



OPERATION OUTWARD REACH

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN REQUEST Pennsylvania Training Building Projects 2004-2008

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ORGANIZATION INFORMATION

Operation Outward Reach is a 501(c) (3) private non-profit vocational training program headquartered in Youngwood, Pennsylvania. While services are offered in sixteen Western Pennsylvania Counties, the impact of our program can be felt throughout the Commonwealth. OOR provides a six month construction trades hands-on training to pre-release inmates in seven state correctional institutions. Trainees return to communities throughout the state demonstrating further positive impact.

Trainees learn masonry and carpentry skills by doing vital construction work on the houses owned by low income, elderly and disabled people and the non-profit organizations that serve them. This certificate program equips ex-offenders with a livable wage trade so that they can become tax-paying assets to their families and to society as a whole. OOR works. In thirty three years, approximately 17% of our graduates recidivate whereas the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections lists a recidivism rate of 45.9% at three years post release for the year 2000. (www.cor.state.pa.us)

The benefits for the trainees are immeasurable. An independent research study found that for every dollar invested in OOR; over \$3 in future incarceration and social costs are saved. *Simply put, OOR helps to reduce crime and its impact on society.*

The OOR pilot project, Repair on Wheels, began at the Greensburg State Correctional Institute in Westmoreland County in 1972. Six other institutions were added over the years including Cambridge Springs prison for women. OOR has witnessed strong support from the Department of Corrections; they recognize the value of our training and public service.

The inmates participate in training must meet pre-release requirements. The inmates are trained in areas such as carpentry and masonry, with marketable skills that will allow them the opportunity to acquire gainful employment upon release. Documented studies performed by independent outside agencies show the effects of OOR training upon the inmates as follows: (a) a substantial reduction in recidivism rates for graduating inmates, (b) less disciplinary problems inside the prison for inmates involved with the program, (c) increased likelihood for the inmates, once outside the prison, to obtain gainful employment.

The communities projects worked on by the trainees are the type that is not affordable to low income homeowners through regular channels. We work for homeowners at 125% of the federal poverty level, non-profit organizations, and small municipalities. The community benefits by reduced costs for the criminal justice system due to lower recidivism rates, costs to victims, and preserving neighborhood homes. The trainees gain skills with which to obtain gainful employment at a living wage to support themselves and their families and become contributing members of the tax base. Society benefits by reduced costs for the criminal justice system by reduced recidivism rates and by preserving the houses that compromise the tax base, stretching the dollars awarded to local non-profits, and an increased pool of skilled workers.

MISSION

OOR's mission is to provide "quality vocational training primarily to adult/juvenile offenders and to assisting the low income population and other community organizations with needed construction and repair services. Operation Outward Reach, Inc. serves to meet the needs of state and county governments who want to see offenders repay their debt to the community and, at the same time, gain valuable vocational training to enable them to escape the trap of recidivism. OOR strongly believes in offenders helping others and themselves through vocational training."

LONG RANGE PLANS

The five major goals as outlined in the organizational strategic plan (updated January 12, 2005 and to include the three training sites in the campaign) are to:

1. Maintain and expand core services
2. Restore the juvenile component
3. Expand service lines
4. Create new revenue streams
5. *Undertake a capital campaign to construct a new main office training complex*

ACCOMPLISHMENTS

As evidence to our success in inmate rehabilitation, in 1998, the American Corrections Association named OOR among the top five best correctional education programs in the United States. Other awards received by OOR include the following.

- ?? **1985** Outstanding Employment and Community Conservation Program from the Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs.
- ?? **1992** Outstanding Pennsylvania Non-Profit Award by the Social Entrepreneur Institute in Philadelphia.
- ?? **1993** Award of Excellence by the Pennsylvania Department of Community Affairs.
- ?? **1996** Outstanding Treatment Alternative by the American Correctional Associations Magazine.
- ?? **1998** Community Service Award by People's Gas.
- ?? **1998** Best Practices: Excellence in Corrections by the American Correctional Association
- ?? **1998** Provider Recognition Award by the Special Kids Network.
- ?? **2001 Community** Impact Award from Dominion Peoples.
- ?? **2002** Staunton Farm Foundation grant to study emotional intelligence.
- ?? **2005** Accredited by the Pennsylvania Association of Nonprofit Organizations for standards in excellence

In over thirty years, almost 2,500 trainees have graduated from the six month program and almost 1,700 construction projects have been completed.

PROJECT PURPOSE

OOR provides quality training in seven facilities in Western Pennsylvania. The core concept of OOR is to provide real life training in an environment that the ex-offender can expect to encounter upon release. The construction projects in the community are scheduled such that the trainee can experience and learn a variety of core skills within the six month program. From small houses to large non-profit organizations, trainees are exposed to a wide variety of learning and cultural experiences.

The need however exists to enhance four sites so classroom and shop instruction can best take place maximizing training time. Shop and classroom instruction exist primarily due to inclement weather or breaks in the schedule. The Somerset site, by far is the best prototype for OOR training. It was built by trainees on institution grounds. It has classrooms, offices, tool storage, and bays for vehicles. It meets the needs in providing quality community services and instruction. Huntingdon and Mercer facilities are almost equally equipped. Cresson unfortunately shares space on the grounds with the maintenance department with no classroom. Greensburg, in rented space, is painfully small as well as the main offices currently located in a "house." The crew at Albion works out of an old trailer with an additional small trailer for tool storage. Cambridge Springs has a rented facility that the women renovated to suite OOR training and storage but, at 10 miles from the institution. Given that shop time occurs during inclement weather, the drive adds some travel risk for Cambridge Springs trainees. It also diverts training dollars toward space costs. Land is available at Cresson, Cambridge Springs and Albion to construct a facility similar to Somerset.

OOR has developed a plan to replicate a prototype at Cresson, Albion, and Cambridge Springs at a cost approximating \$63,000 per site in materials. The commercial worth of these buildings in the market place will be about \$150,000 each when you factor in sweat equity and DOC in-kind support. The beauty of this project is that trainees perform the bulk of the work and learn the entire process of constructing a building. The Greensburg/Hempfield training center/new central office complex will proceed more swiftly given that the shell of the building exists. It is expected that on inclement weather days the trainees can be framing offices and finishing the interior of the new building. This will have a significant savings to the overall project.

The DOC is very supportive of having a training facility on the institution grounds or in the case of Greensburg, less than one mile away. This will increase OOR resources for training because funding will not have to be spent on space costs. The Greensburg project budget came in at almost half of what was anticipated by the Board. This is what prompted the Board to move forward with the three other training centers, bringing all the training centers up to the same standard.

The Greensburg training center/man offices will be located in the Hempfield Industrial Park. OOR closed on the property February 16, 2005. OOR negotiated a very favorable 6.25% interest loan with National City Bank for the \$150,000 to acquire the Greensburg building which sold for \$179,000. National City, J.A.D.A. Financial LLC, Dick Metz Insurance Agency, Attorney William Wiker and the Community Foundation of Westmoreland County have all made donations. The OOR board hopes to pay down this mortgage well before the twenty year mortgage expires. The Hempfield building had been used for an import/export business and the shell warehouse and office and has already proven perfect for the training complex. Trainees began occupancy in the building in May, 2005 although certain modifications remain to be made using the gift from the Community Foundation. Specifically, classroom walls, updated electricals, and a restroom for the trainees.

The Hempfield steel metal pre-fabricated building is perfectly suited for the training facility although administrative offices will need to be added. The building is 4,000 square feet, has a bay entry and the location in the Industrial Park is well suited to our location needs for space, commercial/light industrial zoning, and relative seclusion from residential or high traffic urban areas. There is plenty of room to construct the new offices on the site.

The new offices will also be a stick built/steel sided building but will not be physically attached to the training center. This will greatly reduce zoning and rehabilitation issues. It will be more professional compared to the current “house” in a residential neighborhood. OOR visitors will have the opportunity to see first hand the work that the trainees do, potentially interacting with and negating stereotypes on both sides. Other shared resources between will be advantageous and contribute to the long term viability of the organization.

OOR did not approach any of the four projects lightly or cavalierly. Combining the Greensburg training center with the central administrative offices has been included in OOR’s long term strategic plan for some time. OOR spent over one year looking for property in close proximity to the Greensburg prison. When the Hempfield Woodward Drive Extension property was identified, the OOR Board of Directors began negotiations with the owner, not wanting to miss a good opportunity. The vast majority of properties previously reviewed were deemed unsuitable due to new construction codes and cost.

Land has always been identified at the Cresson, Albion and Cambridge Springs prison sites for the construction of training centers. They will be on prison grounds and will allow liberal use of prison resources for activities that the trainees cannot perform such as excavation, welding, electrics, etc.

The Board is enthusiastic about this opportunity to put into place a vital part of the organization’s long term strategic plan. We have 100% participation in the campaign from the Board and management staff. Other donations are starting to be received. The Board has signed a commitment to contribute time prospecting and visiting with foundations, corporations, public funders, etc, and to bring at least one influential peer volunteer to help with the campaign, secure at least five donations/pledges of \$500 per year for four years, and to personally make a significant monetary donation to the building project.

OOR is fortunate to have Architect Don Lettrich as a member of the Board of Directors. Mr. Lettrich is finalizing plans for the renovation and addition to the Greensburg/Hempfield building and made one of the project’s first significant pledges to the campaign. He volunteered many hours in visiting potential sites and identifying pros and cons of each site.

Mr. Lettrich is working hard to keep costs low and maximizing the use of trainee labor. As for the other three new training sites, plans from the Somerset training center are being shared with DOC staff. The Albion/Cambridge Springs Site Manager has developed a budget. He and the Greensburg/Cresson Site Manager are well versed in new building construction. Mr. Lettrich will be involved as well. The main goal for all project sites is to ensure quality workmanship, cost control, and accommodations for potential growth and, most importantly, serve as a training tool for the inmates. It can not be stressed enough that OOR has an extremely talented Board willing to take significant time and resource commitments to the OOR mission.

NEED FOR THE CAMPAIGN

The space needs that are currently lacking are many. OOR has never had a conference or meeting room type facility. Historically, OOR has had to rent space from the Westmoreland County Community College or other type facility in which to conduct staff trainings, hold Board of Directors meetings, etc. The age of both the central office “house” and the Greensburg Training Facility creates limitations. The current “house” was obviously not constructed for commercial use. The electrical service cannot accommodate a sufficient server for the computer network. Additionally, for some reason, electrical service is disrupted periodically causing loss of data. A location in a commercial area would alleviate these concerns.

Plumbing is something that most take for granted. Both facilities are overused for the design. Continual repair and intervention is both frustrating and costly. The new building is anticipated to have open areas for flexible work spaces and to accommodate growth, a computer network/copy center, conference room, hospitality room, offices, a large training workshop with bay areas for vehicle storage as well as a classroom and locked storage rooms. The combination training center/main offices facilitate trainee, staff and visitor interaction and thus promote mutual understanding and respect.

The need for the three new training sites as stated earlier is evident by disparage in quality of the seven training sites. Albion, in the old trailer, was never intended to be a permanent location. Neither was Cambridge Springs in a rented facility about 10 miles from the prison. At Cresson, sharing space with the maintenance workers and their stored supplies ultimately made evident the inadequacy of the arrangement.

TIMELINE

The closing on the Hempfield Industrial Park property occurred February 16, 2005. It is anticipated that the Greensburg training crew took occupancy in May, 2005. A recent grant from the Community Foundation of Westmoreland County will be used to finish modifications to the training building and preliminary architectural plans. This will be completed before the end of 2005.

Groundbreaking for the office building is anticipated for the late summer of 2006. Extensive research was done in comparing prefabricated steel buildings with stick frame. Initially, the Board shied away from having the trainees build the structure because we felt it would take away from time spent in the community. We found however, that recently one of our crews built a similar structure in only six weeks. Given the project cost savings and limited time out of the community, it appears to be a win/win situation. Trainees will learn all facets of constructing a building and OOR will save a significant amount on the project. The only components that are planned to be contracted out are the mechanicals and masonry and, of course, the architect.

Besides, that same schedule is planned for Albion, Cambridge Springs and Cresson. The three other training sites will begin site plans immediately, working with the DOC regarding location, utility issues, design, in-kind support etc. Work is anticipated to be complete by 2006-07, or sooner, as resources are secured.

The goals set by the OOR Board of Directors is to complete the capital campaign by 2008, this includes the financial plan as well as construction/occupation plan. The OOR Board of Directors is comprised of prominent, skilled, educated people with significant experience in non-profit leadership. All are willing

to commit a significant amount of time to ensuring that this capital campaign is a success. Dr. Ed Lewis is personally responsible for raising millions for other non-profit organizations and has already taken a leadership role as Board Emeritus and Ambassador. The Board typically meets quarterly and as needed in committee. For this campaign however, the Board will be communicated with at least monthly.

Although OOR has not yet conducted a fundraising campaign of this magnitude, the board feels well positioned, especially with recent support from the Community Foundation of Westmoreland County and National City Bank. Naming rights for all seven facilities and rooms within are being fleshed out which may prove to be helpful as well.

OOR President has personally met with most of the legislators in our sixteen county service area and almost all enthusiastically support our request for \$5,000 Community Revitalization Program from their district allocation as well as support a Senate amendment to the Commonwealth budget should it come to fruition. Resources, education, relationships with significant potential donors, and enthusiasm are in place as the reader can see from the next chart. The highest level of procedures and protocol of a campaign that meets every aspect of non-profit ethical and legal fundraising standards have been embraced by the board of directors.

BUDGET

<i>Item</i>	<i>Amount</i>
<i>Total Campaign</i>	\$1,320,300.00
<i>Sweat Equity</i>	-299,000.00
<i>OOR</i>	-\$160,000.00
<i>Donations</i>	-\$19,097.00
<i>Other kind/materials</i>	-\$72,000.00
<i>Total Needed</i>	\$770,203.00

FUTURE CHALLENGES

As with many non-profit organizations, OOR has found itself in the precarious position of being heavily dependent upon public funding (specifically the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections). As evidenced by the previously stated accomplishments, there are few programs in our country’s correctional institutional network which are as effective at reducing recidivism and related tax dollars. Mandatory sentencing and increased drug violations have swollen our prison population well beyond capacity. The majority of our inmates are repeat drug offenders (Travis/Austin, Criminal Justice Initiative, 2002). OOR feels that we have a moral obligation to expand our services by identifying alternative and diverse revenue streams, our biggest challenge facing us.

EVALUATION

Although legislative funds can never be guaranteed, OOR currently has a five year contract with the DOC. This will support our program through until the year 2007. The DOC would not commit to supporting four new training centers if they lacked belief in OOR. DOC only funds about 92% of the cost to run the program, hence the need to raise funds from other sources for operational our building project purposes. Funds are not readily available from the DOC to help with capital expenditures. Due to the societal benefit of our rehabilitative services, our intent is to aggressively seek alternative funding sources for long term partnerships. The new building will help to solidify our continued progress in this vital mission.

Evaluation - Individual client files are maintained for both the inmates and the construction project. The OOR Vice President of Operations visits the sites at least monthly, has scheduled weekly telephone conversations with the Site Managers, and conducts a monthly communal informational and continuing education meetings which also result in the sharing of best practices.

Upon program completion inmate satisfaction is recorded in the trainee folder and kept at the institution with copies sent to the main office.

Property owners are also debriefed as to their satisfaction with the program via the OOR client completion form. All comments are taken seriously and used for reference in continual quality improvement.

Evaluation of the new building projects will also be determined by funder satisfaction and opinion of a well invested contribution. OOR is firmly committed to making sure that all donors are kept apprised of progress made both programmatically and construction.

OOR PROGRAMS

OOR provides hands on vocational training in the construction fields, coupled with job readiness and job retention skills, to inmates who have little or no work experience. In addition to carpentry and masonry skills, OOR's job readiness training includes: following directions, resume development, interview techniques, and job search suggestions. OOR inmates learn the trades by completing construction projects for low income, elderly/disabled homeowners, community non-profits, and local municipalities.

Property owners are carefully screened for low income or non-profit eligibility. Our charge to construction clients is just materials and supplies to complete the project. We do our best to get materials donated for hardship cases. OOR's higher level vocational program teaches not only a living wage skill, freeing the released inmate from the bonds of poverty, but also teaches a work ethic, respect, independence, self esteem, tolerance, empathy and the value of restitution. Property owners who may never have encountered a minority outside of television learn valuable acceptance attitudes during the progress of the project and the trainees learn manners while dealing with the public.

Trainees perform such works as roofs, windows, porches, new additions, wheelchair ramps and other vital projects that would prevent displacement and/or improve the safety of the home. The Site Manager and instructor carefully inspect each project for construction needs. The Site Manager may make

referrals to other sources available to assist such as redevelopment authorities, community action agencies, rural development, etc. and in severe hardship cases, solicits donations of materials or refers

The Site Manager at times makes the rounds of the health and human service organizations with specific emphasis on organizations that provide services to homeowners. “Word of mouth” remains our best marketing tool. Even though our work is done by trainees, the point of the services offered is not fast but of quality. The instructors are “firm, fair, and respectful” and will patiently work with the participants until the project is “right.”

The OOR program consists of a basic six months with a specialty in either carpentry or masonry. This includes not only weekly classroom vocational training and application of those skills in a donated capacity in the community, but also, an employment readiness component that is offered in an individualized manner.

Prior to all this, the SCI staff begin preparing inmates for participation. SCI staff begins early eliminating any inmate who might be at risk to the public. In order to participate, the prison, the convicting judge and the victim must agree to allow the inmate off site. The program is an open entry/exit six month program. As soon as one inmate graduates, another five or more are waiting to fill the slot.

A few days prior to release, the Site Manager meets on a one-on-one basis to provide support for” life on the outside” and to instruct inmates on how to obtain a new toolkit from OOR when they do get a job in the trade. Through our 12 month post-release follow up and support, Site Managers contact graduates at 30, 60, 180, and 360 days. Forms are completed based on the results of these queries and submitted to the main office for entrance into the computer database. Reports may be generated at any time at the request of the funding source.

Additionally, OOR, over the years, has developed relationships with trade unions, developers and other employers who have been historically pleased with workers trained by OOR or employers who may be placement prospects. The Site Managers meet minimally monthly to share information among other things that may be beneficial to the trainee securing a job.

CONCLUSION

In summary, an investment in OOR reaches a considerable number of people. A building in Cresson might not have relevance to someone in Erie, for instance. But that training center, as all seven, is where the process of rehabilitation all begins. Houses are rehabilitated near the centers but trainees go home to communities throughout the state. We feel that they are more likely to become law abiding tax paying citizens than their peers. Tax paying, not revenue depleting, citizens of the Commonwealth.

