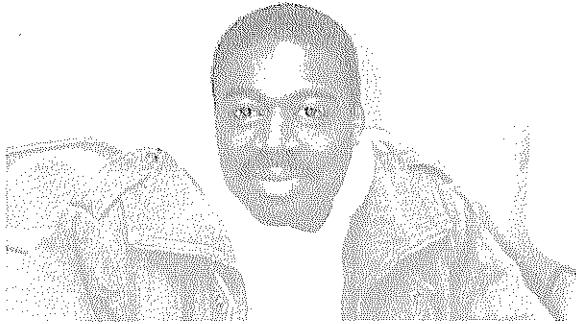
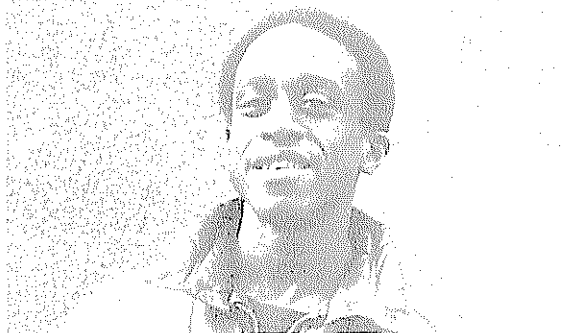


SUCCESS STORIES

When William D. was arrested for stealing a radio, it was his seventh arrest for petty offenses. Mr. D. had a \$30 a day crack habit and was unemployed when he entered CSS. The CSS Support Services Coordinator, impressed by Mr. D.'s community service work and his ability to remain drug-free, arranged for job training in the construction field after he had completed CSS.



On entering Manhattan CSS, Eddie S. had numerous problems; he was living on the streets, unemployed and a heroin addict. Eddie was able to complete the community service sentence after CSS staff enrolled him in a methadone maintenance clinic and found him a permanent place to live. Eddie now pays his rent from money he earns as an employee at Burger King.



INFORMATION

If you are interested in a Community Service Sentence, please call the appropriate borough office listed below:

BROOKLYN Community Service Sentencing
120 Schermerhorn Street, Room 811
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201
(718) 237-0400

BRONX Community Service Sentencing
215 E. 161st Street, Room M29
Bronx, N.Y. 10451
(212) 681-7500

MANHATTAN Community Service Sentencing
100 Centre Street, Room 1535
New York, N.Y. 10013
(212) 285-0055

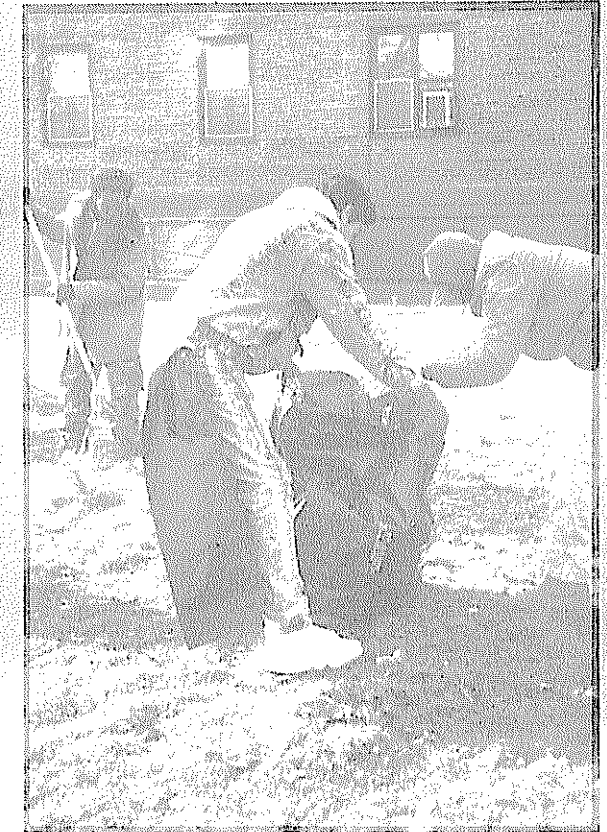
QUEENS Community Service Sentencing
118-20 Queens Blvd., 3rd Floor
Kew Gardens, N.Y. 11375
(718) 793-3002

If you are interested in general information about the project, please call the Central Office.

CENTRAL OFFICE
Vera Institute of Justice
377 Broadway, 11th Floor
New York, N.Y. 10013
(212) 334-1300 ext. 251

THE NEW YORK CITY COMMUNITY SERVICE SENTENCING PROJECT

VERA INSTITUTE
LIBRARY 1587



WHAT IS THE COMMUNITY SERVICE SENTENCING PROJECT?

In the 1970's most offenders sentenced to perform community service in this country were white, middle-class first offenders who needed little supervision and were not jailbound. In 1979 the Vera Institute of Justice undertook the challenge of devising a sentence of community service that would be sufficiently punitive and enforceable so that judges and prosecutors would impose it on repeat property crime offenders, instead of sending them to jail. The Community Service Sentencing Project (CSS) was designed to meet this need and was undertaken at a time when overcrowding in New York City's jails had fueled a search for real alternatives to incarceration.

By 1985, CSS was operating in the Bronx, Brooklyn, Manhattan and Queens Criminal Courts. As of January 1989, 8,000 small-time thieves, hustlers, and car-strippers had each been sentenced to 70 hours of community service, without pay, at worksites in the neediest areas of New York City. Participants who complete the sentence receive additional help from staff in job training or job placement. Participants who do not complete the sentence are returned to court and are resented to jail.

Research on the project has shown that CSS makes financial sense: funding from the City, State and Federal Governments is about \$2,000,000 annually, while the the City saves approximately \$6,500,000 in operating costs each year from jail space freed up for more serious offenders. There is also the additional value of the participants' 50,000 hours of unpaid labor each year, worth around \$250,000 to community groups.

HOW DOES CSS OPERATE?

IN THE COURT

Each week CSS Court Representatives review over 600 court case folders of repeat, non-violent offenders to determine who is eligible for a community service sentence. A recent history of violent crimes, a rash of recent arrests, or an extensive history of drug sales, will disqualify a defendant from consideration for CSS. There is some variety in the criminal records of the offenders in this group, but the bulk are petty thieves who have long records for stealing dresses from Macy's or a radio from Crazy Eddie's.

If the Court Representative finds the defendant eligible and the defendant and his lawyer agree it is a fair disposition, the Court Representative presents the facts in support of a community service sentence to the court. If the judge agrees, the defendant is sentenced to a conditional discharge, the condition being the performance of 70 hours of unpaid labor under the supervision of CSS.



PARTICIPANT INTAKE

Most participants in the program are unskilled, unemployed, Black or Hispanic offenders with substance abuse problems. CSS staff arrange for emergency housing, drug treatment and family care for those who need such help to complete their sentence. Participants are given tokens for transportation to the worksite, and those who arrive at the worksite on time are provided with breakfast and lunch.

WORKSITE OPERATIONS

For 10 work days the participant shows up at the worksite to clean up neighborhood playgrounds and parks, repair and paint senior citizen centers, and clear vacant lots to help create gardens - all at no cost to the community. The monetary savings and the potential for community rejuvenation are greatly appreciated by CSS worksite sponsors in each of the four boroughs. One such sponsor, a Director of a YMCA in Brooklyn, stated "The most severely damaged of our buildings has been brought back to life thanks to CSS. Programs for teenagers are now operating out of that location."

WHAT IF AN OFFENDER DOESN'T COMPLY?

CSS asks the court to issue a warrant to take a participant into custody only after all compliance efforts have failed. The Borough Director documents for the court the extensive efforts that have been made to encourage the participant to return to the worksite: the phone calls and home visits made by the enforcement staff and the services provided by the Support Services Coordinator. When these efforts have failed and the defendant is brought back to court, a resentencing hearing is held. Delinquent participants are resented to an average of three to four months jail time.