PRESS RELEASE

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SHERIFF TOUTS SUCCESS OF RICHMOND CITY JAIL PROGRAM:  
RESULTS OF FOUR-YEAR STUDY SHOWED LOWERED RECIDIVISM  
AND NEARLY $8 MILLION IN SAVINGS TO TAXPAYERS

RICHMOND, VA—Sheriff C.T. Woody, Jr. held a Press Conference at the Richmond City Jail this morning to speak about the findings of a study of one Richmond City Jail program which revealed a lowered rate of recidivism for its participants, and a taxpayer savings of nearly $8 million dollars over the course of the term of study.

Presenters at the Press Conference included Sheriff Woody, Dr. William C. “Bill” Bosher of Virginia Commonwealth University, and Dr. Sarah Scarbrough. Dr. Scarbrough’s invaluable research over a four-year period revealed the below findings, which became the topic of her dissertation at VCU. Also at today’s Press Conference was McShin Foundation President John Shinholser, Pastor Kenneth Barbour and Chairman Nat Shanks of Kingdom Life Ministries, representatives from public offices, and other academics from the Richmond area.

In collaboration with Sheriff Woody, Colonel Alonzo Pruitt, D.Min., and Program Coordinator Mike Kelley, the Kingdom Life Ministries’ partner with Brother’s Keepers and the McShin Foundation to form the Men In Recovery (KLM/MIR) program. The program operates initially inside a housing tier at the Richmond City Jail, and partners continue to provide housing for residents who need a different environment when they leave the jail. Aimed at serving individuals who suffer from alcoholism and other drug addictions, KLM/MIR offers peer-to-peer recovery support services; meaning people who are successful in their recovery deliver the recovery message. On any given day, rehabilitation and recovery services are provided to up to 120 men in what used to be the worst, and historically, most violent tier of the Richmond City Jail. A large portion of the men housed here battle substance abuse disorders and/or have exhibited habitual criminal behavior over an extended period of time.

Using a mixed methods approach, Dr. Scarbrough examined the effectiveness of the program during two stages — while the men are incarcerated and upon release. The study began in February 2008, when Sheriff Woody sought assistance from the faith-based community and the private sector and implemented the KLM/MIR program. The examination spanned three and a half years, concluding in September 2011. The qualitative and quantitative findings of this study revealed the effectiveness of this program. Secondary data examining other programs in and outside of Virginia was also reviewed in order to develop best practices recommendations for substance abuse treatment organizations. It was also discovered that private organizations provide this type of service more efficiently than public programs, and do in a much more cost-effective manner.

Due to the vast increase of incarceration and recidivism rates over the past 30 years, the progression from jail or prison back into society is an area of growing concern both nationally and within the Commonwealth of Virginia. These concerns have driven the efforts of legislators and policymakers in
taking aggressive measures in an attempt to lower crime rates and rehabilitate convicted felons, thus allowing them to successfully return to society. Despite these initiatives, recidivism rates continue to soar. Deducing a method or framework conducive to successful reintegration and rehabilitation of felons requires a comprehensive analysis of current data. Determining the specific factors influencing habitual offenders, discovering consistent and unique variables associated with repeat offenders, and discerning the most prudent factors present in successful reentry cases is vital to providing both our law-abiding citizens and inmates the necessary measures to reverse current trends. Accordingly, Dr. Scarbrough conducted research that evaluated a relatively new rehabilitation program in the Richmond City Jail, examined statistics of inmates navigating through other programs within the Commonwealth, reviewed statistics among individuals not participating in a treatment program, and compared these numbers to those of other states.

**The research:**
The main goal of this research was to examine the effectiveness of the KLM/MIR program during two stages: both while the men are incarcerated and upon release, and was accomplished by using a variety of data-collection strategies. Further, because the peer-based model is rather new and unique, especially in Virginia, the study determined if it is effective, or why it is not and for whom it is (or is not) effective. These results were then be compared to statistics of those (1) who go through the program while incarcerated, but do not continue upon release, (2) those who do not undergo any programs, and (3) those who go through other programs, which will be collected through secondary data analysis.

**Findings:**

* In determining which variables correlate to recidivism, it was found that arrest record (number of times arrested), treatment type (either KLM/MIR or another program), and crime committed were highly correlated to the likelihood of recidivating. Other significant predicting variables found were the amount of time out of jail, if subjects lived in KLM’s recovery houses, and if subjects were released on bond. Being a non-violent offender was extremely significant in predicting recidivism. This study found drug and/or alcohol use, race/ethnicity, and educational level were not factors in predicting recidivism (they were all found to be not statistically significant).

* Found that the KLM/MIR program is one of the most effective in Virginia for multiple reasons. The recidivism rate of those who go through KLM/MIR was found to be 18 percent lower than those of the control group.

* The time between re-incarcerations after the program for those who went through the KLM/MIR program was significantly greater than the time for control group.

* This research enabled the development of a best practice/evidence based model for programs that are targeted at offenders who battle substance abuse

* Upon reviewing data collected on various programs in Virginia, it is evident that the efforts and assistance provided by Virginia is not keeping pace with a considerable number of states that are currently experiencing more success.

* It is unknown whether the majority of programs in Virginia are effective and successful because evaluations and research have not been conducted on them.

**Cost/Savings:**

It costs approximately $25,000 annually to incarcerate an individual in Virginia. By increasing the amount of time between incarcerations among the men who go through the program, it saves on average $14,500 per person. This multiplied by all of the men in the program over the study period, results in a savings to taxpayers of **$7.1 million**. Furthermore, when a prisoner requires a visit to the emergency room (because of fighting.), it costs the taxpayer approximately $2,000 per visit. Prior to the beginning of
KLM/MIR, the tier experienced many severe fights, leading to an average of two to three visits to the emergency room each week. This averages 10 visits or $20,000 a month — $240,000 a year. Since the beginning of the program, there have been only three minor scuffles on the tier, none of which have required a visit to the emergency room. As such, this has saved the jail an additional $840,000 over the study period. These savings are over a couple years’ span, from one tier of one jail in Virginia. If more tiers of this jail, and multiple jails, were offered this program, the savings would be unimaginable.

It is the Sheriff’s expectation that the Richmond Justice Center, which will open in January 2014, will be capable of implementing programs like this throughout the facility. “The design of the new Justice Center will accommodate an expansion of this program, and others like it”, said Sheriff Woody. He continued, “With a facility designed to implement programs like this, one can only imagine the positive numbers we’ll be talking about years from now; and imagine how those translate to changed lives rebuilt families. We are so proud of what’s being done now, but we’re even more excited about what the future holds!”

Dr. Scarbrough’s Bio:

Dr. Sarah Huggins Scarbrough is a native Virginian, born in Northern Virginia, but has resided in the Richmond area for over 20 years. A graduate from Clover Hill High School, Dr. Scarbrough received her Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from the University of Virginia’s College at Wise in 2005. In 2007, she graduated with her Master’s in Criminal Justice, and in 2012 with her Doctoral degree in Public Policy and Administration both from Virginia Commonwealth University.

Dr. Scarbrough has volunteered and worked with substance abuse organizations for several years. She began her research in the Richmond City Jail four years ago, in order to determine the effectiveness of a new program in the jail as it relates to substance abuse, re-entry, and recidivism and then compare it to the rates of other programs throughout the Commonwealth and in the nation. By doing this, she was also able to develop a best practice, evidence-based model that Virginia should adopt and follow.

Dr. Scarbrough has participated in and conducted other studies, including one with Judge Henry Hudson and Dr. John Reitzel entitled Drug, Crime, and the Gateway Effect: A Study of Federal Crime Defendants.

Press Conference Attendees:

Following statements made by Sheriff Woody, Dr. Bosher, and Dr. Scarbrough, attendees will have the opportunity to ask questions related to this matter, and may then proceed on a tour of the KLM/MIR Program Tier led by the Sheriff and Dr. Scarbrough.

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