



Dismas Ministry is proud to welcome Wendy Tarr as one of our speakers for the 2018 National Catholic Prison Ministry Conference!

Wendy Tarr has 15 years of experience in community organizing and public policy advocacy. She is the founding Director of the Vincentian Ohio Action Network (VOAN), a 501c3 organization formed by the Society of St. Vincent De Paul Diocese Council of Columbus to help carry out the mission to end poverty through systemic change.

VOAN develops leadership skills and organizational capacity among members of the community experiencing poverty and marginalization so they can educate the community and come to the table with policymakers on issues that directly impact their lives. VOAN builds collaborative projects that address systemic issues such as criminal justice reform, reentry, and access to mental health and addiction services. VOAN staff and leaders are active in local reentry coalitions. VOAN is engaged in a number of projects that provide in-reach, peer mentorship, and support to those returning to the community from incarceration. Wendy has effectively worked with state officials on various criminal justice reforms, including ban the box, sentencing reform, expanding record sealing, and advocating for reintegration and rehabilitation improvements for the incarcerated.

Wendy is also the program director for Accompanying Returning Citizens with Hope (ARCH), a ministry formed in 2016 focused on equipping Catholic with the tools and resources needed to minister to the needs of returning citizens and their families. ARCH aims to minister to and meet the needs of the formerly incarcerated (returning citizens) and to help local parishes become welcoming communities offering essential support services on the road to reintegration and healing. This project also aids those who minister to returning citizens in their ongoing conversion and living out of faith in compassion and mercy. ARCH is sponsored by the Catholic Diocese, Office for Social Concerns and the Vincentian Ohio Action Network and is funded by the generous support of the The Catholic Foundation.