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Vol XIV January 2004

President's Message

by Caroline Stewart

This message was delivered at the Annual Meeting on December 3, 2003:

Thank you all for supporting me in my new role as President of A New PATH. One week ago, while walking with a close friend, she scolded me for rushing and said, "Wow...you sure are Type A."

Well, this friend had me pegged. I am definitely someone who does not like to sit around when there is work to do. I hope that some of my Type A behavior will be put to good use helping our organization rise to new heights as a program dedicated to promoting drug and alcohol treatment in lieu of incarceration for nonviolent offenders.

As a social work professor, a psychotherapist and first and foremost, as a mother of a dually diagnosed son, walking won't do when addicts and their families are suffering and failing to receive the services they so desperately need.

The road to A New PATH has been a long and arduous one for my family and me. For us, the journey is far from over. My adult son is still deep into his addiction and trapped in denial.

His father and I grieve for him. We do not, however, grieve for ourselves. We have learned how to find peace and, yes, even happiness, through education and support from other recovering families and recovering addicts.

As the President of A New PATH, I look forward to helping others find this same peace of mind.

My goals for the Presidency are:

1. To keep it real. To work with other parents and their children in a parent-to-parent relationship.

Executive Director's Message

by Gretchen Burns Bergman

2003 was an incredible year for A New PATH! In looking over our scope of work for the Demand Treatment project I was impressed, amazed and exhausted by what we had accomplished. At the same time, I became critically aware of what we have yet to accomplish.

A few of the Highlights of 2003 include:

March: Media event to award District Attorney Bonnie Dumanis a Demand Treatment award and to bring focus to the problem of insufficient adolescent treatment services in our county and the high rate of heroin overdose deaths in San Diego.

June: Musical Gift to Recovery event to raise funds for the Self-Reflection Garden at Donovan State Prison.

July: Press Conference to announce the Ron Roberts Rehabilitation Fund and grant received from the county for the Garden and other projects

September: Third annual It Takes a Community...event in partnership with the Mental Health Association to reduce the stigma.

November: Faces of Recovery Calendar unveiled and three PATH Co-Founders received the Channel 10 Leadership Award.

Our plans for 2004 include:

- The completion of the Self-Reflection Garden at Donovan State Prison
- Harm Reduction Seminar with NCADD
- A media event to bring focus to the efforts to amend California's 3 Strikes
- A Parent Survival Kit for guidance and support for family members
- It Takes a Community...2004 with MHA
- An updated resource and referral guide
- Faces of Recovery 2005

Path Welcomes Your Involvement

In 2004 PATH will hold quarterly educational speaker meetings. Our next General meeting will be held on March 2nd 2004 at 7pm at Alvarado Parkway Institute, 7050 Parkway Drive in La Mesa (619-465-4411). We invite you to attend and to get more involved in our many projects to reduce the stigma of the disease of addiction and to increase substance abuse treatment options. For information call: 619-670-1184.

Schedule of General Meetings:

March 2, 2004

June 1, 2004

September 7, 2004

December 7, 2004

Our Board of Directors meets monthly at Scripps McDonald Center on the second Tuesday of each month at 6pm. Please let us know if you are interested in attending or if you would like to serve as a member of the Board of Directors: 619-670-1184.

SAVE THIS DATE

Feb. 6, 2003

Seminar Sponsored by A New PATH and NCADD
Theme: Harm Reduction

Speakers: Ethan Nadelmann, Luncheon Speaker
Pat Denning, Workshop Presenter
Location to be announced

For more information call: 619-670-1184

PATH is endorsed by

- ⇒ San Diego Psychiatric Society
- ⇒ Mental Health Association in San Diego County
- ⇒ NAMI San Diego
- ⇒ Friends of SD Psychiatric Society
- ⇒ Families to Amend California's Three-Strikes
- ⇒ The San Diego District Attorney's Office
- ⇒ Join Together/Demand Treatment

Resource Information:

A New PATH: 619-670-1184

AA Hotline: 619-265-8762

Alanon, Alateen: 619-296-2666

Naranon: 858-492-8720

NA Hotline: 619-584-1007

Central Public Defender: 619-338-4700

Juvenile Hall: 858-694-4500

Las Colinas Jail (women): 619-258-3176

Mental Health Assoc.: 619-543-0412

Probation: 619-515-8202

SD County Jail (men): 619-615-2808

SD Superior Court Central: 619-531-4420

SD County Alcohol & Drug Service Info. & Referral: 619-692-5727

Teen Drug Screen, Palmerado E.D., 858-694-8497

A New PATH 2003 Committees

Please help us move forward with our goals by joining one of our committees:

- ◆ Legislative & Prison Reform
- ◆ PR & Publicity
- ◆ Membership
- ◆ Education & Recovery
- ◆ Demand Treatment!
- ◆ It Takes a Community
- ◆ Fundraising

Contact the office at 619-670-1184 or email anewpath@cox.net to join a committee.

Please Help Support Our Cause by
Purchasing:

PATH T-shirts \$10
Resource Guides \$10
Musical Gift to Recovery CD's \$20
PATH License Plate Holders \$5
2004 Recovery Calendars \$15

through our office: 619-670-1184
or email: anewpath@cox.net.

If you would like us to mail any of these items to you, please add \$4.

A New PATH newsletter is published quarterly by the Parents for Addiction Treatment and Healing non-profit organization.

Gretchen Burns Bergman, Managing Editor
Jan Roach, Editor and Designer

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Demystifying Harm Reduction: Social, Political & Clinical Implications for Abstinence Based Treatment

Twenty three million Americans suffer from substance abuse addiction. Untreated addiction costs America \$400 billion per year (Brandeis Univ. Schneider Institute for Health Policy).

Harm reduction has been described as a public health philosophy that seeks to lessen the dangers that drug abuse and our drug policies have on society. For many who have endorsed the drug-free society ideal and the abstinence model of treatment, this philosophy can be seen as controversial and incompatible with our beliefs. But as substance abuse continues to constitute our number one public health problem, examining the variety of options to addressing this problem becomes increasingly important.

A New PATH and NCADD-SD are pleased to join forces in presenting a conference on Demystifying Harm Reduction February 6, 2004 from 8:00 AM to 2:30 PM at the San Diego Hilton Hotel in Mission Valley. This conference will provide education and information in order to stimulate thought and conversation that will bring about positive new solutions to the problems of substance abuse. We are most excited to have two outstanding speakers for this conference:

Ethan Nadelmann (luncheon speaker) is a dynamic and engaging presenter and an internationally recognized leader and advocate of drug policy reform.

Pat Denning, Ph.D. is a sought-after speaker and trainer on harm reduction clinical techniques. Her 3-hour morning workshop will focus on how harm reduction strategies can be integrated into abstinence-based treatment.

We encourage professionals, community leaders, health advocates, parents, people in recovery, concerned citizens, and others who may care about or assist others struggling with substance abuse issues to attend. For registration information call: PATH at 619-670-1184 or NCADD at 858-549-8949.

Individual: \$90 (Includes lunch & CEUs)
Student (ID required) or Senior (60+): \$80
Late registration or at the door:
Individual: \$100 (includes lunch & CEUs)
Student (ID required) or Senior (60+): \$90
Luncheon only: \$50

Alternative News Sources

www.anewpath.cc
www.jointogether.org
www.narconews.com
www.drcnet.org
www.reconsider.org
www.drugpolicy.org
www.sdchip.org

Self Reflection Garden

The physical work on the Self-Reflection Garden that is being created for inmates seeking recovery from substance abuse at Donovan State Prison will begin on January 30, 2004.

We received approval of the plans by the Warden and the land is being cleared of rocks in preparation for the ground breaking. A timeline is being created involving two phases with completion by the end of the year. Gretchen Burns Bergman and Sylvia Liwerant spoke to the inmates who will be involved in the project in December and received an enthusiastic response. A New PATH sees this as a first step in increasing addiction treatment behind bars.

We are tremendously excited about the new plans that have been drawn up by landscape architect Gary Stone. His insight about what we are trying to achieve in instilling hope and creating a serene haven where inmates can discover the strength within is apparent, and his donation of talent and skills is considerable. We appreciate his support as well as the support of Supervisor Ron Roberts who awarded \$20,000 in Community Project funds for this project and other current projects designed to increase access to substance abuse treatment and rehabilitation.

We also appreciate the generosity of individual donors. If you would like to contribute to this effort, please send your tax-deductible contribution to A New PATH, and indicate that the donation is going to the Ron Roberts Rehabilitation Fund.

Recovery Events 2004

Feb. 6: Conference on Harm Reduction Principles, presented by NCADD & PATH

March 28: Walk for Recovery, Balboa Park

May 29-31: War Memorial Recovery Dance, Balboa Park

June 26: Prop 36 Graduation Celebration, Balboa Park

September: National Alcohol & Drug Addiction Recovery Month

Sept. 18: It Takes a Community... Gala, presented by PATH & MHA

Oct. 21: Meeting of the Minds, Town & Country Hotel

PATH would like to thank:

⇒ **The California Endowment**
⇒ **The Fund for Drug Policy Reform of the Tides Foundation**
⇒ **Las Patronas**
⇒ **Join Together/Demand Treatment**
⇒ **San Diego County, Supervisor Ron Roberts**

For their generous support!

Proposition 36

Study Evaluates California Drug-Treatment Initiative
From Join Together Online 10/16/2003

A study tracking California's three-year-old addiction treatment initiative finds that more people are getting help instead of being sent to jail, the *Associated Press* reported October 15.

Under the voter-approved Proposition 36, which took effect in July 2001, first-time nonviolent drug offenders are sent to a treatment program rather than prison.

The University of California at Los Angeles study found a sharp increase in the number of admissions to treatment programs in the state's major counties: Kern County, 27 percent, Riverside County, 21 percent, Sacramento County, 17 percent, and San Diego County, 16 percent.

San Francisco was the only county not to see an increase, because it had a comprehensive diversion program and prosecution policy in place prior to the statewide initiative.

The study also found that existing drug programs are running into challenges with offenders with multiple or severe problems, such as mental illness, disability, or homelessness.

A New Way of Life

The Drug Policy Alliance has made a 13-minute video, A New Way of Life, which is available in English and Spanish, which teaches prospective participants in Prop 36 drug treatment diversion about their rights and responsibilities.

After viewing this video, those arrested for or convicted of a non-violent drug possession offense will have a fuller understanding, not only of what is expected of them under Prop 36, but the role the courts and drug treatment programs play in supporting their recovery from drug addiction.

According to the Drug Policy Alliance, "The first-hand testimony by Prop 36 participants can help motivate clients to work toward greater health, happiness and well being for themselves, their families and ultimately their communities." These videos can be viewed by going to the Prop 36 site: www.prop36.org. We have these videos in both English and Spanish at the PATH office if you would like to view it.



Addiction : A Major Public Health Problem

A recent National Survey on drug Use and Health concludes that 19.5 million Americans, or 8.3 percent of the population age 12 and older, used illegal drugs in 2002. This survey also estimated that 22 million Americans are addicted to alcohol and other drugs.

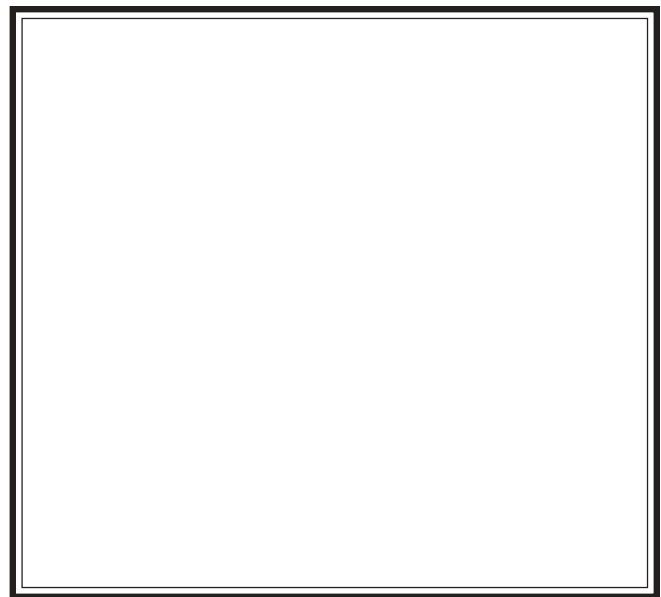
However, according to the report, "Only 1.4 million received specialized substance-abuse treatment for an illicit drug problem and 11.5 million received treatment for alcohol problems."

The Revolving Door of the Criminal Justice System

By Gretchen Burns Bergman

As a mother of a young man who has spent several years of his life caught up in the revolving door of the criminal justice and parole system (all for non-violent drug crimes and relapse), I am relieved to be seeing so many newspaper articles that deal with this subject. I also feel more optimistic because of viewing TV programs such as the recent 60 Minutes report and the West Wing program that dealt with the subject of Mandatory Minimums.

In recent years the California parole system has been involved in re-arrest and paper shuffling rather than helpful supervision. Sadly, many of our sons and daughters have become addicted to drugs, arrested, and put behind bars, where they receive a painful and hardening education on how to behave like a convict. They have become mere numbers in an inflated, expensive and damaging system. As Rulette Armstead, Assistant Chief of the San Diego Police, was quoted as saying in a Union Tribune article in November, "Law enforcement should be engaged in supporting the re-entry process". So, too, should our entire community!



For years we have known that transitional programs are key to successful reentry, yet the guidance to services such as drug treatment, job training, and even anger management is not happening. Confronting California's powerful Correctional Peace Officers Association is long overdue and reform of the entire parole system is both necessary and just. The discrimination must end in order for us to heal our families and communities who are losing so many young people in this punitive process. Instead, with proper care, understanding and services that are far less expensive than incarceration, we could be assisting these individuals to regain their lives and become contributing members of society.

From the Inside

with David Beck-Brown

Arts in Corrections

Can our prisons afford it?

As seen in the Union Tribune 1/22/04

Dismantling California's prison programs confounds seasoned correctional staff. Nothing like this has ever happened before. Previous prison programs were designed to rehabilitate inmates, provide them with job skills, or simply to keep them and their hands busy. Eliminating these programs should be seen as a red flag signaling future disaster, in and out of prison.

Vocational Education, Hobby Crafts, Arts in Corrections, Community Work Crews and exercise yards with free weight have been eliminated or emasculated.

The prison Vocational Education programs are gone. Machinery collects dust. Prison factories stand idle, empty as discarded steel mills. Equipment, tools and supplies are being removed and placed for future auction.

It took over twenty years to build these programs. Inmates manufactured eye glasses, lenses, clothing and several other products. It has taken only one year to see them eliminated. These programs provided inmates with an incentive to learn employable skills such as automobile repair, auto body and paint, janitorial services, and electronics. No more.

They also provided inmates with a motivation to improve their behavior; misbehave and they were out of the program. This gave staff leverage and created a safer work environment. California's economy will improve one day; however, when it does, the cost of replacing these programs and the machinery may be financially prohibitive.

While working on a prison yard recently, a lifer asked me about the prison Hobby Crafts program. He said he specializes in bead work. Other inmates create leather goods, belts, wallets and officer emergency alarm holders. Some work with folded paper making picture frames, or artwork for sale. Hobby Crafts is being eliminated in most of California prisons. Without an avenue to sell their work many inmates will not be able to buy tooth paste, deodorant or items we often refer to as incidentals. I know of one inmate who uses peanut butter for deodorant and jam for hair tonic when he no longer has money on his books.

"If I can't sell my beadwork, I'll be forced to make money doing things I don't want to do." I knew this wasn't a threat. This lifer was merely responding to the changes taking place within the California prison system. While incarcerated, convicts can make money by trafficking illicit drugs, or contracting themselves to make hits on other inmates or staff. Staff were once off limits. No more.

Thirteen correctional officers were injured in one recent prison riot alone. A significant segment of the prison population has reading and anger problems and will act out their frustration when not preoccupied with activities.

Aggression was once managed by providing weight lifting to inmates. California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger knows the benefits of weight lifting. Every prison yard had an exercise area larger than a full tennis court. Inmates would use this privilege of pumping iron and bulking up. If they misbehaved, the privilege was taken away from them. As they developed their exercise routine, their bodies became disciplined and healthy. Seeing these changes, many inmates stopped using drugs while in prison. A warden told me that the inmates pumping iron weren't the ones causing him trouble. Despite these benefits, several years ago radio talk shows successfully crusaded against the program and the prison weights were eliminated.

The Arts in Corrections program once served as an emotional and creative outlet for prison inmates. It was documented to reduce inmate recidivism as it paid for itself. Now, its contract artists have been eliminated. Arts in Corrections is now a transparent early release program, designed to get inmates out of prison for the purpose of saving the high cost of their incarceration.

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Faces of Recovery Calendar 2004

Thanks to so many of you our 2004 Faces of Recovery Calendar was a tremendous success. Letter-Kraft Printing did a beautiful job on the layout and printing, and the stories of each of the 13 individuals featured were moving and effective in combating the stigmatization of the disease of addiction.

We want to thank our sponsors who helped to make this project a reality:

Drug Policy Alliance
Sharp Mesa Vista / Vista Pacifica
Viejas Enterprises
Smith Barney
Scripps McDonald Center
SAMA Eyewear, Sam Vance Foundation
Caroline & Associates
Letter-Kraft Printing
Alvarado Parkway Institute
North County Serenity House
Body Tracks/ Maury Liwerant
Gretchen Productions
Citizens Against Violent Crime

We also appreciate the work of David Beck-Brown for cover design & portrait renderings; Tanya Bjork for cover composite; Kathy Foster for Photography; Dagmar Fields, Editing; Gretchen Burns Bergman, layout and editing; Leah Fine for sponsorship.

We are especially grateful to Kristy Marquart, Susan Burton, Stan Page, Leah Fine, Lee Hailey, Macquenzie Phillips, Jeanne McAlister, Claudia Dyson-Hightower, Chuck Negron, Mary Hubbard, Scott Silverman, Krista Oliver, and Jim Benson for sharing their lives with us so that others could benefit.

We met our goals for distribution and the calendars went all over the United States. There are still a few copies left at the PATH office if you would like to order one. Otherwise, watch for Faces of Recovery 2005 in December.

I would like to help A New PATH in Breaking the Stigma of Addiction by ordering:	
_____ Calendars (1-10) @ \$15.00 each	
_____ Calendars (11-30) @ \$12.00 each	
	Total: \$ _____
Name _____	
Address _____	

Reform of '3 strike' law on agenda for 2004

Orange County Register Commentary section
January 31 2003

One might prefer that it had come - and come long ago - as a spontaneous outburst against injustice and the possibility of injustice. But if California's "three strikes" law ends up being amended by initiative, as now seems possible, more because of concern over unnecessary spending and burgeoning deficits ... well, we'll take this reform any way we can get it.

We have written often about how California's "three strikes" law, passed in 1994 in the wake of widespread indignation over the abduction and murder of Polly Klaas, differs from "enhanced sentencing" laws in other states. In California a "third strike," which leads to an automatic 25-years-to-life sentence, does not have to be a violent felony, just a "serious" felony. Thus people are serving life sentences for petty theft or drug dealing, and California taxpayers are paying the price.

Polly Klaas' grandfather, Joe Klaas, now "regrets that the law passed in her name casts too wide a net, fails to target the hard core offenders it set out to reach, and has diverted critical funds from crime prevention and education," as he wrote on the Web site of Citizens Against Violent Crime, of which he is chairman. CAVC (www.amend3strikes.com) received word last week from the California Secretary of State that its proposed initiative amendment to the "three strikes" law has met the

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Slow-Release Buprenorphine Effective Heroin Treatment

According to an article in Join Together Online on 1/13/2004: A new study finds that a shot of buprenorphine in slow-release form is effective in curbing the withdrawal symptoms of individuals addicted to heroin, the *Melbourne Herald Sun* reported Jan. 9. The US study found that buprenorphine eliminated withdrawal symptoms, reduced the effects of heroin and detoxified patients within a six-week period.

Buprenorphine, now distributed under the name of Suboxone, has been proven to be effective in treating the chronic illness of opioid addiction. A New PATH is very optimistic about the effectiveness of this medication and are hopeful that it will help to reduce the stigma of the disease of addiction and further legitimize it as a medical condition.

For a listing of physicians qualified to treat opioid addiction with Suboxone (buprenorphine) in San Diego County, see the October 2003 PATH newsletter at www.anewpath.cc, or you can call the PATH office at 619-670-1184.

Reform of '3 strike' law

Continued from page 6

legal requirements to be available for signatures.

We talked with Jim Benson, CAVC campaign chairman for the initiative, at his office in Garden Grove. He told us CAVC has enough money and pledges to get the measure qualified for the ballot. "After that it's a question of how persuasive a campaign we run," he said.

As Thomas Jefferson put it, "Punishments I know are necessary, and I would provide them, strict and inflexible, but proportioned to the crime." Disproportionate punishments, he believed, are unjust in themselves, and also encourage people to look the other way rather than strictly enforce laws.

That's the case in California. Criminologists estimate that the enhanced punishment for non-violent crimes in California's "three strikes" law costs taxpayers an extra \$700 million to \$1 billion per year. That's money we don't need to be spending, especially since there's little or no evidence that it serves as a deterrent to crime.

President's Message

Continued from page 1

2. To continue forging networks between A New PATH and allied therapeutic and educational organizations.

3. To promote improved clinical sophistication and livability of sober living facilities.

4. To continue the current high standard of community outreach and education.

It is my sincerest belief that A New PATH can best reach its goals through hard work, a strong value placed on empathy and finally, on the essential spirit of forgiveness. For who of we parents have not felt rage and injury from the terrible monster of addiction. Yet to move forward, we must first forgive. To quote a disciple of Martin Luther King:

"There is incredible power in forgiveness. But forgiveness is not rational. One can seldom find a reason to forgive or be forgiven. Forgiveness is often undeserved. It may require a dimension of justice, but not always, for what it holds sacred is not fairness, but self-respect and community. Forgiveness does not wipe away guilt, but invites reconciliation. It is as important to be able to forgive as it is to be forgiven."

(Andy Bacchus, Unitarian Universalist Minister)

Thank you all for your support. I look forward to a productive and successful new year.

From the Inside

Continued from page 5

Do you recall seeing prison work crews clearing trash from our public parks, river bottoms, trolley and Cal Trans sites lately? These services were provided for free. The prison work crews were composed of eight to eleven well-behaved, minimum security inmates. The inmates looked forward to getting away from prison. They were on their best behavior on and off prison grounds. The community programs have ended. The crews that continue to work in the community are contracted out, working for profit.

Can California afford to eliminate inmate programs at the cost of public safety? What is the medical cost for rehabilitating an injured correctional officer? Now, multiply this cost by thirteen, the number of injured officers in only one prison riot. There are 33 state prisons in California and all of them have several segregated prison yards. Riots are common in every prison and in most yards. Now, add the cost of paying the officers' salary during their convalescence. Inmate programs are designed to relieve the emotional tensions inherent within our penal system.

How much money does it cost to clean up after a prison riot? Injured inmates need medical care. With an abundance of lifers being sentenced through California's mismanaged 3-strikes law, how much more will it cost us to care for aged and ailing inmates who pose no threat to society?

With little consideration to the human factor, or the long range impact on California, the previous prison administration eliminated these programs as a quick fix to the budget crises. The consensus of many people working in our prisons is that this short fix will have dire consequences to the future safety and welfare of California. As a child, I was told not to be penny wise and dollar foolish. Some lessons are worth remembering.

David Beck-Brown, Prison Reform and Legislation Chairman for A New Path (Parents for Addiction Treatment and Healing). He has worked in prisons since 1977.

Executive Director's Message

Continued from page 1

Tom O'Donnell, Co-Founder of A New PATH served as a strong and effective President of the Board last year, and we thank him from the bottom of our hearts. We also welcome Caroline Stewart as this year's President of the Board. She has great enthusiasm and energy and brings a clear vision for accomplishing our goals for 2004.

We sincerely appreciate your membership and support. Together we are making a difference and we will continue to expand our efforts until we see an end to discrimination against people who suffer from the disease of addiction.

Gene Linked to Alcohol Addiction

Join Together Online 1/16/2004

A 15-year study has resulted in the identification of a specific gene that may increase the risk of alcohol dependence, the San Antonio Express-News reported Jan. 15. The \$65 million federally-funded Collaborative Study on the Genetics of Alcoholism (COGA) included 10,000 participants with a history of alcohol addiction.

The research was conducted at 6 locations. In St. Louis, scientists isolated a gene on chromosome 15 that appears to be connected to alcohol addiction. The gene is involved in the regulation of gamma-amino butyric acid (GABA), which is a chemical in the brain that helps to send messages between neurons. Previous research has shown that GABA alters behavior and is linked to psychiatric disorders.

“Stimulating GABA receptors will increase behavioral effects of alcohol, like motor coordination and reduction of anxiety,” said Danielle Dick, a professor of psychiatry at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis and principal author of the study.

Arizona Drug Inmates Eligible for Release

Join Together Online 1/12/2004

As a result of a new state law, hundreds of drug offenders in Arizona’s prisons are eligible for early release, the Arizona Republic reported Jan. 2.

This law is aimed at reducing the state’s prison costs by focusing on rehabilitating nonviolent drug offenders, releasing them into a transitional-services network.

Legislative summaries show that 4,800 drug inmates, or 16 percent of Arizona’s prison population, could qualify for the program. However, because of a \$500,000 budget cap for the first year of the program, less than 200 prisoners would be placed in the program during 2004.

Although the law took effect Jan. 1, Department of Corrections officials have yet to implement the early release program. Logistics of the program involve hiring a private contractor or non-profit agency to establish four or more offices that would provide addiction treatment, educational development services, housing assistance, and employment services for those inmates granted early release.

Amend California’s Three Strikes Law

By Gretchen Burns Bergman

On January 12, 2004 Citizens Against Violent Crime started a petition drive to place a 3-Strikes amendment on the November 2004 ballot. Currently both volunteer and paid petitions are being circulated. To ensure success in both the petition drive and the election to follow we need your commitment and help.

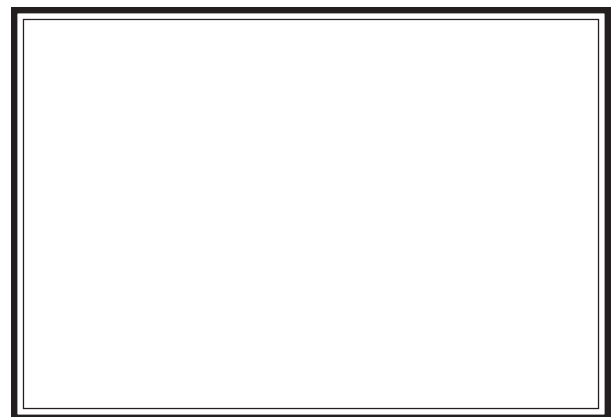
According to Jim Benson, Vice Chair of Citizens Against Violent Crime, “Our success will depend on each and everyone of you committing to dedicate time and money to this campaign. Every signature you get saves the campaign \$1.25. Our goal is to get at least 100,000 signatures from volunteers.

Yes, we have some good solid backers, but that alone will not win this campaign. We will need people and as much money as everyone can spare because the Prison Guard Union and the private prison interests will fight us every step of the way.”

Sixty five percent of the 42,703 prisoners serving Second and Third Strikes sentences were convicted of non-violent, non-serious crimes. Three Strikes costs taxpayers more than \$500 million per year. Most strike-enhanced sentences are given to ethnic minorities and to the poor.

A New PATH supports the efforts of Citizens Against Violent Crime and Families to Amend California’s Three Strikes Law to apply only to serious or violent crimes. Too many people who suffer from the disease of addiction have been sentenced to 25 years to life because of this law. We believe that the law should be changed to apply only to violent offenses.

Please let us know if you will help us circulate petitions to get this amendment on the ballot in 2004. We need them to be circulated and signed right away. Please call us at 619-670-1184 and we will get the petitions to you. You can also go to www.amend3strikes.com or call the petition line at the CAVC office at 714-547-9866.



Many Parole Violators Will Avoid Prison

California agrees to divert thousands of nonviolent offenders into programs.

By Jenifer Warren, Times Staff Writer
November 19, 2003

SACRAMENTO — The Schwarzenegger administration agreed to a court settlement Tuesday that will keep thousands of nonviolent parole violators out of prison, a move expected to save the state money in years ahead by reducing the population behind bars.

But it promptly stirred the concern of victims' advocates, who fear it might jeopardize public safety.

The settlement, which must be approved by a federal judge, resolves a 9-year-old class-action lawsuit brought by ex-convicts who claimed California's system for handling parole violators was unconstitutional.

Under the agreement, thousands of parolees who now go directly to jail or prison to await a hearing on their alleged parole violation may instead be diverted to a residential drug treatment center, home detention or electronic monitoring, among other options.

That new approach, to begin in January, would apply only to parolees whose records are free of violent or serious felonies and whose parole violations are considered "administrative." An administrative violation would include a positive drug test or failure to meet with a parole agent as scheduled.

Officials overseeing the change predicted that by 2006, the number of parole violators returned to prison every year in California — now about 100,000 — would be cut by nearly a third, saving the state millions and perhaps leading to the closure of a prison.

"Some people will view this as soft on crime, but that's not the case," said Michael Brady, deputy secretary of the Youth and Adult Correctional Agency and the lead negotiator for the state. "Instead, we are taking people whose underlying problem is substance abuse and making sure they get help and get the tools they need to become law-abiding citizens."

The settlement comes one week after a state watchdog panel, the Little Hoover Commission, criticized the California correctional system for failing to prepare inmates for release and for recycling parolees in and out of prison.

It also comes on Day 2 of Arnold Schwarzenegger's governorship. Brady said the settlement — stalled under former Gov. Gray Davis — proved that the new administration "is about change, about efficiency in government and about doing what's right for the state."

Brady added that had the parties failed to come to an agreement, a judge's order — issued in July but delayed pending further negotiations — would have saddled the state with a costly and more difficult remedy.

Lawyers for the ex-convicts who filed the suit praised the settlement as bringing "radical" change to a system that has habitually incarcerated parolees for months without a hearing, at substantial cost to the state.

"This agreement will take a process that has been running out of

control and make it fair and effective for both the parolee and the state," said lawyer Donald Specter.

A spokeswoman for one victims group, however, worried that the new approach might jeopardize public safety. "Let's see what happens to the crime rate," said Maggie Elvey of Crime Victims United. "If they can guarantee us that these violators won't re-offend and hurt someone while they're out, then fine. But they can't."

Also skeptical were officials with the California Correctional Peace Officers Assn., which represents prison guards and parole agents. Lance Corcoran, vice president of the union, worried that agents might be prevented from imprisoning parolees whose violations merit it.

"With some individuals, it doesn't matter what rehabilitative opportunities we provide. They're hell-bent on living a certain [criminal] lifestyle," Corcoran said. "So if the agent doesn't have the ability to re-incarcerate that type of person, is public safety truly being served?"

Under current regulations, ex-felons arrested on suspicion of violating their parole are entitled to a hearing on the charge within 45 days. But because of a backlog, many parolees languish behind bars for twice that or longer before their case is heard. The pact sets up a new system. Immediately after their arrest, parolees will be screened to determine the seriousness of the violation.

Those not diverted must be provided with a "probable cause" hearing before an administrative judge within 10 business days — and, in a major change, must be provided with an attorney. Previously, only the mentally ill and a few other categories of parolees were entitled to an attorney.

At the hearing, the parolee will be presented with a proposed deal offering a certain term in prison for the violation. Officials expect 80% of the cases will be disposed of this way — rather than at a second parole revocation hearing — thus saving the state money.

"One of the biggest problems with the current system is that parolees often didn't understand the hearing process," said Thomas Patterson, the deputy attorney general who represented the state.

In overhauling how the state treats parole violators, the settlement answers a chorus of criticism. In addition to the Little Hoover Commission's report, the state inspector general's office has attacked the system, reporting that 81% of parolees charged with violations spent longer than the specified 45 days in prison awaiting a hearing.

The inspector general also found that in many cases, by the time parolees made it to their hearing, they had already served as much or more time than the sentence they would receive for their violation.

"I believe that in five years, this settlement will have saved hundreds of thousands of lives, reduced the prison population and prison budget — without jeopardizing public safety," Brady said.