



# Shreveport DRC Update

OCTOBER 2020

## WELCOME

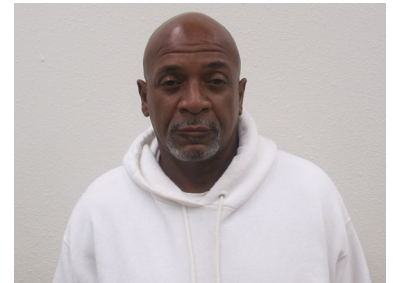


**Justin Jones**  
*Program Manager*

While normalcy has been disrupted for many during the pandemic, the Shreveport DRC has made great strides in continuing services for our participants. At the same time, we have also made changes to reduce the spread of the virus from person to person. Currently, we're using a hybrid model that involves in-person services as well as remote services, including doing some sessions over the phone and using Microsoft Teams for video conferencing. While we will eventually allow for more in-person services, our hybrid system has been running smoothly with more than 20 participants currently enrolled in the program. Until then, we will continue to provide the highest level of service to participants while following guidelines from the CDC and local officials. Also, going forward, the Shreveport DRC will once again be announcing the parole officer who referred the most participants to our program for the month. These are officers employed by our main referral source and partner, the Louisiana Department of Public Safety and Corrections' Division of Probation and Parole. September's highest referring officer was Officer Kathy Gipa-Reedy, and Officer Danny Hodges had the most referrals for August. Congratulations to both and thank you for reading our October update. Please stay safe!

## SPOTLIGHT ON... CLARENCE W.

Clarence W. began the DRC program in April and has already made it to the last step! At first, he was reluctant to attend, he said, but his impression changed once he began learning some helpful things and participating in more social interactions. "The hardest part for me was just getting used to people again," said Clarence, "because I had been locked up for 20 years." The most helpful classes, which he was able to attend in-person, were Thinking for Change and MRT, he said, because they taught him to stop and think before acting. Clarence, who now has a job remodeling houses, said his advice to someone just starting the program is: "You will only get out of the program what you give to it. If you don't participate, you won't learn anything."



## DID YOU KNOW?

GEO Reentry Services' **Community Connections** program links parolees with representatives from social services, governmental agencies, faith-based organizations, community groups and businesses. These valuable local service providers offer participants useful information about employment, vocational training, education, family services, food, clothing, housing, mental health, identification, substance abuse, support groups, mentoring and legal assistance. During the pandemic, staff at GEO Reentry centers nationwide took initiative to develop additional programming so that participants could access such essential resources while centers' in-person services were modified or suspended. Efforts included bringing in representatives from the state workforce commission to help participants fill out job applications, connecting with nearby community colleges to offer remote and in-person GED tutoring and building relationships with local retailers and restaurants to donate food and hygiene items, which program staff delivered to participants' homes. Through compassion and innovation, GEO Reentry staff helped program participants hold onto progress made prior to the pandemic and continue their reentry journeys without interruption.

*By Wendy Dressler, GEO Care Research Analyst*

