



WHAT'S WORKING

A Message from
DJJ Director Andy Block

Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice

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Loudoun's One-Stop Success Shop

Lambert's Reentry Collaborative Brings Youth Resources To One Table

Josh Lambert's epiphany occurred the day a young Algerian client came to him asking how to get identification to register for classes. The young man, who was born in Algeria, said he had lost all forms of ID and didn't know how to get a copy of his birth certificate.

"It was right then that I understood that sometimes you have to set your ego aside and realize you don't have all the answers," says Lambert, a parole officer with CSU 20-Loudoun. He knew the Loudoun community had excellent resources, but didn't know where to start to find them. And if he didn't know, then the kids he serves certainly didn't either.

Anticipating the kinds of questions and concerns a youth returning to the community might have, Lambert reached out to county mental health, family services, public schools, parks and recreation, food assistance, and the local workforce development center representatives to create the Reentry Collaborative, which brings everyone to one place once a month, so that youth can have a panel of experts at the ready to provide help and guidance.

"I like to have productive meetings with the high-risk youth I supervise," Lambert says. "I wanted to offer them something that they maybe had



Members of Loudoun County's Reentry Collaborative, standing from left: Officer Gabriel Ascunce, Leesburg Police Department; Brett Whyson, Loudoun County Mental Health; Mark Alexander, Supervisor, CSU 20L-Loudoun; Josh Lambert, CSU 20L Parole Officer; Travis Duggan, Virginia Department of Social Services; Joel Walkley, Evidence-Based Associates. Seated from left: Jason Bickmore, sex offender specialist, CSU 20L; Fariyah Kuraishi, Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIAO) program; Jessie Tamayo, WIAO program; Janet Clarke, Transition Specialist, Loudoun County Public Schools; Donna Fortier, Mobile Hope; Sam Denuccio, CSU 20L intern.

never experienced in the system. That was the main driver behind getting the reentry collaborative started."

In a single meeting, Loudoun youth can now learn about health services, registering for classes, applying for jobs, how to get a driver's license. Before each meeting, clients are given a sheet of paper to write down any questions they have or roadblocks they've encountered. In the case of the young Algerian, the birth certificate issue was solved by Janet Clarke, transition specialist for college, career, and life for Loudoun County Public Schools, which had a copy of the youth's

birth certificate on file.

"I wouldn't have had any idea where to obtain the certificate," Lambert admits. "The solution would've been a lot harder to find if it wasn't for Ms. Clarke."

Lambert says the collaborative also meets with families of local juveniles at Bon Air JCC who are getting ready to transition into the community.

"We believe what Josh has done with the collaborative makes our youths' transition a lot less scary and less stressful," says CSU 20L Acting Director Ira Holland. "Not only does it make a difficult process easier, it improves the chance of success for the client."