



## State of New Jersey

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# Media Release

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## **Successful Female Parole Program Comes to Passaic *Female Offender Reentry Group Effort (FORGE) is shown to reduce recidivism in Essex; now launched in Passaic with Federal grant***

PATERSON: Chairman Yolette C. Ross today announced that FORGE, a successful reentry program for female parolees, is expanding into Passaic County with help from a Federal grant to the State Parole Board.

"We have firsthand evidence that FORGE helps women stop the revolving door of recidivism, and helps them contribute to society," Chairman Ross said during the announcement at Kintock Paterson, a parole-contracted community resource center. "I am proud to bring FORGE into Passaic County, where by helping women rebuild their lives we will also be helping their families and communities."

"We are a proud partner with the State Parole Board for the mission to enhance New Jersey's public safety with effective reentry programs," said David Fawcner, CEO of the Kintock Group, which runs Kintock Paterson under contract with the State Parole Board. "The resources we provide for ex-offenders, and the networks we've created with other service providers in the community, make our facility the perfect center for FORGE-Passaic."

The State Parole Board launched the Female Offender Reentry Group Effort (FORGE) in Essex County in 2004. The initiative is based on nationwide research into the unique risks and needs that face female ex-offenders, and on the observations of New Jersey parole officers in the field.

FORGE-Essex is a coalition of state, county, municipal and non-profit agencies. It brings their services together in a one-stop reentry center at Essex County College, with funding provided by the Nicholson Foundation. Research conducted by the Rutgers School of Management and Labor Relations (SMLR), announced in October 2009, found that female parolees enrolled in FORGE have a lower recidivism rate than female ex-offenders not enrolled in the program (see the attached fact sheet).

Based on the FORGE initiative's proven success, the State Parole Board was awarded a Federal grant totaling \$200,000 to create FORGE resources in Passaic and Camden Counties over two years. The grant will enable the hiring of a resource specialist in each county to provide gender-responsive case management for female parolees. It will also enable funding for services necessary to help parolees gain and maintain employment, such as bus tickets and obtaining birth certificates; and enable the purchase of printed materials and other resources.

Kintock Paterson currently provides services for male and female parolees, including drug counseling and relapse prevention; job readiness and employment counseling; academic assistance; mental health referrals; money management skills; stress and anger reduction; parenting skills and family

intervention. Program staff share information on a daily basis with the parole officers who supervise the parolees who have been referred to the program.

The New Jersey State Parole Board (SPB) is New Jersey's lead reentry agency, and works to ensure ex-prisoners return to society as law-abiding citizens. As required by law, appointed Parole Board Members and staff conduct nearly 20,000 hearings per year, solicit input from victims and decide parole matters. SPB sworn parole officers supervise more than 15,000 offenders statewide. In addition, SPB is New Jersey's primary law enforcement agency responsible for sex offender supervision. SPB officers are also active partners with multiple Federal, State and local law enforcement agencies and task forces. Finally, SPB's Community Programs Unit partners with government, non-profit and private agencies to connect ex-prisoners with vocational, mental health and related services, targeted to break the cycle and risk of crime.

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4/12/10

**Fact Sheet: FORGE-Passaic**

**Q: What is FORGE?**

The State Parole Board launched the Female Offender Reentry Group Effort (FORGE) in Essex County in 2004, and participation became mandatory for all Essex County parolees in 2006.

FORGE is a gender-responsive strategy for improving reentry outcomes for female parolees. In Essex County, FORGE consists of a coalition of state, county, city and non-profit partners, all pooling resources for job training, substance abuse treatment, life skills training and other social services in a one-stop reentry center, at Essex County College.

FORGE is expanding into other counties, based on this model of multiple partners bringing their reentry resources together in a single location.

**Q: Is FORGE proven to reduce recidivism?**

Research conducted in Essex County shows that female parolees enrolled in FORGE have a lower recidivism rate than female parolees not enrolled in the program.

A researcher from Rutgers' School of Management and Labor Relations (SMLR) Economic Development Research Group compared the success rates of female ex-offenders in Essex County. Among other findings, the study noted:

- Parole supervision, even without FORGE, is associated with a reduction in recidivism. Within four years of release from prison, female parolees not enrolled in FORGE had a lower re-arrest rate (48 percent) than those who "maxed out," or left prison without parole supervision (66 percent).
- Female parolees who were enrolled in FORGE had a 42 percent re-arrest rate within four years of release from prison.
- Female parolees who were enrolled in FORGE and in Parole Accountability Conference Team (PACT) support groups had a significantly lower re-arrest rate – 28 percent – within the same time frame.

**Q: Why a specific focus on female ex-offenders?**

Through they make up a minority of the incarcerated population, a significant number of women have committed crimes and are subject to correctional control. According to recent nationwide research, 1 in 265 American women aged 25-29 are incarcerated in jail or prison. Furthermore,

1 in 89 adult American women are under some form correctional control (either in jail or prison, or subject to parole or probation supervision in the community).<sup>1</sup>

Researchers nationwide have found that male and female offenders have different needs for treatment and rehabilitation.<sup>2</sup> For example, researchers have found that women in prison are more likely than incarcerated men to have suffered sexual and physical abuse; to have a drug addiction; and to have documented mental illness. Incarcerated women are also more likely to be the primary caretakers of minor children, and to engage in criminal behavior for economic reasons.

The New Jersey State Parole Board and the US Department of Justice National Institute of Corrections both recognize that the distinctive rehabilitation needs of women should be addressed with distinctive solutions during parole supervision. In New Jersey, parole officers noted that female parolees often did not succeed as often as men when placed in community-based rehabilitative programs.

The State Parole Board developed the FORGE model in Essex County, in partnership with the Nicholson Foundation; Essex County College; the New Jersey departments of Corrections, Labor and Workforce Development, and Human Services; the Essex County Board of Social Services; the Newark Mayor's Office; Churches in Cooperation; the State Parole Board's community-based reentry programs; and the Rutgers Police Institute. The State Parole Board has also drawn on insight and training available from the National Institute of Corrections.

**Q: What is Kintock-Paterson?**

Kintock Paterson, operated by The Kintock Group, is one of the State Parole Board's 11 contracted Community Resource Centers (CRCs). The State Parole Board may require parolees to attend CRCs based on the parolees' specific risks and needs. The CRCs operate seven days a week, to ensure parolees are able to access the appropriate level of services while employed or seeking a job.

Services at the CRCs include drug counseling and relapse prevention, life skills development, job readiness skills, employment counseling and placement, academic assistance, money management, family intervention, parenting skills, housing needs, mental health referrals, transportation, links to community resources, outpatient counseling and other services.

**Q: Who are the partners with FORGE-Passaic?**

FORGE-Passaic will build on Kintock Paterson's existing partnerships with agencies including:

- Cumac Corporation
- NJ LWD / Passaic County One Stop Career Center
- Passaic Community College
- Hillside Food Bank (culinary arts training)
- Washington Mutual Bank
- Division of Vocational Rehabilitation
- Division of Youth and Family Services
- Eva Corporation (housing)
- Salvation Army (clothing)
- Social Services

- Family Community Health Center of Paterson
- Hyacinth Aids Foundation
- Challenge Program
- Lincoln Tech School
- Silk City Charter School
- Hohokus Technical School
- Father English Food Panty (furniture)
- Division of Disability Services
- Legal Services of Paterson
- Good Shepherd Mission

## End notes:

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<sup>1</sup> According to the Pew Center on the States reports *One in 100: Behind Bars in America 2008*, and *One in 31: The Long Reach of American Corrections*.

<sup>2</sup> This information is found in the following research and publications, among others:

- Berman, J. 2005. *Women offender transition and reentry: Gender responsive approaches to transitioning women offenders from prison to the community*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections.
- Bloom, B., B. Owen and S. Covington. 2005. *Gender-Responsive Strategies for Women Offenders*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections.
- Covington, S.S. and B.E. Bloom. 2006. Gender-responsive treatment and services in correctional settings. *Women and Therapy*, 29(3/4) 9-33.
- Ditton, P.M. 1999. *Mental health and treatment of inmates and probationers*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Greenfeld, L.A. and T.L. Snell. 1999. *Women offenders*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Heilbrun, K., D. DeMatteo, R. Fretz, J. Erickson, D. Gerardi, C. Halper. 2008. Criminal recidivism of female offenders. *Corrections Compendium*, 33(2)1-2, 30-32.
- Houck, K.D.F and A.B. Loper. 2002. The relationship of parenting stress to adjustment among mothers in prison. *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*. 72(4):548-558.
- James, D.J. and L.E. Glaze. 2006. *Mental health problems of prison and jail inmates*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics.
- Orbis Partners. 2006. *Women Offender Case Management Model*. Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Corrections.