

News

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e-newsletter
November 2008

Getting Rolling Again



Kevin Byker's road back was getting off to a rough start.

After receiving work release in 2003 from Faribault Correctional Facility, Kevin was dropped off at transitional housing and told he had 30 days to find housing and a job, or go back to prison.

Sound like a challenge for someone with a felony drug record who had already made several trips behind bars? How about adding to it the fact that Byker had an amputated leg, no wheelchair and that his room was in a four- floor, non-accessible housing facility?

"I remember one of the first things staff there said to me was, 'How are you going to work? You've got 30 days to find a job or you're going back to prison.' I told them, show me where the bus station is and I'll find a job. "

The situation got brighter when Kevin contacted Ruth Johnson at Amicus' Reconnect Program.

Ruth spoke with Kevin over the phone, providing advice on getting going on his job search. Not long after their initial interview Ruth called again and gave Kevin a job lead at an organization called "Rebuild Resources," which provides transitional employment. To help him get around town, she also lined up an old wheelchair for him to use.

On the day of the interview, Ruth picked Kevin up at the housing facility and gave him a ride to "Rebuild Resources" front door.

"I came in, had an interview and they hired me on the spot. I started the next day."

Using bus tokens coordinated through Amicus, Kevin went to Rebuild Resources every day and worked his way through an apprenticeship and into a part-time permanent staff position. When Kevin moved into an apartment, Ruth connected him with "Bridging," an organization offering free furniture to those making a new start.

Two years ago, Kevin became the full-time Production Manager at Rebuild Resources. He is still going back to the transitional housing facility he spent his first weeks in after prison, but these days he's going back as a member of their board of directors.

Now, Kevin is planning to buy his first house and provide a room for his son to stay in on visits.

"What if I didn't have Amicus? What would I have done? I had a lot of things going against me."

WISH LIST

- \$30,000 :: New phone system
- \$85-120 :: Men's Winter Coat
- \$36/box :: Copier/Printer paper

[Donate](#)

EVENTS

12/8 - One to One Training; Unity Unitarian Church;
732 Holly Ave., St. Paul, MN 5:30 - 8:30 p.m.

1/23 - From Gender Theory to Responsive Practice - Training Gustavus Adolphus College, St. Peter, MN

HAVE US VISIT

Have Amicus President Louise Wolfram or other Amicus representatives visit your office or organization to tell our story.

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Articles about: The Real Prison, Dimensions of Loneliness, Effects of Loneliness, Amicus answers: RAFIKI, ONE TO ONE, Girls' Restorative Justice, Golf event, Circles story

[RECONNECT Online](#) (2002)

Articles Relating to a Good Transition:

1. News You Can Use: Getting Along With Your P.O.
2. Advice from successful ex-offenders about what it takes to transition into a positive life.
3. Release planning guide Checklist for success.

"Right now I'm doing well, but an awful lot of people can use that kind of help to gain self-sufficiency."

Amicus Links

[Link to additional information here](#)



Real Change: One to One



When Amicus volunteer Don Lewis visits his One to One friend at Stillwater Correctional Facility, he's continuing a long tradition of service that Amicus was founded on over four decades ago. 8,000 inmates and 4,000 community volunteers have learned firsthand that one of the deepest needs for someone wanting to make a change in their life is a good friend.

In the spring of 2007, an Amicus study followed a group of 59 people who had served time in correctional facilities and were released for a year or more. Thirty eight of them had participated in a One to One mentoring program, while 21 of them were not matched with a mentor due to a shortage of volunteers.

At last check, only 5 percent of those working with a One to One mentor committed a new crime of any severity within one to four years of their release. Of those, none committed felonies. Meanwhile 38 percent of those not participating in One to One committed new crimes, with 9.5 percent of those committing felonies.

For Lewis, it goes beyond the statistics though. The relationship he's built through several years of One to One visits is something of inestimable value both for his friend and for him.

"The friendships that the Amicus program offers are in many respects, richer and more genuine than other relationships we have in this electronic age," Lewis said.

Amicus Links

[Link to additional information here](#)



The New Amicus Newsletter



It's been too long! Stay in touch! Let's get together sometime! Friends can say those things with the best of intentions and then so often we get sidetracked with more urgent things. That can happen with organizations too. At Amicus, we're on a mission to deepen our relationships with our friends and supporters. Sure, we need to expand our donor base, but we are also hoping to involve you more in what we're doing.

We encourage you to learn more about the issues our offenders, ex-offenders and juveniles in the criminal justice system encounter and how we all can make changes within ourselves as the first steps to making changes as a society.

So consider this newsletter our way of saying "Really. It has been too long. Let's stay in touch!"



Amicus Links

[Link to additional information here](#)

Amicus is a Minnesota not-for-profit organization with over 40 years of experience in improving public safety by helping inmates and ex-offenders make a positive transition into our communities. All of the Amicus programs are relationship-based, community-driven, culturally specific and outcome-oriented.

[The Most Cost-Effective Approach to Prisons? Keep Offenders from Going Back.](#) Read the letter to the editor of the Star Tribune written by Louise Wolfgramm, Amicus President, October 2008.