

Skills • Transition • Respect • Integrity • Direction • Employment

## STRIDE To Implement Trauma Workshop

STRIDE is constantly working to improve their services and keep the curriculum updated and current. While working with the women at York Correctional Institution, it was apparent that something additional was needed for this group of participants. The large majority of them have experienced some kind of trauma in their lives and most people need assistance to overcome such an event. This requires a deeper look into the reasons the individual has ended up in the situation they are in and many times these reasons are far below the surface issue.

STRIDE attended several training seminars on the topic of trauma all to assist in creating a more comprehensive and effective approach in working with the female STRIDE participants' at YCI. In using these training opportunities, STRIDE Career Specialist, Sarah Therrien, created a trauma workshop and workbook to add to the STRIDE curriculum in order to meet the needs of our female participants and to address the traumatic experiences they may have experienced.

By introducing this into the curriculum, our goal is to target the true core issues of our participants. By targeting these issues,

the aim is that they will begin to understand why they have developed certain coping mechanisms, made certain decisions, maintained certain relationships and why they are in the position they are in today. Through this realization, the workshop will help them to acknowledge the traumatic events they've lived through understand why they reacted as they did, and create new, healthier coping mechanisms in order for them to start to change their life for the better. Furthermore, we hope this workshop will help reduce their recidivism rate, and assist them in obtaining, and retaining employment.

By opening the door and beginning to talk about some of the difficult traumatic things our participants have endured, we are hoping they will begin to heal, and continue to grow into the individual they want to be. Our goal is to guide our participants in a direction that will help them to reach their potential and ultimately reach their dreams.

**Submitted by:**  
**Sarah Therrien, Career Specialist**

## STRIDE Works with Veterans in the New Unit at Cybulski



On December 8, 2015, the STRIDE program ran their first class with all Veterans at the Cybulski Community Reintegration Center in Enfield. There were eleven gentlemen participating in this class who were from various branches of the military and had different degrees of service to their country including Michael, who served in Operation Iraqi Freedom. He stated, "STRIDE has given me an opportunity to honestly look at where I want to go in my professional career and has reignited a desire to start my own business."

These young men are part of a 110 bed specialized unit for incarcerated Veterans from all five branches of the military which opened at Cybulski on October 1, 2015. This unit is a collaborative effort with CT Department of Correction, U.S. and CT Departments of Veteran Affairs, CT Vet Centers, CT Department of Labor Office of Veterans Workforce Development and other community partners to provide specialized services to Veterans ensuring a smooth transition as they return home. The providers are working on several services to include completing DD 214 forms to check on discharge status, determine eligibility of GI Bill benefits, and housing to other supports they can utilize when they are released. If it is determined the Veterans do not qualify for certain benefits, the staff at DOC are meeting with them individually to ensure they get connected to other support services in the community.

**Submitted by:**  
**Sue Gunderman, STRIDE Job Placement Coordinator**

# Striding Forward Corner... Anthony C.



Anthony was released from the Department of Correction on January 13, 2016 after attending STRIDE classes at Niantic Annex. Anthony started the reentry process in Fairfield county and was very apprehensive at first and was considering a move back to his native Pennsylvania. However, Anthony trusted in the process and followed the direction and suggestions of his STRIDE staff. He went on to secure not one but two separate jobs at Outback Steakhouse and Stop and Shop. In fact, Anthony is being trained at one his jobs by a former STRIDE

participant who himself continues to do very well! We are all very proud of Anthony for his hard work and commitment to succeed.

Submitted by:  
Rob Hebert, STRIDE Job Developer Region II

## Would You Like More Information On STRIDE?

Contact Julie Scrapchansky  
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## A Discussion on Race, Class, Gender and the United States Criminal Justice System at Quinebaug Valley Community College

During the 2016 Spring Semester, Quinebaug Valley Community College (QVCC) launched Conversations at QV: Race and Identity, a new series of speaking engagements featuring a diverse group of people slated to discuss some of the most pressing social justice issues currently facing the United States of America. It is sponsored by the Office of the President, the Cultural Programming Committee and the Philosophy Club. It was partly inspired by the James Baldwin Project, a special initiative designed to ignite conversations about equality and social justice during the 2015 Fall Semester.

The first speaking engagement, "Race, Class, Gender, and the American Justice System: A Personal Journey with Bonnie Foreshaw and Andy Thibault", was held on Monday, February 29, 2016 at QVCC. This event featured Ms. Bonnie Foreshaw, a woman who served 27 years for the charge of premeditated murder of a woman she had previously never met. Ms. Foreshaw received a clemency hearing and eventually earned her freedom after a previously unreleased memo related to the case became public. This memo disclosed that Ms. Foreshaw received an unfair

trial.

Ms. Foreshaw talked about her experiences with the U.S. criminal justice system from the vantage-point of a working-class black female. She also talked about the impact that empathetic individuals can have in the lives of inmates and the important role that quality programs operating in correctional facilities play in rehabilitating inmates. Ms. Foreshaw is also a contributor to the prison journal collections, "Couldn't Keep it to Myself" and "I'll Fly Away", edited by best-selling author Wally Lamb, who was also present as a member of the audience during the discussion. Andy Thibault, a public investigator and judicial activist, also provided his perspective about the criminal justice system during the event. Thibault was the person who first publicized the memo responsible for Ms. Foreshaw's release from prison in his blog and column in the New Haven Register. The discussion attracted QVCC faculty, staff and students as well as members of the community.

Submitted by:  
Ramon Espinoza, STRIDE Career Specialist