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Administration Officials Celebrate Opening of Knoxville Reentry and Recovery Center for Women

Knoxville, TN. – Today, marking the one-year anniversary of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, Federal, state, and local officials celebrated the grand opening of The Next Door in Knoxville, a transitional residential program for women, which received seed money from a grant made possible by the Recovery Act. The 16-bed facility will serve approximately 45 women per year coming from incarceration in Knoxville and surrounding counties.

Gil Kerlikowske, Director of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP); Pamela S. Hyde, J.D., Administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA); Virginia Trotter Betts, Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Mental Health and Developmental Disabilities; and Gayle Ray, Commissioner of the Tennessee Department of Correction, were among the speakers who provided remarks at the opening ceremony for the Knoxville location of The Next Door.

“The Recovery Act has stimulated the economy by providing seed money for jobs and funds for programs like The Next Door,” said Director Kerlikowske. “The Next Door model effectively reduces recidivism and drug abuse by approaching the drug problem one woman at a time, from a public health and public safety perspective and with combined support from law enforcement, the treatment field, faith-based organizations, and the community. Clients of The Next Door receive more than substance abuse treatment and recovery services. They receive dignity, hope, and a second chance to rebuild their lives. Through this program, clients also learn skills that enable them to become part of the workforce and to make positive contributions to their communities.”

“Reentry programs help people leaving jails and prisons succeed in the community by avoiding a recurrence of crime and drug abuse,” said SAMHSA Administrator Pamela S. Hyde. “Through programs like The Next Door we are investing Federal resources in peoples’ success, reducing recidivism, and strengthening communities.”

“The place we most often see the real impact of the stimulus funds provided by the Recovery Act is at the individual or local level,” said Tennessee Governor Phil Bredesen. “I’m very pleased with this opportunity to replicate a successful program like The Next Door in new locations in Knoxville and Chattanooga with the help of Recovery Act funds.”

According to the U.S Department of Justice Office of Justice Programs’ (OJP) Bureau of Justice Statistics, there are more than 1 million women under the supervision of the criminal justice system in the United States. Drug and property crimes are the most likely cause of incarceration. The Knoxville program is modeled after The Next Door in Nashville, which has helped over 600 women from the criminal justice system rebuild their lives since it opened in May 2004. Services provided by The Next Door include housing, recovery support services, and workforce development. The structured curriculum provides job preparation, readiness, communication skills and conflict management to support retention, and career planning. In 2009, 107 out of 143 clients of The Next Door in Nashville received employment.

The third Next Door location, in Chattanooga, will open in early summer 2010. These programs break the cycle of drug use, crime, and incarceration; reunite families; and make recovery possible for Americans, key focuses of the Obama Administration’s national drug control strategy.

The grant to The Next Door was made through OJP’s Bureau of Justice Assistance and will support three new jobs at the Knoxville site, in addition to jobs at the organization’s locations in Chattanooga and Nashville.

For information about The Next Door visit www.thenextdoor.org
For information about the Office of National Drug Control Policy visit www.WhiteHouseDrugPolicy.gov

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