

**Tennessee Community Resource Board
Riverbend Maximum Security Institute
October 19, 2018**

TCRB Representatives:

Rev. Michael Rickenbaker, Chairman / West TN Representative	(P)
Mario Allen, Member / West TN Representative	(A)
Vinessa J. Brown, Member / West TN Representative	(P)
Paul Hensley, Member / West TN Representative	(P)
Thurston S. Smith, Member / West TN Representative	(A)
J.R. Davis, Member / Middle TN Representative	(A)
Joan Evrist, Secretary / Middle TN Representative	(P)
Tom Hallquist, Treasurer / Middle TN Representative	(P)
Ronda Waters, Member / Middle TN Representative	(A)
Tommy Mathis, Member / Middle TN Representative	(P)
Sean Driscoll, Member / East TN Representative	(P)
Raeanne Hance, Member / East TN Representative	(P)
Lee Ragsdale, Member / East TN Representative	(P)
Rep. William Lamberth, House Representative	(A)

TDOC Representatives:

Reverend Brian Darnell, Director of Religious Services	(P)
Cindy Sword, Assistant to Reverend Darnell	(P)
Eric Qualls, Director of Reentry	(P)
Jody Khan, RMSI Reentry	(P)

Guests:

Vicki Helgesen, Leaving The Cocoon
Brandi Ghergig, United Way VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance)

Call To Order – Michael Rickenbaker
9:00 a.m.

Welcome

- Michael Rickenbaker welcomes everyone. Introduces Eric Qualls.

Volunteer Income Tax Assistance – Brandi Ghergig

- Eric Qualls introduces Brandi Ghergig with VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance).
- Brandi Ghergig – VITA provides free tax prep. Brandi works for United Way of Metro Nashville. VITA started 40 years ago, and now is an IRS program. They have a 31-county coverage, mostly in Mid TN. They work with other non-profits to operate these sites. They train over 300 volunteers a year for IRS training. Every volunteer has to be certified yearly to prepare taxes. Want people to have high quality tax returns. The prison has a big need for proper tax preparation. They follow IRS regulations. Have a 7-hour tax law training. Want to have all volunteers trained and certified. Training begins in December for next year. They come to class, go online and certify. They will get a booklet to prepare for the test with all the test questions.

Takes 35-40 hours to get certified, and it is free. Cannot prepare returns for incomes over \$65K a year. Go online to find out more of how to become a volunteer www.volunteerforvita.org. Contact person for this is Eric Qualls.

- Michael Rickenbaker – If we start training in December, how quickly can we get info so we know now if we need to solicit volunteers, etc.? How would training work exactly? What do we tell our volunteers?
- Eric Qualls - Still to be determined. There isn't a site map yet, but Brandi can get VITA site reps to whoever wants that info.
- Michael Rickenbaker – I would like to involve and get input from Thurston Smith also about this VITA conversation (Thurston is not in attendance today).

Prayer – Reverend Darnell

Comments from Chairman Rickenbaker

- As the Chairman, please allow me to bring and keep things in order. Your opinions and involvement on this board are very important. I want to make sure we cover our agenda, so please wait to be addressed by the Chairman.
- We welcome our newest Board Member, Tommy Mathis, who works with Men of Valor. Opened a new facility in Nashville to house 50 men. He is involved in aftercare re-entry.

Review and Approve Minutes of Previous Meeting

- Motion made by Lee Ragsdale
- Seconded motion by Leanne Hance
- All approve

Update on Education – Tom Hallquist

- Tom Hallquist – Teaching GED classes and would like to see more said about our GED program from the TDOC. Also, to see the GED graduates be able to pursue an Associates degree. I've been working on a paper about societal influence on inmates who are released. How do we change the mindset from fixed to growth? And how do we change the perception of the community towards inmates who are coming back into society?
- Michael Rickenbaker – We do not have an active 501C3 at present but something to consider in the future.
- Sean Driscoll – I would like to see numbers so that we are able to help the TDOC. Is the public supporting what the TDOC is doing? Let us educate the community about what the TDOC is doing.
- Vicki Helgesen – I suggest that Reverend Darnell or Eric Qualls get on TED.com and share what we are doing. Let's make sure that Mr. Smith sees this and is able to input as well. Also YouTube is a great venue for this.
- Lee Ragsdale – Who is it that we need to bring the communications to the forefront? Not to the "choir" but to those who don't know.

TDOC / Take One Presentations

- Reverend Darnell – Chaplain Walker and I have placed 400 matches. We are doing group mentoring – encouraging group mentoring not just one-on-one. In group mentoring we start as a group and then break into one-on-one. Also, we are trying to do needs assessment. We're

also trying to bring to the table some professionals – using what we have. We have a goal of 1000 participants, but not just for numbers' sake. We should have 720 right now. We will be encouraging Chaplains to go through their facilities and give another call for Take One participants who are getting ready to get out. The matches are driven by the Chaplains, but also volunteers are very active in it as well. Our challenge is that some believe in this program and some don't. I'm trying to be out and about in the community and find matches. If you know a church that wants to be placed send them to me. TDOC does recognize Leaving The Cocoon and Men of Valor as Take One ministries. Community is vital to Take One.

- Reanne Hance – For clarity about the training for Take One, is there a separate training for Take One mentors to learn about things like manipulation, how to not get emotionally involved, how to handle different situations with inmates coming out of the prison, etc.?
- Michael Rickenbaker – Since Take One began, I haven't seen any resource development for training mentors for Take One. We have resources that are proven and acceptable, and we as a Board have many resources collectively among us. The training we're referring to hasn't been provided, but I am now working with Reverend Darnell and it is important to us all to provide greater training resources so that those who are mentoring can be successful
- Vicki Helgesen – Take One could use people who have proven ministries that churches can contact to ask questions about different situations that arise. The circumstances are so individual and if we can direct churches to people who have done this and have experience, that would be a great help.
- Michael Rickenbaker – An incredible resource for TDOC would be to bring together a coalition of people who would be an advisory board for Take One. As there are circumstances that arise, this advisory board would be available for churches to contact. In our resource development, I think that would be worth getting on the table.
- Reverend Darnell – We can do that. We have a lot of low hanging fruit here. When I do volunteer training and certification, that's a separate issue. Those who are Take One mentors spend a lot of time with the me and I personally train them, more specialized training. I integrate this into the volunteer training, but I do more specialized training with mentors. We want to allow Take One the space to scale as needed, considering our limits as well. We don't want to compromise quality for the sake of numbers. What we're doing takes a high degree of faith and trust.
- Michael Rickenbaker – All the more reason we need training and resources, and utilize the resources from those on the Board.
- Joan Evrst – I also think we are all desiring a greater partnership between TCRB and TDOC. If we had this advisory board that Chairman is referring to, we could tap in to the wealth of resources we have right here on our Board.
- Jody Khan – Also, communication is important and needs to be open. We're all here for the same thing, including the TDOC and those of us volunteers. We all need to re assert ourselves into the conversation.
- Michael Rickenbaker – Also, our representatives from the legislature and the senate are not here today. Mr. Lamberth is our legislative representative and Thelma Harper was our senate representative, but she has retired. We need help in getting support and involvement from the Senate and find out who that replacement for her would be. I appreciate Mr. Lamberth and his involvement.

Five-Minute Break

Reconvene – Michael Rickenbaker reconvenes and turns meeting over to Eric Qualls for TDOC.

TDOC Presentations / Re-Entry – Eric Qualls

- TDOC
 - Eric Qualls – As a department we have come a long way but have a long way to go. Doing a lot as a department on education and work force development, basically training all around. We are expanding collaborations across the state. We have recently been meeting with TN Dept of Labor and Work Force Development to provide services consistent across the state once individuals are released.
- Re-Entry
 - Eric Qualls – All of our facilities should be involved in re-entry – state issued ID cards, SS cards, providing core civic administration, etc. All individuals are now covered under that umbrella. We have a dynamic superintendent for education now. We are a school system through TDOE. Our principals, teachers, wardens, etc., have to have accountability. We have to report on all this – they are key performance indicators that we have to report on. Rev. Darnell has worked diligently with Take One, matching mentors with mentees. TDOC is always available to talk with anyone about Take One. Everything starts small and has to grow. Going forward you have 100% support from me. There is nothing stopping us from doing what the Board wants. As the Board develops initiatives the TDOC is willing to come alongside. Re-entry is a collaboration of TDOC, the Board, Dept. of Education and all faith-based ministries and structures. The biggest challenge is getting everyone to see that re-entry is everyone’s business. That will take a huge cultural change, because of the old mindset. If you don’t have security you don’t have treatment, and if you don’t have treatment you don’t have security. It all goes together. Let’s perpetuate this mindset together – that it will take all of us to make healthy people.
- TREC
 - Eric Qualls – We had a wonderful meeting here the other day, many organizations were there and represented. The time has never been better for outreach. Now is the time. We want to make sure everyone gets a skill/job skill before they leave. I see us working together and moving together in tandem together.
 - Sean Driscoll – You mentioned that we didn’t have enough money for secondary education. What can we do to help to get the budget needed for secondary education?
 - Eric Qualls – Meet with THEI (Tennessee For Higher Education Initiative) – non-profit agency that we work through. They raise money, and seek to raise money. They went to Nashville State to provide lower costs. They’re willing, but there’s no money legislatively that’s been designated for that so they do fund-raising.
 - Michael Rickenbaker – I so appreciate the sense of purpose that has been brought into this Board. This is what this is about. I want to express that all of the community services would be a part of the Board. We want to increase the participation in the Board.
- Security
 - Michael Rickenbaker - One thing I want to bring up that came up at our last Board meeting is that the Board members are very concerned about the security in our facilities. There seems to be a rise in drugs/contraband that have come into our facilities. We understand it’s always been an issue, but lately it seems as if cell phones,

- contrabands, drugs, etc., coming into our facilities are on the rise, especially over the last few months. I have received calls from families. We have lost inmates who have given a 9-1-1, but it doesn't seem like it's been addressed. At some point this has to be addressed. We want to help be a catalyst for change and to bring this back to the TDOC to ask what is going on and how is this getting into our prisons? As volunteers we are having to work with the fear issues that this causes for our inmates.
- Eric Qualls – Historically there has always been issues with contraband. I've been in the system for 38 years, and it's a lot better than it used to be. The Department takes these issues seriously. There are processes that have to take place. Suicides and deaths and overdoses are very serious to us. A lot of times inmates are being manipulative with their families in order to keep up their drug habits. The Department strives to be professional in all that we do. The Commissioner has talked with legislature to increase salaries. If there are specific situations that you can document then you can bring them to me.
 - Michael Rickenbaker – As volunteers we all go through major checks in security but we have all noticed that when officers go through security, they are not checked to the same extent or thoroughness as the volunteers. And, we know it's not all coming in through the officers. But, my recommendation is that we need to step up security with security officers.
 - Eric Qualls – I respectfully disagree. There are many factors that come into play.
 - Michael Rickenbaker – I agree about those factors, but all the more reason we need to step it up in security in whatever fashion we can to detect the problems.
 - Eric Qualls – I will push your concerns up to the Commissioners. If you as a Board feel that then I need to facilitate an audience with you to present this matter to the Commissioner.
 - Vinessa Brown - There is a new breed of offenders coming in. These younger ones are very difficult and very different than the older ones. They are very intelligent and savvy.
 - Vicki Helgesen – These issues are real. When we leave at 8:00 p.m. at the Annex (TPW) there is only one officer with 140 women. This doesn't seem like enough.
 - Eric Qualls – The Annex is a minimum security facility, so this isn't a problem (at Annex or transitional center) versus at a maximum security compound. There's one officer in control, then one that roams, then mobile security. They're not staffed for more because they are minimum security.
 - Lee Ragsdale – There's internal affairs folks as well ("the Green Team") – they will do robust searches. If you're thinking that one facility is a little slack, internal affairs is available to come in. They will investigate it.
 - Eric Qualls – Also, there are tip lines that offenders can report things to anonymously. If there are problems you encounter, please let me know.
 - Michael Rickenbaker – Is it a possibility for when I get a call from someone in a state facility to pass them on to you?
 - Eric Qualls – Yes, I am your initial point of contact and I can forward it on; also Rev. Darnell is available for that, too.
 - Tommy Mathis – A lot of these young kids have been running by themselves since they were six and seven years old. We need non-traditional educational methods to get these kids. If you grow up in a highly dysfunctional environment it's all you know and you think it's functional. It is their normal.

TCRB Retreat Status

- Michael Rickenbaker – TDOC in the past has covered a TCRB Retreat. One of the things this Board has done in the past is to help development of volunteer and religious services within the facilities. We would like to have a Faith and Corrections Conference.
- Tom Hallquist – Problems are opportunities but it seems that we keep trying to re-invent the wheel. So, one of the things we need to address is how can we get all volunteer organizations to come together along with the TDOC, and communicate to other organizations about what we're doing? We must get the community involved in what we're doing.
- Reverend Darnell – The re-entry people are the ones who are at the epicenter of what goes on because they are the ones helping people get out.
- Sean Driscoll – The biggest picture to me (with recidivism) is that cost inhibits what we can do.
- Michael Rickenbaker – We are proposing a Faith and Corrections Conference. With possibly Eric Qualls as the keynote speaker. We need to submit a proposal for this. Draft up a letter or memo stating what we want to do and why, with topics, location, funding we are requesting, etc. Possibly have it at Montgomery Bell State Park.
- Vicki Helgesen – In addition, I suggest that the Board attends the Mass Incarceration event at Cathedral of Praise on October 25-27, starting at 7:30 a.m. This is a fantastic opportunity to learn a lot.
- Michael Rickenbaker – Just a couple of things in closing. On the retreat, Tom Hallquist and Sean Driscoll will get together and come up with a plan and a date to submit to Chaplain Darnell. Meet at Montgomery Bell from Friday morning until Saturday at Noon. We are proposing January 18-19 (in lieu of our next meeting). If Sean Driscoll, Tom Hallquist and I can set the agenda, that would be great. I motion to set a TCRB Retreat.
- Reverend Darnell – We need a lot of lead time for TDOC to approve. We have two executions coming up in 2019 and nothing happens when those are taking place. Put all the details in the letter to TDOC.
- Michael Rickenbaker – There is another meeting already happening January 18 that inhibits us from doing a retreat at that time. We will move to the second option of April 19-20. For our Board meeting on January 18 we will be here at Riverbend.
- Tom Hallquist - Let's not just have the same conversation in January. We need that meeting to be very purposeful.
- Michael Rickenbaker – That's why I'd like for you (everyone) to get to us so that we can put together an agenda for that meeting and not just have business as usual at the January 18 meeting. So, go away and email me your input for that meeting. It's very important.

Grand Division Reports

- West TN:
 - Paul Hensley - He emailed this report to the Chairman.
 - Thursday, 9-6
 - I met with School Principal, Ronnie Lanier, to discuss the many classes being offered by NWCX. He told me we have about fifty inmates enrolled with Dyersburg State at this time. His passion for rehabilitation is contagious. TDOC is fortunate to have a man of his caliber on board. He has my full support.

- I met with Chaplain Bolden and we discussed some church service scheduling as well as manipulation by inmates. Having been a Correctional Officer for fifteen years prior to his becoming a Chaplain, he had some insightful comments, which I found to be valuable.
- I met with Chaplain Gross to discuss an upcoming Volunteer Certification/Recertification meeting to be held at the First UPC in Union City on Saturday, September 22 at 1:00 PM. We also discussed the upcoming LCRB meeting and Volunteer Certification/Recertification to be held at NWCX on Thursday, October 4 at 6:30 PM.
- Saturday, 9-22
 - I coordinated a Certification/Recertification class held at the First UPC in Union City. I did a Take One Presentation and representatives from four different churches requested and received literature for Take One. Chaplain Gross did a fine job of presenting the Certification/Recertification Training. We had thirty-one in attendance.
- Wednesday, 10-3
 - I met with Chaplain Gross to discuss the upcoming Volunteer Appreciation Banquet and the LCRB meeting and Certification/Recertification Training to be held Thursday, 10-4.
 - I met with Chaplain Bolden to discuss matters pertinent to Volunteer services being rendered and ways to make them more effective at the two sites he serves.
- Thursday, 10-4
 - I chaired the LCRB Meeting at NWCX. We had seven in attendance with three to be certified. Chaplain Gross taught the Cert/Recert class. At my request, Warden Phillips presented the Take One Program. He did a fine job and endeared himself to those present.
- Wednesday, 10-17
 - I met with A.W.S. Mike Reeves and assured him of my desire to have a harmonious working relationship. He assured me of the same.
 - I met with A.W.T. Steve Jones and we discussed the caliber of employees being hired reflects the caliber of our society.
 - I had lunch with Chaplain Bolden. He brought me up to speed on some of the good things being accomplished by Volunteers on his side of the compound. His prior fifteen years as a Correctional Officer allows him to have a well-rounded view on rehabilitation.
 - I met with Chaplain Gross to discuss the upcoming Volunteer Appreciation Dinner and help choose those for special recognition. We are expecting this to be our best event to date. Chaplain Gross also informed me of the upcoming graduation for our NWCX classes to be held 10-18-2018.
- Vanessa Brown – In Memphis please continue to pray for us. The churches don't work together well. We need more cohesiveness. We're working on unity in our churches. We are trying to get Take One into our churches.

- Middle TN:

- None
- East TN:
 - Lee Ragsdale – Our TREC team is acting as the LCRB in East TN. Take One is our big initiative. We're holding appreciation dinners for our Take One mentees and mentors every quarter or so. We're trying to involve them and show appreciation with them. We're also providing separate Take One training. We're working on an infrastructure with sub-committees for education and marketing, that will hopefully encourage others to come into it.
- **Assignments**
 - Michael Rickenbaker – Is everyone clear on the assignment you've been given on regard to the facility you represent? In the transitions that have taken place it's not been as clear. Mario Allen is the Vice Chair, and Joan Evrist is the Secretary. One of the responsibilities we have as a Board is to have facilities that we are specifically assigned where we will work more closely with those Chaplains and the LCRBs of those facilities.
 - Reanne Hance – I attend Morgan's LCRB every month, and have read them the minutes from our TCRB meetings.
 - Michael Rickenbaker – We need to look at each Board member's assignments and make sure everyone is clear on who is assigned where.

Other Business – None

Announcements – None

Meeting Adjourned at 12:00 p.m.

Next Meeting: Friday, January 18, 2019 at 9:00 a.m. at Riverbend