



McShin
Recovery Resource
Foundation



The Virginia Recovery and Re-Entry (VRR) Project aims to serve individuals with Substance Use Disorders from incarceration through the re-entry process with an authentic, peer-to-peer approach to recovery. The project exists as a result of a matching grant awarded to The McShin Foundation in 2018 from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)'s Building Communities of Recovery initiative.

With these funds, two new recovery jail programs began in Riverside Regional Jail and Rappahannock Shenandoah Warrenton (RSW) Regional Jail. McShin Foundation staff and volunteers facilitate recovery support services five days a week in RSW and three days a week in Riverside. As part of McShin's financial match, following participation in these programs, the grant offers residential recovery program scholarships to twenty individuals to receive recovery support services through The McShin Foundation in Richmond.

VRR uses a wide variety of resources to enhance and promote long-term recovery support networks and services. Key project goals include: Helping those incarcerated with SUDs have a better sustainable recovery outcome when released from incarceration; Educating participants about recovery, addiction, and life skills development, building a foundation of recovery knowledge and coping skills upon re-entry; Providing housing in a peer run recovery house for participants; Providing wrap-around support services, based on an individualized needs assessment, such as job training, peer-to-peer recovery coaching, and family programming; and Engaging participants in recovery citizenship. These are achieved through Peer Recovery Support Services (PRSS) delivered by those in recovery, and non-clinical RSS that provides direct assistance along with a continuum of customized services and supports.

The hope of VRR is to combat Substance Use Disorders, deliver access to authentic recovery support services, and ultimately reduce recidivism for individuals actively seeking recovery.



Christopher Ronquest
VRR Project Director
chrshr@mcshin.org



Matthew Conner
VRR Project Coordinator
mattc@mcshin.org



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Participant Testimonials

"My name is Jeremy Miller and I am a person in recovery suffering from the disease of addiction. I am in sober living at The McShin Foundation Recovery Community Organization. First off, I would like to say that **I owe my new life to these people**. I have been an active addict for 25 years and had no exposure to rehabilitation before I wound up in the McShin Recovery Pod at the Rappahannock-Shenandoah-Warren Regional Jail. **It saved my life and my families lives by allowing me to become the father my daughter needs and the person my family always wanted me to be.**

From 2017 to 2018, I spent a year at the regional jail for drug charges with no rehabilitation offered and wound up using within days of my release. Incarceration did not help my disease at all. Rehabilitation was the only thing that worked. **The tools and education, combined with the clean-time, all given to me here at the McShin RCO, have allowed me the confidence to be a productive member of society.** America will not succeed at arresting its way out of this problem. Rehabilitation provides the only positive outcome for those who suffer from the disease of addiction." – *Jeremy Miller, 2019*

"My name is Lisa Madison and I'm a person who suffers from Substance Use Disorder. I battled my disease for 38 years. I never knew about recovery. **My life was unmanageable and chaotic**. I wanted to die. I knew I was hurting my family and enabling my kids. My life was spiraling further and further out of control, and I felt that I wanted to escape. Then, on November 14th, 2018, I was arrested. I went through an 11-day withdrawal. It was horrible. I was put in general population to sit until July for my next court date.

In late January, a young guy came into the general population pod and started telling his story (only it was my story). **There was someone else just like me**. As he talked, I watched him. He smiled and laughed and told how he came to get where he was. I knew at that moment I wanted what he had. The next day I was moved to the McShin pod. It was structured. We had speakers come in to share their experiences in strength and hope. I applied for a scholarship. I thought I'd get it, but I didn't think I'd get let out of jail to go to Richmond. I'm pretty sure that **God knew I was serious this time** because I got a bond. I've been at the McShin R.C.O. since March 29th, 2019. **I've learned to listen, help and give back.**

My life has been so different since coming here. I have a purpose. One year ago, I never knew living clean could be possible. RSW Regional Jail, is the only jail that offered a program. So, thank you SAMSHA, RSW, and Christopher Ronquest for **a new way to live.**" – *Lisa Madison, 2019*

"My name is Norman "Butch" Wilkinson. **I'm 61 years old and in Recovery from a Substance Use Disorder.** I was born in Maryland in 1958 and was raised in the suburbs with my Mom, Dad and four sisters. My Mom was awesome, but Dad was brutal at times - other times he was a good dad. I experimented with marijuana and acid as a teen. My Dad got cancer in 1979 and died in 1980. That was when I drank vodka. **I was in and out of jail for the next almost 40 years.** I wound up in RSW jail in November of 2018 for a drug charge. That was where I heard about McShin. I had never tried rehab before. I liked the things they were teaching and became interested. My son overdosed and died shortly after I went to the drug pod in RSW. I was lucky to be with the guys I was with, because I'm sure I would have relapsed. I learned a lot about Narcotics Anonymous and 12 Step in RSW. I really like Cricket. **He helped me through some of my grief.** He told me to write McShin a letter and I received a scholarship. I recently completed my 28-day Intense Program. It's been a wonderful experience - very educational. **I'm excited to see what the future brings.** - *Norman Wilkinson, 2019*

"My name is David Thurber and I am a person in recovery from the disease of addiction. What that means to me is that **I can live a normal life without the need for substances, without harming those I love, and without being a burden to society.** I can actually now be a productive citizen giving back to the community and to those I love. When I entered the McShin recovery program at RSW Regional Jail, I had little to no hope that I could ever have a life worth living. I was very skeptical and very guarded with little to no trust at all. When John and Cricket came in and spoke, they caught my attention. I began to start thinking of the things they had said, and **a spark was ignited.** I started to realize that maybe I do have a chance, maybe I can be a good person and have a normal life. I began to grow and, bit by bit each day, **my thinking started to change.** I started to discover who I am. You see, the person I was on drugs and with my addiction leading me hid the real me, not only from those around me, but from myself also. Now, with just a few short weeks from my 18th month in recovery, **I have armed myself with the tools I need to help me stay clean.** I have clear goals to achieve and a purpose in life. **I can finally look at myself in the mirror and feel confident and happy with the person I have become.** I would sincerely beg the community to reach out and help the recovery community as much as they can, it makes a difference. There are so many young men and women that are lost and hopeless and that just shouldn't be, all they need is for someone to light a spark in them and give them a helping hand." – *David Thurber, 2019*

"My name is Leslie Jones and I am an addict. My addiction took me from a beautiful family, three children, a home, and vehicles paid for. I had a terrible car accident that crippled my son and took me to a deep dark depression. **I numbed all my hurt and pain with alcohol and drugs.** From the streets, I landed in RSW Regional Jail and I asked to be put into the drug program. The first day I met a facilitator from the McShin program and he told me he was a hope dealer, not dope dealer. As he talked, I found myself relating to how he had been in

jail and how a peer to peer program helped him. As they came in week after week, I found myself being more and more educated and liked what I was hearing. Throughout the eight months I was there at RSW, **right before my eyes I saw a change so great that it made my heart happy to see this truly works**. Within a few months, my life became amazing. I was really understanding the disease and knew what I had to do to have a new life. Now, I am living the sober life at McShin helping others dealing hope and saving lives. I have a job, I am a house leader, leading others in the way I was led. **I love my life and it is precious to me. Better yet, I am loving me.**” – *Leslie Jones*

“My name is Terry, and I am in recovery from a substance use disorder that lasted 45 years. **I did not realize my addiction was a disease until I was introduced to The McShin Foundation**. I was at my low of all lows. I was living on the streets for the past three years. I was arrested for sleeping in the post office lobby where the P.O. boxes were. I was charged with trespassing and sentenced to 45 days.

I was in the Riverside Jail in Prince George, VA. I was moved to the Veterans Pod after I detoxed. The pod had a program that was military chain of command. One of the outside programs was The McShin Foundation that had recovery groups.

I was inspired by what The McShin Foundation had to offer. I spoke with them and they offered me a full scholarship. I am still in the recovery program today. **The McShin Foundation saved my life.**” – *Terry Barry*

“My name is Justin Biggers and I’m 26 years old. I got incarcerated on February 9th, 2019 at RSW Regional Jail. I was only home for four months after doing 13 ½ months. I was sitting in classification thinking to myself that **something has to change or I’m going to lose my family or end up dead if I continued the path I was on**. I was tired of living the way I was, hiding my addiction from my family for 11 years. I’ve never had any kind of treatment program, the judge always gave me jail time and, clearly, it wasn’t working. When I saw the announcement on the kiosk for the McShin program, I thought **this could be the change I had been looking for**.

I got moved to the pod a few weeks later. When I got in the pod, it was an environment that I wasn’t used to – a pod full of convicts grouping, expressing their feelings to one another, and just getting along. After a week of being in there, a little guy that went Cricket came in the pod and told us his story. That’s the day **I knew I could change my old ways** because this guy has been through everything that I’ve been through and has everything he’s ever wanted. He sold me hope that day, and it hit me right in the heart that I wanted what he had. After that day, I stopped gambling, playing cards, and goofing off so I could focus on my step work, reading the NA book and staying sober one day at a time.

I got released August 19th, 2019 and came straight to The McShin Foundation in Richmond, VA and **it was the best decision I ever made**. I have family supporting me like I’ve never had. Everyone at McShin is so loving and caring, they want nothing but to see you

succeed at a sober life. Today, I can say I'm sober and I'm working on 7 months clean **one day at a time.**" – *Justin Biggers*

"I cannot begin to express my gratitude for the opportunity to improve my life as made possible through the SAMHSA scholarship. I have been in active addiction for over 10 years, in and out of recovery, never being able to get it right. **I have been homeless, I have ruined relationships, I have disassociated from my family.** My disease has brought me to places I never thought I would be and, for a time, I was utterly hopeless. I am happy to say that now I have found a new love for life, my own life, and I am proud to say that **I am finally able to see my own potential.** Love, optimism, and trust have become a part of my life in a way they never have before. I am grateful beyond words for this new chance, and my circumstances today are a direct result of the kindness and generosity of SAMHSA and The McShin Foundation.

My time at the McShin recovery pod in RSW Regional Jail was a blessing, and I could not have asked for a better learning opportunity during my incarceration. Today, I have the desire to help others. **I know that through compassion and empathy, I and many others like me can find a new, more fulfilling way of life.** I wish to pay it forward; I wish to help others the way SAMHSA and The McShin Foundation have helped me. **I am grateful for my life today and excited about my future.** I have found a new belief and a new purpose: to show the same kindness to others that was so generously shown to me." – *Nick McKelvey*

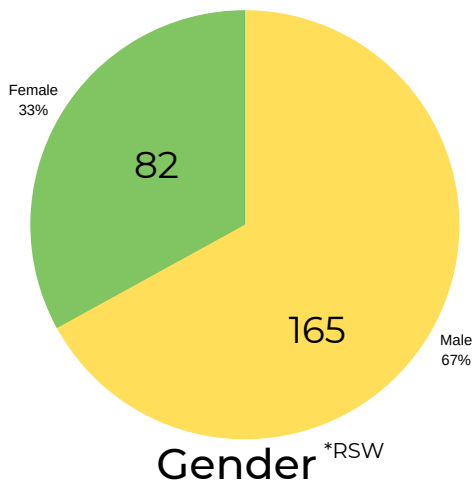
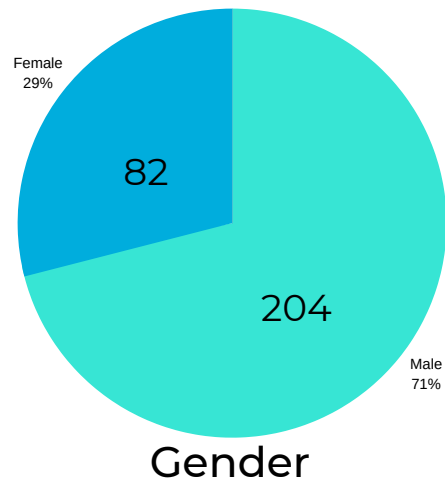
"Ever since coming to McShin, **I have had a completely new outlook on life.** It has shown me so many different ways that I can have fun time being clean, and that **I don't ever have to use drugs again.** It has shown me the pathway I use for my recovery (which is the program of Narcotics Anonymous). Without the NA program and McShin, I don't know where I would be at in life. I would probably be in jail or prison. If not that, I would probably be dead! It has given me **the opportunity to have a great connection with my family** – one that I have not had in many years. I have also made many real friends – true friends that don't want anything from me but my time and my friendship. **I'm so blessed to be able to come to McShin.** They have taught me to be able to live life without the use of drugs. And now, with the help of the people that work there, I can relate to the peer part very well!" – *Dylan Knouse*



VIRGINIA RECOVERY & RE-ENTRY PROJECT

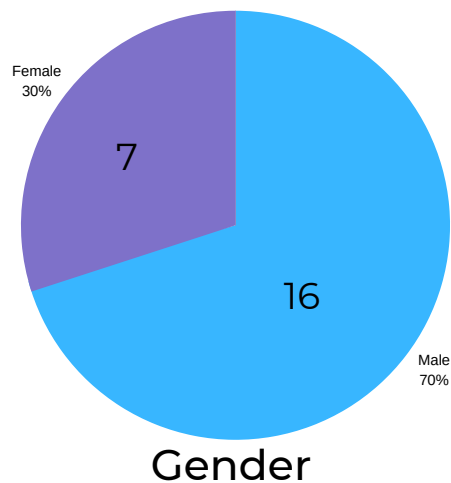
286 served through the VRR Project

Those served through
VRR Jail Component
RSW : 247
Riverside : 39



While only serving men at
Riverside, the VRR Project serves
both men and women at RSW.

23 served on scholarship through
VRR Re-Entry Component



New Jail Recovery Program Could Be A Model for Addiction Treatment



By ANDREW JENNER • APR 11, 2019



According to the superintendent of the Rappahannock-Shenandoah-Warren Regional Jail, locking up people with substance use disorders simply doesn't work. In the first in an occasional series on local jails, WMRA's Andrew Jenner reports on RSW's partnership with a Richmond-based recovery organization.

DOMINIQUE HINTON: I'm just looking forward to getting out of here. A lot of men need this program.

In a few moments, Dominique Hinton will walk out of the [RSW Regional Jail](#) in Front Royal. He's headed to Richmond to begin the reentry portion of the jail's new peer-based recovery program.

HINTON: This is something I'm most definitely looking forward to, just to help me get my life back on track.

The program began last fall at RSW. It's designed to help people whose addictions keep landing them behind bars. Superintendent Russ Gilkison guesses that 90 percent of those incarcerated here fit that description.

RUSS GILKISON: They're either in here actively for using, or selling or they've committed another crime of theft or whatever to support their habit, or they've violated their probation from a previous incarceration.

After more than 20 years in corrections, Gilkison is ready for a new approach.

GILKISON: When we hold people in jail, we're just warehousing people. We've got to find new ways to try to address the addiction disease that they have.

That's where Christopher Renquest comes in.

CHRISTOPHER RENQUEST: I am the project director of Virginia Recovery and Reentry. It is a project that is designed to create, develop, implement and operate substance use recovery programs in a jail setting.

Renquest works for the [McShin Foundation](#), a Richmond organization that runs a peer-based recovery program for people with substance use disorders. "Peer-based" means that most staff have been through the program themselves. Renquest, who is in active recovery, started in January 2015, while he was in jail in Hanover County.

RENQUEST: It provided the hope that I could live differently than I had been living all the years that I had been in active addiction. They came in and they made me believe that recovery was possible and attainable for

After release, Renquest – who had been arrested 64 times – completed the McShin Foundation’s reentry program.

RENQUEST: I never thought in a million years that not only would I not be incarcerated for the rest of my life or dead from a drug overdose, but I’d be allowed to go in and out of jails, and giving the same hope that was given to me.

GILKISON: There was a time when I probably wouldn’t have even sat across the table with a guy like Chris.

That’s Gilkison again, sitting across the table from Renquest.

GILKISON: I used to be the guy, ‘lock ‘em up, make ‘em do their time.’ That doesn’t work.

Participants in the RSW program live together in two recovery pods, one for men and one for women. They spend five hours a day in facilitated groups.

RENQUEST: They do trauma classes, they address anger, communication skills, money, budgeting.

There’s space for 60 men and 30 women in the two recovery pods. Both are nearly full. At least once a week, Renquest leads group sessions. Other facilitators come to the jail on other days.

RENQUEST: They’ve bought white boards so that I can go in and do what we call chalk talk. We have videos. We bring in guest speakers. We address every aspect that we can think of to help somebody not recidivate or relapse.

The program’s reentry component is key to that. After release, participants begin a 28-day intensive residential program in Richmond, followed by a move to a sober living home, where they can stay for a few months as they find jobs and new footing in life. Half the funding for the RSW program is a \$200,000 grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. The McShin Foundation is paying the other half. John Shinholser is the group’s president and co-founder.

JOHN SHINHOLSER: Every jail and every prison in America should have this type of program. The best studies, on average, are showing a 20 percent reduction in recidivism for these type of programs. They pay for themselves. They create healthier communities. It’s almost sinful, disgraceful that this stuff ain’t happening in facilities all across America.

Gilkison is cautiously optimistic that the new program is a step in the right direction.

GILKISON: Time will tell. We’ve had five people successful so far. And I’m sure that we’re going to have people that are going to have initial successes that may relapse. Unfortunately, that’s just part of the recovery process, from what I’ve seen.

The last of several doors at RSW opens and clangs shut. Hinton and Renquest step out into bright sunshine. They head toward a waiting truck, bound for Richmond and the start of the reentry process.

HINTON: I’m going to go ahead and watch these men who are actually out here walking it. I’m going to see if I can follow them and help change my life.

Of the several hundred people per year cycle who through the McShin Foundation’s program, Shinholser said, about 40 percent remain engaged in their recovery two years later. That’s a rate they’re proud of. Still, that means there are also plenty of setbacks. Prior to this story airing, Hinton was dismissed for noncompliance and returned to RSW. Comparing substance use disorder to other chronic diseases like diabetes and hypertension, Shinholser said they expect and prepare for unsuccessful attempts at recovery – and, frequently, readmit participants when they’re ready to try again.

Jail program strives to teach another way to live

By Melissa Topey The Northern Virginia Daily Jun 28, 2019

FRONT ROYAL — Chris Kerns says he now has hope.

Kerns, 30, of Woodstock, has been attending McShin Foundation Peer to Peer support groups for about three months with other inmates of Pod B at the Rappahannock-Shenandoah-Warren Regional Jail. “Yes, I have hope. When I say hope, I am extending it beyond the next meeting. ...I was ignorant that I could choose to live differently; it was not something I was exposed to,” he replied when asked if the program is helping him.

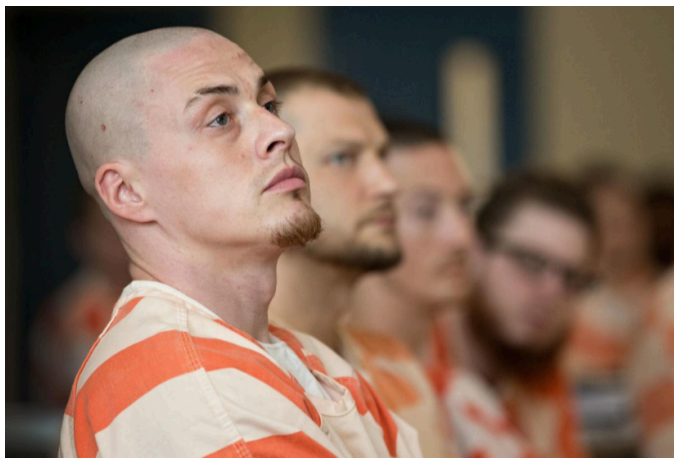


Kerns, who is in the regional jail on a probation violation, said his path in life has led him in and out of jails and courts on various drug or drug-driven crimes. The RSW program, he said, was his first opportunity to be exposed to a peer-to-peer recovery group. It was not a normal experience for him, he said, to hear a group of guys tell their stories, share their feelings and talk about empathy. When he leaves jail, Kerns will use a \$9,800 scholarship he has received to enter the McShin Foundation full-service recovery center in Richmond.

Due to a grant, the McShin Foundation is able to give away 20-such scholarships every year for three years. It covers housing, groceries, substance abuse counseling, peer recovery coaching, psychiatric evaluation and access to other resources. Participants who are successful also receive a 16-hour NAADAC (The Association for Addiction Professionals) certification as a peer recovery coach.

Kenya Mccutheon, another inmate in the support group, is new to the RSW jail, arriving a few days ago. He was arrested by Rockingham County authorities on several charges including a drug charge and fraud and larceny charges. He said he does not want to end up being transferred to another facility. “I am trying to stay here. I know I need rehab,” Mccutheon said.

The peer-to-peer program is being funded with grant money. Christopher Ronquest, director of the Virginia Recovery/Reentry Project for the McShin Foundation, leads the group. “We gonna recover today,” he shouts as the men enter the common area from their cells. Then Ronquest shares his story. He is brutally honest with the men. Honesty, he said, works to reach them; they are where he was.



"I had been using for some time. They called me a career criminal. A career is what you do. A career is a path you choose. I felt like a failure," Ronquest said. He told the group that he was a straight-A student when at the age of 14 he started using drugs and drinking. Ronquest said he was at times homeless, panhandling on the streets and so desperate he would do anything for the next hit. He discussed the jails and prisons he had been in and out of. "I wondered why I couldn't get myself right," Ronquest said.

He asked the men how many of them had been in lockup more than once. About 80 percent of the group of 55 men raised their hand. Ronquest talked about sitting in the Pamunkey Regional Jail in Hanover, feeling defeated and beaten down. Then a man came into the jail to talk to them. "I hung on every word he said," Ronquest recalled. The man was John Shinholser, president and founder of the McShin Foundation, who returned often to the jail.

"I liked what I was hearing," Ronquest said. "I started to realize recovery is a real thing." He told the group that recovery people watch recovery people, and are there for each other. "I cannot beat my disease by myself. Dope will win every time if I fight it on my own," Ronquest said. Ronquest told the men about coming to the realization that the decisions he was making weren't working and he might as well listen to Shinholser and others in sustained recovery.

"Has your will ever worked in your favor?" Ronquest asked. He also asked the men how many wanted something different – about 95 percent of the men raised their hand.



For more than two years, Ronquest said he has not used illegal drugs or drank. "Recovery has kept me out of jail, out of poverty and it allows me to walk in and out of the jails I was once incarcerated in," he said. He has a good job he is proud of, and a home. Ronquest said he has not only bought himself a nice car, he bought his mom an even nicer one.

At the end of the two-hour meeting, the men of Pod B stand up and applaud Ronquest. They gave Ronquest, whose nickname is Cricket, a hand-drawn Father's Day card with a cricket on the front. It read Happy Father's Day along with the word Recovery. The inside of the card was filled with signatures.

Ronquest said the McShin Foundation is grateful for the opportunity Jail Superintendent Russ Gilkison gave them. Gilkison said the program came to be as a result of the jail board and the community wanting a more intensive program to help combat the drug trade, drug use and its associated crimes, something that cannot just be fought by arrests. "I think it's going well. The inmates that have participated seem to be getting a benefit from it. We are getting people out of incarceration and into treatment. For those who remain here, while they are here they are getting that peer support," Gilkison said.



RSW Jail, substance abuse rehab program mark progress with summit

Published 5 days ago on August 10, 2019

By Roger Bianchini 

ROYAL EXAMINER
THE NEWS BEHIND THE NEWS

On Thursday, August 8, Royal Examiner spoke with Virginia Recovery and Reentry (VRR) Program Project Director Christopher Ronquest of the McShin Foundation, McShin-RSW Jail Program Facilitator Diana Lieber and Rappahannock-Shenandoah-Warren County (RSW) Regional Jail Superintendent Russ Gilkison about the first eight months of implementation of an aggressively proactive effort to rehabilitate inmates dealing with substance abuse issues.



As Gilkison notes during our video interview, in addition to people convicted and jailed on drug offenses, many jailed on other criminal charges have substance abuse problems as a basis for that criminal activity. And the VRR program launched at both RSW Jail and Prince George County's Riverside Regional Jail last December takes direct aim at addiction and substance abuse through a peer-to-peer approach to recovery aimed at reducing criminal recidivism related to substance abuse and addiction.

To mark the program's personal success stories, stories that remain in progress for the rest of the participating inmates' lives, the two jails and the Richmond-based McShin Foundation will hold a VRR Organizational Summit in southern Warren County on August 29, from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. at the Mountain Bed & Breakfast at 3471 Remount Road. The event is open to the public.

In addition to program and jail officials the summit will include scholarship recipients from the VRR re-entry program. Those inmates now facing transition back into the world will tell their stories of hope for meaningful change in their lives brought to them through the partnership of the McShin Foundation's Virginia Recovery and Re-Entry Program and the RSW and Riverside Jails.

The scholarships or grant offers will help fund 20-plus inmates, a majority from RSW, transition back toward productive lives away from the environments that led to their substance abuse and criminality, in residential recovery settings as they seek jobs and meaningful change in their lives.

As Ronquest, Lieber and Gilkison explain in our video interview, the heart of the VRR Program is that peer-to-peer interaction with program members and inmates who share a background in substance abuse and addiction. It is an approach that removes the "why don't you straighten up and do something positive with your life" lecture to "this is how I overcame my addiction issues and have maintained sobriety, I think you can do it too" path of empathy and shared mutual experience.

Lieber, an Air Force veteran who is a volunteer program facilitator at RSW told us, "It is a win-win for everybody and a miracle to see in action." And that "everybody" who wins from the VRR program includes you as a taxpaying member of this community. For when the pattern of behavior of addiction and associated criminality is broken, those inmates and VRR Program alumni are much less likely to return to that previous lifestyle and consequently are less likely to return to jail to be housed again for longer periods of time on the taxpayer's dime.

The McShin Foundation was established in 2004 and is Virginia's leading non-profit, full-service Recovery Community Organization (RCO), committed to serving individuals and families in their fight against Substance Use Disorders. The VRR Programs at RSW and Riverside Jails was enabled by a matching grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)'s Building Communities of Recovery initiative.

Please watch the linked Royal Examiner video interview for more detail on the VRR Program, the upcoming summit, and the project's potential to enable meaningful, positive change in individual lives and consequently in the life of, not only our community, but communities across the commonwealth.

Herring visits RSW jail for peer to peer support group launch

By Melissa Topey The Northern Virginia Daily Dec 15, 2018

FRONT ROYAL – The McShin Foundation is officially established at the Rappahannock-Shenandoah-Warren Regional Jail.

Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring and other government officials were there Friday afternoon to see the program launched.



“This is not a program we can arrest our way out of,” Herring said. “Its roots are in the medicine cabinet, and addiction can happen to any of us. We must have a multi-faceted approach, and a key part of that approach is treatment and recovery. I have seen how peer to peer support works.”

The McShin Foundation, founded by John Shinholser, is a recovery community organization that offers a program that includes peer-to-peer recovery support services at the jail and resources for addicts such as halfway houses, transitional recovery houses and opiate detox. The re-entry component to the project will take place through The McShin Foundation in Richmond, which will provide the housing and recovery support services to individuals as they re-enter society. The ultimate goal of this project is to reduce recidivism and other societal problems created by substance use.

Herring, Del. Todd Gilbert, R-Mount Jackson, and others were taken back into the jail to a pod where 61 inmates who had volunteered to take part in the program were waiting. “I want to thank you, that you volunteered for that. I have seen the great work that they (McShin Foundation) do,” Herring said. An inmate called out: “I want to thank you for your help.” “Amen,” others cried while clapping echoed in the room. Herring took a few minutes to walk around and talk to the inmates, many expressing their excitement about the program.

The McShin Foundation, founded in 2004, recently received a \$200,000 matching grant that allows it to bring its recovery program to the regional jail. It will also be starting a program at the Riverside Regional Jail in Prince George County.

During the event, Shinholser said he was feeling fabulous. He talked about the grant and that McShin would need community help to match that \$200,000 to sustain the grant. “This is the fifth jail that we started a program in. We want to have programs in as many as we can, where ever we can,” Shinholser said. Shinholser asked how many people had addiction impact their life. More than half of the people in the room raised their hands, including Kate Obenshain Keeler, who sits on the McShin Advisory Council. Obenshain Keeler is the sister of Sen. Mark Obenshain, R-Harrisonburg.

Keeler shared her personal story of her youngest son, who has battled mental illness and drug addiction for six years. “I never thought I would be here talking about addiction. Ten years ago I was in the group who said lock them up and throw away the key. I had had zero personal experience,” Keeler said. She said it is time to start looking toward Shinholser and others to find a solution to the epidemic. She said she was grateful that Herring and Gilbert were there.

“Let’s all start working together. These programs are a huge part of the solution,” Keeler said.