

The CCCP NJ (Coalition of Community Correction Providers of New Jersey) Conference was held on November 27 and 28, 2007 at the Trump Plaza hotel & Casino in Atlantic City, NJ. The Conference's primary focus was on Offender Re-Entry.

The morning plenary session was presented by Dr. Bruce Stout, who is currently on loan to the Office of Governor Corzine. He chaired the re-entry working group that developed the reentry component to the Governor's Crime Bill. Dr. Stout is currently working with the Government Efficiency and Reform Commission on sentencing and corrections reform in New Jersey. Dr. Stout informed the audience of key points in Governor Corzine's "Another Chance Bill". This initiative, among other things, will require all inmates to be discharged to a halfway house with all necessary identifying documentation prior to their "max out" date in order to be better prepared for positive reintegration into the community.

A presentation panel consisting of three programs who assist Special Needs Offenders spoke of the barriers to providing services to this population and how they have overcome some of those barriers through collaboration with other programs, community services and agencies.

The FORGE (Female Offender Reentry Group Effort) Project was presented in one of the sessions in the afternoon. FORGE is a gender-specific approach to improve re-entry outcomes for female parolees. The program was implemented by the NJ State Parole Board and its community partners. Among many other things, the FORGE program incorporates a continuum of care transition plan and the opportunity for distance learning for career advancement while focusing on accountability for female offenders in Essex and Camden Counties.

It was the first conference hosted by CCCP NJ, however CCCP NJ hopes it will be the first of many to come. The conference went well, there were probably about 175-200 people present and MASCA was also represented by MASCA Board member Helena Tome. The first night, at a reception in the vendor room, our MASCA surf boards were a hot item. Helena also handed out about 40 save the date flyers and the MASCA "who we are" forms that evening. Individuals who were present included the NJ DOC commissioner, the Director of NJDOC community programs who inquired about MASCA, Members from the NJ Parole Board as well as others. MASCA items were at the New Jersey Association on Correction's table and their Executive Director was very supportive in describing MASCA and who we were. Thanks to Helena and to the new Jersey Association on Correction for their support of MASCA