MOTHER’S / FATHER’S VOICE

The Mother’s/Father’s Voice Program is back! Through this program, incarcerated mothers and fathers of young children are recorded reading a storybook to their child. The BCPS Community Outreach team creates a DVD and sends it along with the book to the child. The child can then watch the video of Mom/Dad reading while following along in the book.

This provides a sense of closeness between the parent and the child that would otherwise not be possible and promotes the importance of reading.

*Mother’s/Father’s Voice volunteers are going through the onboarding process with the jail and we anticipate that they will begin volunteering in March. Since September, BCPS staff have been administering this rewarding program.

Do you want to support BCPS? Follow us on social media and DONATE NOW!
Castle Lawn & Landscaping, was present and At the event, Santos Almodovar, from New which are life-changing for individuals. offer second-chance employment opportunities, Lawn & Landscaping, and more. These employers offer second-chance employment opportunities, which are life-changing for individuals.

At the event, Santos Almodovar, from New Castle Lawn & Landscaping, was present and actively recruiting individuals for the company. Santos was hired by New Castle at the BCPS Returning Citizens Career Fair 6 years ago. Between 1999 and 2016, Santos was apprehended by the police two times. After being released in 2016, Santos was living in a halfway house and working a factory job; he was not content with how his life was going.

After a motorcycle accident left him unable to walk and work, Leonel “Leo” Paulino turned to the streets to support his family. For the streets eventually caught up to him and he was incarcerated in 2009. After being released in 2017, he tried to clean up his act and got giving rides to friends from Scranton to New York. However, Leo was incarcerated once again in November 2017.

Leo was referred to BCPS after his release, in 2017. He had hit rock bottom; he was homeless and disconnected from his family in New York City. This low point inspired him to turn his life around. With the help of BCPS, Leo explored jobs in the manufacturing sector.

But because of transportation issues, he lost his job. Having a record made finding a job challenging. Not having transportation made it even more difficult.

Leo saw the impact of not having reliable transportation first-hand and decided that he was going to save his money and start his own transportation business.

Leo presented his plan to his Case Manager and she connected him with one of BCPS’s volunteers, Jim Shankweiler. Jim has served as a mentor to Leo and has guided him every step of the way in establishing his business.

Pardon Project of Berks County

One Year Update

BCPS helps guide eligible individuals through the pardon application process, ensuring they understand the nuances of the application. Applicants are connected with trained volunteer Pardon Coaches to assist them in completing the pardon application and telling their stories thoroughly. This is a life-changing opportunity to finally break free from their past mistakes and live their lives according to their current potential.

If you are interested in becoming a volunteer Pardon Coach, email BerksPardonCoach@BCPSReentry.org

Do you want to begin your pardon application process? BCPS can help! Go to the Pardon Project page on our website: https://www.berksreentry.org

Since we launched the Pardon Project of Berks County last October of 2021, we have 28 Pardon Coaches, 28 applicants with a Pardon Coach, and submitted 16 applications to the Pennsylvania Board of Pardons!

Pardons give people who have changed their lives the opportunity to stop being defined by their worst mistakes.

After the fair, Santos met Brad Stephenson from New Castle who encouraged him to apply. Santos had no experience in landscaping, but he saw this as an opportunity to grow. Santos is now a manager and his pay has more than doubled since he started working with them.

I have been able to grow so much because of the opportunity that I got. They (New Castle Lawn & Landscaping) saved me from what was waiting for me in the streets. Finding you guys (BCPS and New Castle Lawn & Landscaping) has honestly saved my life.

- Santos Almodovar

Friends of BCPS Social

At the event, guests were treated to a cocktail hour, followed by a presentation of agency highlights by Co-Executive Directors, Peggy Kershner and Nikki Schnovel.

New Paul J. & Mary Kate Hoh Society members were also recognized, receiving a character board and wooden pen, both hand-crafted by BCPS clients during the R3 program.

Thank you to everyone that was able to join us for this special evening. We are very grateful for all of your support.

Second Chance Libraries

Reading-area children have two more locations to find a good book to read! In August, BCPS delivered two little Second Chance Libraries to Brooklynville and E. J. Dives Playgrounds, in cooperation with Reading Recreation Commission. These Second Chance Libraries were crafted by BCPS clients in the R3 Program.

Nikki Schnovel, BCPS Co-Executive Director explained that “Making these libraries and donating them to organizations provides an opportunity for R3 participants to not only sharpen the skills they have learned but to give back to the community as well. It is a win-win.”

In the past three years, BCPS’s Holiday Gift Project, which has been providing rides in our community for the past three years! For information about Paulino’s Transportation, please contact (484) 505-7865.

Thank you to everyone who helped us spread the holiday cheer!

Proud Business Owner

I want to pay it forward. I have shown me that there’s more to life than money. He has been teaching BCPS one without them; I would probably be in jail right now. In the future, I want to help someone the way I was helped. I want to pay it forward.

- Leo Paulino