

“Reconnecting” in Tough Times

Mary Maas Talks About Service Through Amicus “Reconnect”

Business is booming at Amicus’ “Reconnect,” and that’s a sad thing.

Mary Maas is in charge of “Reconnect,” Amicus’ referral program for offenders re-entering society. Amicus puts them in touch with resources for jobs, housing, family services, transportation, clothing and more. Mary’s been working with “Reconnect” since the late 1990s, first as an intern, then as a volunteer and later as staff. She said she’s seen many changes in that time.

“When I first started there were tons of jobs available. If somebody wanted a job they could get one, Mary said.

Mary has noticed that the picture has changed dramatically since then as the job market gets tighter and a felony background eliminates the possibility of many positions.

“Reconnect” staff and interns see clients on a daily basis. The number served per day has been growing steadily. One day in March 2009, 29 people received services.

“Some of them are real discouraged and it’s hard to lift them up,” Mary says, adding that a few of those who are down mention they feel they don’t have any option other than criminal activity. “That saddens me,” Mary said.

She said others are more optimistic.

“Some, even a few who have been trying to find work for months, surprise me. Not too long ago, one man told me, “I know god’s got a plan for me. I know it will happen when it’s meant to happen.”

Mary believes the lines at “Reconnect” will get smaller when and if society starts paying attention to those in need before they end up in a correctional facility.

“We have so many people incarcerated and they really need the help. I think ‘Reconnect’s’ going to be here for a long, long time.”

“Reconnect” Coordinator Mary Maas takes a phone call from a client asking for job-seeking and housing assistance.

