

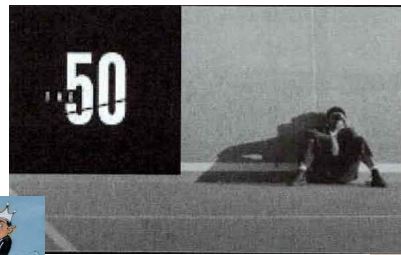
Options

NEWSLETTER

BREAKING THE CYCLE OF ADDICTION



Mentoring Teens at Oakland Tech



OMCP Featured Documentary



Community CleanUp Day



Peer Mentors at Academy of HOPE

Healing Opportunities and Personal Enrichment

Options' mission is to break the cycle of addiction that causes crime, homelessness and broken families. For nearly a decade, Options has provided in-prison training and treatment for inmates with Substance Use Disorder. Our Occupational Mentor Certification Program (OMCP) has trained over 1,000 inmates as peer mentors in violence reduction techniques; these peer mentors now work in all 32 prisons throughout the state, and in many community organizations outside of prison, providing opportunities for recovery and violence reduction. In 2018, Options initiated its Violence Intervention Program in Oakland and Berkeley funded in part by the California Board of State and Community Corrections.

Founded in 2022, Options' Academy of HOPE (Healing Opportunities and personal Enrichment), located in Oakland, provides instruction, support, and community opportunities for formerly incarcerated adults from Options' in-prison program, the Occupational Mentor Certification Program, who are transitioning as returning citizens. These remarkable individuals are applying their lived experiences to help others dealing with substance use disorder, fostering hope and healing within our community and serving as peer mentors. Men attending the Academy of HOPE find a home at the Thomas Gorham Center in Oakland, while women in the program reside at Options housing on 3rd Street in Oakland. The program is spearheaded by George Smith as the Program Manager, Jessica Sias as the Program Supervisor and Thomas Martinez as the Project Supervisor, working with participants to arrange instruction and opportunities to engage in community projects. One of the key community projects, Youth with Options, provides mentorships and leadership activities for local youth.

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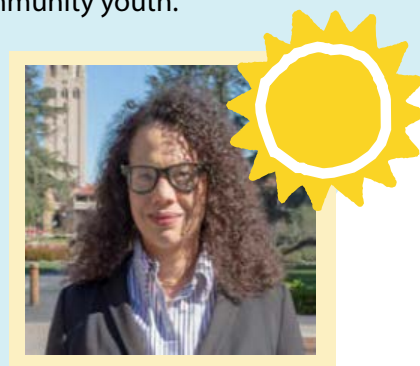
Letter from Options' Board President

Welcome to Options' first Newsletter of 2024. We create and distribute our Newsletters quarterly to inform our public of our achievements and to solicit your involvement in helping us pursue our mission of "breaking the cycle of addiction that causes crime, homelessness and broken families."

In 2018, we initiated our Violence Intervention Program, with partial funding from the California Board of State and Community Corrections. In 2023, the program expanded to provide an Academy of HOPE for highly trained, formerly incarcerated mentors to work with community youth and youth organizations on violence reduction. Our returning citizens with their lived experience are trained and receive professional life coach/ credible messenger training and certification to adequately serve our community youth."

I am especially pleased to present this Newsletter focusing on the Academy of HOPE and the role that it plays in helping returning adults make a significant impact in their community.

- Susan Champion, JD
Attorney, Three Strikes Project, Stanford University
Options' Board Co-President



Voices of Recovery: December 2023 Graduates

At Options, we celebrate recovery. Every day, every month and every year is a milestone. These December 2023 graduates continue to be examples that the cycle of addiction can be broken.

"I can honestly say that this program has not only set the foundation for my path to success, but also gave me supercharged starting blocks; I had quite a few hurdles to overcome and I am still in the process of obtaining the goals I have set for myself, but now those goals seem obtainable."

- Collin G.

"I came to this program emotionally unintelligent, lacking any effective communication skills, and an alcoholic. Since I began, I've been equipped with those skills and so much more."

- Erika D.

"Being in this program has really helped me see that not only does substance abuse keep me away from good things in life, but tangible things that I can accomplish, but also keep me away from my sense of spirituality and sense of belonging and sense of community."

- Dallace W.

"When I was in Options things started to turn out a lot better. I had a place to stay; I actually just now celebrated being sober for one year."

- Daniel R.

"What I learned in Options Recovery is understanding my triggers and warning signs, understanding what emotional intelligence is, learning how to express myself, which has been really helpful for me."

- Andrew T.

"Slowly I was entering back into the real world with a better understanding of who I was, and without these programs, I don't know that I would have been able to come to that understanding on my own."

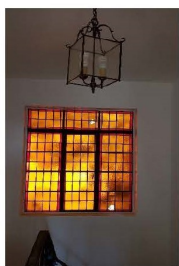
- Rita T.

"What brought me to it (Options) though, was to get my life back on track, work on myself, get my kids back and just be healthy."

- Sean G.

Client graduation speeches can be viewed at <https://optionsrecoveryservices.com/graduation/>

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Academy of HOPE at Gorham Center

At the **Academy of HOPE**, men and women with lived experiences are trained as certified professional life coaches and credible messengers. These individuals play a crucial role in assisting youth with high-risk lifestyles, guiding them towards positive pathways and away from harm. Through partnerships with various community-based organizations, Options' credible messengers – who are also certified drug-and-alcohol counselors – engage with at-risk youth at Oakland Technical High School and other youth organizations in the community. They provide invaluable support in areas such as job readiness, job placement assistance, workshops addressing criminal thinking, gang intervention/prevention,

self-identity development, financial literacy, and socialization skills. Additionally, they offer process groups, one-on-one peer support, and certified drug and alcohol counseling services, such as brief relapse prevention techniques. They lead workshops on topics such as anger management, conflict resolution, gang prevention and gang intervention, and develop trusting mentor relationships that allow the youth to discuss any stressors related to violence or crime. In addition to working directly with individual youth, Options' mentors spearhead community healing and restorative efforts, such as community clean-up days. These events not only contribute to the physical improvement of our neighborhood but also foster a sense of ownership and pride among community members. By working together to beautify East Oakland, our credible messengers and volunteers demonstrate the power of collective action in creating positive change as well as community healing and restorative effort.



Community CleanUp Days

Community-based partners include but are not limited to:

1. G.R.O.W. (Growth Reinforces Our Worth, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), gang prevention/ intervention, mentorship in the community as well as in the juvenile halls and juvenile camp facilities; job readiness, case management)
2. Y.S.A. (Youth Spirit Artworks) (art training program committed to empowering low-income and homeless Transitional Age Youth (TAY) youth, ages 15-25 with job skills, and to transform lives)
3. Safe Spaces (empowering youth to change the conversation around mental health)
4. My Story Matters (promotes healing, inspires hope, celebrates courage, improves self-esteem, builds confidence and inspires imagination)
5. Alameda County Probation Department (referral by Juvenile Justice staff of youth returning to the community for mentorship and additional support, as well as youth in the community)

The impact of the Academy of HOPE's outreach extends beyond individual interventions; it helps to cultivate a safer and more supportive environment for all members of our community. Through program for at-risk youth, pre-incarcerated adults, incarcerated adults, and post-release adults who then use their experience and training to work with at-risk youth and vulnerable adults, Options is working to build a long-term, sustainable solution to address violence before, during, and after its occurrence. Options' 2021 Summary Evaluation concluded that participants in our Violence Intervention Program reported decreased criminal behavior. Similar findings are anticipated for the current program, which will be enriched by support from Alameda County's Violence Prevention and Intervention program.



George Smith, Program Manager



You're invited to help us celebrate our Options' Graduates at the



March 8th, 2024 at 4:30 p.m.

We will broadcast via Facebook and Options' website!

Please consider supporting Options:

Write a check or donate on-line

Send a check to Options Recovery Services, donate one time or become a recurring donor on-line at www.optionsrecovery.org. For questions, contact Porter Sexton, Development Director 408-393-0089 or email psexton@optionsrecovery.org.

Approximately 90% of Options' funding comes from government contracts. The remaining 10% comes from business income and from donations from people like you. Your donations help to provide the necessities that support our clients on their roads to recovery.

Donate gently used furnishings, appliances, & housing items

Bring items to Options' Allston Way office on Friday afternoons or contact Barbara Madeiros, Housing Director, 510-666-9552 x 123 or email bmadeiros@optionsrecovery.org.

Volunteer your time

Help with our office support, development, and/or facility maintenance and improvement. Contact Dianna Beamon, Administration, 510-666-9552 x 119 or email dbeamon@optionsrecovery.org.

Sponsor a graduation ceremony

A great way to promote your church, business or community organization. Porter Sexton, Development Director, 510-666-9552 X129 or email psexton@optionsrecovery.org.

Contract for drug testing services

Ensure your workplace or activity is drug-free by calling Kim Chavez, Director of Administration 510-519-6880 or email kchavez@optionsrecovery.org.

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