

MASSACHUSETTS ROCA, INC.



An excerpt from YAP's Policy & Advocacy Center publication *Safely Home*

UNCONDITIONAL CARING; NO REJECT POLICIES & PRACTICE

Based in Massachusetts, Roca's mission is to help disengaged, disenfranchised young people move out of violence and poverty. Since 1988, Roca has used its intervention model to help over 20,000 young men realize positive behavioral change.

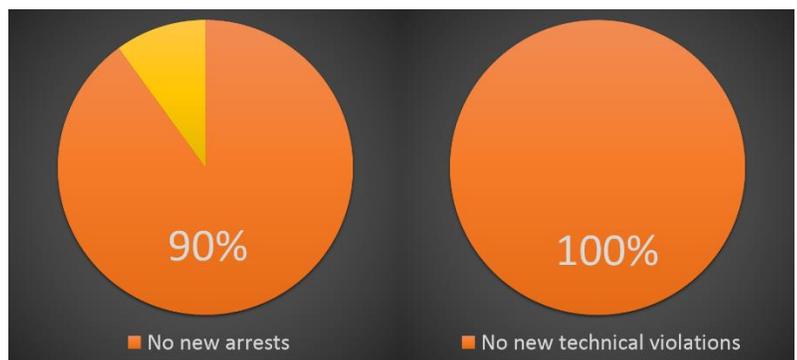
Its focus is on young men ages 17-24 who are high school dropouts, have felony convictions, have been failed by other programs and have no employment experience. Almost all the men in Roca's program also had nothing but negative institutional experience. Roca works with these young men for four years.

The Roca model begins with "relentless street outreach" to the most high-risk young men, then moves to intensive case management and relationship building, or "transformational relationships."

The third component is intensive programming, which includes Roca's unique transitional employment program. This employment program emphasizes unconditional caring and maintains a no eject policy. Roca intentionally builds in space for relapse into bad mistakes and dangerous behavior and does not eject men from the program because of it. While it does impose consequences, being kicked out of the program is not one of them. On average, it takes most young men in Roca's transitional employment program 15-18 months to complete 60 days of work in a row.

The final component of Roca's intervention involves collaborating with local and state governmental and law enforcement partners to extend the reach and success of the intervention.

Roca has also made a commitment to rigorously track data and outcomes, reporting that in FY 2012 it served over 400 very high-risk young men and had retention rates of 78%. Of those who completed the intensive component of the model, 90% had no new arrests, 100% had no new technical violations and 70% have demonstrated educational gains.



Source: Interview with John Ward, Roca Inc., May 2, 2014; and Roca's Intervention Model, <http://rocainc.org/what-we-do/the-solution/rocas-intervention-model-forhigh-risk-young-people/>