

ARCH equips Catholics in the Diocese of Columbus with tools and resources to minister to the needs of the formerly incarcerated (returning citizens) and their families.



The above image was taken at an ARCH accompaniment training held at the St. Thomas More Newman Center, Columbus.

Contact Information

Program Director:

Wendy Tarr:
wtarr@svdpcolumbus.org

Program Coordinator:

Vanita Nevis:
vnevis@svdpcolumbus.org

ARCH Ministry Phone:

(614) 643-2140

Arch Ministry Email:

arch@svdpcolumbus.org

Website:

svdpcolumbus.org/arch

*Be Part of Restoring Hope to the
Formerly Incarcerated*

Accompanying with Hope

Personal Story by Thomas Scheid, Parishioner at St. Francis of Assisi, Columbus, ARCH participant

My interest in working directly with men returning from prison was based upon the work my wife has been doing the past few years as a member of the Society of St. Vincent de Paul and the Vincentian Ohio Action Network. As she talked more and more about the challenges faced by returning citizens, I felt more motivated to find a place where I could contribute. So, I accepted the invitation to the Accompaniment Training meeting. I was moved by the direct ties to our Catholic faith in doing this work, and by the passion of Jeff Daniels.

His presentation on developing a pre-release program at a local correctional facility was just what I needed to hear. Called Life Builders, it's a faith-based program of the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Corrections designed to prepare these men for life on the outside. We moved quickly to get the program up and running, and are now ready to start our second program cycle in the Fall. We are men from several different faiths, but united in our belief that this is something God has moved us to do. The affirmation we get at every meeting from the guys we are meeting with is an incredible experience.

I have learned so much about what is needed to help these men be successful on the outside, and what they can realistically expect in the way of help, and their faith that God will be there for them.

These men all have tough stories, and we spend a lot of time talking about positive ways they can make it in the community after their release. We have guys in the group whose whole outlook on themselves and their future can change in just a few weeks, depending upon whether good things have been going on in their life. It's amazing what a little bit of positivity can do for them. Achieving a GED, or even passing a section of the GED, was cause for celebration and affirmation from the whole group. Our presence, as friends and guides, represent the kind of good thing that can clearly make a difference. The class materials we use are clearly exposing them to new insights into themselves and their community, and giving them some tools to help them be successful after their release.



Fr. Michael Lumpe offers a spiritual reflection to Catholic business leaders during an ARCH strategy meeting at the Catholic Foundation.

Business Network

Employment is an essential need in the lives of those who are formerly incarcerated, enabling them to support themselves and their families. Therefore, an important component of ARCH is to be active in finding employment opportunities for returning citizens. They face many barriers to employment due to their criminal background. Catholic business leaders can make a real difference by providing jobs as well as employment support along the way. The ARCH Business Network is a network of Catholic employers

and business leaders that can offer this support, share best practices with each other, build a pool of employment opportunities, and provide linkages for returning citizens. Working with numerous workforce development agencies in the area, ARCH's Business Network can link potential employers willing to hire returning citizens seeking employment following incarceration with these agencies. As a ministry, ARCH also provides Catholic business leaders an opportunity to strengthen and grow in their own spiritual journey through offering jobs to those who need a second chance. "...when I was in prison, you visited me..." (Matthew 25:36).



Director of the ARCH Ministry, Wendy Tarr, speaking on a radio show about ARCH.

First Step Friday

First Step Friday is a reentry support event held the first Friday of every month. Its purpose is to help newly released individuals returning to Franklin County access critical "first step resources" they need for successful reintegration. The resource fair brings together a multitude of local nonprofit and state agencies such as the BMV, Social Security, Child Support and

Tips for Church Engagment

Tips provided by Eric Brooks, Our Lady of Perpetual Help, Grove City.

1. Keep returning citizens in prayer.
2. Find an advocate among your parish staff.
3. Get your pastor's permission before starting a parish ministry.
4. Approach parish groups and offer an ARCH speaker.
5. Build your list of interested parishioners.
6. Schedule an ARCH event or volunteer training.
7. Pray some more, get out of the way, and let the Holy Spirit do its work for you.



Eric Brooks shares at an ARCH meeting at Out Lady of Perpetual Help in Grove City.

Columbus State, to provide useful information and answer questions in a open setting. The goal is to create a simplified "one stop" that is hospitable and welcoming. Volunteers from the community are needed as onsite navigators and to help with various intake and exit procedures for the event. First Step Friday is held the **First Friday of every month from 10 am -12:30 pm at Ohio Means Jobs- 1111 East Broad Street Columbus, OH 43205.**

LEAF- Family Support



Do you or members of your community have a loved one or family member who is incarcerated? Please help us build the LEAF ministry. LEAF Ministry is a peer support group designed to help provide emotional support, resources, information referrals, and fellowship for families and friends of the incarcerated. Our meetings and webpage offer practical resources. LEAF addresses many of the difficulties families experience. Interested parishes can launch their own LEAF meetings. Training materials and support is provided by ARCH staff and trained LEAF facilitators.

Meetings are currently held the **second Sunday of the month** at **St. John Neumann Catholic Church, Sunbury** at 4 pm in Classroom 9. A group near to Ohio State University is likely to launch in Jan. 2019.

Additional resources for families of incarcerated individuals can be found at www.leafministry.org.



Warren Wright, President of St. Vincent de Paul Diocesan Council, testifies for criminal justice reforms at the Ohio Statehouse

"(Jesus) teaches us to see the world through his eyes -- eyes which are not scandalized by the dust picked up along the way, but want to cleanse, heal, and restore. He asks us to create new opportunities: for inmates, for their families, for correctional authorities, and for society as a whole."

- Pope Francis,
Sept. 27, 2015

Advocacy

SB 66, a bill we supported that helps non violent offenders, was signed into law by the Governor on 7/31/18. SB 66 expands judicial discretion, record sealing, allowing for unlimited misdemeanors and up to five felonies for nonviolent crimes. SB 66 removes the 1-year minimum prison sentence for a probation violation. SB 66 will now allow judges the ability to send individuals with a technical violation to a Community-Based Correctional facility (instead of prison) for up to 6 months. It also expands the judicial options for treatment-in-lieu of conviction and pretrial diversion programs.

The Safe and Healthy Ohio

Campaign successfully collected signatures to put "Issue One" on the November ballot. The initiative addresses those with low level drug possession charges, and does the following:

1. **Reward personal transformation** with earned credit to reduce prison sentences for certain crimes;
2. **Cut off the addiction-to-prison pipeline** reclassifying low level drug possessions to misdemeanors;
3. **Prohibit prison for technical violations of probation** when no new crimes have been committed.
4. **Reinvest at least \$100 million for healing and rehabilitation** in the local community from the money saved through the reduction of the prison population.



Mr. Eddie Slade is a restored citizen and reentry specialist. Mr. Slade teaches reentry skills and "Creating Lasting Family Connections" in the prisons and mentors people as they come home.

ARCH Makes a Difference

The following is an excerpt of testimony about the impact the ARCH ministry from restored citizen, Eddie Slade.

I can honestly say that ARCH has made a real difference in the direction of my life. As a convicted felon, and being removed from the outside world for many years, it was difficult for me to find housing at all. Since becoming involved with ARCH, I have had the chance to share my story with hundreds of people in local parishes. I have also been connected with realtors in the church who are helping me reach towards a big goal in my life --

owning my own home. I have been in discussions with the business alliance leaders about practical ways to turn my experience in reentry into a business. For example, ARCH has helped put me in a position to improve my employability and build my resume by sponsoring me for certification as a Master Trainer in the Creating Lasting Family Connections (CLFC) Curriculum, a program designed to support families of the incarcerated as well as those in prison. I am very excited and appreciative of the support and inspiration I have gained from my involvement with ARCH.

Reflection

"We are still a long way from the time when our conscience can be certain of having done everything possible to prevent crime and to control it effectively so that it no longer does harm and, at the same time, to offer to those who commit crimes a way of redeeming themselves and making a positive return to society. If all those in some way involved in the problem tried to . . . develop this line of thought, perhaps humanity as a whole could take a great step forward in creating a more serene and peaceful society."

Saint Pope John Paul II, July 9, 2000



ARCH was a partner in planning the Catholic Diocese Jail and Prison Ministry conference sponsored by the Diocese of Columbus Office for Social Concerns on April 2018 at St. Elizabeth Church in Columbus. The event had 150+ attendees.

Get Involved

To **Sign Up for Accompaniment Training**, or volunteer at **First Step Friday**, contact Vanita at vnevis@svdpcolumbus.org
To **Join our Business Network** contact Bob Gorman, rbrtgorman@gmail.com
To **Start a Leaf Ministry** or help with families, contact Angelita at 614-241-2540 or email us at leaf@svdpcolumbus.org
To **Schedule a Presentation** at your parish or **join our legislative efforts**, contact Wendy Tarr, wtarr@svdpcolumbus.org
Visit our webpage for more information at www.svdpcolumbus.org/arch



THE CATHOLIC FOUNDATION

ARCH is a joint ministry of the Catholic Diocese of Columbus' Office for Social Concerns and the Society of St. Vincent de Paul with the generous support of The Catholic Foundation.