

THE *BIG* BREAKTHROUGH

After several years of on-again, off-again discussions and negotiations with Securus Technologies, we finally have a path forward to integrate our online ION website with the 600,000 tablet computers they supply to inmates across the country. In case you weren't aware, distribution of small handheld tablets has been rolling out in prisons and jails around the country in recent years, providing both entertainment and educational resources. But meaningful reentry tools have been missing on inmates' tablets—until now. This is the breakthrough moment we've been working and praying for and that inmates, corrections staff, and reentry service providers have been waiting for.

Here's why this is a big deal. Currently, corrections staff are the de facto go-betweens for inmate reentry. However, with significant staff shortages, they aren't able to keep up with the pressing demand for access to the ION platform. This creates a major roadblock to access. When ION is available on their tablets, inmates will be able to *directly* access our platform beginning a year prior to their release. They'll be able to search for, message with, and connect with relevant reentry service providers without waiting for staff assistance. What a great and long-overdue step forward toward our goal of giving inmates and returning citizens a significant amount of personal agency in their own reentry process!

We've convened a "Working Group" comprised of representatives from the Arizona Dept. of Corrections, Rehabilitation, and Reentry (ADCRR), Securus, our contracted tech team and our staff. We are methodically working through the process of ironing out technical and security issues. Though Arizona will be the first state to implement ION on inmate tablets, this is not just for our work with the ADCRR. Once we have onboarded ION onto the Securus system, our site will be available on every Securus tablet (400,000 in prisons and 200,000 in jails) nationwide, and we'll only need to work out an agreement with a state DOC or jail system to have them turned on for the inmates under their supervision.

Continued on Pg 2



TABLE OF CONTENTS

The *BIG* Breakthrough • Pg 1

Four...Mississippi! • Pg 2

Color Me Yellow Campaign • Pg 2

State Updates • Pg 3

Hope And Help Come Full Circle • Pg 4

Maddi Briguglio • Pg 4

Book Blurbs • Pg 5

THE *BIG* BREAKTHROUGH (continued from Pg 1)

This big breakthrough comes at a moderate cost. We're grateful that Securus is making this affordable from their end, but adapting our ION platform for inmate tablets will require significant one-time, up-front IT development from our contracted tech team. As with our breakthrough in Mississippi, we're asking our supporters to consider helping us by generously donating to ION's "Color Me Yellow" fundraising campaign (see info on right).

FOUR...MISSISSIPPI!

This summer, we got a surprise call from Burl Cain, the Commissioner of the Mississippi Dept. of Corrections (MDOC). He said that he was attending a conference in Tennessee and had been talking to the head chaplain from the Arizona Dept. of Corrections. Then he said, "I heard that you can help with reentry." I said, "Well, we're certainly trying to. We're currently active in Illinois and Arizona, and we're in the midst of expanding to Oregon." And he said, "Don't go west. Come down here and help us. We really need it! What do you say?"

First, we said "Sorry, no. We're already committed to going west, to Oregon." And then we said "Absolutely, yes! We'd be honored to head east and make Mississippi our fourth state."

And, so, in the middle of October, armed with a Memorandum of Understanding and a public letter of support from MDOC, we started actively reaching out to reentry providers across the state. So far, we're being warmly received, and some service providers have already registered. Once we have 40 providers registered, MDOC will start the process of registering men and women who are six months prior to release. Barring any hiccups in the process (and they do happen), we're aiming for late spring to launch.

A couple of facts and figures: There are about 21,000 inmates in prison facilities in Mississippi and another 39,000 men and women on probation or parole.

Continued on Pg 4

Color Me Yellow

FUNDRAISING CAMPAIGN



As you've been reading in this newsletter, we've experienced an unexpected double breakthrough this fall. First, after several years of discussions and negotiations, we finally have an opening to migrate our online platform to 600,000 inmate tablet computers across the country. Then, at the same time, we were approached by the Mississippi Dept. of Corrections and invited to expand our operations across that state and help transform the experience of their returning citizens.

For the past four years, our funding approach has been to seek grants from foundations and to collect subscription fees from service providers (we never charge returning citizens or their families for our services). And that approach has worked well. But new doors of opportunity are open now, and we need your support to be able to walk through them while we can.

If you are able to make a tax-deductible contribution to ION now, your gift will be doubled! Several generous friends of ION have come forward with matching challenge gifts in the amount of \$30,000. Through what we're calling our "Color Me Yellow" campaign, we hope to raise a minimum of \$60,000 by the end of the year to fuel our vision. Checks should be made out to "Inside Out Network" and mailed to 3247 S. Sun Splash Dr., Tucson, AZ 85713. We've also set up a convenient and secure online donation portal, with suggested donation levels for you to consider.

DONATE

Please join us on this mission at this crucial time, and consider giving generously!

~Fred Nelson



OREGON UPDATE

Our Oregon team of staff and interns has been hard at work this year, and their efforts are bearing fruit. We've managed to grow our reentry service provider database from zero provider locations at the start of this year to 47 providers with 63 locations.

Many different people, departments, and organizations have helped with our growth over the past several months. In May, Executive Director Fred Nelson had the opportunity to demo the ION platform to a statewide gathering of county directors of community supervision (probation and parole) in Pendleton. Since then, we've been able to follow up with 33 of the 36 county directors to get lists of local providers. Because we're still new to the state and are working remotely, it can be difficult to connect with providers in the community. However, getting these lists and working with others who have "boots on the ground" is really helpful. Overall, our Oregon team is working hard to connect with providers so that we can go live in the state.

In order to fully launch, we need 70 service providers to register so that we can begin enrolling adults in custody (AICs) prior to their release from incarceration. Once we reach this mark, individuals who are incarcerated in the Oregon Department of Corrections will be able to create their customized ION accounts and begin connecting with providers as early as 6 months prior to going home. We have officially passed the halfway point and we are hoping to begin AIC registration early next year.

Oregon Scorecard (as of October 31, 2023):
47 service providers enrolled, 23 to go!



ILLINOIS UPDATE

ION and the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) are currently exploring new options for returning citizen registration. During this process, pre-release registrations are on a temporary hold. However, we are trying to stay connected in other ways. For example, we have recently partnered with Freedom from Within, a faith-based organization that is already doing amazing work inside of IDOC facilities, as they are beginning to add reentry support to their programming. ION will be offered to Freedom from Within students who are incarcerated at the Kewanee Life Skills Reentry Center. In addition, we are still working with federal probation staff from Northern Illinois to register those who are under their care. Also, people leaving Cook County Jail are given our info upon release. Finally, we have notified our Illinois service providers via email of all that's happening in Illinois.

Illinois Scorecard (as of October 31, 2023):
2613 returning citizens and 215 providers enrolled.



ARIZONA UPDATE

As of October 2023, we have 190 service providers and over 5,500 returning citizens registered on the ION site in Arizona. Our staff continues to engage with returning citizens and service providers at both AZ prisons and community events throughout the state. Below are a few events we attended this past month.

Re-entry Simulation: A Glimpse into the Struggles

The Arizona Supreme Court's Adult Probation Services Division organized a re-entry simulation for Department of Economic Security (DES) staff. This eye-opening experience sought to shed light on the difficulties faced by individuals upon release from incarceration. Participants gained firsthand insight into the challenges returning citizens face throughout reentry, such as transportation hurdles, challenges of meeting court/legal obligations, and difficulties in fulfilling basic needs such as obtaining identification, finding employment, housing, food, clothes, etc.

Our ION interns and staff volunteered to role-play as various organizations within the community, providing basic resources to DES "returning citizens." These reentry simulations are a valuable tool in understanding—on a personal level for all involved—the vital need for effective pathways to available help. We are always grateful for the opportunity to

Continued on Pg 5

HOPE AND HELP COME FULL CIRCLE

FreeBird Auto is a used car shop in Phoenix, Arizona, and so much more. It's a business designed to offer hope and opportunity along with each sale. The company logo says, "FreeBird Auto: 2nd Chance Auto Dealer," and the ability to offer a second chance at a full and fulfilling life is what motivates founder Jerry Trafny.

Jerry's company, FreeBird Auto, makes reliable used cars available for purchase to formerly incarcerated people and people with credit challenges. He started FreeBird Auto in 2022, six months after he was released from prison. In the six months prior to his release, Jerry had connected, through the ION platform, with an organization called Reentry By Design. He credits Reentry By Design and its founder, Brett Matossian, with helping him find his purpose so that he, in turn, can help others find theirs and live full lives post-incarceration.

Here's how Jerry describes the company's mission on their website: "FreeBird Auto isn't just about selling cars; it's about offering a better way of life. We understand that owning a reliable vehicle can be a crucial step in helping previously incarcerated individuals and those with credit challenges regain their independence and live their best lives. By providing affordable vehicles and exceptional customer service, we empower individuals to take strides toward a brighter future."

FreeBird Auto is now listed as a service provider on the ION platform. Someone looking toward release to the Phoenix area might well be wondering how they'll get a job without a car. When they find Jerry's listing, one fundamental piece of the reentry puzzle falls into place, and hope replaces anxiety.

Thanks to Jerry for allowing us to share his inspiring story!



The 2nd chance auto dealer that is helping transform the experience of reentry.



MADDI BRIGUGLIO, FACULTY ASSOCIATE

This fall, ION's director of operations, Maddi Briguglio, began teaching at Arizona State University. As a faculty associate for the School of Criminology and Criminal Justice, she is teaching a course on crime control policies (CRJ 201). With 70 students in her course, Maddi is able to have some interesting conversations in class, covering topics such as police use of force, the death penalty, wrongful conviction, race and crime, juvenile crime, alternatives to incarceration, and more. Maddi has also been able to share information about the Inside Out Network and the importance of reentry in this country. She is really enjoying this teaching experience and will be instructing the same course during the Spring 2024 semester.

FOUR...MISSISSIPPI! (continued from Pg 2)

A couple of early impressions as we begin our work... Southern hospitality and charm are still a real thing. And Commissioner Cain wasn't exaggerating: they really do need help in reentry. Mississippi is the poorest state in the nation, and, unlike the other states we work in, there seem to be no functioning reentry coalitions. Most reentry providers lack connection to other providers across the state. Bottom line...this is exactly the kind of help we're good at providing!

Final thought. We've already begun the process of reaching out to charitable foundations in Mississippi to seek grant funding to fuel our expansion. But this process takes time, so we're asking our supporters to consider helping us out by generously donating to ION's "Color Me Yellow" fundraising campaign. See details on page 2.

BOOK BLURBS: WHAT WE'RE READING

BREAKING RULES: THE SOCIAL AND SITUATIONAL DYNAMICS OF YOUNG PEOPLE'S URBAN CRIME,

by Per-Olof Wikstrom, Dietrich Oberwittler, Kyle Treiber, and Beth Hardie. Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 2012.

Some people theorize that the underlying causes of crime are traceable back to the individual person. Others argue that the social environment in which people find themselves is the determining factor. So, which is it? In this ground-breaking book, Wikstrom and his colleagues not only advance a novel integrating theory (Situational Action Theory, or SAT), but they have rigorously tested it. The test was a longitudinal study of a cohort of roughly 700 adolescents in the English city of Peterborough and includes a dizzying amount of statistical analysis to measure the complex interplay between person-centered "crime propensity" and environment-centered "exposure to criminogenic settings." The casual reader interested in the theory itself will benefit enormously from simply reading through the first chapter. The scholarly (and statistically able) reader who's interested in the statistical analysis can dive into the next seven chapters. And both can read the brief summary in chapter nine. Situational Action Theory doesn't answer every pressing question about the causes of crime, nor does it attempt to. But it does provide a hugely helpful explanatory framework to hold the personal and social aspects together.

HOW OFFENDERS TRANSFORM THEIR LIVES,

Edited by Bonita M. Veysey, Johnna Christian, and Damian J Martinez. New York: Routledge, 2011.

A fundamental insight of desistance research in the past 25 years is that corrections-based programming that aims to "fix" offenders is only getting halfway to the goal of real personal transformation. This collection of essays explores various ways in which offenders transform their own lives through identity work and the new self-identified roles they step into, including "student" and "advocate/activist."

A particularly interesting essay on "Looking Glass Identity Transformation" explores the complex interplay between returning citizens' own self-perceptions and the way those around them perceive, label, and have expectations about them—all of which can have a powerful impact. The authors argue that the more society uses pro-social labeling the more helpful it can be for people to navigate the challenging process of reentry. Strangely absent is any sustained exploration of how offenders transform their lives through the identity transformation achieved through participation in religious traditions, practices, or communities. What Byron Johnson has called the "reflexive blindness" of mainstream criminologists toward matters of religion seems to be at work again in this otherwise helpful collection of essays.

ARIZONA UPDATE

(continued from Pg 3)

participate in simulations as they reignite motivation in our interns and staff, as well as help spread awareness to our community partners.

Maricopa Reentry Center (MRC) and Pima Reentry Center (PRC): Supporting Successful Reintegration

Our ION staff continues to visit both the MRC and PRC frequently. These centers are specifically designed to provide necessary treatment and support to individuals who are working toward a successful reintegration into society. It is our honor to regularly support the residents at these centers as they navigate this crucial phase in their lives. We want to extend our thanks to all those at the reentry centers who help facilitate our visits.

Empowering Pre-release Planning at Lewis Prison Complex

For the third time, our ION staff visited the Lewis Prison Complex, Rast Unit. We believe that pre-release enrollment is of utmost importance, as it allows incarcerated individuals to establish connections with service providers on the outside at an early critical stage. We are grateful to the ADCRR for providing us the opportunity to participate in the Convergent Case Management (CCM) and Reentry Preparation Specialists (RPS) training across different facilities in the state. Through this training, we've been able to share information about the registration process with both staff responsible for enrolling returning citizens and incarcerated individuals who want to support their fellow inmates with reentry planning. Sharing this knowledge is crucial to increasing pre-release registrations, and we are thankful for the chance to help make a difference.

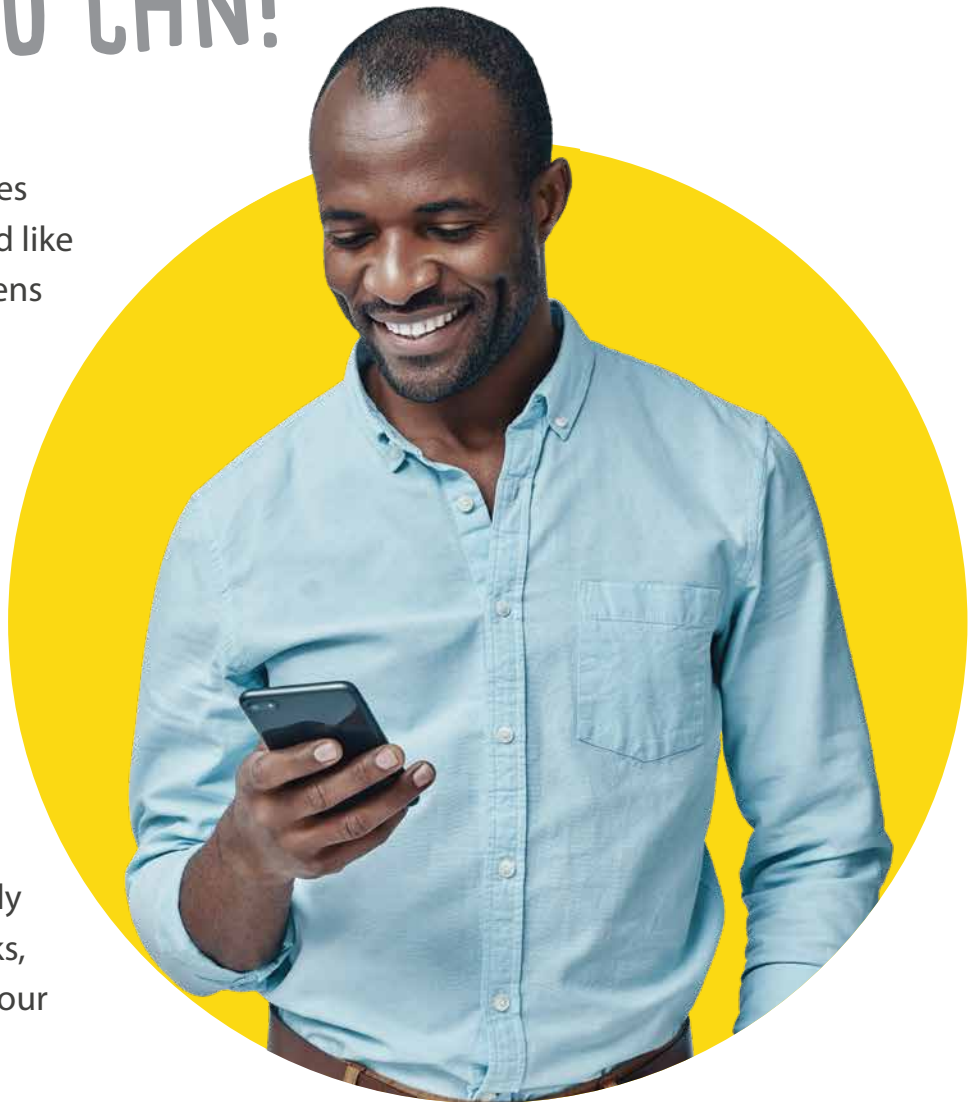
ADCRR Employment and Resource Fair

ION staff and interns attended the ADCRR's Employment and Resource Fair. This event brought together numerous community partners and service providers, with over 85 vendors in attendance. The fair aimed to connect individuals with the employment opportunities and essential resources needed for a successful reintegration into society. It was incredibly encouraging to see so many people receive the help they truly needed.

Thank you all for your continued support and dedication to our shared mission of empowering individuals during their re-entry journey. Together, we can make a lasting impact!

CAN YOU HELP? YES, YES YOU CAN!

The Inside Out Network welcomes contributions from anyone who'd like to help empower returning citizens to take control of their own reentry and get the support they need. You can give by clicking on Donate on our Facebook page or in the top menu on our website. Or you can send a check to ION at the address below. You can also contribute by spreading the word about ION on social media, to service providers, ministries, corrections staff, family members of justice-involved folks, news media, grantmakers, and your prayer group. It takes a village!



INSIDE OUT
NETWORK

The Inside Out Network is always a free service for returning citizens

INSIDEOUTNETWORK.NET

support@insideoutnetwork.net • Tel: (602) 842-3705 • 3247 S Sun Splash Dr. Tucson Arizona 85713