

# Gratitude

## the Green sheet

### Berks reentry grads grateful for help

Graduates of the Berks Reentry Program on November 4 expressed gratitude for the team that helped them to succeed.

Eduardo stated that the team assisted him with securing better housing and they were patient with him. The program staff was always supportive and worked around his employment schedule. He said it was important to know that there were “agents that he could speak with and that he felt comfortable enough to tell them things he normally wouldn’t have.”

Lisa (not pictured) shared that she appreciated the encouragement and support the team gave her over the past year. Lisa, who is seven months pregnant, stated that she enjoyed the program, it was a positive thing in her life.

Frederick commended the staff for making themselves available - his agent, parole supervisor, district director, and Board member were always there to deal with any problem. In addition, he stated the program was not as bad as he thought it would be and that “you just have to be patient.” Frederick looks forward to being a member of an alumni group where he can share his experience with future program participants.



*Pictured left to right: Reentry Director Richard Podguski, program graduates, Board Member Edward Burke, and Agent Baradgie.*

Charles stated that between the program and working full time he was very busy - and that was a good thing. He has struggled to rebuild his life after many years of incarceration and lost his children to adoption, hitting rock bottom to see that he needed something else. He credits the program for giving him the tools to reenter society “to be a better man and a better member of society.” “I am proud of all of these graduates and pleased that they recognized we were here to help them succeed,” said Board Member Edward Burke. “The Reentry Program is just one of the many ways that the Board works with other partners for successful reintegration into the community.”

Established in 2009, the Berks Reentry Program provides intensive parole supervision and substance abuse treatment to offenders for 12 to 18 months. There are several programs across that state and the team usually consists of a judge, Board member, treatment professionals and community agencies.

Offenders move through four phases and parole contacts and drug testing decrease as they are successful. Inpatient treatment, employment assistance, team and peer support, life skills, drug and alcohol counseling and mental health services are available.

The Board's Reentry Program is based on the National Association of Drug Court Professionals model, and provides individually tailored continuity of service, maximizing each parolee's ability to succeed in the community. Participants undergo intensive supervision and treatment over four phases, lasting approximately 12-18 months.

The Board also established reentry programs in York (2005) Lackawanna (2008), Dauphin (2013), and Philadelphia and Allegheny (2014) counties.