

SOUTH JERSEY OBSERVER

Volunteers of America Delaware Valley Celebrates 20th Anniversary of the Opening of Hope Hall in Camden

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Volunteers of America Delaware Valley leadership and local officials commemorate Hope Hall's 20th Anniversary. From left to right: Judy Donlen, Board Chair, Volunteers of America Delaware Valley; Daniel L. Lombardo, President/CEO, Volunteers of America Delaware Valley; Kathy White Thomas, Vice President Human Resources, Volunteers of America Delaware Valley; Chairman Samuel J. Plumeri, Jr., New Jersey State Parole Board; Acting Commissioner Marcus O. Hicks, Esq., New Jersey Department of Corrections; Eric Echevarria, Staff Member and Former Client, Volunteers of America Delaware Valley; and Assemblyman William Spearman, D-5.

Camden, N.J. – On Thursday, August 1, [Volunteers of America Delaware Valley](#) (VOADV) celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the opening of its [Hope Hall](#) facility in Camden. Representatives from the New Jersey Department of Corrections, New Jersey State Parole

Board and local elected officials joined leadership, staff and former clients from VOADV to mark the milestone anniversary of this facility's service to Camden and the greater regional community.

"Hope Hall opened in Camden the same year New Jersey's prison population reached its peak, a direct result of mass incarceration," explained Daniel L. Lombardo, President/CEO, VOADV. "Since then, the number of those incarcerated in our state's prisons has decreased by nearly 39 percent, which can be attributed to the rise of community corrections programs like the one at Hope Hall. This facility continues to be a tribute to and continuation of our founders' commitment to providing reentry services to individuals impacted by incarceration."

Committed to the reformation and improvement of conditions of the nation's prison system, Maud Ballington Booth, co-founder of Volunteers of America, opened the nation's first "Hope Halls" in the late-nineteenth century. Designed to be recuperative settings for individuals recently released from prison, Hope Halls served as residential programs that assisted thousands of incarcerated individuals in their transition back to community life.

VOADV's Hope Hall was opened in Camden in 1999. Accredited by the American Correctional Association and contracted by the New Jersey Department of Corrections, Hope Hall is a 175-bed residential community release program designed specifically for adult males who are within 24 months of parole eligibility.

"Since its opening in 1999, Hope Hall has helped thousands of individuals as they transition back into communities. We look forward to continuing the New Jersey Department of Corrections' long and successful relationship with Volunteers of America, and we congratulate everyone affiliated with the facility on the occasion of your 20th anniversary," said Acting Commissioner Marcus O. Hicks, Esq., New Jersey Department of Corrections.

Hope Hall provides a therapeutic environment for clients who need intensive treatment service, in order to best facilitate their transition back into society. The facility offers 24-hour staff support along with a broad spectrum of services, that includes: individualized case management and discharge planning; job coaching, job readiness and employment support; cognitive skills training; substance abuse treatment and relapse prevention; and emotional management and support.

"On behalf of the entire parole board, I want to congratulate the Delaware Valley Chapter of Volunteers of America on the anniversary of Hope Hall," said New Jersey State Parole Board Chairman Samuel J. Plumeri. "Through Hope Hall, Volunteers of America has successfully demonstrated its commitment, passion, and compassion towards providing meaningful reentry programs for offenders seeking to effectively reintegrate into society and their communities in a positive manner."

Over the past 20 years, the staff at Hope Hall have helped more than 8,000 men return to society from the criminal justice system. Staff utilize evidence-based programming and practices to ensure each individual can live independent, self-fulfilled lives once they have served their time. Additionally, each staff member is committed to providing community-based support as these individuals rebuild their lives, introducing vital life skills and delivering social services needed to help acclimate to life beyond incarceration.

“Reintegration into society post-incarceration is not an easy process, yet vitally important to those who have served their time in our criminal justice system,” said Assemblyman William W. Spearman, D-5. “In today’s world, technology, culture and society as a whole change on a daily basis. Facilities like Hope Hall reacclimate these individuals back into society, helping to rebuild lives one step at a time while ensuring that no individuals feel ‘left behind’ once they have served their time in the corrections system.”

“Hope Hall has been a beacon for individuals leaving the corrections system throughout the county and plays an important role in reintegration for us in Camden City,” said Camden County Freeholder Director Lou Cappelli, Jr. “The services and resources provided at VOADV’s Hope Hall is critical to ensuring we are providing anyone coming out incarceration with the ability to stand on their feet and transition smoothly back into society.”

Volunteers of America Delaware Valley continues to provide expert reentry services through three residential treatment programs, serving both men and women; voluntary reentry services for individuals; a day reporting center, catering to the needs of parolees; programs for offenders experiencing mental illness; and through extensive outreach efforts.

For more information about Hope Hall, [click here](#). For more information about Volunteer of America Delaware Valley’s reentry services and community release programs, [click here](#).

About Volunteers of America Delaware Valley:

The Greater Philadelphia regional affiliate of the national Volunteers of America- a nonprofit, faith-based organization founded in 1896-Volunteers of America Delaware Valley serves more than 13,000 men, women and children annually in Southern and Central New Jersey and the states of Pennsylvania and Delaware. Headquartered in Camden, N.J., Volunteers of America Delaware Valley provides a range of programs for senior citizens; homeless families; offenders returning to the community; and men and women dealing with addiction and mental health issues.