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PRINCIPLES OF A SUCCESSFUL DRUG TREATMENT RECOVERY
Looking at the foundations of a successful recovery in the 12 steps tradition
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SHANNY NOMINATED BAND AT MCIC
The band Jesse Culture performs on Mule Creek, bringing music and praise
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To Our Readers

by D. Rose Baker
Editor-in-Chief

AS WE HONOR African-American Heritage Month, we look to the voices of someone who devoted her life to the struggle of human dignity, free speech, and true, full, permanent meaning to the meaning of equal rights for all men and women, and as eloquently voices of the worlds human tragedy of discrimination, bigotry, segregation, and apathy.

Caged Bird
By Maya Angelou

A free bird leaps
on the back of the wind
and floats downstream
till the current ends
and dips its wing
in the orange sun rays
and dares to claim the sky.

But a free bird, stalks
down his narrow cage
can seldom see through
his bars of rage
his wings are clipped
and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

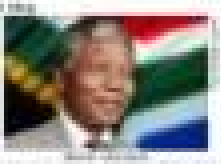
The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.

A free bird finds
the sun rising
and he claims it's joy.

A free bird leaps
on the trade winds
and he names the sky his own.

But a caged bird stands
on the grave of dreams
his shadow shouts
on a nightmare scream
his wings are clipped
and his feet are tied
so he opens his throat to sing.

The caged bird sings
with a fearful trill
of things unknown
but longed for still
and his tune is heard
on the distant hill
for the caged bird
sings of freedom.



Celebrations at the 2014 Mule Creek Lunar New Year Festival on Feb. 1 were well attended. Some of the participants pictured here are Jeremy Bell, Damien Jackson, Jeremiah Andrew, Jason Rose, Kai Richards, Hailey Rosario, Luke Rawlings, Anderson Mercado, and Eddie.

Long-Term Offender Program

By F. Lee, Staff Reporter
and Rose Gomez, MCSP Contributor

IN NOVEMBER, MCSP's Long Term Offender Program (LTOP) held its first graduation. A total of six men successfully completed the program, to an facility is and is on facility B.

LTOP, sponsored by Healthright 360, provides a curriculum that combines cognitive behavior treatment (CBT) techniques with substance abuse counseling. The program teaches men to change their thinking and behavior so they have a better chance of staying out of prison. In addition, LTOP helps participants develop good social patterns and with anger and impulse control, and cope with everyday challenges. However, LTOP staff for graduates would not have been successful without the dedication and cooperation of its members and mentors.

As program director of Healthright 360 at Mule Creek, Maggie Baker has always been interested in prisoners, some of the most overlooked and misunderstood people in society. "I believe that they are not represented accurately," stated Baker. "Most people are quick to judge and think of them as bad or evil, without really understanding their circumstances and the reasons they have undergone."

It is this perspective that helps people like Baker see prisoners and their life experiences, many who come from broken or abusive homes, or those who came through the foster care system, some of whom have suffered incredible trauma. "I have been in the mental health field for almost 30 years," said Baker. "Working here felt more like a calling than a job."

Stephanie Baker is the supervising counselor of LTOP. When Baker started, she had no idea what to expect from her work with prisoners. When she realized the men were fully engaged in the process of changing their lives, it changed her heart and thinking. "It's amazing to see the men doing the work to make the changes necessary to give them a chance at life without criminal and addictive thinking," commented Baker. "It's really no harder than any treatment criminals," she said, "just more fascinating human."

LTOP counselor Raphael Gomez believes people can change. "Everyone gives a chance, you make changes in their lives if given the opportunity." Gomez was amazed at the level of commitment from these men, their willingness to open their minds to a different way of thinking. The graduation featured six prisoners, two of whom were Latino. Gomez believes people can change, and that Latino prisoners need to see Latino counselors who can relate to their culture and language.

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The Point of Black History Month

By Lester "Royal" Wood
MCSP Contributor

EVER SINCE I was a kid growing up in Los Angeles, I was always told that I was "somebody" by my teachers, aunts, grandmothers and, of course, by my own mom more than anyone else. Like other women of her generation, lived through the Civil Rights era.

I lived in a town called Watts, and in our community Black History Month was a big thing. Our schools would show us videos of the Civil Rights Movement, and our pastor centered on the life of our hero Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and take us on field trips to see like Watts Towers.

As a youth, I remembered feeling really angry at the images I saw of black people being sprayed with high powered fire hoses and attacked by police dogs for peacefully protesting the lack of justice and equality they faced back then. But my mother, a beautiful African-American woman, said to me, "Don't be angry, baby. You can't change the past, but you never can learn from it." She would say to tell me that she did not want those videos to make us angry, but to show us what courage, strength of character, and confidence looked like in the face of overwhelming odds.

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February 1 marks the beginning of the year in the Chinese and other Asian calendars. See **Year of the Horse** on page 5.

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