



## Nigel Pain Youth Community Chaplain

Hi, I want to start by saying a huge thank you to all of you who support us at Peninsula Initiative, whether you are one of our wonderful mentors or involved with financial and prayer support. We couldn't do it without you. Likewise, the support and help we get from those within the other organisations we work with is amazing and often goes beyond the call of duty, and we greatly appreciate it.

This last six months has seen the work of Peninsula Initiative grow in many areas and we have had some great success stories (snap shots of which are elsewhere in the newsletter). However, even the work which doesn't obviously or immediately seem like successes will have helped the people involved to move on, to know someone cares about them, and hopefully encouraged them to continue making those steps towards a crime free life. We know when we are faced with change how incredibly hard it is, and the effort and willpower required to make such a radical transformation cannot be underestimated. Being provided with a reliable, useful and caring mentor is a huge help on that challenging journey.

I would also like to thank AJ who has decided to stand down as a mentor after many years. He has had a huge effect on the lives of many people within his local community and has been a good and faithful mentor for us. We all wish him well.

HELP! One of the areas where we need help is in finding a greater number of mentors, especially (but not only) in Cornwall. We currently have a small but dedicated team mainly based in the Camborne/Redruth area but would love to be able to find mentors throughout the County. We do try to get the volunteering work to fit around your life and to make it an enjoyable and rewarding experience. You will be trained, supported, and your expenses covered. If you or someone you know may be willing to offer some time then please, please get in touch. We cover Cornwall, Devon and parts of Somerset so do contact us if you are interested. You will make a difference.

Again, thank you. Nigel



Evie ended up in prison after what started out as a drunken prank went horribly wrong. Both Evie and her boyfriend received lengthy sentences, during which time Evie spent a lot of time thinking about her life, and resolving that things would be different when she got out. The Making Connections team at the prison referred her to Peninsula Initiative. On her day of release, Evie was met off the train by a Peninsula Initiative team member and taken to report to her Probation officer, then to her accommodation in a supported housing scheme. As Evie's previous flat had been cleared out, Evie's mentor went with her to the Youth Enquiry Service to retrieve some of her belongings. There was no warm coat and no shoes, so a shopping trip was undertaken to remedy this. Evie soon got involved with lots of training courses but really she wanted to work and earn her own living. Many attempts to get a job came to nothing but at the same time, she was feeling very much under pressure and unwell —she started to have flashbacks of bad experiences she had in her childhood. Evie's mentor went with her to the Job Centre and after discussion with the staff member there, Evie acknowledged that she needed to go to her GP and get signed off to give her space to recover. Evie has since moved to her own flat and is working with a counsellor. Most recently, she has agonised over difficult family issues. All in all, Evie has really worked hard to make a fresh start but still has a lot of challenges to face, not least to get properly well. She is now trying to give herself more time, and with the help of her mentor, to think things carefully through before making big decisions.

## Will you spread the word about the work of Peninsula Initiative?

Would you like to know more about the Peninsula Initiative? Would you like to introduce it to your local group or church community? Please get in touch and our team will be happy to come and meet with you.

## Tom's Story

Tom's experience of prison was not good. He was subject to bullying from some of the inmates and spent much of his time behind his door for his own protection. He was deemed at risk of suicide and self-harm. He also had family problems and although he was allowed to go to his mother's on release this could only be a temporary measure. When he eventually left prison, he says he felt more positive having the support of Peninsula Initiative and that it made a big difference to the way that his family accepted him back just by knowing that he was making positive steps to stay out of trouble. It also helped guide him through the requirements of Probation and the Police, being with him at the first appointments and explaining his licence provisions. Tom had a very positive attitude and worked well with Probation and Peninsula Initiative, keeping appointments and being open to advice and honest in how tough he was finding life. Not long after release, Tom was able to move into shared accommodation and whilst this was not ideal it gave him short term security. Unfortunately it wasn't the best location and when he started forming inappropriate relationships and his offending past came up he had to move on. This was done with the support of the letting agent and he moved to better more stable accommodation. Tom was forming a strong bond with his mentor Ian, and they had a good open and honest working relationship. Ian helped Tom with all sorts of issues and helped him to mend bridges with his family, think through his own attitudes and behaviours, keep on track with benefits, find a job and the best way of disclosing his past. After a time, Tom finished his probation period and although it was due to his good attitude Tom believes that he would have returned to prison had it not been for the support he received from his mentor, keeping him on track and being there with support, advice and a listening ear. As with so many of the people we work with, finding a job was very difficult, especially in a world with Google where sensationalised reporting of the offences and the person can be found. Eventually Tom was interviewed for a job within a fast food chain. However the offer was withdrawn when they checked on his offending past. After discussions within the team, Ian approached the Area Manager and persuaded them to give Tom a chance.

Tom has grabbed this opportunity, has passed his probation period with the company and is now a full time employee. He has rented a 2 bedroom flat with a friend, rather than living in a shared house. He and his family are proud of his achievements.



## On the Agenda

- Women who are victims of violence and abuse are over-represented in the criminal justice system. Nearly half (46%) of women in prison report having suffered a history of domestic abuse and over half (53%) report having experienced emotional, physical or sexual abuse as a child. We are finding this to be evidenced in our growing work with women prisoners leaving HMP Eastwood Park and HMP Send (see also Evie's story shown overleaf).
- With an ever growing demand across all the prisons we work in, we still need more volunteers, especially in Cornwall.
- We are delighted to welcome Justin Luxmoore to the team. Initially, he is working with adult prisoners in HMP Exeter. We will introduce Justin more fully in the next edition.
- The Government's Transforming Rehabilitation programme is bringing sweeping changes within the Criminal Justice system, particularly at present for Probation staff and increasingly in the future for small charitable organisations working in this field. May we face these challenges and opportunities with wisdom.
- Each person that PI supports faces a mountain of challenges as they leave prison and return to life in the community. It is not an easy journey and a great deal of perseverance is needed to keep on track and not return to the more familiar ways of living that they have previously known.

If you are a person of faith please hold these concerns and other items included in this newsletter in prayer

## How I see It

by Tom

### **What was the reality of your re-release back into the community like?**

Strange, I had been in for a year and everything had changed so I didn't know what to expect. I was also worried about receiving abuse about the offence.

### **What have you found most difficult about being back in the community?**

Gaining a job in a proper working environment. Everywhere I tried would cause my offence to be brought back to my attention.

### **What has been most helpful to you during this time?**

Having somebody to talk to about my situation and them going out of their way to attempt to fix the situation or make things better. Without that I would have nothing. My mentor took his time to help me get a job and when they refused due to my offence, he attended the workplace to convince them to hire me—wouldn't take no for an answer.

### **What difference has having a mentor made?**

I wouldn't have a job, or a house, I wouldn't be speaking to my father, I would be financially unstable and would have more than likely ended up back in prison.

### **How do you feel about the future now that you've been in the community for a little while?**

I feel like I have potential. I know that whenever I need to talk to somebody, I can still communicate with the mentors that helped me.

"I feel like I have potential. I know that whenever I need to talk to somebody, I can still communicate with the mentors that helped me"

Tom