

Better People

Not Just Better Workers



Better People graduate William Robinson tells his story on page 15.

*Celebrating Our Fifth Year Of Helping To Reduce Recidivism
In Multnomah County and Surrounding Areas.*

2002-03 Annual Report and Program Update



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October 2003

Dear Friend of Better People:

We are pleased to report that Better People is making great strides in fulfilling its mission of dramatically reducing recidivism (offenders returning to crime) in Multnomah County and other areas since opening five years ago.

Despite an uncooperative economy, we achieved **63 job placements this year**, which is just eight fewer than in the previous year.

In these pages, you will see some of our successes over the past five years and learn more about our goals for the future. There is much work to be done. The continued downturn in Portland manufacturing means our clients will need more help than ever to find the opportunities they have been preparing for through participation in MRT®. Those incarcerated at age 15 under Oregon's harsh mandatory minimum law **Measure 11** are now being released at 21, an age criminologists consider to be well within the most crime-prone years. Yet despite these challenges, we take heart that more than **185 Portland companies have used Better People as a hiring source for reliable employees.**

We thank the many employers, donors, alumni, researchers, volunteers and referral agencies who have made our accomplishments possible. We particularly thank the **Meyer Memorial Trust, The Black United Fund of Oregon, the Multnomah County Department of Community Justice, worksystems inc., the Oregon Department of Human Services Office of Vocational Rehabilitation Services, the Warren Family, Multnomah County Chair Diane Linn and Multnomah County Commissioner Serena Cruz** for their strong support.

Thanks to your kindness and support, former offenders released in the Portland Metropolitan area, as well as those on probation, now have a place where they can become better providers, better parents and better people.

Thanks again. If we can ever be of service, please call at (503) 281-2663.

Always with hope,

William (Chip) Shields, M.S.W.
Executive Director

Edward J. Hill
Outgoing Board President

Better People – 2002-03 Annual Report



photo: Cheryl Juetten

Spring 2003 graduates.

The Better People Mission:

To dramatically reduce recidivism (offenders returning to crime) in Multnomah County and other areas.

How We Accomplish Our Goal:

Better People combines a cognitive behavioral therapy approach, Moral Reconciliation Therapy (MRT), with living-wage job placement and job-retention services for one year after placement. Our Alumni Club provides added support.

One Measure Of Our Success:

*For every dollar invested in MRT, taxpayers, crime victims and society receive a return of \$11.48 in benefits.**

What Donors Say About Us:

“Better People is an exceptional organization. We were pleased to be one of its initial funders, and we recommend it to any donors who are concerned about human rights, community, and our economy.”

*– Amina Anderson, Executive Director,
Black United Fund of Oregon*

* Source: Aos, S. (1999) *The Comparative Costs and Benefits of Programs to Reduce Crime*. Washington State Institute for Public Policy. Olympia, Washington. (Available 9/19/2003 at www.wsipp.wa.gov/crime/pdf/CostModel_4Page.pdf) This study found a return of \$4 for every dollar invested in job counseling and job search programs for inmates leaving prison, and \$11.48 in savings for every dollar invested in MRT.