

2016 JMGBL Awards Application

Submission Date	2016-06-24 09:33:31
This application is for:	Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award
Project Title	Operation Educate
County/Counties	Spartanburg County
Staff Contact	Neal Urch
Job Title	Major / Director
E-mail Address	nurch@spartanburgcounty.org
Phone Number	864-596-3420
Please provide a summary of your entry (no more than 100 words) to be used in a handout for the awards competition and included in press releases/publications. You may either type the summary in the text box or upload it as an attachment below.	Operation Educate gives inmates access to education and resources to help provide skills and workplace habits necessary for employment. Most inmates at the county jail are unemployed and have less than a high school education. It also focuses on worker characteristics such as punctuality and cooperation with co-workers and provides readiness training, which includes tips on interview skills. This program could save taxpayers money by reducing the jail population, have a major impact on an inmate's life, and even have a dramatic effect on the families of those inmates, setting a new pattern of employment for their children.
Presentations may include more than one speaker; however, each speaker should be aware that the 10-minute time limit is strictly enforced. Please list the name, title, and e-mail address of each speaker:	Major Neal Urch, Director nurch@spartanburgcounty.org
Will any of the speakers need accommodations (wheelchair accessibility, etc.) during the awards competition?	No

Operation

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Barrett Lawrimore

Memorial Regional Cooperation Award



SPARTANBURG COUNTY
SHERIFF'S OFFICE



SC WORKS



State Agency of
**Vocational
Rehabilitation**

Spartanburg County Sheriff's Office
Detention Divison

Operation Educate

Benefit/Importance of Project:

1. Why was this project undertaken?

According to a US Department of Justice report published in 2006, over **7.2 million** people were at that time in prison, on probation, or on parole (released from prison with restrictions).

From Prison Policy Initiative's *Mass Incarceration: The Whole Pie* (2015) by Peter Wagner and Bernadette Rabuy. <http://www.prisonpolicy.org/reports/pie2015.html>

The United States incarcerates more people per capita than any other nation in the world. Yet, the crime rate is still the highest. The conclusion reached is that incarceration alone is not the answer. This was realized to be true in Spartanburg County where the recidivism rate is estimated to be at 33% or 1 in 3 people will return to the jail for minor violations within a year. While analyzing the various issues that brought people back to the jail, it was found that many of them become caught in a cycle and did not know how to get out. Those issues may include mental health, drug or alcohol addiction.

(August 2012) Since 2002, the United States has had the highest incarceration rate in the world. Although prison populations are increasing in some parts of the world, the natural rate of incarceration for countries comparable to the United States tends to stay around 100 prisoners per 100,000 populations. The U.S. rate is 500 prisoners per 100,000 residents or about 1.6 million prisoners in 2010, according to the latest available data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics (BJS). 1 References;

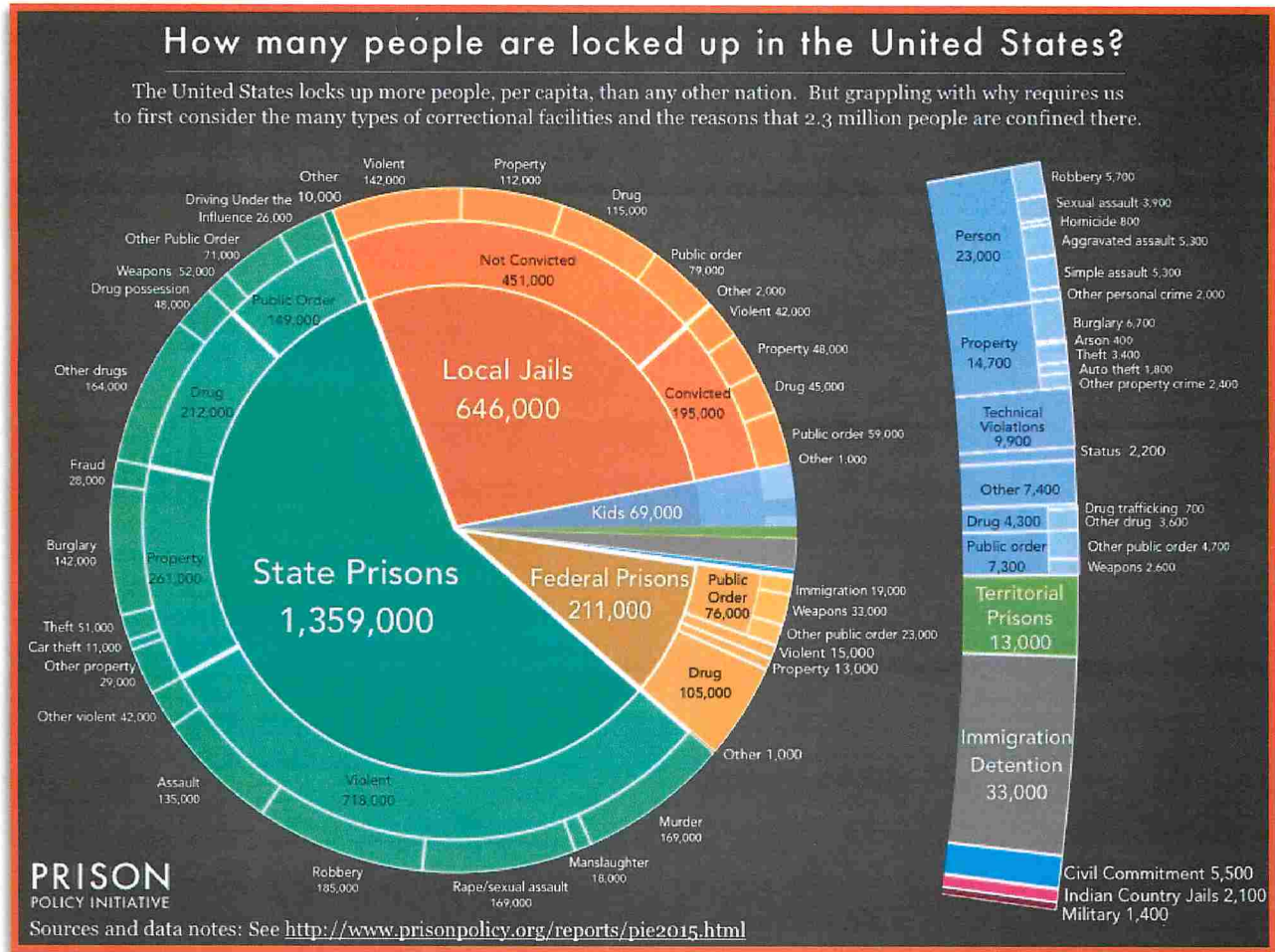
1. Paul Guerino, Paige M. Harrison, and William J. Sabol, *Prisoners in 2010 (Revised)* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011); and Sara Wakefield and Christopher Uggen, "Incarceration and Stratification," *Annual Review of Sociology* 36 (2010): 387-206. **Clarification, Oct. 28, 2014:** There were 740,000 inmates in city and county jails and other facilities in the U.S. in 2010; about 5 percent of these were in state and federal custody. Counting the local jail population, the total incarcerated population in 2010 was about 2.3 million. See: Todd Minton, *Jail Inmates at Mid-Year 2010—Statistical Tables* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, 2011)

The numbers:

- In the U.S., 2.3 million people are incarcerated on any given day, resulting in the highest incarceration rate in the world.
- The American criminal justice system holds more than 2.3 million people in 1,719 state prisons, 102 federal prisons, 2,259 juvenile correctional facilities, 3,283 local jails, and 79 Indian Country jails as well as in military prisons, immigration detention facilities, civil commitment centers, and prisons in the U.S. territories.
- In addition to the 636,000 people released from prisons each year, over 11 million people cycle through local jails each year.
- Jail churn is particularly high because at any given moment a majority of the people in local jails have not been convicted and are in jail because they are either too poor to afford bail and are being held pretrial, or because they have just been arrested and will make bail in the next few hours or days to

come. The remainder of the people in jail — almost 200,000 — is serving time for minor offenses; generally misdemeanors with sentences under a year.

- There are another 850,000 people on parole and 3.9 million people on probation currently.



2. What is the significance of this project to your community as a whole? How does it relate in importance to the other problems in your community?

Education plays a pivotal role in a person’s life and can either help them obtain employment or prohibit them from the same. A higher level of education usually equates to a better paying job and the benefits that come with an increased income. When someone, for whatever reason, does not obtain a high school diploma or equivalency and does not have skill level training to make them attractive to an employer, they will resort to other means to create an income involving criminal activity. Some of those who process through the justice system may have good intentions upon release from incarceration but without being able to obtain gainful employment, they often return to the life of crime.

More data:

According to the Brookings Institution (2014):

- Crime rates in the United States have been on a steady decline since the 1990s, but the incarceration rate in the United States is now at a historically unprecedented level and is far above the typical rate in other developed countries.
- Per capita expenditures on corrections more than tripled over the past 30 years

- According to the population Reference Bureau (2012):
- The US has had the highest incarceration rate in the world since 2002.
- Incarceration rates are highest for those in their 20s and early 30s. Prisoners also tend to be less educated: The average state prisoner has a 10th grade education, and about 70 percent have not completed high school.

Male and Female Imprisonment Rate by Region, 2010:

	Total	Male	Female
United States	500	943	67
Northeast	296	577	27
Midwest	389	735	53
South	552	1,039	78
West	418	772	60

According to the Pew Center on the States (2012):

- The length of a prison stay increased by more than a third over the past two decades, a period of time in which the prison population doubled - Inmates released from prison in 2009 spent an average of 2.9 years — or 36 percent — longer behind bars than offenders released in 1990.

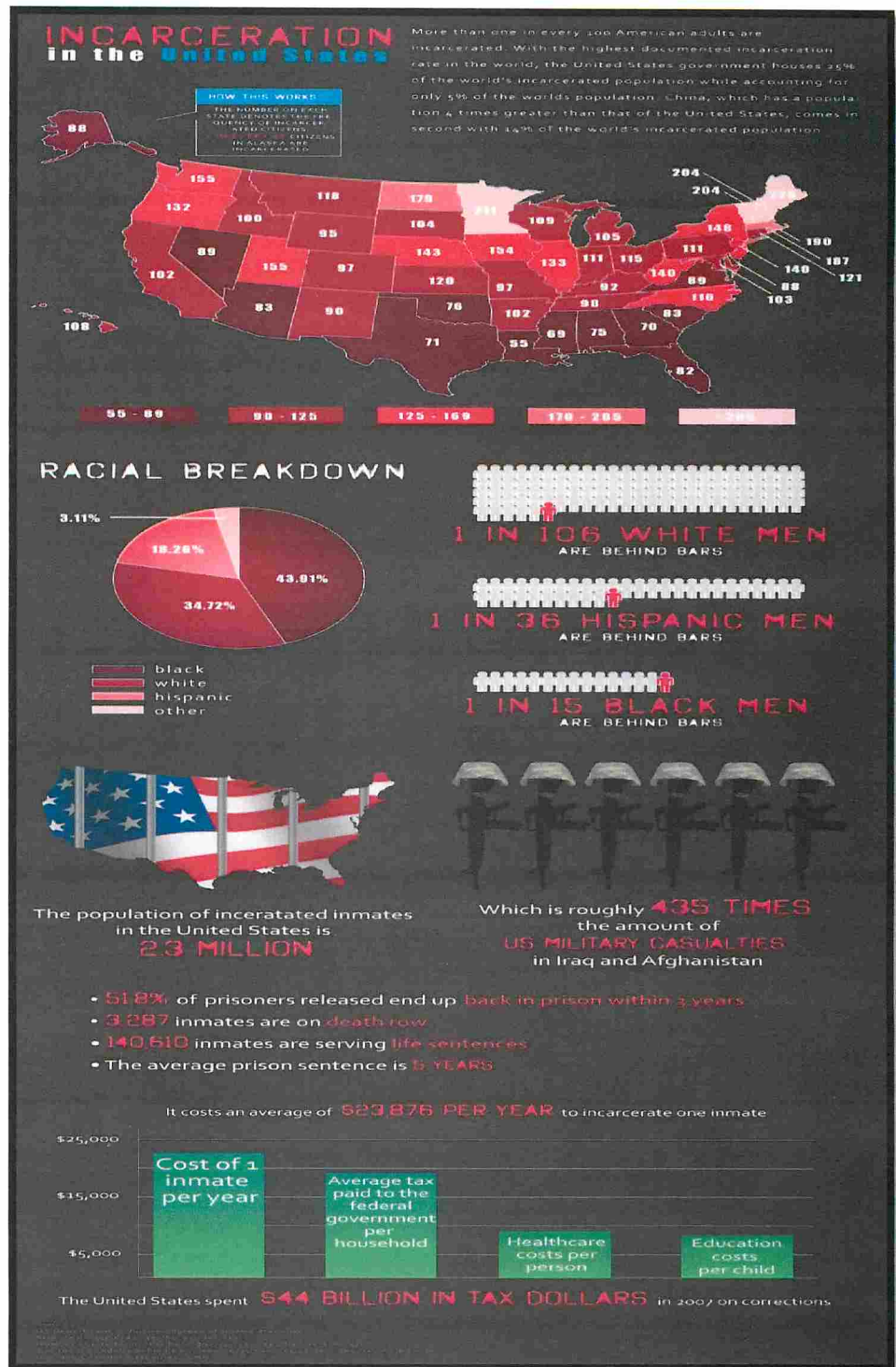
3. How much of the county’s population is benefited by the project? In what specific ways are different groups of citizens within the county better off than before?

Given that the crime rate in a community affects the whole community either directly or indirectly, one of the ultimate goals of this project would be to reduce the crime rate. Obviously, a higher level of education would directly affect the individual and their family but if someone leaves the jail and does not recommit a crime, the community becomes safer and more attractive to those businesses that look to locate their business in that community. It also becomes more attractive to families who may be looking for a place to live. In certain aspects, the entire population of the community benefits from a person receiving their education while incarcerated which in turn allows them to make better choices upon release.

If a human being has hope, they will try harder to succeed. If a person achieves a level of education while incarcerated and we work with that person to find employment upon release, they are officially contributing to the county’s tax base instead of being a consistent burden to it. With enough lives affected by the program and a reduction in the jail’s population, monies which are now spent for the operation of the jail could be diverted to other quality of life issues in the county.

Given these principles, not only are there individual affects by someone who receives an education and applies it to make a different path for them, this also affects the family unit. Everyone has someone who cares for them and wants to see them succeed in life.

As this ripple effect develops over time, more and more people feel the affect. It is true that not a lot of people commit a small number of crimes but rather a small number of people commit a large number of crimes. The more of this small number of people we can affect through programs that allow them to have different choices in life, the more the affect is magnified tenfold as they have probably committed many more crimes then they have been charged with. This program, along with the community partnerships and commitment to make our community better by changing lives of our residents, has the potential to impact the entire community. If not personally, then by reducing the number of inmates incarcerated in our jail it will reduce the operating cost of the jail, which is largely funded through the tax base of the county.



4. What degree of success did the project attain? What major objectives were achieved?

One can measure success in numerous ways. We can measure our success with numbers. In a year's time, sixty eight inmates have achieved a vocational certificate in one of the following; manufacturing, office administration, and cell phone repair. Twenty six tests have been administered towards one of four sections of the General Education Development with zero failures. Twenty six inmates have achieved a

bronze level or higher certificate towards a Work- Keys accreditation. Success can also be measured by the feedback we get back from our participants, whom express to our staff the level of hope these opportunities offer them. The will to succeed from the individuals are higher than the ones who do not wish to participate in these programs. We can measure these levels by successful scores and lack of disciplinary incidences.

The major objectives achieved during the process were creating the only Pearson VUE-Authorized Test Center in a South Carolina detention center and create higher participation levels. Our authorized testing classroom has created the opportunity for testing inmates on-site without added transportation and security costs.

Project Effort/Difficulty:

1. What did your county have to do to accomplish its objectives?

To determine an approach to break the cycle of recidivism, it must first be determined what the cause of the behavior is and how do we provide that person with different choices. Crime is a symptom but what is the cause? The answer is varied as the number of inmates and in many cases there is more than one cause. Spartanburg County has taken the approach of public, private and nonprofit partnerships which address the individual's problem(s) with already established evidence based programs. In this plan, the jail becomes a place of screening, brief intervention, and the community partners become a place of referral and treatment. This treatment works best if begun inside the jail when the person is looking for answers and continues upon release supported by the community partner who holds the expertise for particular need. This could include mental health, addiction treatment, education, housing or transportation. The things that most of us take for granted are barriers for individuals coming out of jail and returning to the community. It would be reasonable to assume, that if we do not provide them with other options, a person would return to what they know which most likely what initially brought them to jail in the first place which will ultimately bring them back again and could potentially be more serious criminal offences.

2. What challenges occurred during the project? Were there any community concerns?

The difficulties in attempting to provide services to a person in a jail setting are complicated with an unknown release date. About 85% of the jail's inmate population is considered pre-trial inmates and with the different variables in the court system and factors with the criminal charge, some may stay in jail for up to 5 years. Most are processed and released on bond within the first 4 to 6 hours of confinement. Given all these factors, Spartanburg County began in 2012/2013 to develop community partners in an attempt to change the culture and philosophy of managing a jail. Our own statistics show that compared to the number of people we process in a year's time, approximately 5% receive a sentence which commits them to the State Department of Corrections, leaving the other 95% are either still in jail awaiting trial or have been released back out into the community. The conclusion reached was that we must do something while they are in jail.

3. What were the nature and extent of the county government's efforts to alleviate the problem(s)? How difficult was it to accomplish the project's goals and/or objectives?

This is a program developed at the behest of the county council chairman, which began with a conversation of the jail director and the president of the local community college in a meeting late in

calendar year 2014 and was supported by the county Sheriff. The idea of the proposal was to provide skill level training to incarcerated individuals which would make them more marketable to employers upon their release. If a person is employed, they are less likely to commit a crime. Since the daily cost of incarceration in Spartanburg County is \$56.08 per inmate/day, it makes much more financial sense to have that person being of benefit to the tax base instead of being a burden to it. The Workforce Investment Board/SC Works and Vocational Rehabilitation quickly joined in the cause and became funding partners to support the cost incurred by the college to provide instructors and materials to support this project. Soon after, an application process was developed to screen inmates for this program. A pilot class of 8 female inmates for administrative assistant was conducted in early 2015 and as of the writing of this letter, none have returned to the jail for criminal charges. In the fall of 2015, we sponsored a class with 8 male inmates for manufacturing assistant. This class was 8 hours per day for 5 ½ weeks. They were required to take the Manufacturing Skills Standard Council (MSSC) exam which is a national certification in manufacturing. After the 4 exams, the class average was higher than the national average for the exams. One individual, Joseph Cheatwood was scheduled to be released a week before the end of the class and voluntarily came back to complete the course so he could graduate and with the assistance of SC Works is now employed and doing very well. This also has an affect beyond just the inmate. His mother has stayed in contact with our facility to let us know of his progress and has said that it has changed her family's dynamics for the better.

4. Was financing the project an obstacle? Were there any unusual factors inherent in financing the project?

As with any budget, funding a project such as this was a concern. One of the benefits produced by the partnerships with the Workforce Investment/SC Works and Vocational Rehabilitation was that they have availability of funding to support education. After explaining the program to both, they readily went to work. Both groups along with the Community College and detention personnel formed a screening tool and conducted interviews of potential candidates. Once the candidates for a specific class were chosen each was sponsored either by Vocational Rehabilitation, SC Works or the detention center through commissary funds. After an inmate survey was conducted, it was realized that many did not qualify for certain skill level training programs because of their lack of a high school diploma. In an effort to eliminate this obstacle, Adult Education then became a partner. Work keys had been offered in the jail but the GED had not been considered. A group of local business owners were consulted and all agreed that while Work Keys was good, the Work Keys program with a General Equivalency Diploma was much better. Adult Education and the jail went to work on developing a program which could not only begin in the jail but continue after release. The TABE (Test of Adult Basic Education) was used to gauge the inmate's readiness for the training. The county council approved funding to be transferred from personnel into contract services which are used to pay the teachers and Adult Education pays for the testing fees and materials costs. On April 18, 2016, after much planning and preparation had been done, GED training began in the female housing unit. The program is divided into four parts. They are Math, Science, Social Studies and Language Arts which are the four part of the test. Spartanburg County detention was approved as a satellite testing site through Adult Education. This has expanded now into three additional male populated units and has been going extremely well.

5. Did any agencies, citizen groups, or other organizations assist your county with this project? Did their participation pose any particular challenges or offer any unique contributions or benefits?

The partners in this project, in no particular order, are:

- Adult Education
- Workforce Board
- SC Works

- SC Vocational Rehabilitation
- A panel of local business owners
- Spartanburg Community College
- University of South Carolina Upstate

Given that each partner works under their respective policies and procedures, it is a joint effort on all parts in order for this to occur. The vision of success is a combined effort and all involved are equally responsible.

6. Are there any unresolved problems or other goals left to tackle?

Since the program is still in its infancy, we are learning to adapt as situations arise. One of the difficulties faced is that a lot of effort is put into screening and scheduling the classes only to have some of the student inmates released before completing the class. This was realized to be a potential problem in the development of the program and the purpose of duplicating already established community programs inside the jail so if we found an inmate to be released before completing the program, they could finish by simply going to the established community based program.

Because of the behavior based operation inside the jail, it has been somewhat difficult to qualify individuals for educational programs primarily because of the restrictions the jail operates under. For example: male and female inmates cannot attend the same class. For those who have been classified as “keep separate” inmates cannot attend the same class or be housed in the same area. The restrictions currently limit the number of students in each class and the desire is to expand the class size in order to be able to reach more people. This is being evaluated by the jail personnel to see if accommodations can be made or adjustments to the program will increase the numbers of those affected.

We also currently face the issue of transportation. If an inmate is released from the jail before completing the GED program, he or she is able to continue earning his or her GED at Adult Education’s location in the community free of charge. However, many inmates lack transportation. If they lack transportation, they will be unable to get to Adult Education to finish earning their GED. One way that we could work towards solving the transportation issue is getting a jail caseworker that could assist in providing outside support to former inmates that want to finish earning their GEDs at Adult Education.

Project Originality/Innovation:

1. Justify the uniqueness of this project. What makes it different from other projects designed to achieve the same objective?

Although there are many educational programs provided during incarceration, this is usually done at the state level through the Department of Corrections. When someone is sentenced to DOC, their sentence is known and planning is much easier. This program is unique in the jail since most of the population there is waiting for court and a multitude of different factors apply to their length of stay. The population is very fluid and constantly changing causing it to be very difficult to plan, implement and conduct. This difficulty causes most detention facilities to abandon anything but very short term educational programs. The design of the program has been made so it is administered in much less time than a similar program taken at the local community college. Because of the design of this program and the community partners involved, a person can be released from jail and continue the program to obtain their diploma/certificate.

2. Do you know of any other similar programs in South Carolina? If so, how is your program different?

It is unknown to us if any other program exactly like exist this in South Carolina. Our program encompasses the entire educational spectrum from the lowest level and is allowed to continue after release.

3. What innovations were required in accomplishing your objectives?

Although there are many programs conducted in institutions designed to affect ones behavior and choices; what make our program unique is that it is designed to continue past incarceration. A person may be of the best intentions while they are incarcerated but, if they fail upon release, they will commonly choose to resort back to the life of crime. By having the community partners focused on the continuum of education and the others who are focused on the employment of the individual, this program has the potential of better breaking the cycle of recidivism and providing that person gainful employment where they can prove to the community that they can change. There is an old saying “it takes a village” which in the past referred to raising children. Given that our society has changed and the family unit has degraded, the meaning of the term has changed into one that takes a group of community partners to help those who have established a pattern of bad choice, to provide them with the skills and the tools with the direction and guidance to make better choices which will not only allow them to live a better life but it will also make our community a safer place.

To make the GED program successful, we had to conduct testing within the facility, as it would be difficult to transport inmates to outside testing locations. To perform GED testing inside our facility, we became the first Pearson View testing facility within a detention center in the state of South Carolina. We underwent a thorough application and screening process to become a testing site.

We have also taken innovative measures to create manufacturing and cell phone repair courses at our jail. The courses have been some of the first of their type taught in jails in the Upstate region. Spartanburg County Detention Center is the first jail that Cell-Botics has taught a cell phone repair course while the individual is incarcerated which may result in the ability to own and operate an independent business removing the barrier of being previously incarcerated.

4. Who provided the creativity and imagination in your project?

With the support of the Spartanburg County Sheriff’s Department, the Spartanburg County Detention Center’s staff was able to plan and begin the GED program and certification courses. The director of the jail and the Programs Department created a partnership with the Workforce Investment Board and Spartanburg Community College (SCC). The Workforce Investment Board, which includes SC Works and SCC assisted the director of the jail and Programs Department in beginning the certification courses, such as the cell phone repair, manufacturing, and administrative assistance courses.

The director of the jail and the Programs Department saw the need for a GED program after the manufacturing course that was offered at the jail. A GED is required for the manufacturing course, which made many inmates ineligible. The jail staff created a partnership with Adult Education to plan the program. We expanded the program to include professors and student tutors from the University of South Carolina Upstate, who also assisted in the planning of the program.

Spartanburg jail graduates 8 in job-ready Operation Educate program



Eight inmates graduated from the Spartanburg County jail's Operation Educate program, which provides inmates with job-readiness skills. The ceremony Tuesday involved family members of inmates who came to show their support. Justin Haygood, 25, of Spartanburg, celebrates with his wife, Dana, and son, Elijah.

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By **Daniel J. Gross**
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Eight inmates went through six weeks of classes to make them ready for jobs when they are released from jail. It was an effort created by jail staff earlier this year to reduce recidivism. This is the second group to participate in Operation Educate class.

"It does take a village, and we can be

that village, to make it a better place to live," said Maj. Neal Urch, the jail's director.

Operation Educate includes staff and resources from Spartanburg Community College, the Upstate Workforce Investment Board and Vocational Rehabilitation.

Inmates receive training in small engine repair, landscaping and manufacturing. They also received job readiness training in grooming and interviewing.

At the end of the class, the group was tested and ranked higher in test scores than the state and national averages within the Manufacturing Skills Standards Council, said Robert Leslie, the dean of corporate and community education at SCC.

He said the group scored an 89.7 percent average while the state average is 75.5 percent. Operation Educate gives inmates a chance to change their lives and be productive while in jail so they can contribute to society once they are out, Urch said.

"There are bad people ... but there are also good people who have just made bad choices," he said. "They're in a low spot in life. We're trying to get them better."

Justin Haygood, 25, has been in jail since October on probation violation charges. He participated in the program to be able to better provide for his family. His wife, Dana, son, Elijah, and father, Chris, attend the ceremony. His father traveled from Texas to be there.

Haygood said he is scheduled to be released from jail Wednesday.

"I'm going home. I'm going to get me a job and I'm going to live life," he said with his arm wrapped around his wife. "I'm not worried about shooting for the top or nothing, I'm going to take it one day at a time."

Some family members took photos of their loved ones as they received their certificates, and others posed with them for photos.

Irene Bradley, of Spartanburg, said she was excited her son, Douglas Jackson, completed the program.

"It's better than sitting here (in jail) not doing anything. If there's something free that's offered here that benefits you, go for it," she said.

John Frady's sister, Mary Splawn, traveled from Alabama to attend the ceremony. Splawn praised the jail staff and community partners for providing the program.

"It's an awesome opportunity to remind them they are smart and can make a difference in the lives of others," she said.

Frady said he has been in jail for 28 months for methamphetamine trafficking. He said he wanted to take part in Operation Educate to prepare for the future.

"I thought it might be a good opportunity for the future, to change some ways of the past," Frady said.

Urch said they plan to continue the program to put more inmates through job-readiness training. The only requirement for inmates who take part in Operation Educate is that they already have a high school diploma or GED.

Sheriff Chuck Wright spoke to the graduates and shook each of their hands before the ceremony concluded.

"I want you to be encouraged. Be the fathers you know you can be. Be the husbands you know you can be," he said. "Be encouraged, gentleman. Be bold."

[Spartanburg Jail Graduates 8 in Job-ready Operation Educate Program](#)

Posted: December 8, 2015

Article by: Daniel Gross | Spartanburg Herald-Journal

[View article as it appears on GoUpstate.com](#)

[View video of WHNS news feature](#)

[View video of WYFF news feature](#)

Instead of caps and gowns, the men taking part in a graduation ceremony at the Spartanburg County jail wore striped jump-suits and orange rubber shoes.

Judging by their reaction, the traditional garb was hardly missed.

The Tuesday ceremony celebrated the inmates who went through daily education classes designed to make them job-ready for when they return to society. It was an effort created by jail staff earlier this year to reduce recidivism.

The group of eight, the jail's second Operation Educate class, ranked higher in test scores than the state and national averages within the Manufacturing Skills Standards Council, said Robert Leslie, the dean of corporate and community education at Spartanburg Community College.

The program included staff and resources from the SCC, the Upstate Workforce Investment Board and Vocational Rehabilitation.

"It does take a village, and we can be that village, to make it a better place to live," said Maj. Neal Urch, the jail's director.

The first graduation ceremony for Operation Educate was held earlier this year for another group of eight inmates, none of whom have become repeat offenders upon graduation and being released from jail, Urch said. The first class was all female. Operation Educate gives inmates a chance to change their lives and be productive while in jail so they can contribute to society once they are out, Urch said. "There are bad people ... but there are also good people who have just made bad choices," he said.

Justin Haygood, 25, who has been in jail since October and faces methamphetamine and financial transaction card fraud charges, said he wanted to be in the program to learn to better provide for his family.



After graduating, he was greeted by his wife, Dana, son, Elijah and father, Chris, who came from Texas to see him.

Haygood said he is scheduled to be released from jail Wednesday.

"I'm going home. I'm going to get me a job and I'm going to live life," he said with his arm wrapped around his wife. "I'm not worried about shooting for the top or nothing; I'm going to take it one day at a time."

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"I want you to be encouraged. Be the fathers you know you can be. Be the husbands you know you can be," he said. "Be encouraged, gentleman. Be bold."

[Spartanburg jail honors first graduating class of new inmate training program](#)

Posted: May 20, 2015 6:00 AM EDT Updated: Jun 17, 2015 10:35 AM EDT

By Dal Kalsi

SPARTANBURG, SC (FOX Carolina) –

Sheriff Chuck Wright and other officials honored the first class of inmates at the Spartanburg County Detention Center to complete the Operation Education program at the facility during a graduation ceremony on Wednesday.

The program gives inmates access to educational materials and resources from Spartanburg Community College to help give inmates "the job skills and workplace habits necessary to gain employment and keep a job," according to a news release. The release stated that most inmates at the county jail are unemployed and have less than a high school education.

Participating inmates get training in several areas, including small engine repair, landscaping, and manufacturing.

Employers in the selected fields are willing to hire Operation Education graduates once they are released from jail, the release stated

The program also focuses on worker characteristics such as punctuality and cooperation with co-workers, and provides readiness training, which includes tips on grooming and interview skills.

Officials said Operation Education could "save taxpayers money by reducing the jail population," have a major impact on the lives of the participating inmates, and "even have a dramatic effect on the families of those inmates, setting a new pattern of employment for their children." Operation Education is made possible with partnerships between the Spartanburg County Detention Center, Spartanburg Community College, the Upstate Workforce Investment Board, Vocational Rehabilitation, and SC Works Upstate.

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Spartanburg County jail inmates can now get their GED behind bars

Posted: Apr 25, 2016 5:25 PM EDT Updated: May 23, 2016 5:33 PM EDT

SPARTANBURG, SC (FOX Carolina) -

Inmates at the Spartanburg County Detention Center are trying to turn over a new leaf by getting their GED's behind bars.

FOX Carolina spoke with two inmates who said since they dropped out of high school, a life of crime followed.

Law enforcement in Spartanburg County said to stop people from being put back in the slammer, there will be a GED program offered at the jail. The initiative is the first of its kind in Spartanburg County, offering inmates the chance to finish what they started in high school before bad choices took them on a different path.

Inmate Sheena Auman said she believes the GED program will put her back on the right track and will help her keep a promise made to her father.

"I think this is going to be the chance to get away from all the bad in my life," she said. "I promised [my dad] that before he passed on, he would see me sober and educated, and I'm trying to make good on my promise."

The program began Monday night and will start in the women's block of the jail. Male inmates will join the program soon.

The GED program inside the jail is a partnership between the sheriff's office and the Spartanburg County Adult Education Center. Tutors have been coming into the jail for the past few months from USC



Upstate to help inmates prepare for the course.

"[The inmates] seem to be very appreciative very open to it," said Tammy Cooley, director of the Adult Education Center.

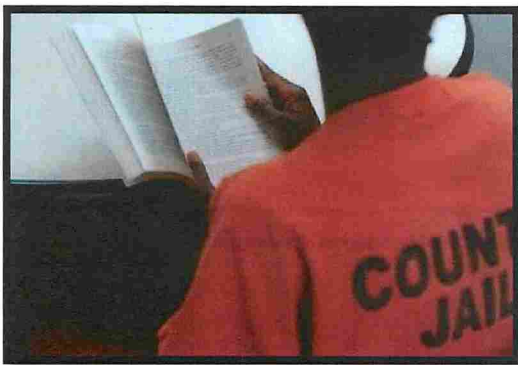
"Incarceration alone is not working," said Detention Center director Major Neal Urch. He said many inmates feel upon release that because of their bad decisions, they are left with few options when they hit the streets. More jail time, he said, inevitably follows. "We are trying to help them and provide them with

choices... To be better and make our community better," Urch said.
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Posted on: April 28, 2016

[Go-Upstate: Spartanburg County Detention Center to offer GED program to inmates](#)

By Daniel Gross, Spartanburg Herald Journal



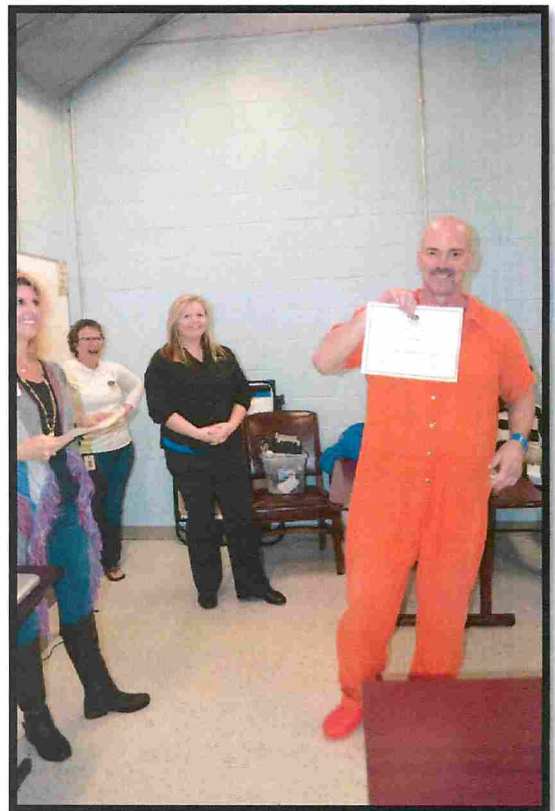
Inmates at the Spartanburg County jail will soon have the opportunity to earn their GED behind bars.

On Monday, the detention center and Spartanburg County Adult Education will begin offering General Educational Development classes and tests in hopes of making inmates better suited for employment upon their release.

The idea of a GED program at the jail has been talked about

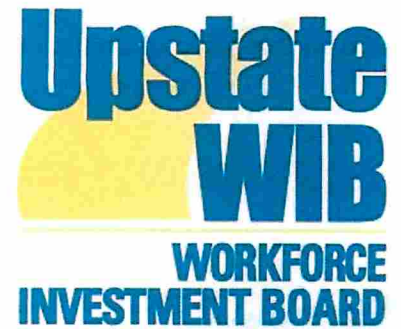
since August. Adult Education has hired part-time teachers who will come to the facility 5:30-8:30 p.m. Mondays through Fridays to teach classes and administer tests on each GED subject — science, reading, language arts and math.

"If you don't have a high school diploma, are you likely to get a job?" Detention Center Director Neal Urch asked jail staff in a briefing last week. "The community needs your support on this. ... A lot of people have taken a lot of their time and energy to do these things, to better (the inmates)."



June 23, 2016

Major Neal Urch
Spartanburg County Detention Center
950 California Avenue
Spartanburg, South Carolina 29303



Dear Neal:

The Upstate Workforce Board and SC Works Upstate are honored to support Spartanburg County's application for the Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award. As a partner in the Operation Educate Program, we could not be more pleased to know that through the application process others will see how collaborative our efforts have been.

As an initial partner with Spartanburg County Council, Spartanburg Community College and South Carolina Vocational Rehabilitation, the support of the Operation Educate program has grown based on the program participants' needs. It has been amazing to see community partners offering services collaboratively to address the barriers of the incarcerated participants. Mental Health, Access Health, Drug and Alcohol, among many others, have all stepped up to ensure that the clients would be successful upon release.

The Upstate Workforce Board and SC Works Upstate are operating under a new law, the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act. Operation Educate has allowed us to be innovative in our approach to serving individuals with barriers while providing them an opportunity for employment upon release. The Upstate Workforce Board and SC Works Upstate strives to help people to work by uncovering and addressing their barriers or special needs through case management, job counseling and training.

The Upstate Workforce Board, SC Works Upstate, Spartanburg County Detention Facility and the above mentioned partners have a positive working relationship in the development and support of training programs related to Operation Educate. Operation Educate has contributed to the overall mission we have and has helped create opportunities for residents to attain their goals upon release.

Thank you for considering Spartanburg County for the Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award.

Sincerely,

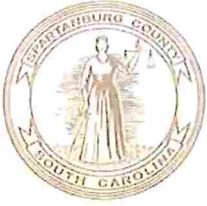
A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Ann Angermeier".

Ann Angermeier
Executive Director
Upstate Workforce Board

Cherokee • Spartanburg • Union Counties

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County of Spartanburg

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Spartanburg, South Carolina 29304

KATHERINE L. O'NEILL
COUNTY ADMINISTRATOR

June 23, 2016

South Carolina Association of Counties
Post Office Box 8207
Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Dear Members:

I am proud to extend my support of the Barrett Lawrimore Memorial Regional Cooperation Award application regarding Spartanburg County's all encompassing work to partner with SC Works, SC Vocational Rehabilitation, Spartanburg Community College, USC Upstate, Adult Education and a multitude of local employers to create an educational opportunity for detainees at the Spartanburg County Detention Center that not only furthers their education but invests in their future through college-level certifications and post-release employment placement.

Being a county administrator, I see the costs associated with a high recidivism rate. The easier path would be to continue to maintain the local detention center population and hope for a decline based on factors outside the facility walls. Instead, Spartanburg County Detention Center, despite the fact that it is difficult to help detainees achieve college-level certifications because the detainees have yet to be sentenced and may leave the facility any given day, Major Neal Urch reached out to community partners to see what could be done. Partners have invested funds and time to bring this initiative to fruition. The last link to the success of "Operation Educate" has been to bring employers into the partnership to be able to provide detainees meaningful employment opportunities once they are released. This final piece of the puzzle is what will help measure a decline in recidivism.

The mere fact that our County Council Chairman started the conversation with Spartanburg County Detention Center's director, Major Neal Urch, shows a genuine desire to find those best practices to improve our county. The two met with leaders of partnering agencies and soon a plan was established. It is a model for how a county can work together for the common good of their fellow county citizen that is at their lowest personal moment. I look at the quality of people I am so honored to serve in this role. They are genuinely passionate and collaborative in their very nature. The same can be said of their counterparts in our partnering agencies. In Spartanburg County, these people make partnering seem so very easy but it is not without tremendous effort by all.

This program is worthy of recognition on so many different levels. It is definitely one I would be thrilled to see emulated across the state. Thank you in advance for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Katherine O'Neill
County Administrator



June 21, 2016

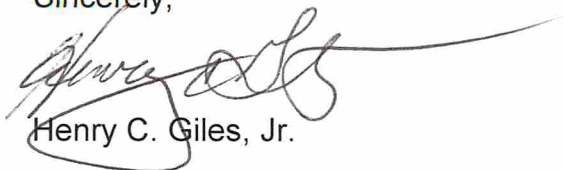
Major Neal Urch
950 California Ave.
Spartanburg SC 29303

Dear Neal,

On behalf of Spartanburg Community College I commend you for your forward thinking leadership at the Spartanburg County Detention. You, the sheriff and County Council are to be commended for working with the community group to provide avenues for those incarcerated to return to the civilian work environment and be productive citizens. Speaking for Spartanburg Community College we are excited about the program and are pleased to be allowed to be a part of it. Together I do believe we can and are making a difference in people's lives.

I do hope that the program is recognized by SCAC Barrett Lattimore competition for it deserves to be recognized. If the College or I can be of any assistance please let us know.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Henry C. Giles, Jr.', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

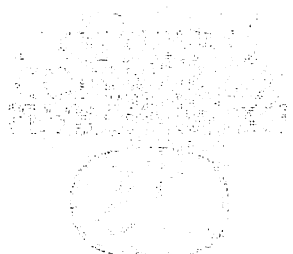
Henry C. Giles, Jr.

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Operation Educate



Date: July 20, 2016

From: Sheriff Chuck Wright

RE: Barrett Lawrimore / Letter of Support

Many of us look around our community and see doctors, lawyers, managers, police officers, construction workers, bank tellers, and many other types of workers that are supporting our community. Many do not see the darker side of our community such as those that are struggling to live with no food or money, suffering from poverty, poor education and alcohol or drug addiction. As a Sheriff, those are the different types of people we see on a daily basis. Those that need help, support...they need *US*. It is not about upper-middle-lower class. *WE* choose who we want to be in life. *WE* choose what we want to accomplish in life. *WE* choose to make the decisions we make every day, good and bad. But we as a community also have to help push troubled individuals in the right direction by supporting them in many ways, such as education.

Incarceration is not always a bad thing. It can essentially be a blessing in a person's life who is struggling to make good decisions and prevent them from being involved in the street life day-to-day criminal activity. Everyone deserves a second chance. Sometimes, we find ourselves giving 3rd, 4th, and 5th chances for those that are not deserving of it. But that is also called *hope*. The *hope* they will find their way to a better life if we support them. Many detainees are incarcerated because they were not given any chances, or just not enough. They have been given up on by their friends and family. They have lost their support causing them to spiral down a road of bad decision making.

Education is something that no one can take away from us. What we learn, what we know, and any educational information we absorb is the one thing that cannot be taken away! Providing our detainees education while incarcerated is one of the best objectives we can do for them while they are in our custody awaiting trial or release. It is not often an inmate says, "Going to jail is the best thing that has ever happened to me". Well, I have heard that several times in Spartanburg County. And I am proud to be the Sheriff of a detention facility with such high standards and a director that follows through with ensuring that we are helping our detainees to the BEST of our ability with outstanding programs so they can return into the community as productive citizens instead of being a burden to the community. Providing them with the skills and education to have more knowledge to maintain a job after their release will help our community, help them be better parents and spouses, help them to support their families, and possibly help them find a career that changes their lives to be what they never thought was possible. Operation Educate is by far the best accomplishment not only to our detention facility, but to our community as well.

We cannot turn our back on each individual that walks through our door. Many of them are here for a reason and we can only pray that God will lead them back onto the right path in life after we have provided them with the essential tools to get back on their feet. We are a team of community leaders that support helping each individual in their future decision making to better themselves and to reduce recidivism in our jails today.