



Friends Outside

in Los Angeles County
2017 END-OF-YEAR REPORT

Inside

Good + Foundation Selects FOLA's Dads Back! Academy to be a Partner!

Mission Statement

The mission of Friends Outside is to assist children and families, prisoners, and former prisoners with the immediate and long-term effects of incarceration, and to act as a bridge between those we serve, the community at large, and the criminal justice system, thereby enhancing the character of justice.

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

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We are very pleased to announce that the Good + Foundation has selected our fatherhood program in Watts, the Dads Back! Academy, to be a recipient of donated goods they receive and distribute. Founded in 2001 in New York City by Jessica Seinfeld and originally named "Baby Buggy," Mrs. Seinfeld decided she wanted to help families who were trying to help themselves by providing them with gently-used items such as (you guessed it) baby buggies! The organization changed its name to "Good+ Foundation" and has grown significantly, now partnering with 100+ "carefully selected organizations" who have qualified to receive a litany of items, which now also include new items from corporations across the U.S.A. The items we will be receiving will be given to reentry fathers in the Dads Back! Academy when they

achieve milestones such as attendance at a targeted number of support groups or participation in our Dads Back! Academy Alumni Group.

We were especially thrilled when we received the news in early October that Mrs. Seinfeld and her famous husband were going to visit the Academy along with several members of their impressive staff. After their visit, executive director Mary Weaver presented Mrs. Seinfeld with a doll that was handmade by female inmates in Los Angeles County Jails, pointing-out that the doll is a reminder of the most basic reason we do this work (the children) and Mr. Seinfeld with a FOLA cap, welcoming him to "Team FOLA." It was a proud day. Special kudos to the crack Academy staff and their leaders, Kelly Quintana, LMFT, and Donald "Bo" Hulen, M.A.



Photo and text taken from Jessica Seinfeld's Instagram Account

Donald "Bo" Hulen, staff supervisor, Jerry Seinfeld, Jessica Seinfeld

Thank you to Bo and the team at Dad's Back Academy for showing Jerry and me your extraordinary work. Dad's Back Academy and Friends Outside LA are helping people who are affected by the criminal justice system stabilize and make positive changes in their lives.

They are a @goodplusfdn partner so we can give children with incarcerated or formerly incarcerated parents a higher chance of success.

Appreciation for a Most Fulfilling Year...



As each year flies by more quickly than the one before it, we pause for a moment of gratitude in appreciation for a

very fulfilling year. I hope you will review the statistics below to get a sense of the scope of our work, in terms of number of clients served, services provided, and service outcomes.

Friends Outside was one of the first entities in the state and in the country to become concerned about the "unintended consequences of incarceration." 60+ years later, the sensibilities of the country have finally caught up with the values and sentiments of our organization's early leaders so that now we find ourselves in the interesting position of having many colleagues in the field and multiple opportunities for collaboration. We are now working in a rapidly-changing environment with the wind finally at our backs!

As you will read in this report, we are honored to have been selected (either

as an organization or as individuals) to receive three awards just in the past six months. As I commented when I received an unexpected award from the U.S. Probation Department, "Getting recognition is not the reason most of us do this work but it is certainly very gratifying when it happens."

The year has also come with our fair share of losses. The Honorable John Van de Kamp, former California Attorney General, died earlier in the year, leaving behind a legacy of advocacy for progressive policies in the criminal justice system. Mr. Van de Kamp served on our Advisory Board for more years than were ever counted. I called him about a month before he passed to ask for some needed support, a request to which he immediately responded.

Father Roger Wood, long-time volunteer jail visitor, past board president, and board member died on June 14 at the age of 93. I memorialized him in a prior newsletter but suffice to mention him now as a beloved person of utmost integrity, intelligence, and a

firm commitment to his beliefs. People don't come much better than he. More recently, we lost another long-time volunteer jail visitor, Beatrice Wolfe. "Bea" died on October 28 at the age of 91. From her obituary, "She was most proud of her 20-year affiliation with

Friends Outside, where she visited weekly with women inmates in the Los Angeles County Jail."

As you can see by these two nonagenarians, the secret to a long life might well include volunteer work with FOLA!

Thanks to all who have supported our work during 2017 in myriad ways, including financially, through voluntarism, and via donated goods such as no-cost office space that is provided by many of our partners. We extend our deepest appreciation for your contributions to our Mission and wish you all the very best of the holiday season and during the coming year.

Winter wishes,

FOLA Client Statistics January through October 2017

- ✓ 770 Unduplicated Clients Served
- ✓ 91 Jobs Attained by Re-Entry Population
- ✓ 71 Vocational Training Certificates Completed by Re-Entry Population
- ✓ 12 Children with Incarcerated Parents Improved Their Grades and/or School Attendance

HAPPY HOLIDAYS FROM ALL OF US



AT FRIENDS OUTSIDE IN LA COUNTY

Why I Got Involved...

I joined the board of FOLA last spring. I admired their mission before joining the board, and my respect has grown ever since. I saw the joy of graduates at Dad's Back Academy, and children with incarcerated parents in elective after-school programs. After many years as a professor at USC, I can recognize untapped potential. FOLA is unique in providing a path to fulfillment and stability for individuals who might otherwise have no support. I feel privileged to be a member of this dedicated and skilled community.

-Eunice Howe, Ph.D.

A YEAR OF RECOGNITION

FOLA Honored in D.C. with “Urkel” Award



Geneva Ware-Rice, program consultant, Carrie Petrucci, Ph.D., program evaluator, Dajohnai Vincson, data-entry, Mary Weaver, executive director, and Donald “Bo” Hulen, staff supervisor.

On August 10, FOLA was one of only six grantees who were honored in Washington D.C. during the Grantee Conference that was hosted by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children & Families, Office of Family Assistance. The “Urkel” award was presented to FOLA and the Dads Back! Academy for having the highest percentage amongst 90 grantees of contact between our clients and our staff, an indicator that our clients will do well in the long-run.

FOLA Staff Member Ernest Melendrez Recipient of Harriet Tubman Award!



Job Specialist Ernest Melendrez (Ernie) was a recent recipient of the Harriet Tubman Distinguished Award at the inaugural Beyond the Bars LA Conference. The conference is “reserved for special individuals who have experienced incarceration and dedicated their life’s work to abolishing the current state of mass incarceration.”

Here’s an excerpt from Ernie’s award letter: *“Born into slavery, Harriet Tubman, a noted abolitionist, subsequently escaped only to come back and free others trapped in slavery. It was during this time the Underground Railroad was born – a network of antislavery activists and safe houses. Tubman was a brave champion of freedom and equality, and it is in this respect that we intend to honor you and your work.”*

Ernie participated in a Friends Outside in Los Angeles County (FOLA) program, Project New Start, in which FOLA was sub-contracted under the City of Los Angeles. He was offered a job with FOLA and is quickly approaching his eighth year anniversary with our organization. We are fortunate to have him on “Team FOLA” and congratulate him on this wonderful accomplishment and well-deserved recognition.

FOLA Executive Director Weaver Wins Award from US Probation Office

On November 7, FOLA’s executive director Mary Weaver was presented with an award by the United States Probation Office “in recognition of your dedication and partnership in advancing the goals, mission and values of the United States Probation Office.”

Presented by Probation Officer Jane Alcalá, Ms. Alcalá recognized FOLA’s efforts to provide employment services to persons on federal probation. Former client Jose De La Cruz spoke effusively about the value of the services he received from FOLA, noting that case manager Patrice Knox was the first person to think to welcome him back to the community after a long absence due to incarceration and that job developer

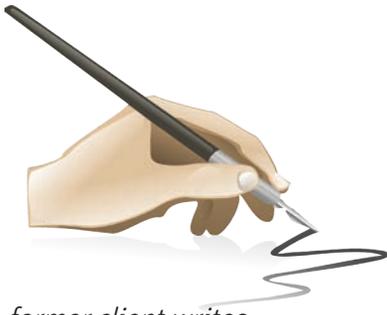


Jose De La Cruz, employed client, Jane Alcalá, federal probation officer, Mary Weaver, executive director

Dorian Esters was instrumental in helping him prepare for job interviews, giving him confidence that he could get a job. Now successfully employed

for about a year, Mr. De La Cruz works in the real estate business, also having inherited a house in which he will soon be living!

APPRECIATION FROM OUR CLIENTS...



A former client writes...

"This place is awesome. This place has helped me in more ways than one. Friends Outside in Los Angeles County has helped me get self-esteem back in my life, I can look in the mirror and smile and truly (sic) say I'm somebody today.

When every door seemed to close in my face, Friends Outside doors were always open. God has really put some great people in that place.

Thank you Friends Outside."

Altha

And this testimonial was written by an inmate at Pitchess Detention Center who participated in our jail-based job readiness program...

"I've been in and out of the system since my early teens. At 19, I became a father. Months later I also became a convicted felon and took the next step on the "Thug Life." I was living (State Prison or the Major Leagues) as I called it. That would be my home for the next couple of years. I had enough time but I didn't think much.

I paroled a little before my daughter's 3rd birthday. But still not much ran through my mind besides I was once again a free man. Reality did not hit me till hours later when I finally made it home. That baby I once left behind wasn't a baby any more. She stood on her own two feet and wanted nothing to do with me. Eventually I won her over and because of her I kept myself out of the way and made it five years free but then I "back-stepped" and found myself behind these walls once again. Even though it's not a long time, it's enough to make me realize that if I continue down this path this place will always have a bunk waiting for me. But most important I will be away from my little girl and that's where I don't want to be.

My goals when I get out are to find employment as soon as possible. If it's in the auto industry I'll be happy as can be but if it consists of mowing lawns, washing dishes or even sweeping floors it will be fine as long as I can provide for my family.

Thank you Friends Outside!" – Jose