# ities. Restoring hope. Reb

Focus on: Rehabilitative Alternative Probation

# Judge Lauds Program Graduates, Staff

Every program at TASC is a partnership A collaborative effort between the Cook between our clients, the entities and people who fund our programs, and the web of government systems and social service programs that our clients often must navigate in order to be successful. TASC's role is to tie resources and system requirements together to help guide clients to success.

The Cook County Rehabilitative Alternative Probation (RAP) program is an example of this important collaboration. Since its inception in 1998, RAP has helped more than 1,100 men and women break the bonds of addiction.

Judge Burns (right) presents the 2012 Distinguished Service Award to TASC's Ron Jones.

County courts, TASC, and communitybased service providers, RAP is an intensive, two-year program that works with people who have chronic addictions as well as long arrest histories for non-violent offenses. In researchers'

services they need to be successful.

Once a client completes one aspect of a program—for example, 120 days of treatment at the beginning of RAP there is a risk for the person to then return to previous peers and behaviors.

"This program could not work without TASC. This program could not work without Ron Jones."

-- Judge Charles Burns

terms, these are the "high-need" clients whose rehabilitation significantly reduces costs and burdens to courts and communities.

At a recent RAP graduation ceremony, Cook County Criminal Court Judge Charles Burns spoke to a group of proud RAP graduates, family members, and program staff. He said it takes a number of people and organizations to make a program like RAP succeed, from the judge to the public defender and state's attorney's office to community treatment providers.

"Behind the scenes we have somebody that works for TASC," he said. TASC's role is to screen participants for the program and make recommendations to the court. Beyond that, TASC's key value is in placing clients into the right types and levels of treatment programs, and ensuring that they are getting the

"That's where TASC comes into play," said Judge Burns. "And we're going to give an award today to Mr. Ron Jones from TASC."

Judge Burns praised Mr. Jones's ability to find treatment and services for clients, even at a time of budget cuts. "Places tell me they have no (treatment) beds. He makes a phone call; there's a bed. People tell me they have no money; he takes care of it in fifteen minutes. He is a wealth of information."

To the program graduates, Judge Burns said, "Ron—in every single case—made a difference in your life. He found the right fit for all of you. He stayed on top of everything.

"This program could not work without TASC. This program could not work without Ron Jones."

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TASC, Inc. (Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities) is an independent, statewide, nonprofit agency that advocates for people in need of health and other rehabilitative services. We work in partnership with Illinois courts, prisons, child welfare programs, and community-based service providers to help adults and youth get the help they need to rebuild their lives. Please visit us online at www.tasc.org.

# **Why Systems Matter**

President's Corner

Pamela F. Rodriguez TASC President



Consider something you learned in school long ago that's remained true across your own life experience. Are there other things you learned then that are now outdated notions?

As a social work student at the University of Chicago 32 years ago, I learned that the way our society operates, and the means through which we create or deny opportunities to people, depends largely on our systems.

"Systems" is one of those bureaucratic terms that doesn't always translate well in everyday vernacular. It's the kind of word that makes people's eyes glaze over when you're giving a speech. It's the kind of word we used in grad school.

And yet, systems are essential to the creation of a fair and just society, where all people have opportunities for education, health, and equal justice under the law.

The focal points of any system are the

people around whom the system was created. Students are at the center of educational systems; patients are at the heart of health care systems; and people who have been arrested are the concern of criminal justice systems.

In theory.

In practice, it is easy to lose focus of the individuals coming through the systems.

#### **Criminal Justice System Growth**

Without clear oversight and analysis of trends and consequences, a conglomeration of forces may lead to the inexorable and unintentional over-reach of a system. For example, state and federal laws and policies can intentionally or unintentionally feed more people into the criminal justice system.

Drug policies in the U.S. have fertilized the growth of the criminal justice system for the past 30 years.

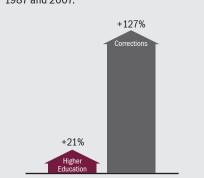
From mandatory minimum sentences to three-strikes-you're-out laws to political messages that trumpet incarceration over rehabilitation, our society has poured more and more people into courtrooms, jails, and prisons in this country than ever before. The U.S. holds the dishonorable distinction of being the world's leader in incarceration, both in

the number of people we incarcerate (2.3 million) and the rate at which we do so (1 in 100).

These costly trends not only are tearing apart families and communities, but they are breaking states' budgets as well. According to data from the National Association of State Budget Officers and reported by the Pew Center, states increased their collective spending on corrections by 315% between 1987 and 2007. Adjusted to 2007 dollars, state corrections costs rose 127% while spending on higher education increased only 21% in the same period.



State corrections spending grew at 6 times the pace of growth in higher education between 1987 and 2007.



SOURCE: National Association of State Budget Officers, "State Expenditure Report" series. Inflation adjusted general fund figures are based on a reanalysis of data in this series.

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For more information on TASC services, locations, and program administrators across the state, please visit: www.tasc.org.

#### **Executive Staff**

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Carolyn K. Ross, *Vice President of Operations*George A. H. Williams, *Vice President of Community and Government Affairs* 

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TASC receives significant funding from the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse (DASA); the Illinois Department of Corrections (DOC); and the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services (DCFS).

TASC is licensed by DASA and DCFS, and is accredited by the Commission on Accreditation of Rehabilitation Facilities (CARF).

Why Systems Matter... (cont'd from p. 2)

#### **Changing Systems**

These incarceration trends do not need to continue. We can change our systems.

What was true three decades ago—my lessons from grad school—was the notion that government was the sole keeper of our systems. This is why they were called public systems.

The notion of public systems is changing. There is greater attention today on public-private partnerships, whether the topic is education, health unlimited growth, the notions of justice will tilt.

Justice is not about growth. It is not about profit. It is about ensuring the fair and appropriate dispensation of sanctions to carry out public safety.

This is why TASC created our Center for Health and Justice. Through consultation, training, and public policy outreach, we help inform public policies and practices so that the focus remains on good stewardship of our justice systems.

"...we care about the people affected by systems, and whether those systems are hurting or helping people and communities."

care, or criminal justice. Exactly whether and how these partnerships will improve our systems—and improve outcomes for the people at the heart of these systems—remains to be seen and is a debate for another day. But what we know for sure, right now, is that we cannot allow the profit interests of the private sector, nor the self-perpetuating nature of large public systems, to dictate the parameters of justice in our country.

When private interests involve profit, or when partners within the system seek

TASC is engaged in a number of projects and initiatives to inform and improve sound systems. For instance, we staffed the Disproportionate Justice Impact Study (DJIS) Commission, which pointed out racial and ethnic inequities in the application of state drug laws. As a follow-up to DJIS Commission recommendations, we staffed the Racial and Ethnic Impact Research Task Force, which focused on improved data collection methods to inform fair justice processes.

In partnership with the National Judicial College, we are leading the Justice Leaders Systems Change Initiative, through which we train jurisdictions across the country on science-based responses to addiction-driven crime. Through a grant from The Chicago Community Trust, and under the leadership of Judge Paul P. Biebel, Jr., we are facilitating a structured planning process to improve health care access for people under justice supervision in Cook County.

#### **What Remains True**

As we work to change and improve systems, we are guided by our core values.

The principles of fairness and justice have not changed in my 32 years in social service, and they continue to guide us at TASC.

We care about fairness. We care about opportunity. And to our core, we care about the people affected by systems, and whether those systems are hurting or helping people and communities. With your support and partnership, we will continue to strive for community health and public safety achieved by means other than the over-expansion of correctional systems. These are the lessons we live by.

## **TASC Welcomes New Board Members**

TASC has welcomed two new members to its board of directors.

# Richard A. Devine, Partner Meckler Bulger Tilson Marick & Pearson LLP



Mr. Devine was elected Cook County State's Attorney in 1996 and held that post for 12 years before returning to private practice. Among his many accomplishments as State's Attorney, his office worked closely with TASC to create programming to divert low-level, non-violent offenders out of the criminal justice system and into drug intervention programs.

#### Susan G. Feibus, Partner Ungaretti & Harris LLP



Ms. Feibus has more than 25 years' trial and appellate experience in state and federal civil and criminal courts. Her specialties include employment counseling and health care law, as well as teaching trial advocacy and legal writing. She is an adjunct professor at the Northwestern University School of Law, and is an active member of TASC's Philanthropy Committee.









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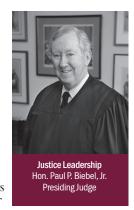
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## **Join TASC 2012 Honorees**

## Register Today for December 12 Leadership Awards Luncheon

Please join TASC on December 12 as we present our 2012 Leadership Awards to Cook County Judge Paul P. Biebel, Jr. and author Christopher Kennedy Lawford.

The Honorable Paul P. Biebel, Jr. will receive TASC's Justice Leadership Award for his work in elevating collaboration and science as critical tools in criminal justice practice. As presiding judge of



the Criminal Division in Cook County,

Judge Biebel engages health scientists and community partners in helping to confront the pervasive challenges that addiction and mental health conditions impose on justice systems. Judge Biebel is widely respected for his commitment to science-based solutions that serve both public safety and public health.

Christopher Kennedy Lawford will receive TASC's Public Voice Leadership Award to for his tireless work to promote addiction recovery worldwide. He partners with numerous corporate, government, and non-profit groups to advance the dialogue around addiction and other complex public health issues. In recovery for more than 26 years, he has written two New York



Public Voice Leadership Christopher Kennedy Lawford Author and Recovery Advocate

Times bestselling books, Symptoms of Withdrawal: A Memoir of Snapshots and Redemption (2005) and Moments of Clarity: Voices from the Front Lines of Addiction and Recovery (2009). His newest work, Recover to Live, Kick

Any Habit, Manage Any Addiction, will be released January 1.

TASC's annual luncheon will take place at the Westin Michigan Avenue in Chicago from 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM.

### ONLINE REGISTRATION AVAILABLE: Visit www.tasc.org and click on our luncheon links.



#### **Help TASC Go Green!**