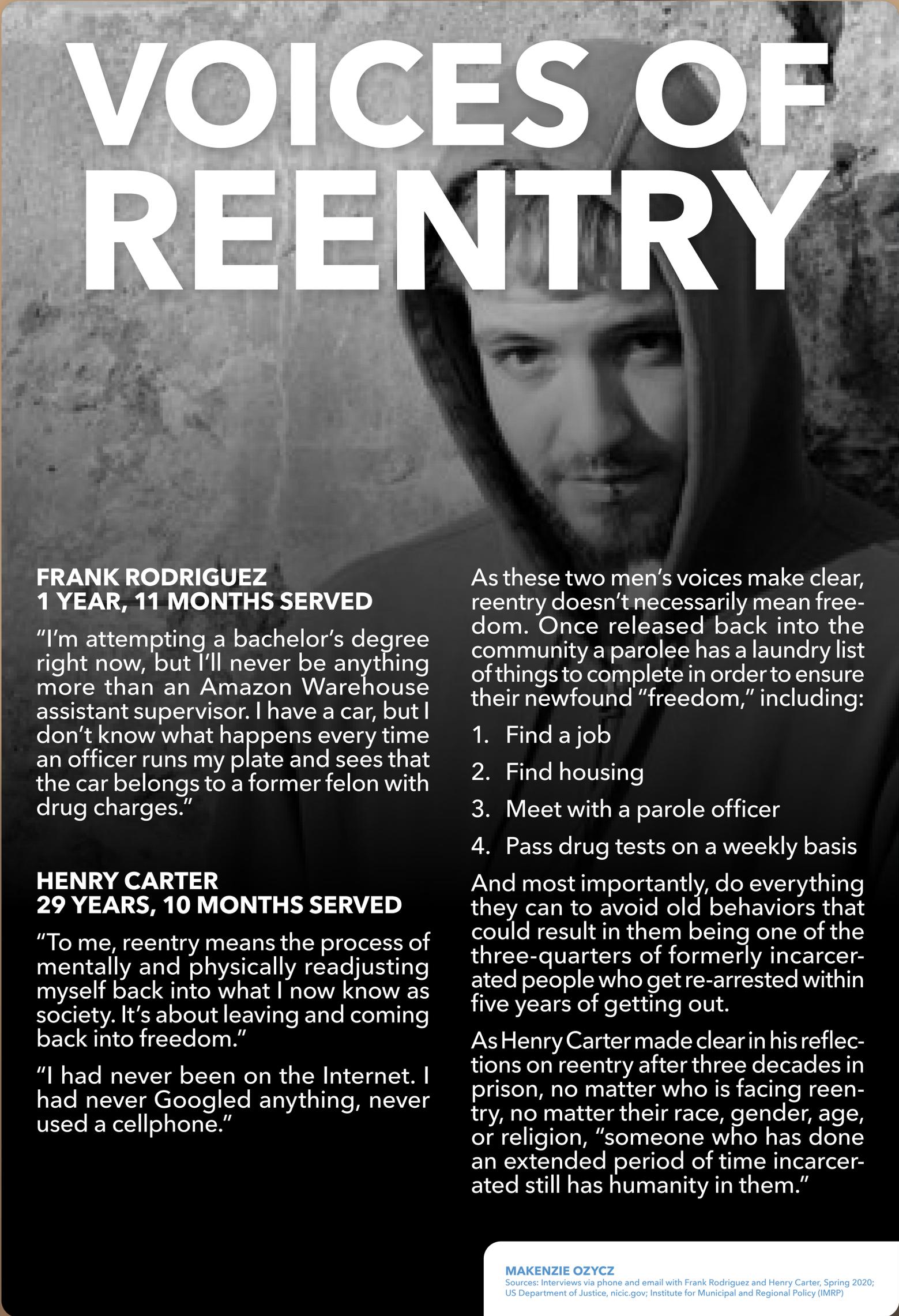


VOICES OF REENTRY



FRANK RODRIGUEZ
1 YEAR, 11 MONTHS SERVED

"I'm attempting a bachelor's degree right now, but I'll never be anything more than an Amazon Warehouse assistant supervisor. I have a car, but I don't know what happens every time an officer runs my plate and sees that the car belongs to a former felon with drug charges."

HENRY CARTER
29 YEARS, 10 MONTHS SERVED

"To me, reentry means the process of mentally and physically readjusting myself back into what I now know as society. It's about leaving and coming back into freedom."

"I had never been on the Internet. I had never Googled anything, never used a cellphone."

As these two men's voices make clear, reentry doesn't necessarily mean freedom. Once released back into the community a parolee has a laundry list of things to complete in order to ensure their newfound "freedom," including:

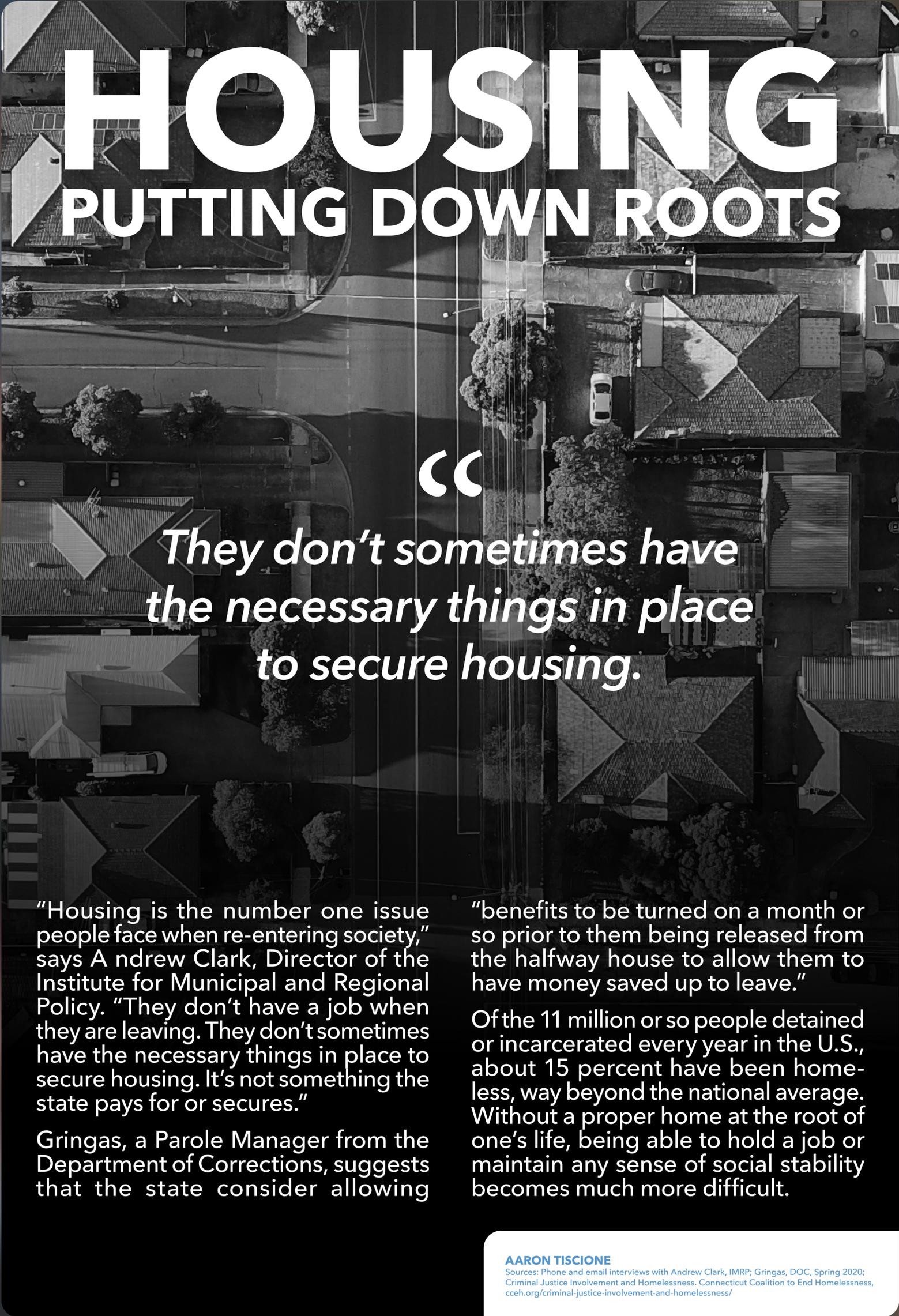
1. Find a job
2. Find housing
3. Meet with a parole officer
4. Pass drug tests on a weekly basis

And most importantly, do everything they can to avoid old behaviors that could result in them being one of the three-quarters of formerly incarcerated people who get re-arrested within five years of getting out.

As Henry Carter made clear in his reflections on reentry after three decades in prison, no matter who is facing reentry, no matter their race, gender, age, or religion, "someone who has done an extended period of time incarcerated still has humanity in them."

MAKENZIE OZYCZ

Sources: Interviews via phone and email with Frank Rodriguez and Henry Carter, Spring 2020; US Department of Justice, nicic.gov; Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy (IMRP)



HOUSING

PUTTING DOWN ROOTS

“

They don't sometimes have the necessary things in place to secure housing.

“Housing is the number one issue people face when re-entering society,” says Andrew Clark, Director of the Institute for Municipal and Regional Policy. “They don’t have a job when they are leaving. They don’t sometimes have the necessary things in place to secure housing. It’s not something the state pays for or secures.”

Gringas, a Parole Manager from the Department of Corrections, suggests that the state consider allowing

“benefits to be turned on a month or so prior to them being released from the halfway house to allow them to have money saved up to leave.”

Of the 11 million or so people detained or incarcerated every year in the U.S., about 15 percent have been homeless, way beyond the national average. Without a proper home at the root of one’s life, being able to hold a job or maintain any sense of social stability becomes much more difficult.

AARON TISCIONE

Sources: Phone and email interviews with Andrew Clark, IMRP; Gringas, DOC, Spring 2020; Criminal Justice Involvement and Homelessness. Connecticut Coalition to End Homelessness, cceh.org/criminal-justice-involvement-and-homelessness/

SUBSTANCE ABUSE

BREAKING THE CHAIN

“

Tier 4 offers the best success rate because it mirrors the sustained support from within the prison system.

The Department of Corrections has a four-tiered system for addressing the needs of substance abusers once they leave prison. The fact that on average nine out of 10 newly incarcerated people in Connecticut have used drugs or abused alcohol, means its clear that any reentry program must address the needs of this population. Yet only one of the programs, Tier-4, provides the sort of sustained support over six months that has the best chance for success.

“Tier 4 offers the best success rate at 60 percent because it closely mirrors the sustained support from within the prison system.” - Violette, DOC Deputy Warden of Addiction Services.

DOC FOUR-TIERED SYSTEM

- 9 session Pre-release Program focused on reentry
- Weekly outpatient program focusing on education about addiction
- 4-month residential program providing recovery and relapse prevention skills
- 6-month residential program in a modified therapeutic community setting, engaging with peers in a supportive network

EVA CARRAGHER

Sources: (Kids of substance abusers 4Xs as likely also abuse) National Survey on Drug Use & Health; (Nearly 20 million Americans battle substance abuse) National Institutes of Health, <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK64123/>; interviews via phone and email with Violette, DOC Deputy Warden of Addiction Services, Spring 2020

SENIORS

60 WEST

“

We don't take people like that.

"We don't take people like that."

Porter, a Health Services Discharge Planner for DOC, explains that's the attitude that prevents many nursing homes from accepting formerly incarcerated seniors. But 60 West of Rocky

PHYSIOLOGICAL FACT:

Studies show that many incarcerated seniors have the added obstacle of having aged on a physiological level 10 to 15 years more than their free counterparts in society.

Hill has proved the exception and is the only nursing home in the state devoted almost exclusively to former inmates. Initially the town rejected their plan but now it's considered a landmark facility not just in Connecticut but nationwide.

MICHAEL JARRETT 35 YEARS SERVED

"At 60 West the food is heavenly, the bed is heavenly. The bed in prison was like sleeping on a 1-inch plank wrapped in cloth. There were women! And they started talking to me all the time. I get to see kids now! It was so long since I'd seen a kid."

REBECCA GEORGE

Sources: Phone and email interviews with Michael Jarrett, Spring 2020; Phone interviews, DOC Health Services Planner, Porter, April 2020; (growing older physiologically behind bars), Nowotny et al. 2016. National Center for Biotechnical Information; (60 West town rejection), McWilliams, Kathleen. 2017. Hartford Courant; (60 West rating), McWilliams, Kathleen. 2018. Hartford Courant.

COMING BACK OUT

REENTRY IN THE 21ST CENTURY



Welcome to a poster exhibit on the unique challenges posed by reentry written and designed by Central Connecticut State University students in partnership with the Department of Corrections and the Institute of Municipal and Regional Policy.

Each year the Writing Minors at CCSU take on a community engagement project to highlight the power of story-sharing and the vital role students' literacy skills can play in their towns, at their jobs and in the state.

Despite getting blown sideways by Covid-19 in spring 2020, Makenzie Ozycz, Rebecca George, Eva Carragher, and Aaron Tiscione interviewed men who have faced the challenges of reentry, professionals at DOC and IMRP, and tracked down startling facts.

They persevered to create a newsletter and this poster exhibit, which informs and pays tribute to those who try to persevere as they make the daunting transition from prison to society and to some semblance of freedom in mind, body and spirit.

PROJECT EDITOR

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