

TESTIMONIAL SAMPLES

On the value of the program

“Working with this program has certainly reinforced my commitment to what we at CSOSA are trying to accomplish. There’s nothing more important for a returning offender than to be embraced by the community. That connection—which we at CSOSA can’t provide, but can facilitate through programs like this—often makes the difference between feeling welcomed and feeling isolated. If the offender can become part of a positive system in the community, that really helps him to make a commitment to success. He also feels that others are willing to invest in him, too. And faith institutions are among the most positive systems available in any community. They keep people going; they give people hope. We’re very grateful for how willingly they’ve embraced the idea of giving that same positive reinforcement to the offenders we supervise.”

On the mentors

“People are so willing to give of themselves for this program. It’s been tremendously uplifting to attend trainings or outreach events and talk with the men and women who’ve decided to be mentors. Some of them have a loved one who’s been involved in the criminal justice system; some of them just want to give something back to the community. But all of them show such a genuine desire to help, to get involved, to address the challenges of reentry head-on, that I know their mentoring will be valuable.”

On reentry challenges

“Through this program, we’ve been able to gain access for offenders to some services they might otherwise not know about—all the faith-based counseling, job training, and human services programs that do so much good in the District of Columbia. But there are still tremendous service gaps. One of the most important is in housing—there’s a significant shortage of appropriate housing placements for returning offenders who don’t have family or friends willing to help them. Another is in employment. These two factors directly influence whether the offender will succeed or fail. Reentry poses significant challenges, and those challenges have real public safety implications. Programs like the CSOSA/Faith Community Partnership make a difference, but there’s still a long way to go.”