

Oct 2013



Issue 3

Effort only fully releases its rewards after a person refuses to quit. - Napoleon Hill

The STAR Project's **Mission** is to provide the guidance and support that will successfully re-integrate ex-offenders into the community as contributing members of society.

Our **Vision** is to increase community safety and reduce recidivism by assisting persons to successfully transition from incarceration to the community.

Dramatic Changes at the STAR Project - A Letter from our Board President

As many of you know, the STAR Project entered crisis mode last fall because of some major funding reversals. First, there was an increase in the number of clients seeking housing and other services, which we stretched ourselves to address. Then our state and county funding took a 59% funding hit. As a result, we began cutting services and informing landlords that we could not continue renting their properties. When the county commissioners approved a one-time grant of \$20,000 from another source and we received another major gift, we started breathing again.

Things began to turn around this spring when the Sherwood Trust approved a grant to fund hiring a consultant and an assistant. That \$75,000 grant over a three-year period now has the staff and board working with consultant Jan McGowan and has allowed the hiring of new administrative assistant Aubrey Hill.

More amazing news came when STAR learned that it was awarded part of settlement money from a lawsuit against A.T.&T. For years they had charged exorbitant rates to inmates' friends and families who accepted collect calls which are the only way for inmates to call home. The award demonstrated the confidence placed in us by inmates' families, Department of Corrections, and our community.

As a result of this award, STAR will be able to create an educational expense fund so that those who must wait up to 90 days for loan money can begin their studies immediately. STAR also expects to be able to rent twelve additional housing units for those needing rapid rehousing after leaving prison. A much-needed housing coordinator and case manager will greatly increase our ability to successfully work with clients. Another position is planned to work with individual inmates in forming a transition plan as they near their release date.

SO, does STAR no longer need donations? Absolutely not! The grants are targeted in scope and to be used over five years for approved purposes only. They don't pay for things like running the organization, the cost of weekly support dinners or office expenses, which will increase. The money just means we can address more of the increasing need. Last year, for instance, we turned away about thirty potential clients, especially in the area of housing. Now we can grow our client capacity, impact more transitional inmates at W.S.P., and give our dedicated director a reasonable workload.

As for our donors, what a joy to support a healthy, effective program! Through all our efforts, we now have greater capacity at a time of greater need. Your ongoing support is a huge part of making that possible.

- Chuck Hindman

A Message From Our Director - Glenna Awbrey

I recently had the opportunity to host STAR Project's Donor Appreciation Event. It was the first time I have been able to set aside time simply to thank some of you who have made STAR the program all that it is through donations of funds, resources and time. The evening was lovely, though I was struck by the number of people there who made comments such as "I donate a little" or "I send a small check when I can". Kindly allow me to say, unequivocally, that seemingly small donations mean a great deal. A \$25 gift will buy two bus passes for clients to get to school or work for a month, contribute to the weekly dinners here at STAR or cover the cost of prescription medications for uninsured clients. And, when these donations come across my desk, I am always reminded that people in this community believe in the work we do and are willing to demonstrate this through their donations.

So, for those of you who were able to attend, as well as those I've not had opportunity to speak to face to face, kindly accept my heartfelt Thank You. People's lives are better and our community safer because of the work we do together.

All-STAR: Gus M.



Throughout the time that Gus has been a client he has consistently made himself available to volunteer on projects and to talk at events. This past month at the Donor Recognition Event he and two other clients spoke with our donors about STAR and their lives. When asked about STAR Gus has nothing but good to say crediting Glenna and the program with helping him develop a sense of self worth, housing stability, and goal setting habits. All of his hard work and dedication is finally paying off as we are pleased to announce that he will be getting custody of his children back by the end of the month.

Above: Gus is both a client and an avid supporter of the program.

Welcome to Our New Board Member—Everett Maroon

Everett has worked in social justice and public health issues for twenty years and is currently serving as Executive Director of Blue Mountain Heart to Heart, a nonprofit in Walla Walla focused on HIV/AIDS support services and prevention.

Originally from New Jersey, Everett moved to the Walla Walla area more than five years ago with his partner Susanne Beechey, who teaches at Whitman College.

He is an avid bowler and amateur chef, and he writes young adult novels in his spare time. Everett and Susanne have a two-year-old son, Emile, and are expecting a second child next March.

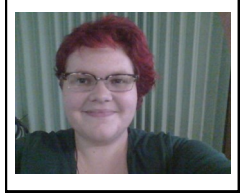


New Team Members



Laura Mote is our newest MSW Intern from Walla Walla University. She does a lot of STAR's case management and intakes and has been instrumental in helping organize STAR for the 21st Century. Laura has a passion for teaching and supporting individuals in developing positive strategies to help manage daily stressors.

Aubrey Hill is the STAR Project's new Administrative Assistant. She has been working in Walla Walla for the past two years as a neighborhood organizer and institutional research specialist for Commitment to Community. One of Aubrey's weirdest hobbies is building elaborate spreadsheets. She graduated from Utah State in 2009 with a BS in Anthropology and Environmental Studies and since then has taught youth gardening, ceramics, music and writing.



Get Involved!

There are a number of ways to help The STAR Project:

- STAR has ongoing need for donations of starter packs that include things like: razors, towels, personal hygiene products, shampoo, comb, towels, and toothbrush/toothpaste.
- Our clients could use clothes since they generally only have what they are wearing when released.
- Donations for bus passes allow clients to find employment and their appointments.
- STAR is always looking for landlords that are accepting of people that are ex-offenders.
- Our clients benefit greatly from Individuals willing and able to mentor them.

Mentoring

"The success of STAR programs is dependent on the availability of dedicated mentors and other volunteers. A mentor is someone who listens, helps clients set goals, supports the effort of their mentee, and advocates for them. Sometimes the mentees will need help enrolling in school, resume help, creating a budget and how to manage their time effectively."

-Mike Howell, *Long-Term Mentor*

Staff & Board

Staff

- Glenna Awbrey - Executive Director
- April Love-King - Bookkeeper
- Aubrey Hill- Executive Assistant
- Laura Mote- MSW Intern

Board Members

- Chuck Hindman - Board President
- Daniel Clark – Vice President
- Sally Kearsley - Secretary

Board Members cont.

- Mitch Clearfield - Treasurer
- Austin Archer
- Chuck Akes
- Virginia Harrison
- Marc McClure
- Dr. Gary Crabtree
- Anastasia Christman
- Rich Jacks
- Everett Maroon

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