

# Karen Frank Barney of The Transformative Justice Program to be Featured on Close Up Radio

SAINT LOUIS, MO, UNITED STATES, November 8, 2024 /EINPresswire.com/ -- At an early age Karen Barney learned about a profession that helped people with disabilities--whether physical or mental health In nature--to learn, grow, improve function and achieve true quality of life. That is why she pursued a career in the Occupational Therapy field. While working on her dissertation, she had a personal experience that led her to focus her efforts on incarcerated persons.

Today Karen J. Barney is a professor emeritus at St. Louis University, where she launched The Transformative Justice Program—a multipronged effort and educational program. This initiative is aimed at helping individuals

who are currently incarcerated to learn professional/life skills that can help them transition more effectively into mainstream society, The program is a grant-funded initiative and by appearing on the radio, Karen hopes to raise awareness of the program and opportunities to support it.

Karen and her team collaborate with City, State and Federal criminal justice initiatives and work strategically toward organizational and social change. These groups also utilize evidence based transformation services, and engage community, university, and systems, in the transformative justice model. The program was envisioned In 2010 and established in 2014. It is an interdisciplinary effort within the University though Karen herself is affiliated with the SLU Department of Occupational Science & Occupational Therapy, within the College of Health Sciences.

As a professor, Karen is also involved in teaching and publishing endeavors that bring notoriety

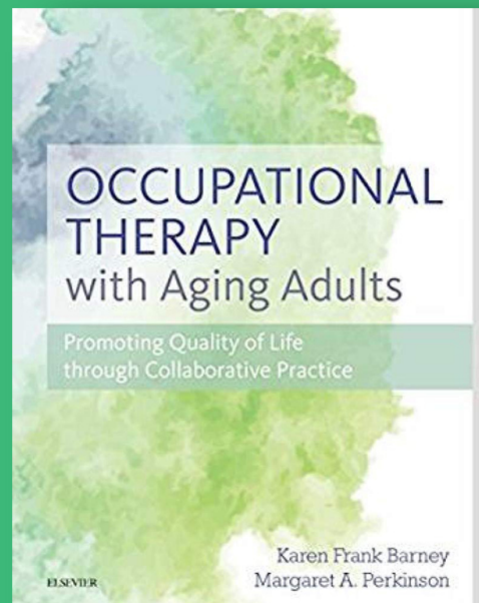


to the University.

“Sadly, the US prison system is not designed to rehabilitate people. It primarily serves as a tool for making money from the work of each incarcerated person. This is something we strive daily to change.”

Karen says that what they are involved in changes everything for the better! The educational component is something that both incarcerated people and prison employees can use to learn and grow (many of the personnel there have a High School Diploma.) There are people who might have wanted to go on to college, but economic or family circumstances prevented them from advancing their education before.

Karen calls her profession habilitative—supporting people no matter their age and what they aspire to, finding ways to optimize the meaningfulness in their lives. When it comes to incarcerated people, that means coaching them to prepare for release and to do much of what they missed while they were isolated from the world-- whether it was for 3 years or 30. Technology in particular, moves at a rapid pace, and people on the inside have limited access to it or don't know how to use it properly. Key to their success, once released, is finding a place to live, having a job and transportation (the mainstays of survival outside). By creating a seamless process to support people upon release, the Transformative Justice Program takes care of such crucial needs and provides help support for maintaining stable emotional behavior as well.



Currently this initiative is only available in Karen's home state of Missouri but there are plans to expand it. There are also different programs with similar goals, such as a youth program in San Francisco and one in New Jersey. And they have begun doing training programs with attorneys as another way of improving outcomes for the accused and incarcerated. To honor the steadfast effort of persons who have benefited from their program, they also host annual graduation ceremonies.

"Our numbers are small, but we have had success. Our practitioners are committed to various occupational and psychological goals. We want to keep growing this effort if we can."

In order to raise awareness and participation, Karen does presentations on the justice system and her program's agenda to the general public. They also do outreach with students in the OT field who are passionate about what the team calls occupational justice and may want to be involved. All the information for such programs is evidence-based (facts from our government systems and the literature on incarceration, and work done in the systems by occupational therapists). The majority of these presentations are virtual.

On the radio show, Karen is going to explain this all in a way that is meaningful for everyone. She is also going to relate her deep personal story, about her youngest son who has been incarcerated for a horribly long time and the ways the family strives to enhance his life and support his rehabilitation. She will also talk about another son who is an Industrial Organizational Psychologist working with Dr. Robert Cialdini, a foremost behavioral scientist, and how they have integrated those principles and technology into the current justice program. It will be a very touching and informative show, so be sure to listen in or learn more online.

Close Up Radio will feature Karen J Barney in an interview with Jim Masters on Tues, Nov 12th at 1:00pm EST

Listen to the show on [BlogTalkRadio](#)

If you have questions for our guest, please call 347-996-3389

For more information about Karen or the initiative, please visit: [www.slu.edu/mission-identity/initiatives/transformative-justice](http://www.slu.edu/mission-identity/initiatives/transformative-justice)

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