

Inmates learn how to leave a life of crime

Project uses goal-setting techniques for executives By: Gabrielle Giroday



David Church

WHAT works for executives in terms of goal-setting might also help gang members break free from a life of crime.

According to a new project involving the John Howard Society, specialized tutoring for convicts in the Winnipeg Remand Centre could make a big difference for those behind bars.

The project involved two inmates and a local consultant who provided tutoring using professional development tools.

Wildwood Consulting Group president David Church gave the men questionnaires on their goals in June and then helped them develop personal profiles on what they wanted to achieve.

He said those tests showed the men did not understand errors they'd been making.

"They're basically jumping to conclusions, not tuning in to what's really going on and not

governing their own expressions of their response," said Church Thursday. "When they feel it, they put it out, but it might not be at all relevant to what is going on."

In a series of five interviews that lasted until September, Church helped the men keep journals on skills they wanted to develop.

Both men completed their journals and Church said the motivational coaching was a success.

Another man who started the program was released before he could complete it.

Church said he usually works with business executives or employees with companies or institutions on achieving goals, but he sees promise in working with inmates.

One inmate told Church he felt empowered to be able to use a small space on his wall to display art he chose. Church said mentorship programs for women involved in the justice system, young offenders or aboriginal people could be highly effective.

About \$500 to \$750 of testing materials were donated for the project, and Church donated his time.

"We wanted them to practice ways of strengthening their use of intelligence in managing daily life," he said.

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