



**Corrections Foundation
Board of Directors Meeting
Friday, February 8, 2008**

Attendees:

Mr. Louie L. Wainwright, President
Mr. Tom Rush, Vice President
Ms. Betty Bennett, Development Committee Chair
Mr. Dave Mecusker, Treasurer
Col. Butch Redding
Mr. Jason Clinger
Mr. Dick Pearce
Ms. Mary Ellen Dayan-Varnum

Absent:

Mr. Robert Woody
Ms. Rosa McNaughton – vote by proxy
Mr. Jim Williams, Finance and Membership Committees Chair

Staff:

Mr. Chris Akins
Ms. Sheri Logue
Mr. Nick Dawkins

President Louie Wainwright called the meeting to order at 10:15 a.m. Mr. Dave Mecusker gave the invocation. Mr. Wainwright welcomed everyone and thanked Mr. Pearce and Mr. Clinger for arranging for our meeting accommodations. Mr. Tom Rush established a quorum and the board minutes from 10/25/08 were reviewed. Mr. Wainwright made a recommendation for page 4 to clarify the Federal Bureau of Prison's requirement of offenders being required to have a GED upon release. It was suggested that we specify that these are requirements of the federal prison system and do not apply to the state level. This change was noted on the minutes and Mr. Rush made a motion to approve the minutes, seconded by Ms. Bennett. Motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Wainwright presented a letter to the board from Secretary McDonough acknowledging that board members were appointed by the Secretary to serve and were allowed to present on behalf of the Corrections Foundation during work hours. There had been some question as to whether employees would have to take administrative leave for the board meeting and/or for presentations on behalf of the Foundation and it has been confirmed that employees do not have to take annual leave for Foundation duties. However they still need to seek permission from their warden or circuit administrator and follow proper procedures to take administrative leave for Foundation duties.

Financial Report

Mr. Dave Mecusker gave the financial report and budget review and noted that our annual income is on schedule but our expenses are higher than our revenue for the year to date. This is partially due to the expenses for the Farmworker Housing project for which the expenses will be recovered as beds are made and distributed to the vendor. By April 2008 this project should be complete and expenses should be recovered along with a surplus of nearly \$15,000 for administration of the contract.

Mr. Mecusker noted that the balance for operating expenses is less than what is needed to cover expenses for the fiscal year. Sheri Logue presented that with a successful spring golf tournament, 1,000 tag sales, the completion of the farmworker housing project, and 10% of Employee Assistance funds for administration that we should have adequate operating funds to carry us through June 2009.

Specialty Plate Project

Chris Akins mentioned that to date we have sold 66 tags and received \$1,650 so there is a need to market the tag heavily to meet this 1,000 a year goal. The State of Florida requires 1,000 a year in sales in order for us to keep the tag. A lot of effort has gone in to securing the tag and we will work hard this year to make our goal of 1,000 so that we do not lose this opportunity. We roughly need to sell 100 tags a month. Currently we are selling about 22 a month through email promotion only.

Mr. Mecusker noted that the specialty tag project initially will sustain a loss but eventually it will be a revenue source for us.

Mr. Akins recommended that we focus on the Iron Triangle region and place a newspaper ad and billboard in the Starke, FL area. He also recommended placing banners and postcards at institutions in the area. Mr. Mecusker suggested that the banner could be a traveling banner and spend a couple of weeks at each institution in each region. Ms. Bennett asked if the information was getting out to line staff. It was noted that email most likely was not reaching line staff and that it would be helpful if we had a local contact at each institution to inform staff of the tag. Mr. Mecusker noted that officers do not have access to computers and that the best way to reach them would be a banner or sign at the entrance to their institution. Mr. Akins agreed and noted that only 49% of the Department has email capability.

It was recommended that an employee at the sergeant level would be the best to relay information to the field. It was further recommended that this person volunteer to help us and not be appointed. This person would be helpful for the specialty tag project and our upcoming membership campaign.

Mr. Mecusker asked if we can tell where the 66 tags have sold so far and suggested that if there is an area of higher interest identified that we focus our efforts in that area. The message should be “Support Your Fellow Officers” and convey that this tag is for them.

Col. Redding suggested that John Miller with the Bradford County Telegraph might donate the 1 page newspaper article. He and Ms. Bennett will work on this possibility.

Mr. Rush noted that something tangible, such as a sign, postcard or newspaper ad would be more effective than an email. Face to face is much better than a passive advertisement. We need to make the tag easy to obtain. Mr. Akins mentioned that gift certificates are available for the tag. Through a gift certificate purchase a donation of \$25 will be given to the Corrections Foundation even if the recipient decides not to obtain our tag for their car. This is another way we can make it easy to obtain the tag.

Mr. Akins presented a poster that has been created to focus on the message that this tag is for DC and to benefit DC. The board commented on how much they liked the poster and how it would speak to the line officer. Mr. Mecusker offered for FCCD to place the poster in their upcoming newsletter that will reach 5,500 members and asked that a line be added to the poster to let people know they needed to ask for it at their tax collectors office. Mr. Akins will make this change and forward the poster to all board members by Monday of next week.

Mr. Akins mentioned that two companies who send information stuffers to motorists had been contacted and that because one is facing a lawsuit they are unwilling to include our information as inserts to their mailings. However we have contacted the tax collectors offices and have been invited to place information such as posters and brochures about our tag in their offices for the public to see. A lot of people renew their tags by mail but many still go to the tax collectors offices so this could be an opportunity for us.

Mr. Rush suggested that it would be great if we could do a mailing campaign to employees at the same time they will receive their renewal notice from the tax collector. To do this we would need to know employee addresses as well as their birth month. Many of their home addresses are not public information and we have asked for their email and birth month and have been told by DC’s Director of Workforce Compliance that this data can not be given to an outside organization. We believe this information is available to the public and if needed a public records request can be made.

Mr. Rush noted that each tax collector’s office would receive positive recognition for supporting us in our efforts. Corrections employees have a large impact on nearly every community in Florida especially the rural counties and with this being an election year their support of us would be good for them. Col. Redding added that we could write a letter to the editor in areas that lend their support thanking them for their help.

Mr. Akins suggested that our newspaper article have a respectful member of the community holding a tag to encourage others to support the tag. Mr. Wainwright mentioned that he had written a letter to the 8 Regional Directors of DC asking for recommendations on how to promote the tag to staff and how we can increase tag sales in their area. To date Mr. Whitehurst from Region I has responded and offered to support us in any way he can. He has asked that a notice be placed on all the bulletin boards for staff to see. Mr. Wainwright assumes the other regions have done so also but have yet to let us know of their efforts.

It was suggested that Col. Redding and Betty Bennett meet with Regional Director Mark Redd to take a photo at the Bradford tax collectors office of Mr. Redd holding a tag. An article will be written for the Bradford Telegraph encouraging support of the tag. It was suggested that Buster Rahn, at the Bradford Telegraph, be contacted about the article. It was noted that he is a retired DC employee and will likely be very supportive of our efforts.

Mr. Pearce recommended that a photo of a well-liked and respected corrections officer and probation officer in each region be enlarged into a sign and placed at the front of every institution and/or circuit office to encourage participation in the specialty tag. Ms. Dayan-Varnum recommended that the poster Chris designed be placed on every bulletin board so that line staff will see it. There are 17 prisons in Region II alone and a sign or banner to travel around from institution to institution would be helpful in bringing our message to the field.

Mr. Akins suggested that we use an image that is not typically expected of DC, such as a petite female officer who does a very tough job protecting the public. Ms. Dayan-Varnum noted that this image might work for the community but not for officers themselves. Mr. Clinger noted that maybe we overlay that image over a field of offenders inside the wire.

Ms. Logue asked for suggestions on what our tagline could be. Suggestions were “Show Your Pride” and “Be Proud”. Ms. Bennett suggested that the board think of possible tag lines and present their suggestions to Mr. Akins for consideration.

Mr. Pearce asked if we could have a competition among regions of who could sell the most tags. Mr. Mecusker noted that the CPOF offers a scholarship of \$500 for a staff member to attend the FCCD institute and that their scholarship is advertised throughout the Institutes publications and that they receive a lot of exposure for a \$500 donation. Maybe the Foundation could offer a similar scholarship. One suggestion was that we could hold a competition among the regions and provide a scholarship to the FCCD Institute Training for an employee in the region with the highest sales.

It was noted that employees should be told about us during each new employee orientation and we should be presented as their professional organization. Membership and the specialty tag should be presented to all new staff as part of orientation.

Ms. Dayan-Varnum noted that the Employee Clubs hold benefits for Special Olympics and other charities such as BBQ dinners and suggested that DC do this for the Corrections Foundation to support their own. It would make us a much better known household name among line staff. Mr. Mecusker suggested that the employees club's donations to the Corrections Foundation be earmarked for that regions use in times of crisis.

Mr. Rush suggested that we have a slogan such as "Charity Begins at Home", "Support Yourselves", "Be Proud" or "Show Your Pride" to let DC staff know that we are here solely for them.

It was recommended that the Corrections Foundation be as large as a push as the Florida State Employee Charitable Campaign and Special Olympics and that strong support of the Foundation come from the top down. Employees supporting themselves through the Foundation should be as large of an event as these other worthy benefits. Testimonials from those we have helped could speak volumes to the field.

It was further recommended that staff contact each tax collectors office and verify that they know our tag is available. Many of the board members were first told that the offices did not have the tag, and then they looked and found a box of them in storage. Making it easy for the tags to be purchased should be our first priority. Many employees may not come back if their tax office makes it difficult to obtain the tag or if they do not know that it exists. Staff will send posters and brochures to each tag office to help educate them about the availability of our new tag. We will also make the order form available to staff so that they can complete it and take it with them or mail it with their tag renewal.

The board agreed that we need to get aggressive regarding tag sales. Mr. Clinger recommended us hosting a BBQ in Bradford or Union county to advertise the tag and kick off the membership campaign and tag sales. Mr. Mecusker noted that Lawtey CI hosts a steak dinner for its employees twice a year from funds raised through the employee club. He suggested that they collect funds during the next dinner and make a donation to the Corrections Foundation.

With the new DC Secretary beginning this week we have an opportunity to get him on board with the Foundation. If he comes out in support of the Foundation it is believed it would be a large morale booster within the Department.

With all the warden changes throughout the last 5 years employee loyalty lies with their major and below. DC staff seems to look up to and respect their longtime local staff and expect their higher-level administration to change. It was suggested that we talk to the Regional Directors and get on their agenda for their monthly meeting so that we can let them know how the Foundation is planning on helping and supporting DC. We need their support to seek help to get our message to their line staff.

Mr. Wainwright asked if the board members are available for another meeting within 30 – 45 days in Tallahassee to meet with Secretary McNeil to talk about these issues. It was agreed that the board would be willing to meet again at this time.

Fundraising Ideas

It was asked if the Corrections Foundation could be part of the Florida State Employee Charitable Campaign so that employees could earmark funds for us during the United Way fund drive each year. Mr. Akins noted that in the past this opportunity was passed on because of the concern of us only helping Florida DC employees and not opening our services to everyone, but since then we have investigated and believe we would qualify to be a part of the FSECC campaign and we will be looking into joining this year. It was noted that many organizations do not serve “everyone”; they focus on a certain clientele such as the Juvenile Diabetes Association. Even the CPOF is a choice for employees on the FSECC form and very little of the funds collected from Florida return to Florida in the form of employee assistance.

Mr. Rush cautioned that there are limitations on fundraising if we join the FSECC. For instance there are certain times of year, mainly August - October that will not be allowed to solicit donations. Mr. Akins will look into the details and report back to the board for a recommendation.

Golf Tournament Committee Report

Mr. Clinger and Mr. Pearce gave an update of the 2nd Annual Officer Benefit Golf Tournament. Mr. Clinger presented that the tournament is planned for May 9th at the Orange County National Golf Center and Lodge. Mr. Pearce noted that this course is a four star PGA course and has been highlighted in Golf Digest. The course is including green fees dinner; player photos and a promotional item for \$55 a golfer.

Mr. Clinger noted that the West Orange Times newspaper has written an article about the tournament and will run it every two weeks until the golf tournament. Mr. Clinger presented the board with a copy of the article in which he is shown promoting the license plate at his local tax collectors office.

Mr. Pearce reported that we are planning a silent auction and great door prizes for this tournament. Letters have been sent to 490 vendors and phone calls are being placed to vendors in the Orlando area. So far we have received a lot of interest from vendors to register a team and or become a sponsor. Ms. Logue noted that a \$1,000 check arrived on Thursday from a doctor out of Jacksonville.

On the recommendation of Mr. Clinger we are holding a 50/50 raffle this year in which someone will win \$500 or half the pot of money raised through the raffle. Graybar Electric has generously

agreed to sponsor this event and offer the \$500 prize money. Mr. Clinger has a verbal commitment from the Ritz Carlton to provide us with a weekend stay for the silent auction.

There is room for 36 teams or 144 players for the tournament and the registration form will go out as soon as Secretary McNeil is advised of our plans for the tournament. The tournament could be an opportunity to sell specialty tags too. Maybe if a tag is purchased they will receive a complementary raffle ticket to be entered into our 50/50 drawing to win \$500.

It was suggested that we contact Mr. Paul Skelton who organizes the retiree luncheons and ask him to present information about the license plate and upcoming golf tournament. It was mentioned that Donald Jackson organizes DC retirees twice a year at RMC too and we could contact him about presenting our information to them.

Ms. Logue asked if the board members would be willing to sell 10 raffle tickets for \$5 each. They agreed and Mr. Clinger added that it would be great if each board member also secured a silent auction or door prize item.

Membership Campaign

Ms. Logue noted that this year's membership campaign would take place from March 1 – April 30th. She asked Mr. Mecusker if the Correction's Foundation could present their membership awards at one of the lunches at the FCCD institute as we did last year. It gave us an opportunity to present to a large group from all over the state. We could even ask one of our recipients to give a testimony at the lunch if FCCD would allow it.

Mr. Williams is set to speak to 4 institutions in the coming month, Gainesville, Lancaster, UCI and FSP and will present our new DVD, brochures and fact sheets to groups of employees at these locations.

Mr. Williams and Mr. Wainwright have done an excellent job of conveying this message among Region's I and II and we as an organization need to have that same impact throughout the state.

Current membership statistics were presented and it was recommended that any location with less than 50% participated be personally contacted by a board member. We should focus our membership recruitment on areas that have a low percentage, which demonstrates word about the Foundation is not reaching line staff. The return on an employee's membership investment is great and we need to let all staff know we are here for them. We will provide every warden and circuit administrator a list of their current membership, the number of employees we have helped at their location and the resources to promote the Corrections Foundation during the upcoming membership campaign.

Troop Recognition Project

Currently 85 DC employees are actively deployed defending freedom in Iraq and around the world. In recognition of their service the Foundation we provided each of their families with a \$50 Wal-Mart card during the recent holidays, Thanksgiving and Christmas, along with a card with the Board's best wishes.

The Troop Project account currently has \$7,600 available.

Mr. Rush presented an opportunity to the board regarding our recognition of the 100 DC employees currently deployed serving our country. The Florida State Capital will fly an American or Florida flag in honor of active military personnel and present it to us to send to either the family or the service member overseas. There is no cost associated with the flags however we would need to call the service members family and ask for an overseas address to ship the flag to. This will be an easy way to recognize their service and let them know that they have not been forgotten.

Another thought is to send care packages to the troops overseas. We have identified items that the soldiers want such as hot sauce, Girl Scout cookies and other unique items that they cannot get at their PX. The food is bland and items we can send them from home would be much appreciated. It is thought that we could ask vendors with the Department to make donations of items such as personnel care and snacks to include in our boxes. The only expense the Corrections Foundation will incur is for shipping. Each box will cost \$8.95 to ship and total expenses for the project are estimated at around \$900.

FCCD Chapter 2 in Central Office has shown an interest in helping us with this project and with their help we could easily complete this project before Memorial Day in May. The board members offered to assist in making phone calls to the families of those serving.

Mr. Rush also noted that he read an article in Golf Digest that said that golf is a popular sport among our soldiers. It would be nice to include golf balls or other items in the goody boxes and we could ask golf shops and pro shops at courses to support this effort.

Col. Redding asked if the Foundation honors the membership of employees with the Foundation while they are deployed. For instance if their payroll deduction stops because they are not receiving a check, does their membership end too? It was suggested that we offer service men and women an honorary membership in the Foundation while they are on active duty. Thus if their family has an emergency at home while they are deployed the Foundation could aid at the level of a member of the Foundation. We could let each service member know of this benefit by including a letter in his or her care package.

Mr. Mecusker made a motion to provide military service personnel an honorary membership during their deployment. Mr. Pearce seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Rush made a motion to use Troop Project funds to send care packages overseas DC employees serving in our military. Mr. Mecusker seconded the motion and the motion passed unanimously.

Program Report

Ms. Logue presented the program report, which included the following:

Employee Assistance Program

To date in FY 07-08 the Corrections Foundation has assisted 225 DC employees and disbursed more than \$248,750 in financial assistance. We are experiencing an increase in requests for assistance when compared to last year when we assisted 290 employees with \$346,340.

We currently assist employees who are also members with an amount of \$1,500 for critical illness, death preceded by illness, and accidents with injuries. We provide \$500 to members to travel out of state for a family emergency, or a house fire, flood, etc.

For non-members assistance is available in the amount of \$250 for the above situations.

Since the program inception in 1999, more than two million dollars has been distributed to assist DC employees in need.

Farmworker Housing Project

We are involved in another project with Everglades Community Association (ECA) to provide 130 beds and 28 tables for their Florida City Project. The vocational shop at Hardee CI is producing 8 beds and tables each day, which puts us ahead of schedule for completion of this project.

Everglades Community Association has been very pleased and we are hopeful this will build a lasting partnership with them and DC for years to come. To date ECA has picked up 48 beds and 10 tables. We are on schedule to complete this project by April 2008.

This project will net approximately \$15,000 in revenue for the Corrections Foundation after expenses.

Mr. Wainwright suggested that we write a letter of acknowledgement to Mr. Winters who oversees our Farmworker Housing Project at Hardee Correctional Institution and thank him for his hard work and commitment to the project and copy his warden on the letter. Ms. Logue agreed that Mr. Winters has been very supportive and has made it a pleasure to coordinate this project with Hardee CI. Warden Cannon has also been very supportive.

DC Apparel Sales

To date we have sold 50 men's polo shirts, 39 women's polo shirts, 54 Flags for Freedom pins, 4 bags, 10 portfolios and 4 hats. These sales have generated \$3,000 in revenue.

Homebuilders Association Apprenticeship Program

Mr. Akins presented that since our last meeting Dr. Pam Valentine of DC's Grant Department and John Hattery of the National Homebuilders Association had visited Washington again and met with Representative Alan Boyd regarding a federal earmark to support an apprenticeship program in Florida institutions. Representative Boyd asked why a state agency was asking the Federal government for funding for an initiative that the state government should fund. He also wanted to know what investment DC was putting into the project other than offering our offenders as students. Mr. Akins noted that he had spoken with Dr. Valentine and mentioned the availability of tools being stored at Hardee CI from the Farmworker Housing project that ended at Avon Park CI. A grant from the Department of Community Affairs in 2000 purchased these tools. He asked the board if they would be willing to offer these tools as an in kind donation to this project should it become a reality.

Representative Boyd was interested in seeing the public/private partnership and identifying what each party would bring to this project. The Homebuilders Association is willing to provide the teachers necessary to make this project work but DC is still determining what resources they can provide to the project.

Mr. Rush mentioned that public sector training is important. It is important that offenders be trained in useful areas so they have opportunities upon release.

Ford Motor Company

Mr. Akins presented on the Ford Motor Company project at Homestead Correctional Institution.

Ford Motor Company has recently conducted a review of the program and found that the program is operating below their expectations. They have made recommendations to DC about increasing student placement and graduation. They have agreed to invest \$5,000 in the program this year and we will receive a check sometime in April. However they want to see results this year. Ms. Marsha Saafir, Director of Ford's YAATC program, is planning a trip in April to meet with DC's higher-level program staff to determine what resources can be offered to the program to increase success. Currently the program needs to improve upon student placement, instructor training and identifying placement opportunities. Only one offender has been placed in the programs history.

Ms. Dayan-Varnum mentioned that re-entry is a very important focus of the Department and that this should be a priority to them. The Ford account currently has \$16,245 available.

The board continued discussion about DC programs as a whole. It was voiced that the Department's program office has the mentality of "Why should we do something because then we'd have to do something?" These concerns have been voiced for years and nothing has been changed or done to correct what should be an easy thing to correct. The Ford program has 12 students a year; they could easily be placed in the community if resources were made available to the program. It was noted that there is now new management among the Bureau of Programs and that this mentality may have changed.

It was suggested that we speak to Mr. John Hancock to address issues in classification to ensure that student placement in the program is successful. Mr. Akins referred to one case where the student had 18 grand theft auto charges and she was trying to be placed in a Ford dealership. This student was set up to fail from the beginning. We need classification to help place the right offenders in the program so that it can be a success.

It was noted that Sherry Porter is the new warden at Homestead CI and she comes from Region I. She would be very helpful and open to working with us to improve this program. Mr. Akins noted that Mr. Bob Shane, the program's instructor, has done an excellent job with what he has been given. It is by no fault of Mr. Shane's that the program has not been successful in student job placement. He needs the resources and DC transition personnel dedicated to helping secure employment opportunities. Ms. Dayan-Varnum had spoken to Mr. Rusty McLaughlin last year about involving the work release centers in this program but little change has occurred to our knowledge.

We need to help DC focus on classification issues first. DC has given the excuse that placement is difficult because the offenders are females instead of acknowledging the little effort has been put forth to properly place the offenders in the program and assist them in finding work upon release. Without this support from DC the program has been set up to fail.

Ms. Logue mentioned that in each board members book is included the Governor's Ex-Offenders Task Force report, which makes great recommendations about offender reentry.

With budget cuts announced DC programs may be facing another round of cuts. We have an opportunity to continue the programs supported through the Corrections Foundation but we must determine how to best help DC support these programs.

Mr. Rush asked if we could find out how many people have graduated and where they are serving their probation. It was recommended that we speak to David Ensley so that we can track how successful they have been since release. One of the issues is that unless the offender contacts the instructor after release we do not know if she has had success in the automotive field or not. There may be more success out there than we know of.

Other Opportunities

Ms. Bennett mentioned a program she saw about reuniting children with their fathers in prison. A grant is available from the USDA and the program is called "For Life". This could be an opportunity that we could explore with the Department's grant department. Mr. Akins will provide a link to this information to DC's grant director, Dr. Pamela Valentine.

New Business

Computers for Florida's Kids

Mr. Wainwright noted that he would like to meet with the Director of Information and Technology and present them with a letter highlighting the importance of the program and the minimal risk associated with the program and seek his support in our asking for the program to be reinstated. If we seek his approval before speaking to Secretary McNeil and we can convince him that it is a reasonable program the chances for it being reinstated will be greater than if we go directly to Secretary McNeil with our request. Mr. Rush agreed that going through OIT first would be best. Ms. Logue suggested that even if we could pilot the program at Cross City CI we could prove it to be successful and ensure security risks were eliminated. Cross City CI was the only location out of 3 found to be operating at the Department of Defense standards for wiping hard drive data when the program was audited in 2006. Cross City CI is also close enough for Foundation staff to make regular site visits.

Mr. Wainwright thanked Mr. Pearce and Mr. Clinger again for their hard work on the upcoming golf tournament and for setting us the board meeting for us.

Mr. Rush thanked the Foundation staff for a job well done.

It was agreed that the board would meet again in Tallahassee within 30 -45 days on a day when Secretary McNeil would be available.

Meeting adjourned 12:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by Sheri Logue, February 19, 2008