



# resolana

working to empower women to break the cycle of incarceration

November, 2011 Update

## Resolana: Standing In the Program Gap

Research has demonstrated a strong relationship between substance abuse and women's criminal activity. Nearly one in three women inmates report committing their offense to support a drug addiction.

Far too many women end up cycling in and out of jail, with each return signifying a deeper level of addiction, trauma and marginalization. In 2009, Dallas Co. Jail booked in over 21,000 women!

Untreated mental illness and substance abuse disorders are costly. According to the Dallas Mental Health Association, local government spent over \$11 million, and the state of Texas over \$17 million, to incarcerate chemically dependent individuals from Dallas County in 2010,

Research also indicates that drug treatment is effective in reducing crime --and is far more cost effective than incarceration. Yet less than 6% of Texans who need treatment receive it. According to a recent report released by the TX House of Representatives Legislative Study Group "Texas on the Brink," Texas now ranks 50<sup>th</sup> out of 50 states in per capita funding for mental health.

Resolana asks, "If taxpayers are already paying \$58/day to hold women in county jail, why not make constructive use of that time?" --and it offers a robust holistic program in the jail. For too many women, this is the only opportunity they will have to focus on recovery and the complex issues underlying their addiction.



## Meeting the Challenge Of Growth and Change

Every inmate who chooses to participate in Resolana makes a serious commitment to working on growth and change.

As Resolana has established the first dedicated program tank at Dallas County Jail, there's been no shortage of opportunities for role modeling! Thanks to our amazing volunteers and staff, in the past six months Resolana has accomplished a tremendous amount of growth and change with aplomb!

With the move into the dedicated environment, Resolana's participant roster instantly tripled from 20 to 64 women who live together in an area adjacent to Resolana's classroom. That classroom has steadily grown busier, with activities stacked from morning to night, Monday to Friday -- and soon to overflow into Saturdays!

In Resolana's first six months in the dedicated tank, **278 women** (unduplicated) participated in **398 classes** and over **60 community meetings!**

**During its first six months in the dedicated program tank, Resolana served 278 women at a cost of about \$6 per woman per session.**

That translates into over 8,500 interfaces with inmates -- in classes teaching them coping skills related to addiction and mental health issues, life skills, and parenting skills, as well as in yoga and creativity workshops, 12 step and community meetings and more.

Even as Resolana focused on building a supportive social learning environment in the dedicated tank, the larger Dallas



County criminal justice community was initiating system-wide policy changes aimed at significantly reducing the jail population, mainly by reducing the time individuals spend at the county jail level.

As these policies began impacting more participants, Resolana responded to the changes with its own program changes.

It introduced more classes compressed into a week's length. Immediately after moving in the tank, inmates now begin a series of "core intensives" that focus on building important foundational skills in emotional literacy, healthy communication and relapse prevention.

Resolana also extensively expanded the case management services that connect women to critical community resources at reentry. And the women also have an increasing number of optional classes that they can choose to attend based on their individual needs and interests.

A new peer leadership program now encourages long term participants to take a leadership role in the community, assisting with classes and serving as mentors in the tank.

"I've been here for ten months," reports one long term participant, "and I can tell you, Resolana just keeps getting better!"

# Parenting Classes: Teaching Skills to Impact Generations

"I'm an addict just like my mom," says Gina, tears streaming down her face. "I love my kids so much, I'd do anything to give them a better life. But I'm scared -- I really don't know how to be a mother."

Other women nod, drying sympathetic tears. Each has chosen to take Resolana's parenting classes. Each shares with the others a fierce determination that their kids will beat the odds.

Statistics tell us that roughly two-thirds of the women in Resolana are mothers. Most are single parents, the sole caretaker for their kids. And more than any other kids, their children are at risk -- of ending up in foster care, homeless or in jail or prison themselves. In Texas, 61% of the girls in juvenile detention have mothers in the system.

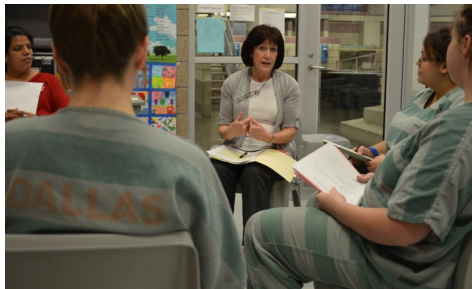
Resolana believes the best way to help these *kids* is to educate their mothers. Weekly parenting classes are an important ongoing part of its program.

Resolana offers two alternating parenting classes. The first is a six week class led by two facilitators from Resolana's community partner, the Child Abuse Prevention Center. Heidi Saylor, LPC-S, and Sheryldine Samuel, BSN, teach the evidence based *Project Support* curriculum, modified for a small group setting (see [www.physorg.com/pdf199442623.pdf](http://www.physorg.com/pdf199442623.pdf)).



"This curriculum teaches consistent, effective, nonviolent parenting strategies by focusing on six basic skills. Each skill is important to master," explains Heidi, "especially because the vast majority of the women in the jail have experienced some form of family violence."

A second class was developed primarily from the *Nurturing Program for Families in Substance Abuse Treatment and Recovery* curriculum plus material adapted from a National Crime Prevention Center study, *Waiting for Mommy*, by Resolana volunteer Martha Newman, MSSW.



"Helping the women understand their children's physical and emotional needs is the primary goal of the eight week series," Martha says.

"But we clearly recognize in the classes that many women must first parent themselves, understanding and then mastering skills that were neglected in their own childhoods, in order to gain confidence in relating to their children. And we face head on the difficulties that develop when substance abuse issues are a part of family interactions."

Teaching parenting in a jail environment can be challenging. For one thing, there is hardly any access to kids. "We give the ladies lots of 'take home' information to study in their own time. We also encourage them to practice with each other since many skills are transferrable to other relationships," says Martha.

Another challenge, she says, is the lack of closure when women are suddenly released or moved. Sheryldine adds, "Our time in the jail is limited. We really want to follow up with the women when they're released." Each participant is urged to contact the Child Abuse Prevention Center after reentry and participate in its in-home mentoring program.

But everyone agrees that the classes have a huge impact. "The women come to class vulnerable and armored, hopeful and hopeless, eager and exhausted by the complications of their life," says Martha. "It's so incredibly rewarding to witness the 'aha moments,' to see their pride when after using their new skills in visits, calls or letters, they report back that their kids *noticed the difference*."

Today Gina is grateful. "I've learned so much. I'm working hard so my kids get the kind of life they deserve."

## Resolana Inspires GG/BG Doll Makers

Inmates began making Good Girl Bad Girl (GG/BG) dolls when Resolana was just a twinkle in the eye of its founder. Volunteer Rebecca Briley first conceived the idea of using doll making to jumpstart a dialogue about stereotypes when she and Bette Buschow led workshops at Lockhart Prison in 2005.

Always a popular workshop, over time GG/BG dolls have become a signature activity of Resolana. Resolana now sells GG/BG kits for kids who want to make their own dolls. And recently Resolana began doing doll making workshops outside the jail as a way to inform the public about its work inside the jail.

At the Westside Music Festival, a call for dolls to be auctioned off was answered by local artists, Sheriff Valdez, Commissioner Garcia - and even by Silva Payne a woman living in the UK who was inspired by online photos of inmate dolls.

Silva created good girl Amanda with her classic pearls and bad girl Mandy with her wine bottle. And these highly detailed knitted dolls became the first of a range of imaginative dolls that continue to emerge from Silva's talented needles.

Silva writes that she and her husband feel that Resolana's work with female inmates is an important cause to support. "My husband is now in TDCJ, but the time he spent in Dallas County Jail was part of our journey. Anything that can be done to improve the skills of the women there is a good thing."



The dolls Amanda & Mandy & friends can be purchased at <http://www.etsy.com/shop/Silva> Check out Silva's story in her fascinating blog at <http://lookingforthecabinbythelake.blogspot.com/>

# Dear Resolana . . .

Messages from Resolana participants and alumni and their families

Note: Resolana participants must be out of jail and "off paper" a minimum of six months (and often much longer, depending on their offense) before they can reenter the jail as a volunteer. When Wendy A recently began volunteering in the jail, here is what she shared about her journey.

I'm very excited to be given the opportunity to be part of a program that has helped shape me into who I am today.

I was incarcerated in Dallas County Jail for 18 months for aggravated assault and released in April, 2010. I attended Resolana for about seven months. I am so grateful for the things I learned in the classes like goal setting, effective communication and anger management. I also learned to love myself and embrace who I am as an individual.

Since I have been out, I have to admit life has been pretty good despite a few setbacks. There are many challenges; the main ones are finding stable employment due to my criminal history and repairing my relationship with my daughter who lives with her father.

Resolana helped give me the skills to be able to deal with challenges and setbacks in a positive way, helped me believe that I can achieve anything I put my mind to. I am a full time student at Tarrant County College and I am very excited to state that I made honors last semester. I am five classes away from my Associates degree; then I plan to transfer to UTA to work on a BA.

The first time I went back to the jail as a volunteer was a little nerve-wracking, but very inspiring as well. The hardest part was to look into the tanks and remember. I think the longer I was out, I just forgot or maybe blocked the harsh realities of jail.

The other volunteers were very helpful in helping me deal with my anxiety, and as we delved into the class I forgot my nervousness and felt more comfortable. I am glad that I faced my fears. Being on the other side this time helps me believe in myself more.

I hope that through volunteering I can make a positive difference in someone else's life, the way that Resolana did in my life. Thank you, Wendy

Dear Resolana,  
I hope this letter finds you all doing good and settling into the new tank. I'm sure it was quite a feat, but with all the positive vibes you all give out, I know it got done.

I can't wait to get back out there and prove to myself and others that I can be a positive part of society. I know I've learned bad behaviors and now it's time to learn new, good behaviors. It's hard, but I'm working at it each and every day [in rehab]. We have Peer Awareness groups here, groups with our counselors and phase groups which are lectures. I take A LOT of notes.

I really miss the yoga class; it helped me to relax physically and mentally. I really miss Seeking Safety: Ms. Carole really made me think about how much potential I have. I miss creativity workshops. Oh, I really miss ALL the Resolana classes.

I'm keeping my head held high. I'm determined to change my life for the better and one day pass it on to someone else who may need it. How can I go wrong with a support system you all are part of?

Your friend forever, Theresa



## Recent Inmate Writing

Memories float by  
Catch them quick in the mind's eye  
Then live life fully

- C** – change is imperative
- A** – awareness, acceptance, action
- T** – taking my positive power back
- H** – happiness is a state of mind
- Y** – "Y" not me? I am worthy

Resolana helps  
Where people, places, things can't  
Thank God they are here



## Updates from Jennifer Resolana's Volunteer Coordinator

Recently we celebrated six months of being in the dedicated tank at Dallas County Jail. We have achieved amazing things in that short half year. You volunteers are the blood in the veins of our program. We can't do it without you.

So **SAVE THIS DATE!** On **February 12 from 2-4PM** Resolana will hold our third annual **Volunteer Appreciation Bash**. We'll be celebrating **you!**

We're still looking for volunteers willing to help us with **jail classes over the winter holidays**. Contact me if you can help! We're also looking for people to join a team that **corresponds with our women** when they move on to other facilities. Contact me if interested.

Many thanks to the lead facilitators who gathered for problem solving and training in October. We will continue to hold **lead facilitator meetings** every three months on the last Sunday of the month, with the next meeting in January. We so appreciate your giving up time on Sundays to help us improve our program.

**Please mark these dates on your 2012 calendars:**

**Jan date TBA Volunteer Orientation**  
**Jan 29, 2-4pm Team Leader Meeting**  
**Feb 12, 2-4pm Volunteer Appreciation**  
**Feb 26, 1-3pm Volunteer Orientation**

I also appreciate you bearing with us as we work to get everyone in compliance with DCJ's new clearance system for volunteers going inside the jail. Inmate Programs has given me a final deadline of **December 5** to turn in the new forms for existing volunteers.

Individuals who have not sent in forms by that date will be treated as if new volunteers, which means filling out application paperwork and coming to orientation in order to continue volunteering inside the jail.

Again, big thanks to all of you for the many gifts and talents you share with Resolana. We love you!

Contact Jennifer at 214-681-2440 or at [contact@resolana.info](mailto:contact@resolana.info)

# Resolana Celebrates Music Festival Success

A sparkling “celebration of community,” Resolana’s second annual Westside Music Festival was a fantastic success by any measure. The fun-filled event on September 24<sup>th</sup> raised over \$27,000 to support Resolana’s work.

An enthusiastic crowd clearly enjoyed the eclectic mix of music offered by the Mark McKenzie Quartet, Janet Davis and the Velvet Living Room, Wolf at the Door, Brent Byrd, Regina Chellew and Parranda Venezuela.

Attendees browsed a silent auction including Good Girl/Bad Girl dolls crafted by local celebrities and enjoyed an in-mate art exhibition. Children gravitated to the bounce house, storytellers and DMA art projects. Yoga and live painter Ivonne Acero attracted many others.

Resolana is deeply grateful to the many people who contributed to the Festival. Special thanks go to Suzanne Enck-Wanzer, our amazing Festival chair, and Sheriff Lupe Valdez, Honorary Chair.



Jennifer McNabb welcomes Kirsten, a Resolana program alumna, who spoke at the Festival.



(Above) Parranda Venezuela (Below, top) Ofcr Hernandez views GGBG dolls; Inmate Program Director Yolanda Lara browses the silent auction



## Campaign Promise Benefits Resolana

In October Resolana was one of 25 area non-profit organizations honored for its contributions to the community and chosen as a recipient of County Commissioner Elba Garcia’s generosity as she fulfilled a pledge to give 25% of her commissioner’s salary to charity.

“I have long admired the work done and services provided by your organization,” noted Dr. Garcia as she gave a check for \$500 to Board president Fran Tynan.

Visit Resolana’s blog at [www.resolanatexas.wordpress.com](http://www.resolanatexas.wordpress.com)

Check us out on Facebook at [www.facebook.com/resolanadallas](http://www.facebook.com/resolanadallas)

**resolana** says a heartfelt **“THANK YOU!”** to all our friends and supporters  
We are especially grateful to:

the dedicated volunteers who donated over **1600** in-jail hours in the first six months in the dedicated program tank

Melinda for an inspiring celebration

Joan and Maggie at Family Place, Heidi and Sheryldine at the Child Abuse Prevention Center, the DMA and other community partners who contribute to classes and handle community referrals

interns Royalti (UT Arlington School of Social Work) and Rhonda (USC School of Social Work) and Laura Frank

student teams from SMU Human Rights Dept., UTDallas Institute for Urban Policy Research, UTDallas School of Management & UNT Dept of Communication Studies

Ofcrs Hernandez, Smith, Thompson & Wall and Kays Tower 4<sup>th</sup> Floor staff for important assistance

Sheriff Lupe Valdez, Yolanda Lara & Ofcr Reeves for supporting Resolana

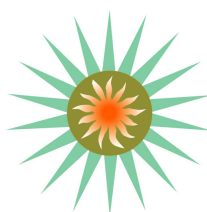
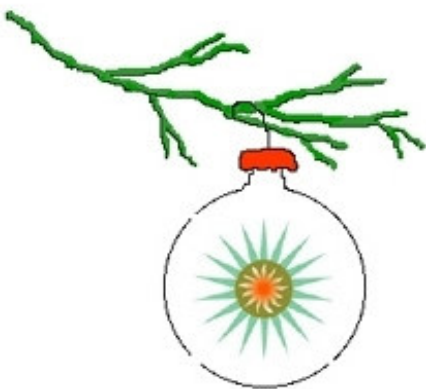
Suzanne Enck-Wanzer, Blake, Jenna & Rachelle for an **incredible Festival !!!**

plus many other Festival contributors: J Michael, Jaime, Huong, Debra, Fran, Ruth, Edith, Jan, Margie, Lynne, Gene, Peggy, Deb, Ellie, Ivonne, Don & Jessie

the Mark McKenzie Quartet, Janet Davis & the Velvet Living Room, Wolf at the Door, Parranda Venezuela, Brent Byrd & Regina Chellew

The Eugene McDermott Foundation, Randall White and the West Dallas Chamber of Commerce, Elettore, the Sylvan | Thirty, Texas Capital Bank, Helix Electric, Texas Health Resources, West Dallas Investments, Jackpot Sanitation, Emergency Ice, Farpoint Cellar & Gandolfo’s.

**resolana** wishes you a joy-full holiday season!



**resolana**

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