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**KENTUCKY DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS
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What Prisoners Should Know About Social Security

Information provided by the Social Security Administration
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Social Security and Supplemental Security Income (SSI) payments are not payable for months that you are confined to a jail, prison or certain other public institutions for commission of a crime. Additionally, you are not eligible for Social Security or SSI payments automatically when you are released.

WHO CAN GET SOCIAL SECURITY BENEFITS?

Social Security disability benefits can be paid to people who have recently worked and paid Social Security taxes and are unable to work because of a serious medical condition that is expected to last at least a year or result in death. The fact that a person is a recent parolee or is unemployed does not qualify as a disability.

Social Security retirement benefits can be paid to people who are 62 or older. Generally, you must have worked and paid Social Security taxes for 10 years to be eligible.

Social Security benefits are not paid for the months you have been sentenced to a jail, prison or correctional facility or confined to certain public institutions for committing a crime. And, no benefits can be paid for any month in which you violate a condition of your probation or parole.

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“If your Social Security or SSI benefits were suspended because you were incarcerated, you can request that they be started again when you are released from prison. You will need to contact Social Security and provide a copy of your release documents before SSA can take action on your request.”

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Social Security continued.....

Although you cannot receive monthly Social Security benefit payments while you are confined, your spouse or children can be paid benefits on your record if they are eligible.

And if you have worked and paid Social Security taxes, survivors benefits also may be paid to certain family members if you die.

WHO CAN GET SSI PAYMENTS?

SSI can be paid to people who are 65 or older, or who are blind or disabled and shows income and resources are below certain limits. No benefits are payable for any month in which you reside in a jail, prison or certain other public institution.

Also, you cannot receive an SSI payment for any month in which you violate a condition of your probation or parole.

WHEN YOU ARE READY TO BE RELEASED.

If your Social Security or SSI benefits were suspended because you were incarcerated, you can request that they be started again, when you are released from prison. You will need to contact Social Security and provide a copy of your release documents before SSA can take action on your request.

If you were not receiving benefits prior to your incarceration or your benefits were terminated, you will need to file a new application for benefits if you think you may be eligible. You should contact Social Security for more information about filing a claim for benefits. SSA will require proof of your release from prison, in addition to a new application and other documents.

You should contact institutional or social service staff to find out if the institution has a prerelease agreement with Social Security. If your institution has a prerelease agreement with the local Social Security office, it will notify us if you are likely to meet the requirements for SSI or Social Security benefits. SSA can then process an application several months before your anticipated release so that benefits can start as soon as possible after your release.

Social Security continued.....

If there is no agreement, when you know your anticipated release date, contact Social Security to apply for benefits if you think you may be eligible. Then SSA can take prompt action on your application.

CONTACTING SOCIAL SECURITY

For more information and to find copies of the publications, visit the SSA website, at www.socialsecurity.gov or call toll-free, 1-800-772-1213 (for the deaf or hard of hearing, call the TTY number, 1-800-325-0778). SSA can provide information by automated phone service 24 hours a day.

SSA treats all calls confidentially. SSA also wants to make sure you receive accurate and courteous service, which is why Social Security representatives monitor some telephone calls.

POINTS TO REMEMBER ABOUT SOCIAL SECURITY

1. Just because you have been incarcerated for several years does not mean that you automatically qualify for Social Security benefits.
2. There is no automatic payment for those that received Social Security benefits prior to incarceration.
3. Generally you must have worked for 10 years and paid into the system before you qualify for benefit payments.
4. If you were not receiving benefits prior to your incarceration or your benefits were terminated, you will need to file a new application for benefits.



First female class in state graduates from Pathfinders program at WKCC

By Rae Wagoner
General Manager of the Lyon County Herald Ledger



Class representative Yvette Goodwin addresses her classmates as program creator Dr. Merry Hanson and Facilitator Martha Lipscomb listen.

On Friday, November 2, 2012 Western Kentucky Correctional Complex hosted yet another first – the graduation of 29 inmates from the Pathfinders program in Kentucky.

"There are a lot of good things about me," said Dr. Merry Hanson, the keynote speaker. "And there are good things about you, and you, and you. There are some not-so-good things about me, too. And about you, and you and you. I'm not perfect. I have faults. And so do you, and you, and you," she said, pointing to individuals each time.

"One of my faults is that I have a bad sense of direction, so now I have a GPS device. My car is a little green dot on the Earth, and the little voice in the GPS tells me where to go."

Hanson related a story in which she was traveling to Bell County Forestry Camp recently, and dutifully obeying the voice coming from her GPS. As the GPS sent her on turn after turn and the road she was traveling began to look more and more "wrong," she continued to follow the directions until she was on a one-lane, rutted road nearing the Tennessee border.

"I knew it wasn't right," she said. "It didn't look right, and it didn't feel right, but I kept following those directions anyway."

After finishing her story, in which she eventually followed her own mind and some road signs in order to arrive at her destination, she asked the class how many times do we listen to people in our own lives and

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"follow what they say, even though we're thinking 'eh, I'm not sure that sounds just right?"

She reminded the Pathfinders to think and feel and choose not to listen to others who may try to steer them wrong.

"Remember where you're going and the things you have learned in Pathfinders," she admonished.

Hanson, who has experience in education and workforce development is the author of Pathfinders, a 180-200 hour psychological skill building/cognitive restructuring curriculum.

Pathfinders is currently used in every prison in the State of Oregon, in prisons in Minnesota, Idaho, Kentucky and Virginia, alternative schools in Oregon, California, Idaho and Washington and in Juvenile Detention Centers in Washington and California.

The program enables inmate participants to think through the consequences of their actions before they act. Every lesson in the program is aimed at attacking thinking errors and replacing those errors with healthy approaches to sorting emotions, making choices and solving problems.

These skills are particularly important for an inmate population, and will benefit graduates both while incarcerated and after they re-enter society.

Re-entry has been a big focus for corrections in the past few years as the Department of Corrections tries to reduce the rate of recidivism in Kentucky prisons.

Class representatives Vicky Hall, Yvette Goodwin and Mitzie Summers spoke to their classmates and assembled guests about the changes Pathfinders has made in their lives.

Hall shared what she has learned about team building, problem solving and stress management, which will be of help to her when she re-enters family life and strives to make a home for herself and her children. "Before coming to prison, I lacked many of the skills I have learned in Pathfinders," she said.

Yvette Goodwin said "the days of simply 'doing time' are gone, especially for those of us who are trying to make changes in our lives. She quoted her pastor as saying "until you know where you've been and how you got there, you can't figure out where you're going. Some

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people think once a criminal, always a criminal, and that is not the case."

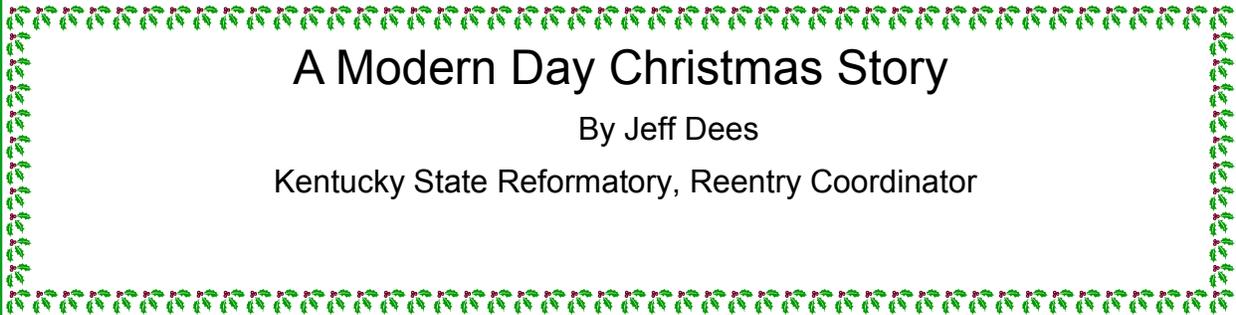
She spoke of motivation and preparation, identifying behaviors, positive thinking and how her new mindset has become her new behavior.

"If my mind can conceive it and my heart will believe it, I can achieve it," she added.

Applause broke out when Goodwin pointed to her identification number and said "although I wear this number, I am NOT this number, and although I committed a crime, I refuse to be identified as just a criminal."

Acting Warden Steve Woodward praised the inmates for staying the course in the 6-month class and commended them for choosing to spend their evenings engaged in bettering themselves.

Permission for reprint of this article was given by Levi Holsapple of the Lyon County Herald Ledger.



A Modern Day Christmas Story

By Jeff Dees

Kentucky State Reformatory, Reentry Coordinator

Tony, 42, is currently on parole for Robbery 2nd Degree. He's been on parole since 5/12/2011 and is currently living at the Prodigal Ministries Wright House in Buckner, KY, just down the street from the Kentucky State Reformatory and Roederer Correctional Complex. Tony hopes to be known as a productive member of society instead of being an ex-offender. Tony's plan for being a productive member of society includes staying sober and to continue working at a local restaurant. Tony gave me some background information before he agreed to answer some questions about his life story.

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Tony says that he spent the last 25 years "acting crazy" and "had to endure a lot of pain before he surrendered." Tony said that everything is different about his life now compared with 10 years ago. Ten years ago, Tony said it was all about him. He owned a catering business but ended up selling it and was involved in "all kinds of criminal activity." Tony said that nothing was ever enough and he was always searching for more. He said that he had no spiritual understanding and had a selfish attitude.

Tony credits the Bridge Program at RCC and Prodigal Ministries for helping him on his journey to success. He said the Bridge Program helped reintroduce him to society by bringing in volunteers to share stories and provide encouragement. Tony said he's thankful to Prodigal Ministries for providing a safe place to stay that is drug and alcohol free. He said the staff have an interest in helping the residents. Tony also listed several individuals from the DOC by name when I asked if anyone inside the institution had been a mentor or helped him out. Tony mentioned Tommy Thompson from The Bridge, Psychologist Billie Stockton from Blackburn Correctional Complex, Mike May, Nick Dunaway, Tim Parrish and Danny Terry from KCI at BCC. Tony said they treated him like an employee in KCI instead of just an inmate. From RCC, Tony mentioned Sheila Rucker from the SAP program, Jack Cummins in maintenance and Deputy Warden Sharon Veech because of the way that she talked with the inmates.

I asked Tony if there was anything he thought was particularly helpful about any of the DOC Reentry programs. He said that there was good information but felt there needs to be more enthusiasm from the staff. "It's not the message, it's how it's delivered." Tony said although he didn't want to do SAP at first, he says he did learn how to be accountable to your boss, your sponsor and yourself. When I asked if he thought there was anything we could do different in Reentry he suggested we bring in real recovery. What he means by "real recovery" is more help from outside AA and NA groups. "Keep it simple, work the steps."

Today Tony says that through prayer and meditation, he asks to stay sober and to be able to help someone everyday. Tony said he is

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spiritual now and has a personal relationship with God. "It's been a hell of a journey." Tony is currently working as a cook at 119 Main St. in LaGrange. Michael Reiddy, owner of the Irish Rover Too (where Tony has also worked) said that Tony did a great job and was one of the best employees he had. As for his future plans, Tony said he wants to continue working in the food service industry whether it is a catering business, restaurant or hotel. "I enjoy seeing other people enjoy the food I've cooked." Tony also hopes to come back to the institution someday as a mentor/volunteer. Tony said he just wants to be part of a community again and has found more openness in Oldham County than he would have ever imagined. He says he never would have dreamed that (former RCC Warden) James Sweatt and others would care so much. "I see Oldham County as home." It may be too soon to call Tony a success story but he is certainly on the right path. Tony said he's sorry for the things he's done but is glad of who he has become. "Hopefully someone will benefit from my experience."

Tony is currently working as a cook at 119 Main Street in LaGrange for Michael Reiddy, owner of the Irish Rover Too. He wants to continue working in the food service industry.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS



QUESTION: When can I go to low supervision?

ANSWER: When you are able to catch up on your fees, obtain employment, obtain GED and follow all conditions of supervision.

QUESTION: Do you have a list of jobs?

ANSWER: Yes. The Reentry Coordinators in the institutions and Probation and Parole Officers have a list of companies in the United States that may hire ex-felons.

This information is provided by the New Jersey Department of Corrections, Division of Programs and Community Services, Office of Transitional Services. The title "What About Me?" is a guide for discussing your incarceration with your children.

Telling the Children

It is a difficult decision to tell children that a family member, particularly a parent, is incarcerated. Parental shame or fears that your child will think less of the incarcerated family member can interfere with appropriate discussions. While it is ultimately a parent or caregiver's decision to inform the children, there are several issues that must be considered. Here are some hints:

If children are not given an answer or a plausible explanation, they may fantasize their own explanation to fill the void. Children may blame themselves and feel that they have contributed to the incarcerated parent being absent.

Children are also smart. While they can be convinced that the incarcerated parent or family member is in the hospital, working for the government, on vacation, or in school, the child may become distrustful or confused by the discrepancy between what they are told and what they experience. Additionally, it is better for a child to find out that a family member is in prison from a caregiver rather than in the school yard or in the media.

In telling a child that a family member is in prison, it is important to keep the explanation simple and age appropriate. *Generally speaking, a "keep it simple" explanation includes:*

- A declaration of the incarcerated parent or family member's love and care for the child;
- A statement that the incarceration is not related to any fault on the part of the child;
- That the incarceration is due to the incarcerated parent making a mistake that led to incarceration;
- Some indication of the duration of the absence of the family member from the child;
- A description of any future contact between the incarcerated parent with the child by mail by phone, or in visitation.

Consideration can be given to include the incarcerated family member during the explanation, if you or the courts decide that there will be parental contact inside an institution.

There needs to be preparation and time to answer your child's questions about prison, prison life, the crime, and the safety of the incarcerated parent.

It is better to say "I don't know" and to find the correct answer for your child. Some children will not ask questions at the time of the explanation, but pose questions over the course of many days as they incorporate the information and any feelings that they may experience.

Children may also need guidance in dealing with stigmatization and teasing that they may experience in the playground. If the child is told to not publicly share information that a parent is incarcerated, the child may need to be given a plausible explanation to share with others. Children at school are aware and accepting of single parent families and non custodial parents living in other communities. It may be enough to tell your child to share with others that the parents are separated. It may not be surprising that the responses and concerns of children of incarcerated parents can bear striking similarities to the responses of the children of separating and divorced parents.

You as a parent or caregiver may need to be aware of any attitudes and behaviors that are passed to the children during the explanation. Prisons are not normal places to be and criminal behavior is not appropriate. The process of talking with children is to normalize their experience and feelings without normalizing prison or crime. It may be important to you to sort through feelings and the explanation that you will use with a care professional.

There are some excellent print resources available to assist in telling the children about the incarceration of a family member. These include *When Your Parent is in Jail* by Maureen Whirtbold, *When a Parent is in Jail* by Stephanie St. Pierre, *When Andy's Father went to Prison* by Martha Hickman, and *Two in Every 100* by Meg Chrisman.

Research has shown that children with an incarcerated parent are significantly more likely to become incarcerated themselves. An interruption of a potential cycle of second generation of criminal activity is necessary for effective crime prevention. Telling the children may start the process.