

Community Programs

Annual Report

In the beginning was the word, and the San Francisco Sheriff's Department Community Programs Unit has embraced terms such as "restorative justice"; "harm reduction" and "freedom" as it reaches out to former offenders as well as the community as a whole.

The Unit expanded its operations as a whole, and is now open Monday through Friday from 7 am to 11 pm, and on weekends from 7 am to 3 pm. Community Programs supervisors are on call twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week throughout the year for clients on GPS monitoring.

Community Programs runs two alternatives to incarceration: Electronic Monitoring and the Sheriff's Work Alternative Program. In May, Community Programs entered into a contract with a new service provider for Electronic Monitoring. This vendor provides the infrastructure for the unit to monitor clients' alcohol consumption and location (via Global Positioning Systems).

The Sheriff's Work Alternative Program, or SWAP, has been re-framed in the past year to encompass more work with the theme of community restoration. SWAP workers have distributed harvested goods at local street fairs and have painted murals at the Women's Resource Center. We have introduced a more flexible schedule so that persons can complete their SWAP service in the evenings. We initiated "SWAP High," a collaboration with the Five Keys Charter School to allow persons without a high school diploma to complete their community service by studying in school to reach that end. In this year, SWAP has allowed 535 persons to provide meaningful community service to restore justice in lieu of spending time in jail.

In the past year, Community Programs monitored 739 participants, providing an alternative to incarceration that allows them to continue to participate with their families, their jobs and in their community. The San Francisco Sheriff's Dept. by providing an alternative to incarceration was able to avoid 39,421 days of incarceration, thus saving the county \$6,859,254 in the cost of incarceration.

We have reached out to other justice partners, such as the Public Defenders, the District Attorney's Office and the Courts to expand the use of SWAP and electronic monitoring as an effective alternative to incarceration.

At 70 Oak Grove, we have made efforts to bring about a new environment, introducing a new harm reduction model so that more persons feel welcome. We are allowing those with children who cannot afford daycare to bring their children to classes and groups.

Back to the subject of the word, Community Programs has established a partnership with the San Francisco Public Library to deliver books to the incarcerated. Books include multiple languages to respond to the wide spectrum of the jail population.

At the Women's Resource Center, the written word became the spoken word when the WRC hosted its first book drive, inviting local writers such as Sunny Schwartz to read about their experiences working with at-risk communities. In addition to reading, the WRC has expanded services to include a sewing circle, a nutrition breakfast program, therapy and the WRC will begin acupuncture in a few weeks.

The next big campaign for the WRC is a job training program that we call Café des Soeurs. This is a barista training program using the WRC as a primary site with satellite locations in high traffic areas. The goal is to help women to mentor women in collaboration with the Five Keys Charter School and other community-based organizations