



growingchange.org

RECLAIM • ATTAIN • SUSTAIN

Board Chair Noran Sanford MSW, LCSW

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Rural America was sold prisons as a form of economic development but now these closed sites are falling into disuse and vandalism, over 25 in NC alone. What we do with these rusting tools of justice is itself a question of justice. Our pilot program has helped youth- who three years earlier were out of home placed, out of school and on probation- to reverse their future, 'flip their prison.' On Dec. 9th, 2013, led by these youth we received approval from Sec. Perry of NC Dept. of Public Safety to create a model to 'flip' these closed prisons from being prominent environmental hazards into valuable community assets.

Growingchange.org converts decommissioned rural prisons into sustainable farms and education centers, providing life-changing opportunities for troubled youth, residential college internships for veterans, and wellness programming for our communities. This non-profit's first "prison flip" will break ground in 2016 at an abandoned corrections facility in Wagram NC, transforming perimeters into pastures, jail cells into aquaponic tanks, guard towers into climbing walls, and galleys into community kitchens.

Wagram's Scotland County, is one of the poorest counties in NC and has NC's highest unemployment (NC Rural Center '14), shares the state's highest food insecurity rate of 27.6% vs. 14.5% US (SmartStart 3/11), while neighboring Lumberton of Robeson County is per ratio the poorest city in the nation (WWAY 10/13). This is set against terrible health outcomes as evidenced in the 2014 Robert Wood Johnson County Health Rankings with Robeson County ranking as the 97th and Scotland ranking as the 98th (out of 100). These risk factors drive high crime rates as Robeson's county violent crime rate is only surpassed by Scotland County in NC (Laurinburg Exchange 10-11-14). We need interventions that impact health, hunger and hope.

Our bold mission and ambitious vision has been supported through a broad coalition including State and Local Leadership of Cooperative Ext., Parks and Rec., DPS as well as NC A&T, NCSU, UNCP, The Conservation Fund's Resourceful Communities Program and others. Returning veterans are key members of our team. Our first priority for the site will be to 'flip' the old staff housing on these sites into residential college internships for veterans who are completing their degrees at our sister universities. In turn, these veterans will be supported by our clinical staff to provide training and mentorship for the youth in our day programming. Our clinical pilot program is 92% effective in preventing recidivism over a three year period in part due to this pairing. Currently, veterans train our youth in sustainable agriculture and our leading them in publishing their own graphic novel series 'Prison Flip Comics.' Your support allows this valuable work to continue and makes you a member of this powerful team.

Thank You For Your Support,

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Debby Hanmer PhD, Dir. Of UNCP Sustainable Ag. Program
Vice Chair