



District 5 Newsletter

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REMOVING BARRIERS FOR FORMALLY INCARCERATED PEOPLE

Over 50,000 formally incarcerated people will return to California's communities over the next year; nearly 60% of them will return to prison over a three year period according to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Someone committing another offense is not just a statistic; it means someone else in our community has been violated.

Many believe that shuffling a large segment of our population in and out of prison shows that we are tough on crime and have an interest in keeping our communities safe. Those who work closely with the formally incarcerated community see it differently and understand that people return to prison most often because they don't have stable employment, a place to live and/or access to the network of services that will allow them to address the issues that lead to their criminal activity.

I have been working on two initiatives to keep people from returning to prison. First, is legislation designed to develop a

seamless transition from state prison into a network of supportive services for individuals being paroled to Alameda County. Second, I am working with County staff to amend the County's standard application, thus allowing formally incarcerated people to fairly compete for employment if they are qualified.

In this most recent legislative session, my office worked closely with Assemblywoman Wilma Chan and her staff to pass, AB 1998. The legislation allows non-violent offenders who are being paroled into Alameda County to be assessed for anger management issues, drug and alcohol issues, level of education, and other significant factors that may lead to anti-social behavior. Our office is putting together a team of service providers, business people and academics who will work with case managers to comprehensively address the needs of those who were assessed as required by AB 1998, and are com-

ing back to Alameda County. The assessment is the first stop on the road map to success; and the assistance of the case manager and service providers will allow the formally incarcerated to complete the journey. The data is clear, formally incarcerated people are much less likely to re-offend if they are educated, have stable employment, and/or access to essential services.

While a connection to services is essential, increasing the opportunity to fairly compete for employment is critical if a formally incarcerated person is to successfully re-enter the community. Alameda County is working to implement a pilot project that will improve the way formally incarcerated people are considered in the hiring process.

Currently, applicants are asked to reveal their conviction history on the first page of the County's standard job application. Many believe that once you reveal you have been convicted of a crime, your

For a complete listing of events in District 5, visit my [Community Calendar](#).

My District 5 e-newsletter is designed to keep *you*, the residents of Alameda County's Fifth District, informed about important issues in our communities. The Fifth District includes the cities of Albany, Berkeley, Emeryville, Piedmont, and large portions of Oakland, namely West Oakland, North Oakland, Rockridge, the Fruitvale District, and the San Antonio District.

Contact me with your feedback by e-mailing dist5@acgov.org or by calling (510) 272-6695.

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REMOVING BARRIERS FOR FORMALLY INCARCERATED PEOPLE—CONTINUED

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application is no longer objectively considered. Once the pilot is implemented, the question asking if you have been convicted of a crime will be replaced by a question asking the applicant to acknowledge that he or she may be asked about their criminal history in the future. Finalists for a position will be asked to reveal their criminal history at the end of the application process. A background check will be done by the County's Human Resources

Agency, which includes a criminal history search with the Department of Justice. If there is a connection between the prior offense and the job someone is applying for, (for example if an applicant for a job driving a laundry truck for the General Services Agency G.S.A., has a drunk driving conviction) then the Human Resources Agency will alert only the G.S.A. Manager who is doing the hiring about the criminal history of the applicant. If there is no connection between the prior offense and the job, then the Human Resources Department will not alert the Manager about the conviction.

Not informing the hiring Manager when there is no connection between the prior offense and the County job eliminates the possibility of overt or

subliminal discrimination against the formally incarcerated person.

Alameda County's economic well-being and social climate will dictate whether we continue to thrive as we move through the twenty-first century. The revolving door of recidivism will continue to be a drain on our prosperity if not properly addressed. The cost of incarceration in a State prison is close to \$35,000 a year, with the same amount of money we can send over 30 people to community college. Providing those who have served their time access to the resources they need, and an opportunity to fairly compete for employment is not a handout; it is good public policy and makes economic sense.

ON THE ROAD TO SUSTAINABILITY

In October, 2004, the Alameda County Board of Supervisors awarded an Energy Services Contract to Chevron Energy Solutions to construct a one megawatt Fuel Cell Power Plant at the Santa Rita Jail. Just two short years later, on August 10, 2006, the fuel cell power plant is operational and running at full power! This is an energy efficiency project utilizing state-of-the-art and environmentally benign fuel cell technology to generate 50% of the electricity used by the Jail and 18% of the heat for hot water.

This fuel cell installation is the first one megawatt fuel cell cogeneration plant to be built in California. Alameda County hopes this type of project will be a catalyst to inspire many others to investigate these types of ultra-clean technologies that can be installed in their buildings. We are incredibly proud of this achievement as a part of the County's sustainability program; previous policies like the County's 2003 Green Building Ordinance

and our 2006 passage of the Climate Change Leadership Strategy Resolution has realized the County \$6 million or 33% annual reduction in utility costs. In fact, Alameda County has a long legacy of advocating and producing environmentally friendly and sustainable projects; for the past 19 years, our County has completed over twenty energy efficient projects in County owned buildings.

The aforementioned fuel cell project is one that utilizes fairly new technology. More specifically, a fuel cell utilizes an electrochemical process that combines hydrogen and oxygen to produce electricity, heat, and water. There is no combustion, therefore no harmful emissions that contribute to global warming. This is another example of Alameda County's commitment to sustainable practices that minimizes the impact on the environment through its operations and construction.

This project proves that we can meet our energy needs, while protecting human health, our climate, and other natural systems. The best part of this fuel cell technology is that it is one of the few ultra-clean ways to generate onsite electricity and heat. By making this investment in this technology, we will actually generate 8,000,000 kilowatt-hours (kWh) of clean electrical power and will annually save the County \$260,000 in utility costs.

With the installation of this plant, Santa Rita Jail is now the "greenest" County facility in the County. We hope this project will encourage other Counties to consider installing fuel cell technology.

NATURAL HOME CLEANING PROFESSIONALS

Housecleaning just got greener. There is a house cleaning service which uses products that are non-toxic to you, your family, your pets, and the environment. *Natural Home Cleaning Professionals*, a worker-owned cooperative, was founded in 2003 and serves the cities of Oakland, Emeryville, Berkeley, Albany, El Cerrito, and southern Richmond. *Natural Home Cleaning Professionals* use the least toxic cleaning products available and all worker-owners are professionally trained and dedicated to Eco-Friendly Cleaning (EFC®).

All of *Natural Home Cleaning Professionals'* cleaners and administrators are co-owners and participate jointly in key business

decisions and share all profits as a worker cooperative.

I am very excited to have this environmentally friendly and economically just business serving the communities in my District, if you are in need of cleaning services. I would encourage you to consider the Natural Home Cleaning Professionals. For more information on *Natural Home Cleaning Professionals*, please contact (510) 532-6645 or info@naturalhomecleaning.com.

Natural Home Cleaning Professionals is assisted by Women's Action to Gain Economic Security (WAGES), a non-profit organization in Oakland. WAGES is dedicated to promoting the social and economic well-being of low-

income women through cooperative business ownership.

With WAGES' assistance, women move out of poverty into empowerment. WAGES uses the cooperative model of business to allow women to pool their skills, resources, and work together in order to succeed. The cooperative members benefit from training and personal support including non-toxic cleaning practices, financial planning, business

SUPPORTING THE FAMILY

Getting older is a process that is inevitable. As many baby boomers begin to turn 60 this year, they are faced with new responsibilities in their lives many are becoming caregivers for their aging parents and/or relatives. People know that aging is something that they will experience in their lifetime; however they don't truly plan for it. Many people plan for their retirement which will often address their financial needs. However, financial planning doesn't address the potential needs for physical assistance when people reach certain periods in their life which may require the help of a family member or a caregiver.

Family caregivers are a critical source of care for

older persons with disabilities and chronic health problems. Family caregivers provide a vast array of emotional, financial, nursing, social, homemaking, and other services on a daily or intermittent basis. More than 50 million people nationally provide care for a chronically ill, disabled or aged family member or friend during any given year according to the US Department of Health and Human Services.

The need for family caregivers will increase in the years ahead. The number of people over 65 is expected to increase by a rate annual rate of 2.3%, but the number of family members available to care for them will only increase at a 0.8% rate. The services provided by family

caregivers represent 80% of all home care services and are valued at \$257 billion a year, more than twice the amount spent on paid home care and nursing home services combined. If the work of family caregivers had to be replaced by paid home health care staff, research by the National Alliance for Caregivers estimates that would be cost to the nation would be \$45 billion to \$94 billion per year.

Approximately 60% of family caregivers are women. The typical family caregiver is a 46-year-old woman caring for her widowed mother who does not live with her. She is married and employed. Additionally, according to National Alliance for Caregiving 1.4 million children ages 8 to 18 provide care for an adult

relative; 72% are caring for a parent or grandparent. Fortunately, most are not the sole caregiver.

Caregiving itself is a multi-dimensional puzzle. For some it means providing 24-hour care for someone who can't dress, feed, go to the bathroom, or think for them self. An essential part of caregiving is learning how to work with doctors and other healthcare professionals so they treat you as an important member of your loved one's healthcare team.

All these tasks can become overwhelming for the primary family caregiver having the added the responsibility of maintaining care of a loved one. However, there are several organizations in Alameda County that support family

DISTRICT 5 STAFF

Rodney Brooks

Chief of Staff

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- County Budget Analysis and Oversight
- Youth Issues
- ACERA
- Public Protection
- Black Elected Officials of the East Bay
- City of Berkeley
- City of Oakland (West Oakland)
- Procurements & Contracting
- Constituent Services

Irmina (Mina) Sanchez

Office Manager

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- Scheduling
- Boards & Commissions
- Asian Community Outreach
- Commemorative Resolutions
- Constituent Services

Aisha Brown

Legislative Aide

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- Social Services
- Senior/Disabled Issues
- Cal WORKs
- General Assistance
- Property Taxes
- City of Albany
- City of Emeryville
- City of Oakland (Adams Point, Chinatown | Central, North Oakland)
- Constituent Services

Nicole Drake

Community Coordinator

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- Community Development/Outreach
- Community Events
- City of Oakland (Fruitvale | San Antonio)
- Constituent Services

Andy Katz

Community Coordinator
(part-time)

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- Geographic Liaison

SUPPORTING THE FAMILY—CONTINUED

caregivers during this important time:

- Adult Day Services Network of Alameda County (510) 883-0874
- Alzheimer's Services of the East Bay, Berkeley (800) 272-3900
- Family Caregiver Alliance (800) 445-8106
- Family Support Services of the Bay Area (510) 834-2443

Another program that will assist family members with caring for relatives is the In-Home Supportive Services (IHSS) program. The IHSS program is administered by the Alameda County Social Services Agency, and is designed to assist those eligible aged, blind, and disabled individuals who, without this care, would be

unable to remain safely in their own homes. The program also provides services according to the client's ability to perform daily activities, and can include feeding, bathing, dressing, house-keeping, shopping, meal preparation, respiration, bowel & bladder care, accompaniment to medical appointments, paramedical services, and protective supervision.

To be eligible for IHSS, a person must be on Medi-Cal, be blind, disabled, or 65 years of age or older, and be unable to live at home safely without help. If you are not on Medi-Cal, but think you might be eligible for IHSS, you can still apply. There are several ways to apply for IHSS. You can call 510-577-

1900. You can also download and application from the website, www.alamedasocialservices.org/public/services/elders or you can come into the office Monday through Friday between 8:30 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. The office is closed between 12 noon and 1:00 p.m. They are located on the 3rd floor of the Eastmont Town Center, 6955 Foothill Boulevard, Oakland.

Supporting our family members is something that we will all experience at one point in our lives. However, proactively planning to care for our parents, relatives as they get older is something that we really need to ensure is happening. Educating ourselves about some of the expectations of this process will as-

sist how we efficiently plan for a better quality of life for all.

APPROXIMATELY
60% OF FAMILY
CAREGIVERS ARE
WOMEN. THE
TYPICAL FAMILY
CAREGIVER IS A 46
YEAR-OLD WOMAN
CARING FOR HER
WIDOWED MOTHER
WHO DOES NOT
LIVE WITH HER.