



This Week at the Second Chance Foundation...

Mission: "To provide a crime prevention strategy for Metropolitan Kansas City through research, advocacy and the funding of programs that improves opportunities for ex-offenders to lead productive lives."

March 13, 2009

Volume 1, Issue 10

In an effort to keep you more informed on what's happening at the Second Chance Foundation, we will send out this e-newsletter periodically with the latest and greatest news and information! The news items will be identified as Research, Advocacy, Public Relations, Special Project or Fundraising related.

Thanks for your support of the Second Chance Foundation!

Coming Soon

- Board Meeting – March 17th, 3pm, Kauffman (Board Members and invitees)

Board Meeting – April 21, 3pm, Kauffman (Board members & invitees)

Special Edition:



Former Donnelly College president Ken Gibson talks about the new program to give inmates at the Lansing Correctional Facility a chance to earn an education from Donnelly College in Kansas City, Kan., something he pushed for during his tenure at Donnelly.

A SHOT AT REDEMPTION

Donnelly program gives inmates a chance to

earn an associate's degree while in prison

Story by **KARA HANSEN** | Photos by **SUSAN MCSPADDEN**

As seen in **The LEAVEN**, newspaper of the archdiocese of Kansas City in Kansas

Kansas City, Kan.- “Show me the money” is what former Donnelly College president Ken Gibson used to tell the warden at Lansing Correctional Facility when asked about offering classes to the inmates there.

“I said, ‘It’s a wonderful thing and it would really fit our mission,’” recalls Gibson. “But show me the money. We can’t take money out of the pockets of our current students in Wyandotte County!”

It took a few years and the dedication of a number of people, but Gibson is now seeing the money-in the form of a federal grant in the amount of \$223,000.

At a press conference held at the college in Kansas City, Kansas, on February 27th, Donnelly announced it has received a grant from the Department of Justice to support its associate degree satellite program at Lansing Correctional Facility. Classes have been offered at Lansing since 2001.

“Donnelly’s program at Lansing is simply an extension of our original mission to serve those who might otherwise go unserved,” said Gibson’s successor as president of Donnelly, Dr. Steven LaNasa. “We know that education exerts a powerful effect on the lives of those who pursue it. The Lansing program recognizes that education can help transform the lives of these students, and that those who make the commitment deserve the chance to pursue a college education.”

The benefits of an education to those trying to put their prison time behind them and succeed on the outside cannot be overestimated. More than 325 inmates have taken classes through Donnelly since the program was launched, 155 of whom have been released.

Of those, only 25 percent returned to prison, compared to the national average of 52 percent.

But more importantly, most of those returning do so for short

- Kansas City Metropolitan Reentry Coalition, March 31st, 3-4PM (open networking 2-3PM) Pioneer Campus of MCC, 2700 E. 18th St, K.C. Mo., Auditorium

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terms of only 30-90 days for parole violations.

Only two percent- or a grand total of three graduates of the program- have actually returned to prison having been convicted of a new crime.

“This is a good program that helps so many people and really saves the country money in terms of reducing prison time,” said Gibson. “The program has a real commitment to reducing recidivism because we know people are much less likely to return to prison once they’ve gotten an education.”

Inmates pay a third of their tuition to demonstrate commitment and personal investment in their education, but additional funding is needed to offset the remaining tuition and program costs.

Senator Sam Brownback was instrumental in helping Donnelly secure the funding for the grant from the Justice Department. The senator said it took over three years to garner the bipartisan support needed to obtain the aid. He took a vested interest in the program, he said, after his own voluntary incarceration in two different prisons in an attempt to better understand what prisoners were experiencing.

“People in prison did bad things and they need to do time for their crime, but they are not without redemption,” said Brownback. “We have a problem when we start looking at people as problems. We need to treat them with dignity and help them become better people.”

Donnelly’s program is one of only a few like it in existence, and one of only two in the state of Kansas.

“Part of the church’s mission is to make real and tangible the love of Jesus Christ in the world today, and this program fits that mission so well,” said Archbishop Joseph F. Naumann. “We’re delighted the church is a part of this and we’re very proud of the program and everything Donnelly has accomplished.”

The grant money will be distributed equally each year over the next three years. The assistance came at a critical juncture in the life of the program, which has recently seen a rise in class enrollment at the prison due to the introduction of live video conferencing, which permits classes to be held simultaneously in more than one location throughout the facility.

“This program helps our inmates address some of their shortcomings in education as well as in their self-concept,” said Dave McKune, warden of Lansing Correctional Facility. “For many, this is the first time someone has believed in them- that they can accomplish positive things. They start to see their self-worth for the first time.

Meet the Second Chance Board:

Over the next few weeks join us in meeting the board members of the Second Chance Foundation.

Ken Gibson, PhD.

Ken Gibson has a B.A. in Philosophy from St. Mary’s College in Kentucky, a B.A. in History from Brescia University in Owensboro, Ky., an M.A. in English Literature from the University of Kentucky, and a Ph.D. in Higher Education Administration from Southern Illinois University-Carbondale.

For 38 years Mr. Gibson was involved in almost every facet of community college education at five colleges in three states. He served as a division chair, half-time teacher and half-time administrator, and as the academic dean for Henderson Community College in Kentucky, as the dean of instruction at Hutchinson Community College in Hutchinson, Kansas, as the dean of instruction at Johnson County Community College in Overland Park, Kansas, and recently retired after serving as President of Donnelly College in Kansas City, Kansas for nine years.

He has served on the Board and the Executive Committee of the Kansas City, Kansas Area Chamber of Commerce, on the Board and the Executive Committee of the United Way of Wyandotte County, as Treasurer of the United Way of Wyandotte County, on the Board of the Volunteer Center of Johnson County, on the Advisory Board of the Volunteers in Prison, on the Board of TURN-KC, and on the Advisory Board for the Boys and Girls Club of Wyandotte County. Gibson is also a member of the Sierra Club of Kansas City, Kansas, a member of CURE International (Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants), and a member of the board of Reaching Out From Within (formerly known as Stop

Violence) helping reorient inmates to civilian life upon release from prison. Gibson currently serves as coordinator of the college degree program for the Donnelly College Campus-Lansing Correctional Facility. His interest in the Second Chance Foundation is a direct extension of his work in Lansing.

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