



Program Description

Right Thinking Foundation is a 501[c][3] nonprofit organization dedicated to providing pre-release services to returning citizens in Virginia correctional facilities helping them to a better chance of success at becoming productive contributing members of society by providing vocational rehabilitation services in the areas of personal financial management, entrepreneurship skills and job counseling.

The program is based on the premise that if a person is under financial stress, he or she will make bad decisions. A person that has been incarcerated and is making bad decisions has a very high chance that he or she will recidivate. The program teaches an overall awareness of how money works in a person's life and provides tools that will assist them as they learn to think and plan ahead making right decisions, reducing the amount of stress in their lives, and not reverting back to the old ways of thinking that resulted in their incarceration.

The program provides encouragement, motivation and hope. The components of the program are: Personal Finance and Small Business Ownership Seminar, Personal Budget Class, Business Plan Class, One on One Sessions, Researching Business Ideas and Mentoring of Ex-Offenders upon Release.

Steve Coplon's Background

Right Thinking Foundation's Executive Director, Steve Coplon, is a life time entrepreneur who brings his extensive business career behind the walls to share real life business experiences with returning citizens to teach them skills and provide tools that will help them face real life situations upon release. Steve is currently the only Virginia Department of Corrections Statewide Volunteer providing a financial education program at multiple Virginia correctional institutions. Steve earned an Accounting degree from Virginia Commonwealth University in 1975. He has had his own accounting practice and has worked as a business consultant for over 45 years; 15 of those with the Small Business Development Center of Hampton Roads serving hundreds of clients. He worked as a corporate executive at Cruise International serving as Chief Finance Officer, Treasurer, Director of Development and President of the Spirit Fleet which included the Spirit of Norfolk harbor dinner boat. He owned and operated a very successful marina and has been actively involved in Real Estate Development for a major part of his career. Steve was recognized in 2008 by the Hampton Roads Chamber of Commerce with the TowneBank Award as the Entrepreneur of the Year in Hampton Roads. He has been presenting his seminar on *Personal Finance and Small Business Ownership* that he shares with returning citizens to business owners for over twenty years. Throughout his career he has provided personal budgeting counseling to thousands of people. Steve is currently teaching a financial literacy program at An Achievable Dream Academy in the Newport News Public School System. RTF's financial education program has recently been brought to economically disadvantaged entrepreneurs residing in communities of the Norfolk Redevelopment and Housing Authority through a partnership with the Small Business Development Center of Hampton Roads. Steve, a Karate Master, has worked as a volunteer for over 44 years at the YMCA of South Hampton Roads, teaching thousands of students. Steve and his wife, Donna, have five children and six grandchildren and reside in Norfolk, VA.