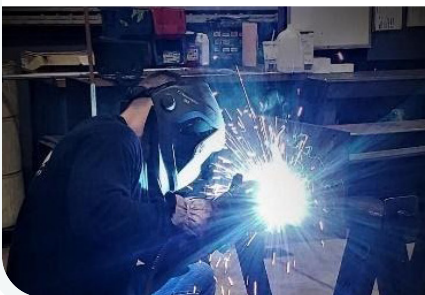


Racine/Kenosha  
Vocational Ministry, Inc.  
COMMUNITY REPORT  
2020



# Futures In Spirit & Hope

## 19 Years and Counting

**NINETEEN YEARS!** August of 2020 marked the beginning of our 19<sup>th</sup> year of service. It takes a lot of good work, funding, collaboration, committed donors, and solid outcomes to be able to support a program for that length of time. We are proud of our ability to sustain our service to those who most need our help.

### APPROACHING 5,000!

In 2020, we placed our 4,500<sup>th</sup> participant. As of today, we have placed 4,556 people in jobs and education. At this pace, we will have placed our 5,000<sup>th</sup> person in 2023. For 13 consecutive years, we placed more than 200 participants each year in work and school. In this pandemic year, we placed 106 individuals. Placements are again moving in a positive direction as we move deeper into 2021.

### SUSTAINABILITY & GROWTH!

As we are approaching August of 2021, RVM is poised to begin its 20<sup>th</sup> year of continuous service in Racine. In 2017 we launched a pilot program, Kenosha Vocational Ministry. In four years, we have built funding relationships with Kenosha County Human Services and the United Way of Kenosha County. This year we added the Bob Barker Foundation to our KVM support team.

**SECRET INGREDIENT!** Our secret ingredient is the love we have for our work and for the people we serve. The questions we ask of ourselves and of our participants are rooted in identifying the transformative elements that profoundly change participants' perceptions of themselves, their families, their place in our community, and their peers.

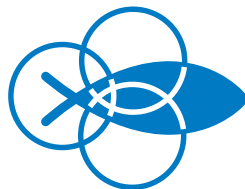


Dr. Anton House, former participant, receives his PhD from Howard University

**HOPE!** Hope is the engine of transformation. Hope is what most of our participants lack when they come through our door. Hope is what we offer. This is no trite, hollow offer. We offer hope with the knowledge that we have helped thousands of individuals change from shattered and disconnected to whole and integrated.

**VOCATION!** Our work is focused not on employment, but on vocation.

Vocation is not a job, or even a career; it is a calling. We believe that all people are called to a life that is both personally satisfying and an asset to the community.



## Racine Vocational Ministry, Inc.

# RVM's Mission

Racine Vocational Ministry is proud of the many men and women we have helped along the difficult and treacherous road to a wholesome, productive life. Racine Vocational Ministry is a faith-based organization established to:

- Help individuals discover God's presence and action in all aspects of life, including work
- Prepare individuals for life and work by developing attitudes, habits and skills that reflect human dignity
- Empower unemployed and underemployed citizens to become productive and fulfilled
- Help individuals use their unique callings to powerfully influence their communities



*Program Director Lori Life teaches a class at HALO*

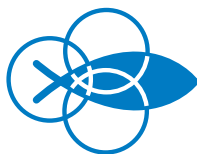
## A Word from the President

When I wrote last year, we were deep in the throes of COVID-19. Although things are improving, the pandemic continues to impact RVM. Things are often difficult for those we serve, but clearly COVID-19 posed additional obstacles and challenges for those attempting to transform their lives. But through it all, RVM was strongly supported by its donors. For that we are especially grateful and because of which, the good work continued. Although placing individuals in jobs, holding groups and scheduling in-person meetings was difficult, we were able to make the best of a bad situation. Staff went out of the way to assure that participants were provided with food, cleaning supplies, transportation, clothing and whatever else they needed including large portions of HOPE. RVM Staff don't just do jobs, they impact participants by forming lasting and caring relationships. Staff believe in participants even when they can't believe in themselves. This year has been a testament to their dedication and loyalty to the mission of RVM.

At present, the job market appears to be improving, wages seem to be on the rise. But RVM participants often lack the training and education needed to land these jobs. The ability to work with staff to remove all barriers to finding living-wage employment remains crucial. As always, this work needs the support of everyone. I'd like to thank all of you for making sure that this important work continues. Please don't hesitate to contact us. The rewards will be many.

I wish to express my heartfelt gratitude to Jim Schatzman and the staff, my fellow board members and all of you who do what you can to make RVM what it is. Thank you all for what you do and for believing in us.

—**Pamala Handrow**  
RVM Board  
President



**Racine Vocational Ministry, Inc.**



## From Our Community Partners

I have worked with the great team at RVM for several years and they have proven to be a very reliable and passionate group that I have been able to count on to help my clients. I know that



when I refer someone to RVM, that client is in good hands and will have the opportunity to pursue their long-term goals. The relationships that I have developed with their staff are among the most valuable in my career. Through the individual work that they do with clients and the collective work that they do along with other agencies and organizations, RVM has helped bring many partners of the same mind and goals together to spread the word and the community benefit of all of our efforts. I look forward to many more years of collaboration and community progress with RVM.

– **Tom Durgom**, Community Corrections Employment Program



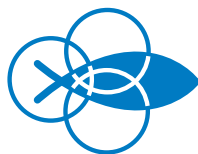
Citizens returning to the community often see a path of closed doors. RVM helps them see hope. They support people at their most vulnerable and enable them to realize their potential.

RVM's participants

become more self-sufficient, restore family relationships, and become engaged members of their communities. Their faith-based, relationship driven approach is an essential part of their success and what sets them apart. The Bradley Foundation is proud to support RVM's work and contributions to strengthening civil society in Racine and Kenosha.

– **Rick Graber**, President & CEO  
The Bradley Foundation

United Way of Racine County is proud to be a longstanding partner of Racine Vocational Ministry (RVM). United Way's mission perfectly aligns with RVM's focus of building an educated work force. It is easy to forget that job readiness starts much sooner than graduating high school and attending post-secondary schooling. RVM works with members of our community who may not have had the support system necessary to acquire critical life skills and the education required to build and maintain an upwardly mobile career. Jim and his staff work tirelessly at being life cheerleaders and mentors for those who have struggled to understand the expectations of the US business culture. RVM has helped them to find



a path to surpass ALICE wages for themselves and their families. Last year alone the programming we support aided more than 150 people with employment readiness and life skills training, employment counseling, intensive case management, job referral and placement, employer recruitment, work experience, educational and employment support. We are thankful for their partnership, work and commitment to community.

– **Alexa Haigh**,  
President & CEO  
United Way  
of Racine  
County



**Racine Vocational Ministry, Inc.**

## From Our Participants

### Maggi Rocha

#### *From Undergraduate Intern to Master's Degreed Professional*

In this feature, we share our pride in the interns who have spent time with RVM. RVM offers multiple opportunities each year and many of our interns go on to post graduate education and professional careers. Maggi is one example.

Maggi Rocha was a Carthage College intern at RVM. Over the years, RVM has had more than 20 interns from the Sociology, Social Work and Religion Departments at Carthage. Maggi began her internship in September of 2016 and continued working with RVM until graduation in May of 2019. Many interns serve a semester or two, but Maggi loved the work and became an important part of the team. She managed part of our walk-in and reentry data and got to know many of the participants over the time that she was here. She always came to work with a smile and ready to dig into whatever project was on her plate.

Maggi's Carthage College professor and advisor, Dr. Wayne Thompson said, "Maggi Rocha has a passion for social equity which is contagious and inspired her peers and faculty at Carthage. When she wanted to put her passion into action through an internship, I suggested calling RVM. It was the beginning of a beautiful relationship, a perfect fit. I am so happy that RVM and Maggi partnered to invest in the Racine community."

After graduation Maggi enrolled in the Social Work program

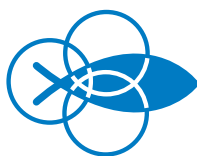


at UW-Green Bay. She completed internships in foster care, hospice and with veterans at the facility in King, Wisconsin. She enjoyed the variety of experiences with differing populations. Maggi is now a Master of Social Work (MSW) and recently passed her state exam as part of her path to being a Certified Advanced Practice Social Worker (CAPSW). She has been hired to work as a mental health clinician at the Behavioral Health Clinic

in Stevens Point. Maggi will work with clients who struggle with anxiety and depression. She will be required to log 3,000 clinically supervised hours to complete her state certification.

She says of her 3 years at RVM, "I couldn't have asked for a better and more fulfilling experience than the work I had as a student at RVM. The direct experiences I had with clients and community shareholders still informs my practice experience today, and I doubt I would be where I am without the care and support from the RVM team."

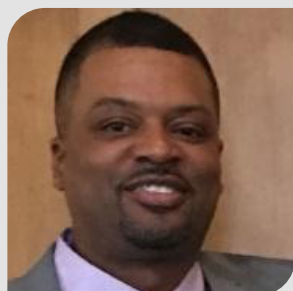
Maggi's contributions to RVM were substantial! She brought a focus that was already beyond her years and continued to grow in her time with us. It has been a pleasure to watch her grow into her career and to know that we were a part of her growth and development.



## From Our Participants

### Dartavian Watson *Second Chances Matter*

Dartavian came to RVM in 2006. He had just come back to Wisconsin and was looking for a way to connect to the community. He signed up for RVM's Solutions for Success training class



and after three days of training was set to do mock interviews with area HR professionals. He sat down for the interview, and it quickly turned into a heartfelt conversation about second chances. As the interviewer finished his interviews and was preparing to go back to work, he said to Lori Life, "have Dartavian call me on Monday." After his formal interview with the company, he was hired. He is now in his fifteenth year with the same employer.

Dartavian did not stop there. He knew that he had ground to make up to establish a solid retirement. The second part of his plan was to rehab houses and maintain them as rental properties. As of today, he owns eight properties and only has two mortgages remaining. With a singular focus and determination, he has built a life that has set him up for success and a secure retirement.

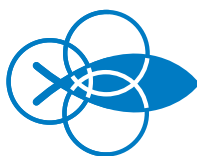
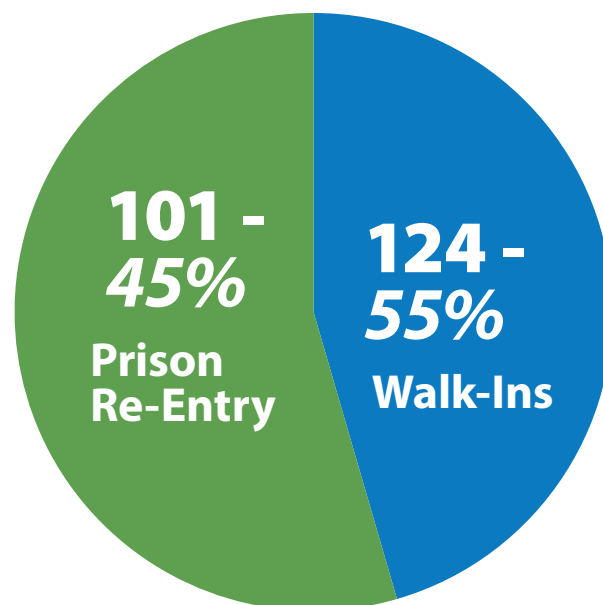
In 2016, Dartavian was awarded the Endel Williams Community Asset Award for his efforts in creating clean, affordable housing. He is not only building his retirement; he is making his community a better place to live!



He may not be done! He has been working to build his skills by acquiring trucking certifications with hopes of one day starting his own trucking company. He is doing his research

to learn more about starting and running a business. Setting and attaining goals has been a lifestyle for this RVM participant. We are very proud of all he has accomplished!

### 2020 Program Participation



## Our Walk-In Program

For those who maintained program continuity:

- 28 attained gainful employment, 24 maintained employment, 10 maintained social security benefits and of those, 4 gained employment to increase their income
- 27 participants got a degree/certificate or are presently enrolled in school
- 68 participants gained marketable skills to advance their careers
- 29 maintained employment above the ALICE threshold
- 51 participants improved their job classification via increased wages or job improvement
- 56 homeless participants and their families were served - 31 of them moved into permanent housing

The COVID pandemic profoundly reduced our ability to reach out and to serve participants. Employers were not hiring and many participants were either laid off or had hours reduced. There is a silver lining! We are seeing steady increases in wages and 32 participants were awarded promotions within their respective fields. Social Security applications and awards were up but programs for mental health, recovery and volunteer opportunities all but disappeared. At intake, more than 80% of program participants had no employment income and nearly all were at least 200% below the federal poverty guidelines. Pandemic responses were chronic fear, worries about the future, and a profound lack of hope.

Our continued focus is to help participants rediscover hope in a way that restores the path to who they are and what they can accomplish. This is the way to positive and life affirming change.

In 2020, Racine Vocational Ministry placed 106 individuals in jobs and job training at an average wage of \$13.83 an hour, our highest mark ever at \$2.52 higher than the county living wage estimate (\$11.31). ALICE wages for a single adult are \$10.97 an hour but for a family of four it is \$36.94. For unskilled workers that means that two wage earners need to earn about \$18.50

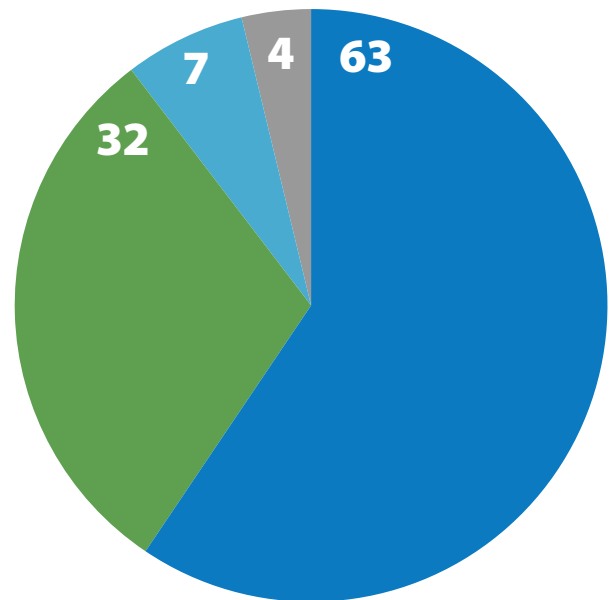
an hour to sustain a family. Accomplishing this takes planning, new job skills, and well-developed life skills. With continued support from our local United Way and other funders we look forward to helping more of those in desperate need of work and in need of mental and spiritual transformation and healing.

\*To learn more about ALICE in Racine County, click below or visit

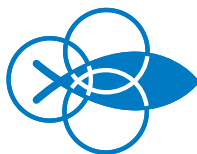
[https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.unitedwaywi.org/resource/collection/572412D0-E79C-45FA-9049-FB-F519C516DC/Racine\\_County\\_\\_ALICE2020\\_.pdf](https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.unitedwaywi.org/resource/collection/572412D0-E79C-45FA-9049-FB-F519C516DC/Racine_County__ALICE2020_.pdf)

[ALICE in Racine County](#)

### 2020 Total Placements of 106



- Jobs
- Upward Moves
- School
- SSDI
- Volunteer & Program



**Racine Vocational Ministry, Inc.**



## Anton House—From Prison Reentrant to College Professor



The headline read - From a drug dealer to a doctor of US history; the inspiring story of Anton House.

The article goes on to say, “Anton House is a doctor of United States history, earning his doctorate from Howard University, a historically black university in Washington, after serving time in prison for drug peddling.” Truly, these are the bookends of his remarkable story.

In 1998, at 18, he went to prison for the first time. He returned to prison again in 2001. It was at this time that he knew he had to do something different! He was referred to RVM by the Wisconsin Department of Corrections in 2006. At this time, he started to map out his career. Within a year he was enrolled and studying at the University of Wisconsin-Parkside. By the time he graduated in 2011, he was on the Dean’s List, had a degree in history, and was President of the Black Student Union. He looked to college professors to confide and be mentored. Anton was building a new life!

Following graduation, he was accepted to Howard University. By 2019 he had finished his master’s and doctorate. He states, “I was able to utilize my mind to take me someplace, and that’s what I try to impress on a lot of the boys and girls who come from, not only from Racine but some of the lower socioeconomic communities that I work in.” He went on to say, “your mind can take you as far as you fill it.” The vision and determination to persevere were also factors in his success. In addition, Anton used his knowledge of history to ground his own life. He confessed that, “In finding my family’s history, I found my place in the world.”

Anton’s career has taken him to Delaware State University, in Greenbelt Maryland, a historically black university, where he now serves as Assistant Professor. He shares his message of hope and resilience with people at the university and local neighborhood centers. We suspect that Anton will be paying it forward for many years to come!

Completed Master’s Degree. Applied and accepted to Howard’s doctoral program. Doctorate and dissertation completed in 2019. Worked as teacher/mentor to DC youth. Hired as assistant professor of history at Delaware State University.

Enrolled at UW-Parkside. Earned a Dean’s List recognition. President of the UW-P Black Student Union. Completed bachelor’s degree in US History. Applied and accepted at Howard University in Washington, D.C.

Referred to RVM’s Community Reentry Program. Worked with Dwayne Windham, Frank James and James Schatzman.

Prison as an Adult

Juvenile Corrections

Crime &  
Drugs

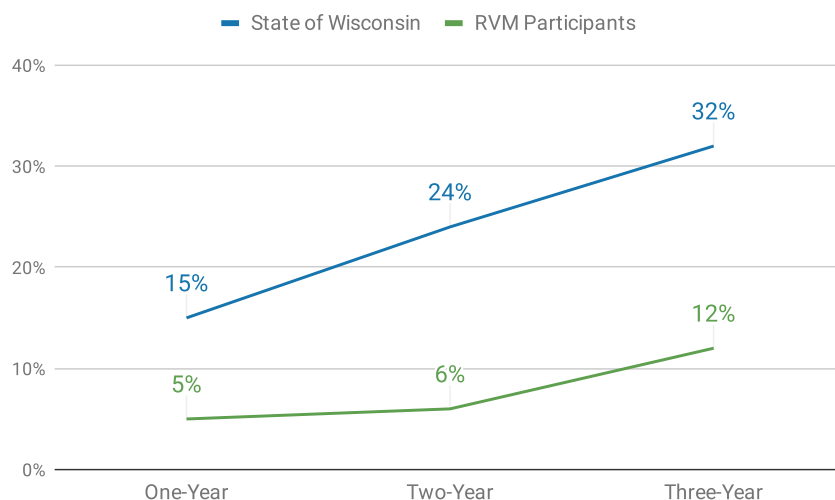




# Our Re-Entry Program

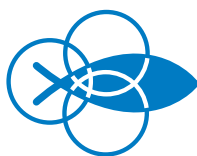
In 2005, with the support of the Wisconsin Department of Corrections, the Racine Police Department and the City of Racine, RVM started the Community Re-entry Program. From 2005–2010 RVM served 223 re-entry participants. In 2011, the City received a federal grant to serve 150 more reentrants over the next three years. The principal task of federal 2nd Chance programs are to reduce participant recidivism by 50%. RVM was able to accomplish this and more. To date, RVM and KVM have served just over 600 reentrants in Racine and Kenosha Counties since the inception of the program.

## Rate of Reentrant Return to WI Corrections



## Impact – Lower Recidivism

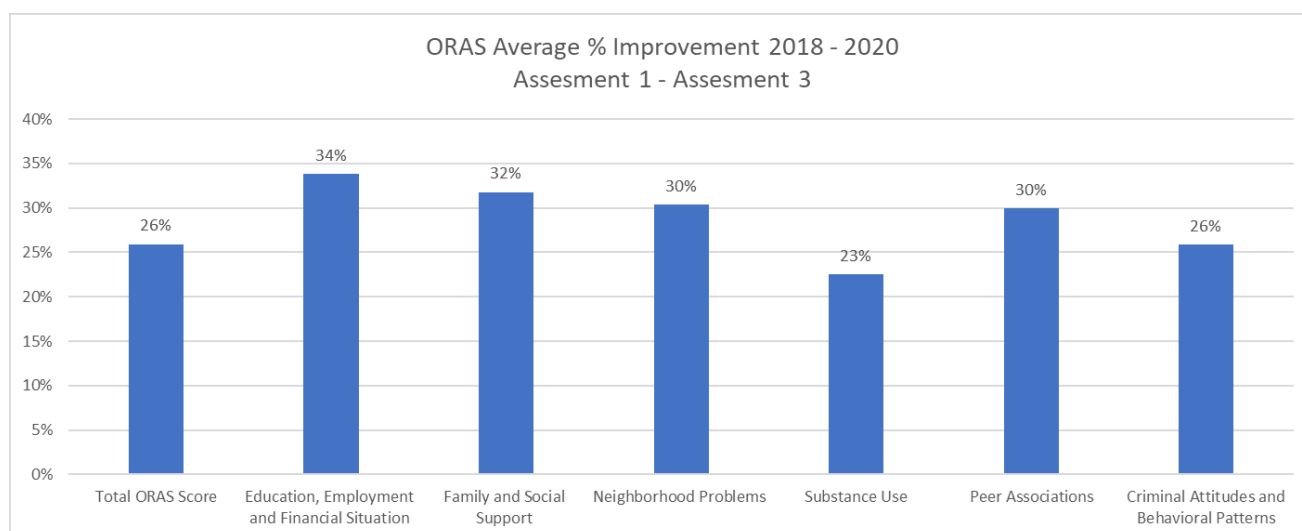
Reducing recidivism has significant civic benefits. First, it keeps people in the community, increasing the effectiveness of program interventions and allowing family and community relationships to be maintained and developed. We believe that keeping families together is the best way to keep our cities economically and socially viable as well as safe. Remaining home also allows reentrants to work, pay taxes, purchase food, clothes, housing and entertainment, thereby adding to the economic vitality of some of our more impoverished neighborhoods.



**Racine Vocational Ministry, Inc.**

# Measuring Cognitive Change

The key to creating a path to long term success is cognitive change. If you cannot think about something differently you will not be able to react to it differently. We begin this process of change by simply meeting participants where they are. We then help them negotiate their stages of change, which is a theoretical framework that allows RVM staff to meet participants where they are in relation to their readiness to change. Change is the lynch pin of all program success. Research from the University of Cincinnati identified six key domains of influence impacting the risk of recidivism and facilitating cognitive change. R/KVM's data report for 2018-2020 showed some very positive improvements in prosocial thinking patterns.



In the chart above we show the breakdown of the areas of cognitive change that R/KVM measures as we assess participants over a three-year period. These subfields show significant improvement for those R/KVM participants being assessed 3 times between 2018 and 2020. The average score across all participants for each of these 6 categories improved by at least 23% with a maximum improvement of 34%. Such marked improvement is no easy feat, as this represents reducing risk factors spread across 6 different domains of life by nearly 25% each. The consistent improvement across all 6 fields speaks to R/KVM's commitment to transforming the whole of their participants' lives and their participants' commitment to the incremental change necessary to get there.

Especially prevalent are the 30%+ improvements in the categories of Education, Employment and Financial Situation, Family and Social Support, Neighborhood Problems and Peer Associations. These areas of growth underscore R/KVM's dedication to ensuring participants have a strong support system and the tools necessary to make and maintain positive changes in their lives.



## From Our Community Partners



It is with enthusiasm that I write to you about Kenosha Vocational Ministry! They have been a part of Kenosha's social service community for nearly four years. I have gotten to know them quite well

over the last few years and I can vouch for their program and the faithful way that their services are delivered. Their participants are treated with dignity and given every opportunity to thrive in a community that can be unforgiving towards those returning from prison. I have seen their

successes and the hearts of their staff as they reach out to those who most need our help. I respond to their mission because it closely aligns with ours. I am thrilled to be working alongside as we collaborate to build bridges to the restoration of families, neighborhoods, and our city.

– **Karl Erickson, Executive Director**  
ELCA Outreach Center



Heather Bennett, 2<sup>nd</sup> Chance Program Coordinator and Karl Erickson, Outreach Director, at Urban Outreach Center in Kenosha



Alfred at his job at B-WAY



Executive Director James Schatzman and former participant Endel Williams talk to employers at the Kenosha Job Expo



**Racine Vocational Ministry, Inc.**

# Kenosha Vocational Ministry (KVM) Is Firmly Established

In late 2015, RVM and a group of Kenosha citizens, under the leadership of District Attorney Michael Graveley and the Kenosha County Health Department, met to address the issues of gun violence and public health. After a year of discussion and planning, the challenges of people returning from prison emerged as a priority in lowering violence and strengthening families. In December of 2017, funding from Kenosha County Human Services and Light of Christ Anglican Church made it possible to triple the number of participants we could serve. Karl Erickson and the Outreach Center offered KVM a workspace and access to all the amenities that were there to support staff and benefit our participants. In 2019, the Kenosha United Way also began funding KVM's work. 2020 began KVM's 4<sup>th</sup> year of service. In 2020, KVM served 35 reentrants. The pandemic drove these numbers down a bit from a program high of 40 in 2019. 28 participants have completed AODA treatment, and 11 others are currently in programs. 38 have participated in cognitive services offered by KVM and 27 have obtained their driver licenses. KVM is aggressively seeking new funding to expand the program to offer full time service. We are thrilled with the outcomes that are a result of our participants' tenacity and dedication to KVM's programming.

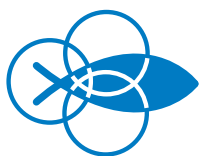


As a field supervisor for the Department of Corrections, I have had the opportunity to work closely with KVM, sharing common goals of providing clients

re-entering our community with opportunities for positive change and success. Kenosha Vocational Ministry staff support participants by creating sustainable change through relationship building, addressing cognitive thinking patterns, and providing another layer of support.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the value KVM provides to the community was highlighted. When most of the world was shuttered, Heather and Hope were a lifeline for participants who struggled with obtaining essential items and battled loneliness from being separated from loved ones during quarantine. They conducted socially distanced face-to-face visits, home visits, holiday meal drop offs, and provided hygiene products. KVM made clients feel safe and supported during this difficult time. Thank you KVM for the important work that you do!

– Terra M. Wendricks, Field Supervisor  
Wisconsin Department of Corrections



**Racine Vocational Ministry, Inc.**



# Funding History

## FUNDERS

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT BLOCK GRANT (CDBG)  
SC JOHNSON FUND  
STATE EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT  
CITY EMERGENCY SOLUTIONS GRANT  
STATE GANG DIVERSION  
RACINE COMMUNITY FOUNDATION  
UNITED WAY OF RACINE COUNTY  
THE BRADLEY FOUNDATION  
DOMINICAN MISSION FUND  
E C STYBERG FOUNDATION  
ELCA DOMESTIC HUNGER FUND  
LIGHT OF CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH  
KENOSHA COUNTY HUMAN SERVICES  
UNITED WAY OF KENOSHA COUNTY

## DATES

2005 – 2020  
2002 – 2020  
2006 – 2020  
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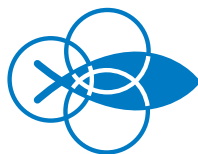


We are grateful to all of our funders. If you would like to support our mission you can make a donation by clicking the button below:

[GIVE NOW](#)

Or mail your check to:  
Racine Vocational Ministry  
214 7<sup>th</sup> Street  
Racine, WI 53403  
262-633-8660

[rvmracine.org](http://rvmracine.org)



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