

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

13 October 2009

Contact: Marguerite Telford, Director of Communications  
Phone: 703-554-8664  
Email: [mtelford@pfi.org](mailto:mtelford@pfi.org)

### **Study Finds PFI Course Changes Prisoner Attitudes**

Manchester, England - - - A recent study concludes that prisoners who participate in PFI's Sycamore Tree Project® have changed attitudes about crime after they complete the six-session course.

"The most recent Hallem study is based on over 5,000 responses and is definitive in its finding that Sycamore Tree changes the attitudes of prisoners in a way that predicts lower recidivism," says Dan Van Ness, PFI's Executive Director of the Centre for Justice and Reconciliation. "We know that the Sycamore Tree Project® has changed the lives of prisoners and victims around the world. We have had anecdotal evidence of this as well as two previous studies with limited numbers of participants, but promising conclusions. Now these conclusions have been confirmed. This is very exciting news."

Sheffield Hallam University recently completed a comprehensive evaluation of the impact of PFI's Sycamore Tree Project® (STP)—a victim awareness program that teaches responsibility, confession, repentance, and forgiveness—on prisoners in England and Wales. PF England and Wales commissioned the study, which evaluated 5,007 STP prisoner participants between January 2006 and May 2009. Each prisoner participant answered a set of questions both prior to and upon completion of the six-day course.

The data collected over this four year period indicates that all prisoner STP participants—male, female, young, and old— showed a significant attitude change, especially in the areas of victim empathy and re-offending. After taking the STP course, prisoners demonstrated an increased awareness of the impact of their actions on victims and they rated their likelihood of committing a crime in the future as lower than before they took the course. Results also show a positive change in the prisoners' general attitude on crime.

This report provides encouraging evidence that PFI's Sycamore Tree Project®, which is run by PFI affiliates in 22 countries, is highly effective in changing prisoners' attitudes. PF England and Wales have been running the Sycamore Tree Project® in 50 prisons since 1998 with more than 10,000 prisoners participating.

[Click here to read the complete report.](#)

###