

KISRA

Championing Positive Community Change

Changing Behaviors, Changing Lives,
Changing Futures for West Virginia Families



GREETINGS,

It is with great pleasure that we update our friends and supporters about all of the exciting things we have going on around the state. The KISRA Team is constantly working to expand partnerships and improve services, all in an effort to strengthen West Virginia families. KISRA's success has always been directly tied to the organization's ability to build and cultivate partnerships with other agencies, so we are thrilled to share with you some great examples of that work.

In addition to some highlights about our meaningful partnerships, I hope you also enjoy reading about the success stories of some of our most inspirational participants. Their stories inspire me to continue our important work to assist vulnerable fathers and families. God Bless!



Reginald Jones, MSW

KISRA Chief Executive Officer
reggie@kisra.org

Volunteer Highlight: Laura Jones

Laura Jones McGuire began as a Second Chance Mentor Intern in the fall of 2015 and continued until spring of 2016. During Laura's time as an intern she was also inspired to be mentor as well. Laura does so much for her family and community. Thank you for taking the time to make a difference and help give someone a second chance!

- Deans List 2013-2016
- 7 years sobriety
- wife, mother/step-mother
- Alpha Delta Mu, the National Social Work Honor Society member since 2015 and President Fall 2016
- 2016 WVSU graduate with a Bachelor of Science in Social Work cum laude
- Social Work Organization member
- RSAT graduate
- KISRA Second Chance mentor

To learn how you can help give someone a second chance, call 304.395.6059.



Our services are diverse but
our mission is consistent:

*Strengthening Families
in West Virginia.*

With the help of our staff and dedicated volunteers, we make a difference every day. It is a difference that can be seen in the faces of the people we serve and felt across the state in terms of a stronger economy.

KISRA

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THE EMPOWERMENT CENTER

131 Perkins Avenue
Dunbar, West Virginia 25064

KISRA.org

At KISRA we have been working to support FAMILIES from every walk of life, since we were first started by Ferguson Memorial Baptist Church in 1993. We have worked to create stronger and better-educated families who are more empowered and ready to change the course of their lives and contribute to our community. It all started with the desire to help children. It has grown to become a comprehensive offering of programs that HEAL and benefit people from every walk of life in West Virginia.

Find us on social media!



Celebrating 10 years of Empowering Fathers and Families!

2017 Strengthening Families in West Virginia FORUM

WEST VIRGINIA
REFORM initiative
A KISRA PROGRAM

KISRA's WV ReFORM Initiative held the Strengthening Families in West Virginia (SFWV) Forum on Friday, November 17, 2017 at Embassy Suites in Charleston, WV. Although this was KISRA's 10th year holding this event, this particular event was a transformation from those held in the past. Rather than holding an event with a broad focus that covered various needs of fathers and families in West Virginia, for 2017 KISRA focused the event on specific challenges and needs of currently or formerly incarcerated fathers. By transforming

the event to really focus on the very specific and unique needs of this population, as well as those agencies that provide complementary services to those participants, KISRA was able to streamline the event and create a very conducive environment for learning, growing and sharing.

The attendees consisted of:

- Participants of KISRA's WV ReFORM Initiative
- Formerly incarcerated fathers
- Partners of KISRA's WV ReFORM Initiative
- Professionals working with currently or formerly incarcerated fathers

As part of the SFWV Forum, a Job Fair was also held during the event. Participants of KISRA's ReFORM Initiative were able to take the lessons learned from the classroom and apply them on the spot while seeking employment opportunities. Case Managers and Instructors were there to offer encouraging words, review resumes and help reinforce the lessons learned from the classroom. Participating employers were sought out by the SFWV Planning Committee and selected based upon their willingness to hire, regardless of criminal background. There were 9 employers onsite.



KISRA Launches New Re-entry Assistance Program

KISRA will be partnering with Pretera Mental Health Center on their awarded funding from the USDHHS, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment to increase access and availability of substance abuse use disorder treatment. The Appalachian Re-entry Assistance (ARA) project will help West Virginia's state prisoners be ready for parole and prevent re-incarceration. KISRA is part of this grant to provide comprehensive and intensive wrap-around and professional treatment services that help people successfully return to and remain in their communities.

ARA partners include Southern Highlands in Mercer County, the WV Division of Corrections, Pretera, and Recovery Point. These strong partners working in coordination will help ensure the success of adults returning home from prison. Once this model demonstrates effectiveness, it can be replicated across the state and beyond.

Over the three-year project period, a total of 246 parolees will be served from three counties in WV: Mercer, Kanawha, and Cabell. These three counties were selected for the project due to having the highest number of parolees in West Virginia.

Strengthening Families in West Virginia - Recognizing Success!

During the Strengthening Families in West Virginia Forum's Keynote Luncheon, KISRA recognized the 2017 Overcomer of the Year, Father of the Year and Partner of the Year. The Awards were definitely a highlight of the day. Both the Overcomer of the Year and Father of the Year spoke about the importance of KISRA's programs and how they are a "success story" in large part of the lessons learned through the program and the encouragement they received from their instructors.



LEON WHEELER OVERCOMER OF THE YEAR

Leon Wheeler is an inspiring young man who came to KISRA after being released from prison. Leon did not let his lack of transportation and limited income get in the way of him working tirelessly to better himself. Although Leon did not

have a support group locally (his family lives in Arkansas), he found a way to attend every class KISRA offered, even if that meant working all night long and riding the bus for over an hour to get there!

Since completing KISRA's Program, Leon has gone on to be gainfully employed. Most importantly, Leon now understands the important role that a father plays in the life of a child. He is determined to be the man that his family deserves, and model that behavior for his children; so that his children can learn from the mistakes that he has made so they do not repeat them.

JOHN MILLER FATHER OF THE YEAR

John Miller is a loving and caring man who is a wonderful example of a "KISRA Dad." John came to KISRA while on probation after previously completing an addiction recovery program. When he arrived at KISRA, he had no job and he was desperate to start working.

John's positive and upbeat attitude brought joy and fun to each class he attended. Through his dedication to the curriculum and his unwavering work ethic, John now has 2 jobs that allow him to provide for his family. John is a loving husband and father of three.



PARTNER OF
THE YEAR



KISRA is proud to recognize WVDOC's Parole Services as our 2017 Partner of the Year. KISRA's work is successful in large part to the strong partnerships we are able to build. The Partner of the Year is a company or agency whose:

- Partnership goes above and beyond a typical "MOU" relationship;
- Partnership is constantly evolving and changing in an effort to better meet the needs of KISRA's participants;
- Partnership greatly impacts KISRA's efforts to strengthen families in WV; and
- Partnership has helped to improve KISRA's services for participants.

THANK YOU FOR
ALL THAT YOU DO!



KISRA WORKING TO CREATE A HEALTHY WORKPLACE

KISRA's NRG - Nutrition, Resources & Goodies (sounds like Energy) Workplace Wellness Program has partnered with the AHA (American Heart Association) as a part of the Try This WV Mini Grant. KISRA will be hosting 11 Mobile Kitchen Cooking Classes for KISRA employees. The classes will feature recipes from the AHA's Simple Cooking with Heart's Cookbook.

NRG also provides C.C.C. (Check It. Change It. Control It) BP checks for all employees. Staff members are able to log their BP online & track it. BP checks can prevent heart attacks & stroke which are the leading cause of death.

In addition, KISRA has formed walking groups and attended a walking groups lunch & learn presented by Kanawha Charleston Health Department. Staff members use Fit Bits, Heart apps on their cell phones and pedometers to track steps.



CAFÉ APPALACHIA *Will Be Opening Soon!*



Coming Spring 2018

KISRA's Paradise Farms will be providing fresh organic produce to the newly opened Cafe Appalachia. Cafe Appalachia, which will be a pay what you can, farm to table, lunch buffet and coffee house that serves the general public and provides job training for a hand up, not a hand out. This program provides job training, healthy meal choices, and a farmers market where local farmers and community members can gather to sell their wares.

The program is a One World Everybody Eats model to address food insecurity. Pollen8, Inc. has taken it one step further to create a job-training program with employment placement assistance at the end of the program. Program participants will receive training from barista, culinary, food ordering/handling/preparation- all the way up to business management. This program is an inter-organizational collaboration between Pollen8, Inc., the City of South Charleston, KISRA, St. Paul's United Methodist Church, and WV Veterans to Agriculture Program.