



Richmond City Sheriff's Office
Sheriff C. T. Woody, Jr.



PRESS RELEASE

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SHERIFF C.T. WOODY, JR. ANNOUNCES RESULTS OF RECIDIVISM STUDY

Richmond, VA— Earlier today, Sheriff C.T. Woody, Jr. released the results of an independent study conducted by University of Richmond professor, Dr. Lisa Jobe-Shields, over the course of one year which measured the recidivism rates of residents in the Richmond City Justice Center and of those in Sheriff Woody's Recovering from Everyday Addictive Lifestyles (REAL) Program. The REAL Program follows an evidence based model, which serves both men and women at the Richmond City Justice Center (RCJC), and takes a behavioral modification approach, combined with education and skills training, which is designed to reduce the chance of recidivism for those who take part in the program.

This study revealed that meaningful and continuous participation in behavioral modification programs, like the REAL program, significantly reduce the likelihood of an individual returning to a correctional facility within a year of their release date. The national average of recidivism hovers between 60-65%. This study found that individuals who participated in the REAL program for more than 90 days had a recidivism rate of 30% compared to the 55% recidivism rate of those who chose to not participate.

“We are very pleased with the results of this study, which provides further evidence that programs like the REAL Program can work if implemented properly,” said Sheriff Woody. “We cannot arrest away the problem of addiction. 95% of people that are incarcerated at the Richmond City Justice Center are going to be released back into the community. I have always said that I would rather release a better citizen than a better criminal, and once that person is released, I do not want to see them return to the jail.” Sheriff Woody continued, “This study shows that evidence based programs, such as the REAL program, reduces an individual’s likelihood to return to a local correctional facility. This research should serve as a guide for other rehabilitation and recovery programs in other jails.”

The Richmond City Sheriff's Office is responsible for maintaining a secure jail and a safe court system, along with seamless inmate transport and civil process to preserve public safety. We remain committed to performing these duties with unsurpassed integrity and professionalism, with progressive training that incorporates best practices and technology. While partnering with the community, we strive to lower recidivism by providing faith-based and community-based programming that empowers ex-offenders to become productive members of society.

REAL Program alumni, Sherman Green, joined Sheriff Woody, Program Director Dr. Scarbrough and Researcher Dr. Lisa Jobe-Shields at the announcement. Green shared that he came to the program initially to be “more comfortable in jail.” However, after spending time in the intense behavior modification program, he began realizing what must change in order to break the cycle of recidivism, which at the time, was the only thing he knew. Growing up in a home with a father active in his addiction and consistently incarcerated, Green’s role models were drug dealers. Today, he shared, his new role model is Sheriff Woody – the very man that tied his tie before the start of the 2016 Father-Daughter Dance that Green was selected to participate in. During this time, Sheriff Woody quietly chatted with Green about making difference choices and told him, “If you ever need me, I am here.” With a tear coming down his cheek, Green shared, “that really touched me. To see he really cares. I carry that with me today.” Not a dry eye was had in the room at this point.

Program Director, Dr. Sarah Scarbrough, shared about future steps, which include taking a closer look at the various opportunities that individuals may take part in, in addition to the REAL Program, to include education, religion, and other small group activities. Additionally, greater details of post-release status will be examined in future research. Scarbrough shared, “these results are encouraging in this age of the drug epidemic and increasing crime and recidivism rates. Through this, we know what we are doing works and is changing lives. It is putting men and women back into the community to make a positive impact as citizens, tax-payers, parents, and family members. As a mom, seeing these moms and dads rebuild relationships with their children, as Sherman has done, it is incredible and why I come to work every day!”

These results come as the Internal Program Department is gearing up to launch and implement numerous new opportunities. This includes the pilot program for those battling mental health illnesses, which we received a grant from the Commonwealth for, recording an album in the recording studio with a Grammy winning band, the start of a male recovery house, and a drum-line.

The full study is attached with this press release or can be found on the Sheriff’s website.



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