



CAMA COMMENTS

CAMA Celebrates Thirty Years of Accreditation

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In May of 1978, the American Correctional Association saw the fruition of a project that had been over three decades in the making – it awarded accreditation to four community corrections agencies. From the publication of the first edition of the Manual of Correctional Standards in 1946, through the establishment of the Commission on Accreditation for Corrections and the standards manuals that we know today, ACA sought to establish national standards for correctional agencies and to acknowledge those agencies that met those standards. At the 2008 CAMA conference, ACA and CAMA recognized two agencies that were in the original group and are still accredited – the Community Corrections Association in Youngstown, Ohio, and Talbert House, in Cincinnati, Ohio. For the past thirty years, these two agencies have maintained the standards of excellence expected by the accreditation process, and have shown themselves to be leaders in the correctional field.

When Talbert House was first accredited in 1978, the agency consisted of four 18 bed half-way houses, all of which were included in the initial audit, a similar residential facility for juvenile offenders, and outpatient services including a suicide hotline. Today, Talbert House operates six large facilities housing over 400 adult offenders, along with a jail treatment program, an adolescent facility, and an MRDD program. They operate in four Ohio counties and in Northern Kentucky, employ 800, and have a \$42 million budget. Accreditation has often been a pathway

to personal career success, and Talbert House is no exception. Of the four original Program Directors, one is now the President and another is a Vice President of the agency. Talbert House credits the accreditation process with high staff morale and as “instrumental in our ability to dramatically expand services over the years.”

Community Corrections Association was initially accredited as a single facility housing twenty-five felony offenders. Thirty years later, they operate four facilities housing 170 male and female offenders from both the federal and state correctional systems, as well as offenders diverted from those systems. Since becoming accredited, CCA has received numerous awards from local, state, and federal agencies attesting to their excellence of service. In addition to their residential facility, CCA offers services to the jail, and the courts, including electronic monitoring, day reporting, community service work, and presentence investigations. Have you ever struggled to meet space requirements for an audit? In 1978, CCA had to move a bedroom wall back 4 inches to meet a space requirement! Accreditation may not help you move mountains, but it can help you move walls.

Please join all of us at CAMA in congratulating these two fine agencies for their dedication, their determination, and their pioneering effort in a process that has benefited so many of us.

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