

# Mentors needed for former prison inmates

**From A1**

Justice.

"There isn't a family in this society that hasn't been affected by someone who's had to go to prison," said the Rev. Roosevelt Ewell of the Canaan Institutional Baptist Church.

Ewell said this includes extended family members such as cousins, aunts and uncles.

Ewell said approximately 500 offenders will be released in

Fairfield County from federal and state prisons between September 2004 and early 2005. Many will face uphill battles as they try to re-acclimate themselves with family, find jobs, and try to undo damage they have created with "bad decisions."

Larry Johnson, the chairman of public relations for the Task Force and an ex-offender, said programs like these are valuable to help turn lives

around. Out of prison three years, his transition has been successful but it was rough in the beginning to find a job and readjust to society.

"I'd been in every-level four and five penitentiary in the state of Connecticut," he said. "It (mentoring) started for me inside."

Johnson served six years of a 12-year sentence.

Ewell said of about 1,300 female prisoners at the Dan-

bury Correctional Facility, a large percentage are minorities. He said the goal is to recruit 200 mentors who will be trained to make the transition easier for adult and juvenile offenders, as well as children of offenders.

"We should be there as our brother's keeper to help them go in a new direction," he said. "They are somebody's mother or father and the children suffer."

# Justice Sunday honors King Jr.

January is National Mentoring month, an effort to recruit mentors for ex-inmates.

By **JAMES WALKER**  
*Hour Staff Writer*

**NORWALK** — Many people believe for perpetrators who commit crime and end up behind bars, doing time is the easy part. The hard times come when offenders are released back into mainstream society and face the harrowing prospect of meshing back into the community and picking up the pieces of their lives.

About 150 people will stage a rally and march Sunday as part of National Mentoring Month, a nationwide effort to recruit mentors to help people who were incarcerated and need help reestablishing themselves.

The event, which starts at 5 p.m. outside the new South Norwalk Police Station, honors the non-violence principles of the late civil rights leader, Martin Luther King Jr.

Called "Justice Sunday," the effort is a collaborative between the National Religious Affairs Association of the National Association of Blacks in Criminal Justice and the Corporation for National and Community Service out of Washington, D.C. and the Connecticut Black Church Task Force on Crime and Criminal

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