NYC DOC Volunteer Services booklet excerpts

CorrectionHistory.Org – with New York City Department of Correction’s permission – presents elements excerpted from the agency’s booklet guide given to prospective volunteers during the orientation process for applicants seeking to join NYC DOC’s Volunteer Services program.

Nearly identical booklet guides for prospective DOC volunteers have been traced by this site as going back at least a half decade or more.

Of course, some volunteer service programs themselves trace back their connection with DOC in terms of decades. A few can count their partnering with the Department by scores of years.

At least one -- the Women Prison Association (WPA) – even predates DOC emerging as a separate distinct agency from its ancestral dual Department of Public Charities and Correction.
The WPA had its beginnings in January 1845 as the Female Department of the Prison Association of New York (PANY), which had been founded a year before by leading NYers very much interested in various penal reforms.

These included improving conditions and operations in the prisons and jails as well as support and encouragement of reformed convicts after their discharge.

PANY sought provide such released inmates with the means of obtaining an honest livelihood, and sustaining them in their efforts at personal reformation.

The PANY Female Department volunteers visited New York prisons, jails, and police station lockups. They reported on conditions and advocated for reforms, several of which they eventually achieved, including the required assigning of matrons where women inmates were incarcerated.
Six months after the Female Department had launched itself as a division of the NY Prison Assn., it opened what we would today term transitional housing for women ex-inmates.

In 1853, the Women Prison Association emerged as its own entity, about four decades before DOC emerged as its own agency separate from the Department of Public Charities (later known as the Welfare Department).

For this web site’s multi-page review of WPA history, see the list of links at the end of the current presentation.

PANY changed its name to the Correctional Association of New York in 1961. CANY is primarily known today for its criminal justice system research, reports and reform advocacy. Links to PANY/CANY history on this site come at the conclusion of this presentation.
Another community partner with DOC throughout the decades has been the Osborne Association which developed from the merger of two organizations (the Prison League Association and the National Society of Penal Information) after the 1931 death of their founder, New York prison official and reformer, Thomas Mott Osborne. Among other services, it provides post-release assistance to ex-inmates.

After serving six years as NYC Correction Commissioner under Mayor Fiorello LaGuardia, Austin H. MacCormick in 1940 became executive director of the Osborne Association and later its President. Seven years after his 1979 death, a Rikers Island school was dedicated as the Austin H. MacCormick Academy in memory of him.

In 1990, group of educators, social service professionals and community workers formed an organization to assist released MacCormick Academy students overcome their post-incarceration problems. They call their association the Friends of Island Academy.

1940 became executive director of the Osborne Association and later its President. Seven years after his 1979 death, a Rikers Island school was dedicated as the Austin H. MacCormick Academy in memory of him.

In 1990, group of educators, social service professionals and community workers formed an organization to assist released MacCormick Academy students overcome their post-incarceration problems. They call their association the Friends of Island Academy.
As is the case with the previously mentioned Women Prison Association, the Correction History website has many pages about Thomas Mott Osborne, the Osborne Association, former NYC Correction Commissioner Austin H. MacCormick, the Rikers Island MacCormick Academy, and the Friends of Island Academy. To access those pages, see the list of links at the end of the current presentation.

When social reformer and New York City Board of Correction Commissioner Barbara Margolis began her Fresh Start culinary training program for Rikers inmates about a quarter century ago, her aim was to ready them for professional positions in the food services field. In 2008, Fresh tart merged with the Osborne’s Rikers program that taught inmates catering skills.
Another long-time DOC community partner has been the Horticultural Society of New York. For decades on the island, it has grown inmate skills and hope as well as flowers, plants and veggies.

Likewise, the Fortune Society, founded in 1967 and run for and mostly by ex-inmates from NY prisons and jails focuses, has worked with DOC on specific programs. The society focuses on educating the public, aiding ex-inmates & at-risk youth break crime cycle thru wide range of services.

This webmaster would be remiss were he not to mention Abraham House an alternative-to-incarceration program found in 1993 by NYC DOC staffers and volunteers. It provides a holistic, family-based program of services to offenders and their families, and other families who struggle to cope with poverty, violence, crime, and lack of essential services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Volunteer Opportunities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Department of Correction Volunteer Services Unit operates under the umbrella of the Department’s Programs and Discharge Planning Division. The unit relies on an array of volunteers to provide a variety of activities, programs, and services to the inmate population to promote the rehabilitation, personal growth, and character development of those incarcerated. Community-based organizations, groups, and individuals work to help inmates begin new lives, reconnect with their families, and become productive members of society. These community-based organizations, groups, and individuals share a commitment to promote activities that contribute to the reduction of recidivism. Volunteers accomplish this by sharing their unique talents, skills, and knowledge, and by adapting to the challenges of a jail setting. Currently volunteers provide religious, social, educational, recreational, and other services that enhance personal development and create links between those incarcerated and their communities. The Department is open to other suggestions.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services provided include but are not limited to:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Alcoholics and Narcotics Anonymous Groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Alcohol/Drug Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Alternatives to Violence Training</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Culinary Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• HIV/AIDS Education Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Horticultural Program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Individual/Group Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Job Readiness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Legal Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Library Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Life Skills Classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Literacy Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Parenting Classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pastoral Counseling</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Self Development Classes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Transitional Assistance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Vocational Training</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PERSONS INTERESTED IN VOLUNTEERING THEIR SERVICES:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• must successfully complete a background investigation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• must not be actively on parole or probation, and must not have had a criminal record last 3 years</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Persons interested in volunteering their services and/or in need of additional information contact office of Volunteer Services at 718-546-0453.
Located in the South Bronx, Abraham House works with the Courts to offer first-time offenders a home where they can turn around their lives and learn to become responsible citizens. Although founded by a French worker priest, Belgian nuns, and Correction Officers who, by the way, identified as Baptists, the program is non-denominational and open to all. Also highly worthy of mention are Mother/St. Theresa of Calcutta’s Missionaries of Charity.

*CorrectionHistory.Org* too is a voluntary endeavor. Though this non-commercial site appreciates its close-working relationships NY correctional agencies and organizations since launching in 1999, it is wholly owned and run by the webmaster and neither seeks nor accepts any outside funding. Editorial freedom that comes from independence is too precious to barter away.

See Variety Among NYC DOC Volunteer Opportunities at

Return to *CorrectionHistory.Org* homepage:
[http://www.correctionhistory.org](http://www.correctionhistory.org)

---

*Note: Listed here are links to *CorrectionHistory.Org* pre-existing presentations on the volunteer endeavors cited in the text appearing above alongside NYC DOC’s website Volunteer Services page excerpt and the seven pages excerpted from the January 31, 2018-published, 16-page* Volunteer Services booklet given by NYC DOC to prospective volunteers during orientation processes. The booklet numbers its table-of-contents page as 1. The table page lists content titles for Pages 2 through 13, and did not number the Commissioner Message page nor the front and back cover pages. The booklet page images shown in this presentation have been reduced in overall size, but all the information printed on them has been included and enlarged for readability.


**Re Austin H. MacCormick, Friends of Island Academy, Osborne Association, Thomas Mott Osborne**
Re: Barbara Margolis and Fresh Start
http://www.correctionhistory.org/images/bobbie-obit.jpg

Re: Horticultural Society of New York

Re: Fortune Society

Re: Abraham House
http://www.correctionhistory.org/preview3/Catholic-Worker-Editor-Remembers-Also.pdf

Re Mother/St. Teresa’s Missionaries of Charity

Historical Background Note: On the night of major league baseball’s 1999 All Star Game (July 13th), an all-star lineup of NY correctional leaders – heads of NGOs and government agencies – gathered in the Manhattan Detention Complex, better known by its historical nickname, The Tombs. Their purpose: to launch a voluntary endeavor to pursue, preserve and promote the history of correction services in New York –city, state, county, community – including alternatives-to-incarceration and transitional services. Besides commissioners and deputy commissioners of various penal agencies, those participating in that meeting more than 20 years ago also included leaders from some of the volunteer associations and community partners cited in the above text:

Women’s Prison Association’s then executive director Ann L. Jacobs, then Osborne Association executive director Elizabeth Gaynes, then Horticultural Society of New York president Anthony R. Smith, and then South Forty president John Rakis (later deputy director of the Osborne Association). Former NYC Correction Commissioner Michael P. Jacobson, now of the Vera Institute, was among the speakers as were Austin MacCormick Clarke of NYS DOCS and Barbara Margolis of Fresh Start. NYC DOC Commissioner (Later NYPD Commissioner Bernard B. Kerik) also spoke.

CorrectionHistory.Org was born there and then twenty years ago. On May 7, 2011, the website launched its social media extension, the New York Correction History Facebook Group accessible to Facebook-ers via https://www.facebook.com/groups/NewYorkCorrectionHistory/members/

With a membership now (2/21/20) at 2,250+, it is one of the very few “open” or “public” NY Correction-related membership groups on Facebook; this is, anyone on Facebook can access its discussion page and view the messages and images posted there. But only members may post material.