

My First Circles of Support and Accountability

With a Core Member!

August 10, 2014

Monday August 11 marks the first date with Beyond Containment for meeting with its first Circles of Support and Accountability Core Member. I am pleased and excited.

It took a very long time to get all of the pieces in place – i.e. identify the most appropriate core member out of all of the people in CDOC looking for a circle, wait for that person to actually get out of prison, be patient until the appropriate venue was selected by the Department of Corrections for this man to live and be supervised in, chill until the halfway house, parole and treatment could decide, along with Beyond Containment, whether this man's already overly demanding life requirements could be met and add a Circle, which was supposed to be "supportive".

After many inquiries to parole, the half-way house etc. it was finally decided that in spite of his already heavy load, the team thought that a Circle would be a good thing for this man.

I am anxious to meet him, and hopefully he is anxious to meet all of us. He has met the Circle Coordinator and one other person on the Circle for a disclosure meeting. Tomorrow night it is time for him to get acquainted with all of us that have done the training and have waited such a very long time to see the Circle materialize. Our hope and prayer above all is that we can provide that sense of family that this man does not have, and that a little bit of the craziness of parole and half-way house restrictions and requirements will soften just a bit; not that supervision is not necessary, but sometimes it seems that it is so overwhelming that it makes it difficult for the parolee to just survive!

There are hundreds of guys waiting on the inside for a Circle, as a "support person" or "support team" such as Circles is required in order to be considered by the Parole Board for release from prison IF you are a lifetime offender in the State of Colorado. Many of you could spare one evening a week to help one more person get out of prison that has already served way too many years, meeting all other criteria required. Perhaps you have a loved one in prison who has a very long sentence, and you will not be able to officially support them for a number of years yet. Or perhaps you are reading this website article and you have someone in prison who does not need an official support person to get out of prison. Or, maybe you are working with those who have a sexual offense in your day job, but could spare two hours a week in the evening to be on a Circle for someone who has no family, and is otherwise stuck inside of CDOC?!

Life is very short, and there are guys who could be on the outside being productive and recovering from institutional overkill. Why not check into Circles of Support and Accountability and see what you can do to help? There is no time like the present to do your part to change the world!

Susan Walker