THE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

MISSION

The mission of the Alumni Association is to provide a positive social network of sober, supportive peers for men trying to maintain sobriety and achieve community and family re-integration and stability after release from jail. The Association also serves as a positive influence in local communities and as a vehicle for positive community involvement.

HISTORY & PURPOSE

The Alumni Association was established in September, 2009 by successful graduates of the substance abuse treatment programs of the Cook County Sheriff’s Day Reporting Center (DRC) and Pre-Release Center (PRC). Many of the senior alumni had been through the programs in the 1990s or early 2000s and have since led lives of sobriety and service. The Association was organized as a positive voluntary social network for men who are committed to their own recovery and who seek to support and assist others who are attempting to reestablish their lives as sober and productive citizens in the community.

The Alumni Association was formed initially around a small core group of four Day Reporting Center participants who had formed a supportive friendship focused on recovery while in the program. Staff noticed the development of the relationship among the men, who were doing well in the program, even though two of them had a rocky start at the beginning of treatment. Because these participants seemed committed to recovery and actively tried to support each through attending evening 12-Step meetings in the community and socializing afterward, it was felt that they could provide a core for forming a larger support group for men about to complete treatment or who had already been released into the community.

After the first meeting, a staff member at the 459-bed in-patient Pre-Release Center who was also an alumnus became involved and brought a small group of alumni of PRC, who had formed a similar informal support network after release from incarceration. This enlarged group of DRC and PRC alumni began meeting on a monthly basis in September, 2009 to develop a more formal group and to plan activities. The group was initially facilitated by a Sheriff’s Office sponsor and also received a small grant from the Cook County Department of Corrections Inmate Welfare Fund for meeting refreshments. Meetings were held in the evenings in space provided by a local church. As the group developed, alumni began to take a more active role in planning and in leading the group.