

**Indiana C.U.R.E.**

**Today's inmate**



**Tomorrow's neighbor**

*"I suspect that all the crimes committed by all the jailed criminals do not equal in total social damage that of the crimes committed against them."*

Karl Menninger  
***The Crime of Punishment***

There are many opportunities to volunteer. Check out the website – [www.incure.org](http://www.incure.org) – email the director – [director@incure.org](mailto:director@incure.org) /

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

NAME		
ADDRESS		
CITY	STATE	ZIP
PHONES		
E-MAIL		

MEMBERSHIP TYPE (please circle)

- |                            |                               |                           |
|----------------------------|-------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Prisoner (\$3 or 8 stamps) | Prisoner's family (\$20)      | Individual (\$10)         |
| Sustaining (\$50)          | Organization / Church (\$100) | Lifetime (\$200)          |
| Newsletter only (\$5)      | Donation only (\$_____)       | Volunteer (call or email) |

Mail completed application to Membership Director, Indiana C.U.R.E. Post Office Box 62 Camby, Indiana 46113

Indiana C.U.R.E.  
Post Office Box 62  
Camby, Indiana 46113  
[www.incure.org](http://www.incure.org)

all these things add up to throwing the prisoner who completes a term out into the world broken, with no skills, and a very high risk of recidivism."

"A wrong turn was taken in American penology in the late 1980s, a tragic misstep that has yet to be corrected and is causing irreparable harm. There was accelerating overcrowding while rehabilitation programs were being defunded, downsized or closed. Prison educational programs were dismantled. Politicians would not even mention prison rehabilitation for fear of losing elections."

"The prison visitation issue warrants a prominent place in the public debate about crime and punishment. There is a contradiction between the good we know quality visitation does and the inexplicable campaign in some departments of correction to obstruct visiting."

"Prisonization [institutionalization] is a phenomenon that affects all prisoners to a certain extent, but the most damaging aspects of prisonization are exacerbated by crowding, harsh conditions, a lack of meaningful activity, long stints in isolation, and too few visits from loved ones."

"I hear from prisoners that the way to survive a prison term and then return to the community and be a success is to 'keep your head out of the prison,' in other words maintain one's identity as a citizen in the free world, a loved member of a family, a son or daughter, a father or mother."

"I ask prisoners who seem very successful at keeping their heads out of the prison how they accomplish that amazing feat. They tell me they read newspapers and current books so they can stay up with what is going on in the world, they maintain contact through letters and visiting with as many loved ones and friends as they can, and they work incessantly on maintaining meaningful contact with their children - that way there is less risk they will be isolated and lonely when they are released, and their family remains functional. And they take part in every program they are eligible for - anger management, training in a trade, classes, even music lessons. They want to increase their skills so they can succeed at "going straight" after they are released."

## Indiana C.U.R.E.

State-level C.U.R.E. meets the 4th Saturday of every month, starting at 10:00 a.m. The meetings are held at the North United Methodist Church, located at 38th and Meridian streets in Indianapolis. State-level meetings are focused on advocacy to change and improve the criminal justice system as well as to address topics of concern to the membership. CURE seeks to work with all groups and individuals seeking transformational change in the Indiana criminal justice system. With nearly 30,000 people incarcerated at the state-level and thousands more in county jail a significant percentage of the people of this state are directly affected by the criminal justice system. There are systemic barriers to reentry that almost doom any convicted person to recidivate regardless of their desire or efforts to resume a normal life. This must be changed! Join Indiana C.U.R.E. Together we can bring about a criminal justice system that works to reduce crime while creating opportunities for people entangled in the criminal justice system to recover productive and happy lives. Do you see the potential for a local CURE chapter, or a Chainbreakers support group or an ex-inmate support group like CrossRoads in your town? Or would you like to discuss issues facing the citizens of this state that CURE can address through its membership? CURE Indiana would be delighted to send a speaker to speak to your group. Please e-mail [director@incure.org](mailto:director@incure.org) or call Lela Ewers (317) 831-0765

## Important websites:

[www.internationalcure.org](http://www.internationalcure.org)

[www.nationalcure.org](http://www.nationalcure.org)

[www.incure.org](http://www.incure.org)

## Bloomington CURE

Bloomington CURE meets every Saturday from 1-3 in the Library of Trinity Episcopal Church at Grant and Kirkwood in Bloomington, Indiana. Bloomington CURE got its start as Citizens for Effective Justice with James Borden's death in November, 2003 after he was repeatedly shocked with a Taser stun gun by correctional officers in the Monroe County jail. Bloomington CURE's primary focus is conditions in the local criminal justice system, particularly the jail. However, from time to time the group has addressed state and national issues. Hal Taylor, President, wrote a letter to Governor Daniels calling for an abolition of the death penalty in the state. Also, when Commissioner Donohue indicated in 2008 that the State was planning the construction of a new 2,400 bed prison Bloomington CURE wrote letters to key people in the State pointing to evidence that effective reentry programs and the reduction of the number of prisoners was a far more effective way of spending scarce tax dollars than on a new prison. In fact rough calculations showed the state could save over \$3 billion dollars over the course of a decade by investing more in rehabilitation services for inmates in the system than by building this prison. Letters have also been sent to the Indiana Congressional Delegation in support of the Second Chance Act.

Bloomington CURE has been especially interested in legislation that affects people after the inmate is released from incarceration. This includes the permanent ban on public assistance to former drug felons. Indiana is one of 18 states that has not yet lifted this extremely irrational and punitive provision. We have also advocated for removal of the question on criminal offenses from job applications and feel that this is a matter that the employer can ask about if real job qualifications have first been evaluated without this stigma.

A very important issue on the horizon is sentencing reform. While the mantra of "evidence-based practice" pervades criminal justice literature there is no evidence behind the major determinant of how many people wind up in prison which is sentencing policy. Why do sex offenders receive lengthy sentences when recidivism is less than 3%? Where is the logic for mandatory minimum sentences which give the prisoner very little incentive to improve? Analysis of the cost benefit of sentencing shows that harsh sentences are often counterproductive and can lead to increased crime and decreased public safety all at greater cost to the taxpayer. A 25 year sentence has direct costs that approach a million dollars. Perhaps before issuing harsh sentences judges should be required to issue a financial impact statement that looks at the cost-benefit of the sentence. Sentencing reform could save the state of Indiana billions of dollars in the coming decade. Governor Daniels could leave no better legacy for our grandchildren than to appoint a Commission on Sentencing Reform that would address this problem comprehensively. Our state is broke, we are shutting down critical facilities and firing teachers yet our system routinely condemns young men who make one bad decision that they will never repeat to decades in prison that cost the taxpayer millions of dollars. How many teachers can be hired for the million plus dollars that it costs to condemn one man to death? It is time for the citizens of Indiana to wake up and demand rational thinking by their leaders!

## Books

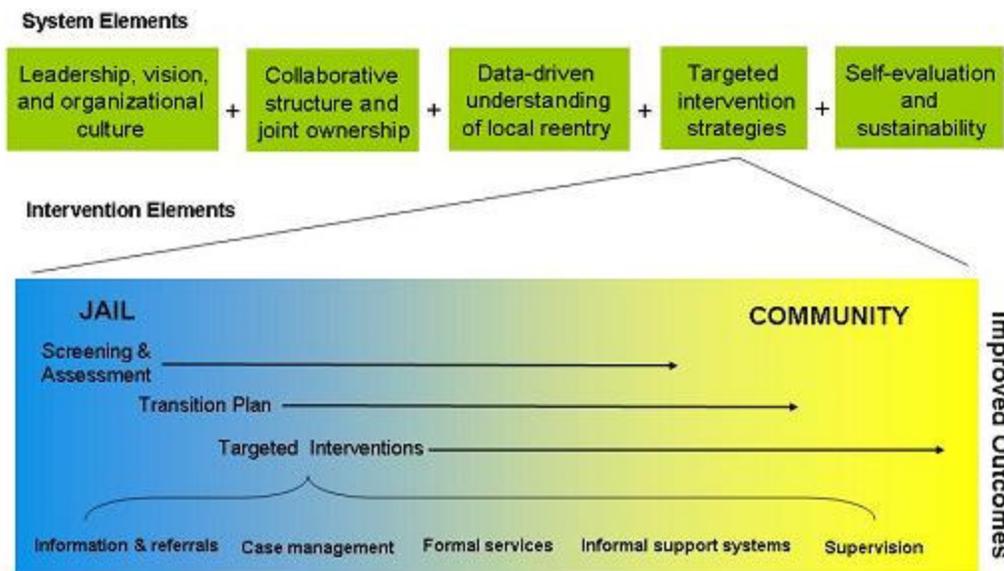
*The Trauma of Psychological Torture* edited by Almerindo Ojeda published by Praeger in 2008 is an important book with particular significance for prison reform. Terry A. Kupers, M.D.,M.S.P., author of the chapter, "Prison and the Decimation of Pro-social Life Skills," makes key points about the effects of incarceration. It should be read by all persons calling for lengthy prison terms and/or increased use of isolation. The following are several quotes from that chapter:

"In-the big picture, destroying a prisoner's ability to cope in the free world is the worst thing prison does, and in the process, there are all the elements of torture if there are no hoods, water-boarding or electric cords. Crowding, a lack of rehabilitation opportunities, excessive reliance on isolation as punishment, the restriction of visits and contacts with the outside world, the pervasiveness of sexual abuse, disrespect at every turn, the failure of pre-release planning -

Institute to develop a model for reentry from jails to communities. This model has been implemented in six communities with the expectation that recidivism from jails in those communities will drop significantly. Based on these results Indiana CURE, out of concern for those incarcerated and their families, is taking the lead to introduce the TJC Model to Indiana. We have received strong interest from the NIC to organize the conference and are in process of lining up sponsors in the state.

## The TJC Model *(from Urban Institute Materials)*

TJC is not a discrete program; it is a new way of doing business: an innovative, collaborative, data-driven approach to jail/community transition. The figure below illustrates the TJC approach to effective jail to community transition and identifies the key components of the TJC model at both the **system level** and the **intervention level**.



The TJC model is about system change and targeted interventions. The elements of the model are outlined below; click on an element to jump to a more detailed description.

[Leadership, vision and organizational culture](#) to set expectations and empower stakeholders and staff.

[Collaborative structure and joint ownership](#) by both jail and community stakeholders to develop and share responsibility for joint

outcomes of interest.

[Data-driven understanding of the local issue](#), including characteristics of the returning population and local barriers and assets.

[Targeted intervention strategies](#) to assess individuals, plan for release, and provide services and training in jail and in the community.

- [Screening and assessment](#) to quickly determine an inmate's risks and needs and guide transition planning and service provision.
- [Transition plan development](#) to prepare individuals for release and reintegration.
- [Tailored transition interventions](#) that begin in jail and continue after release.

[Self-evaluation and sustainability](#) to guide and improve the effort.

## Sex crimes receive retroactive punishment

### 2-25-2010 Maryland:

Fifteen years have come and gone since he was arrested, pleaded guilty and received five years' probation for the third-degree sexual offense of trying to solicit sex from a prostitute who was 13 years old. Larry -- a name I've given him for the purposes of this column -- served his probation and took part in weekly group therapy sessions at the University of Maryland Medical Center. Records indicate that he has not committed such a crime -- or any crime -- since then. "In fact," he adds, "I would say I've lived an exemplary life since then."

There aren't many sex offenders going public these days. Larry, who told his story provided I did not use his name, says he "came out of the woodwork" only because of what he (and others) see as election-year hysteria in Annapolis to toughen laws and regulations on sexual offenders, particularly those who victimize children. One of the dozens of measures in the legislature would expand Maryland's sex offender registry to cover cases from 15 to 25 years ago. That means Larry's face and his record would appear where it doesn't now: on the Internet, for the entire world to see. "I hadn't really been paying attention to all this nutty, knee-jerk sex offender legislation," he says. "But I am now." When he was arrested in 1995, he had been a consultant on several government-funded projects. He lost his security clearance, lost his job. He had a difficult time finding another. "Categorically turned down by many, many employers," he says.

So he took a lot of lousy jobs that didn't last. Finally, he found a good job commensurate with his education and training, but he's sure he would lose it if the General Assembly expands the offender registry.

Larry wrote an anonymous letter to the House Judicial Proceedings Committee. He had a friend deliver it for him. He gave me a copy. I told him I'd let him have his say in this space because an anonymous letter to an Annapolis committee probably never gets much attention.

"Over the past 15 years," he wrote the committee, "I have been continuously employed. I completed an advanced degree; and I have provided time tutoring and guiding adult students in my field. I am involved in an international program to improve technology in third-world countries. I have made valuable contributions using my artistic and creative side.

"I do not seek contact with children, and I usually go out of my way to avoid it. I do have several nieces whose lives I've been invited into with welcome arms. Friends have knowingly welcomed me into their homes.

"Rehabilitation has not been easy. I've worked extremely hard at it and succeeded at it. Were I to detect potential triggers, I know how to employ avoidance strategies involving family, friends and therapists."

Larry credits the group therapy sessions at UMMC with having the most effect on his thinking and behavior, and he thinks the state should spend its money on such programs instead of the costly expansion of its online offender registry.

"I attribute a certain amount of ease in rehabilitation to the fact that I was not subject to any post-probation placement on Internet sex offender lists or unsolicited neighborhood notifications. For example, my current employer, who I hope to be my long-term employer, would not have hired me, according to their policy, had I been on the state's sex offender list. If I get on such a list, who knows whether I'll keep my job? It's open season on you once you're on that list."

Larry believes he made a contract with the state 15 years ago -- a guilty plea in return for five years' probation, the court-ordered therapy and nothing more. "I have lived in a contract with the state of Maryland," he wrote. "Now the state of Maryland wants to impose stringent, retroactive reporting requirements on me and put my picture on the Internet, parading me like a circus freak. The state wants to humiliate me and set me back. The state wants to open me up to potential violence. The state is about to punish me for having done everything right for over 15 years." Source- *Baltimore Sun* Editorial Dan Rodricks

## Indiana CURE is seeking to organize a statewide conference on reentry.

Reentry is attracting attention across the country because in tough economic times taxpayers no longer tolerate failed corrections systems where the majority of those incarcerated return to prison. The plain truth is that we no longer can afford to lock up 1% of our adult population. A leader in the reentry field is the Urban Institute whose published research has helped to shape reentry policy. Recently, the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) engaged the Urban



*drawing by John Bigelow (†)*

February is Black History month. Let us remember that a disproportionate numbers of black people are imprisoned.

**All Veterans!**

Attention: All hands on deck! C.U.R.E. is doing its utmost to distribute the “Federal Benefits for Veterans, Dependents and Survivors” manual (officially VA Pamphlet 80-09-01 P94633) that is published by the Department of Veterans Affairs. Any veteran regardless of type of discharge, is still entitled to some V.A. benefits though most are at a reduced level for convicted felons. For example, a 100% disabled American Veteran (DAV) benefit will be reduced to 10% after a felony conviction. Between 10% to 90% it will be at \$100 per month. Also, incarcerated veterans with dependents are eligible for some benefits.

Those veterans with less than an honorable discharge can have their discharge upgraded to an “honorable” status by petitioning their congressional representative. DO NOT let this benefit slip through your fingers after your out date and release. Possibly the only exception would be “treason.”

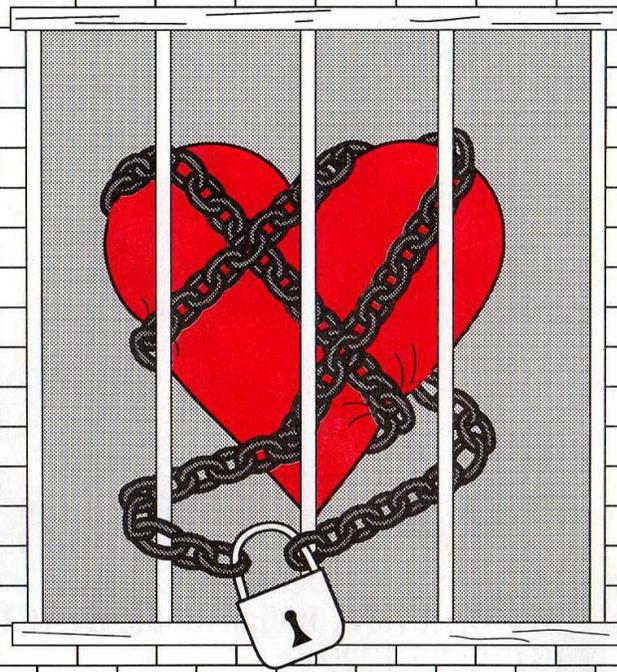
We were promised by the DOC Commissioner that these benefit booklets would be distributed to all facilities as soon as C.U.R.E. receives copies from the US Government. Two sources are being used to accomplish this task,



so please just hang in there! I know all inmates have heard similar promises, but we are trying harder!

Veterans! You are very special to CURE because we understand. CURE leadership includes veterans that have been there!

**Do you have a loved one in our judicial system?  
Is your heart bound by chains of helplessness, anger,  
sadness, bitterness, loneliness;.... Do you feel  
imprisoned too? Your feelings are normal.  
You are not alone.**



*Contact Chain Breakers for more information:*

317-352-0358 (evenings)

[www.incure.org](http://www.incure.org)

click on Chainbreakers

We encourage you to come join us. Share your burdens with those who care. Find freedom through loving support of others.

**What:** A support group for families and friends who have loved ones imprisoned.  
**Purpose:** To love one another by offering encouragement, compassion, a listening ear, a positive atmosphere and to educate.

**Call or e-mail Marilyn Reed. [marilynreed@disposer.biz](mailto:marilynreed@disposer.biz)**

*The degree of civilization in a society can be judged by entering its prisons.* Fyodor Dostoyevsky



# CURE news

## Citizens United for the Rehabilitation of Errants

### Meeting with Ed Buss, Commissioner IDOC

Indiana CURE President Lela Ewers, Vice President Dana Parrott and Vid Beldavs met with Mr. Buss and Julie Stout Superintendent, Rockville, Correctional Facility on January 12, 2010. The Commissioner listened carefully to the various points that we made. We were impressed with his responsiveness and grasp of the issues facing prisoners and their families. We told him that we share his interests that the prisons are professionally managed by highly trained personnel and that every effort is made for the successful reentry of prisoners who return to their communities. We raised concerns about telephone charges, prison food, and veterans issues. He indicated that lower rates are coming with the next contract with the phone companies. He also said that the two meals per day on weekends idea has been abandoned. He offered to put a link on the IDOC website to the Indiana CURE website and to meet with us again on a regular basis.

Volume III Issue 1 Feb-Mar 2010

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### Reflections. . . By Lela Ewers, Director

Will sex offender have to pay again for old crimes? This is something we all should read. Will the penalty for a crime never be paid? Nobody can afford to stand by and point out that they are exempt from any situation like this ever occurring in their life. If the government gets by with this, what will prevent them from deciding to 'protect' society for other crimes? A registry could be designed to contain other felonies and be put in place for all the world to see.

Public humiliation does not prevent crime nor does it rehabilitate anyone. If so, we would never have progressed from the "stocks" on the town square, or the "Scarlet Letter". "We already cannot provide enough jobs for those convicted of felonies, what will happen if this kind of law is passed?

I already receive calls from those who cannot find a job or a place to live and need food and clothes.

The population in town under the bridge will certainly increase to more than the three dozen or so they complain about now.

If we think this is nothing to be concerned about because it is happening in another state, that is distorted thinking. All it takes is for someone who is up for reelection to include this in their platform. It will snowball to a problem with many consequences. Do we want to live with this?

### Indiana CURE Mission

*Advocate for rehabilitation and restorative justice and provide support to prisoners and people released from incarceration and their families* 2009 PRIORITIES

- Improve food quality served in Indiana prisons and jails
- Improve education and professional training and qualification of correctional officers
- Build local support groups to serve the needs and interests of C.U.R.E. members
- Build a statewide coalition of organizations that share an interest in reducing recidivism to advocate for policies that advance treatment and rehabilitation.

2010 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

- Law to compensate those who are exonerated after they have been convicted.
- Limit incarceration for not paying child support to work release.