



# Baton Rouge DRC Update

APRIL 2020

## WELCOME



**Timithia Hall**  
Program Manager

This quarter began with the global crisis of COVID-19, in which all scheduled events had to be postponed until further notice. But while normalcy for many has been disrupted, the Baton Rouge DRC has made great efforts to continue services for our participants while making changes to reduce the spread of the virus from person to person, including modifying hours of operations and offering remote programming. All services that can be provided telephonically are being provided as such, including participant check-ins, individual cognitive behavioral therapy and homework assignments, all of which are held weekly during a mutually agreed upon time between the participant and the case manager. While participants are not allowed to come into the

facility due to the stay-at-home order mandated by the governor, they still have access upon request to the monthly donations we receive from our sister DRC in Covington, including prepackaged meals and toiletries. Here at the Baton Rouge DRC, we understand that when a crisis occurs, individuals undergoing treatment not only need continued assistance to get through past issues, but reassurance on how to address new issues using recently learned and adopted skills. As this crisis continues, we will keep on providing the highest level of service to our participants, while following guidelines from the CDC and local government officials. Thanks for reading our April update, and please stay safe!



## SPOTLIGHT ON... CASE MANAGERS TORREY WILLIAMS AND ANTONIO FINLEY



**Torrey Williams**  
Case Manager



**Antonio Finley**  
Case Manager

During the COVID-19 pandemic, DRC case managers Torrey Williams and Antonio Finley have taken it upon themselves to address participants' needs in new and creative ways. Every day, they continue to reach out to felon-friendly businesses, submitting job applications on behalf of participants who are less computer-literate; arranging pick-up for items donated to participants, including food, clothing, toiletries and sanitizing materials like Lysol and gloves; and mailing out GED and jobs materials, information on community resources, CBT worksheets and other class materials to participants' homes. At the same time, Williams and Finley have implemented a new system of accountability for clients. While the center is currently closed to the public, Williams and Finley have been checking in with participants every week, while holding them accountable to call in daily for check-ins. **"We want to show them that just because you haven't been coming in doesn't mean you aren't able to reach out to your case manager,"** said Williams.

**"We're just letting them know that we're still moving forward and that we have their best interests in mind. We cater to the individual in that way."** Williams and Finley each graduated from Southern University with bachelor's degrees in criminal justice, and Williams previously worked as a case manager for Catholic Charities. Said Finley, who began at the DRC in 2019 as a client services specialist, the best part of his job is **"to know you're able to put someone on the right path to better their lives, even though they have been in situations where others thought they weren't good enough."**

## DID YOU KNOW?

By Wendy Dressler, GEO Care Research Analyst

Criminal justice researchers have spent decades asking: Why do offenders stop offending? At GEO Reentry we ask: How can we successfully assist citizens to reintegrate back to the community?

**Desistance theory** attempts to explain both questions, arguing that with the proper tools, an offender can become a reformed person. The “desister” must choose to initiate change and be motivated by something in his or her life. The individual must state that they want to “stop offending,” and they “feel like they can stop offending.” Researchers\* identified three types of offenders: 1) Confident, the individual wants to stop offending, feels that they can stop offending, and their supervising officer agrees; 2) Optimistic, the individual wants to stop offending, feels they can, but their supervising officer disagrees; and Pessimistic, the individual does not want to stop offending. Desistance from crime is a gradual process of change and is evident by a reduction in offense severity and frequency. Therefore, it is crucial to reward individuals for every small step they make toward change.

\*Burnett, R. (1992). *The Dynamics of Recidivism*, Centre for Criminological Research, University of Oxford, England.

