

# Correctional Newsfront

The official newsletter of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections



## 2016 News ~ January to March

Week of March 28...

### PUPPIES!!!

SCI Huntingdon began its journey into the world of "PAWSabilities" on March 31, 2016, with its partnership with Canine Partners for Life (CPL). CPL provides dogs to individuals with physical disabilities. The institution received its first four puppies (Nate, Sailor, Rafter, and Draco).

Inmates from the institution will be tasked with training the puppies in basic obedience and the mastery of over 30 commands while they are here. Staff volunteers are instrumental to the success of the program as they provide socialization opportunities for the dogs outside the Institutional setting. The dogs remain at the institution for approximately 14 months, at which time they return to CPL to complete their training as a service dog.



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## Donating Bottled Water

The administration of SCI Graterford was recently asked if donations of bottled water could be collected for the residents of Flint, Michigan. Officer L.A. Jones had family headed that way at the end of March with an empty truck. They were willing to stop by Graterford to pick up the donated water and deliver it to Michigan.

The water crisis in Flint, Michigan began in April 2014, after the town change its water source from the local water and sewer department to the Flint River. However, they did not apply "corrosion inhibitors." The corrosive river water caused lead from aging pipes to leak into the water supply.

In Flint, between 6,000 and 12,000 children have been exposed to drinking water with high levels of lead.

Officer Jones and her fellow officers coordinated the fliers, collection, storing and pick up of the donations. Employees were asked to once again open their hearts and donate one case of bottled water, each. In total, three skids of water were collected.

On March 31st, the donations were picked up and were on their way!



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## Clark Named SCI Albion Superintendent

Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel announces the appointment of Michael Clark as superintendent of SCI Albion. Clark replaces Nancy Giroux, who retired after many years of service to the DOC. Clark's appointment was effective March 27, 2016.

"Mike has served in a number of positions that helped him establish a strong corrections background," Secretary Wetzel said. "I am confident he will continue to lead SCI Albion and its employees and inmates on a path to success."

Clark began his corrections career at SCI Albion in 1995 as a drug and alcohol treatment specialist (DATS), and in 1998 was promoted to SCI Albion's DATS supervisor. In June 2006, he was promoted to corrections classification and program manager (CCPM). He was CCPM at Albion until November 2009, at which point he was promoted to major of the guard and unit management at SCI Cambridge Springs. Clark held that position until he was promoted in August 2010 to deputy superintendent for facility management (DSFM) at Cambridge Springs. In June 2013, he moved over to serve as deputy superintendent for centralized services (DSCS), and in February 2014 returned to Albion as DSCS. In August 2015 he switched to DSFM.

A graduate of Union City High School, Clark attended Mercyhurst College in Erie, Pa., graduating in May 1985. He has been a trainer for numerous corrections-related trainings over the years, and most recently he was a trainer of Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) for security captains.

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## Coal Township Names Employee of the Quarter



Corrections Officer Dawn Scicchitano, was recognized as SCI Coal Township's Employee of the Quarter for the First Quarter of 2016. Officer Scicchitano, who was nominated by her supervisors, is a 27-year DOC employee, transferring to Coal Township in 2001.

Officer Scicchitano's supervisors stated that Dawn's initiative and work ethic is in accordance with the highest standards in the DOC.

Officer Scicchitano is currently assigned as Central Control's CCTV Officer. Due to her diligence on the camera systems, her efforts prevent contraband introduction into the visiting room, in turn making Coal Township a safer environment. Specifically, on February 28, 2016, Scicchitano's attentiveness and awareness to a possible contraband exchange in the visiting room and use of her good communication skills, made it possible to observe a contraband exchange with visitors.

Superintendent Thomas McGinley noted that Dawn's work performance led to significant drug finds, followed by appropriate arrests which is instrumental in a safe and secure environment for staff and inmates.

One of Officer Scicchitano's supervisors stated, "If Central Control is the brain of the institution, Officer Scicchitano is the heart."

Congratulations Dawn!

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## Mahanoy Honor Guard



SCI Mahanoy Honor Guard with Lt. Governor Mike Stack at Girardville's St. Patrick's Day Parade on Saturday, March 19, 2016.

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## Inmates Donate to Drug Free Coalition

Recently, SCI Laurel Highlands' inmate organization, The Phoenix Group, in conjunction with the prison's transitional housing unit (THU), made a donation to the local Somerset County Drug Free Communities Coalition (DFC). This donation of \$500 is going to be utilized to provide ongoing drug and alcohol prevention education materials to elementary and middle school students as well as funding community awareness events such as the Red Ribbon Campaign.



The DFC's mission is to promote healthy drug free living for all Somerset County Residents, and its vision is that all youth become healthy, productive citizens in the community. Some of the programs that the DFC offers at no cost are Botvin Life Skills in the school systems, Reach Out Now, National Red Ribbon Week, Why Animals Don't Smoke, Students Against Destructive Decisions –SADD, and Teens Against Tobacco Use.

To learn more about this program visit: <http://www.twinlakescenter.org/drug-free-communities/>

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## **Quehanna Donates to Wounded Warriors**



Through the generosity of the Quehanna Boot Camp staff, the QBC Empowerment Committee was able to make a \$1,000 donation to the Wounded Warrior Project for 2015.

QBC Empowerment Committee raises funds through raffles, hoagie/sandwich sales, Gardners Candies sales, 100-mile Yard Sale, etc., and a percentage of the proceeds is donated to a charitable organization.

For 2016, the committee has decided to support local fire companies and EMS. Given the number of local companies, it was decided to limit the annual donation to two fire/EMS companies per year for the next several years.

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## An Easter Delivery

Employees and residents of the Harrisburg Community Corrections Center (CCC) delivered 50 Easter baskets to the residents of the Homeland Center in Harrisburg.



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Week of March 21...



# Blood Drive!

Recently, 21 employees at the DOC's Central Office donated 15 pints of blood to the Central Pennsylvania Blood Bank.

This collection will go on to save the lives of **45 local patients!!**

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Week of March 14...

## Helping Non-Profits

During February, Riverside Community Corrections Center (CCC) residents and staff collected non-perishable food items for Pressley Ridge's Backpack Giveback program.

Pressley Ridge is a non-profit organization that provides educational opportunities, foster care connections, residential options and community-based support.

The Backpack Giveback Program provides children of Pressley Ridge's school with food to help sustain nutrition. Every week, the staff at Pressley Ridge's school shop and purchase non-perishable food items, as the need is high.

This is the second time that Riverside CCC has donated to such a wonderful program. As one of the center's biggest collections to date, Riverside CCC looks forward to future opportunities to assist Pressley Ridge in helping those in need.



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## Pet Food Drive Held

In February, the residents of Allentown Community Corrections Center conducted pet food drive for a local no kill shelter. The shelter is S.O.A.R. - Starting Over Animal Rescue.

The director, Gloria, and her team of volunteers travel around the Lehigh Valley trapping and recusing stray animals. The animals are cared for and given medical treatment. Gloria then arranges pet adoptions fairs at local pet stores to find homes for the animals she and her volunteers help.

This is the second time the residents at Allentown CCC have participated in a pet food drive for S.O.A.R. Gloria has expressed much gratitude for their donations.

This time around the residents donated more than \$1,100 in pet supplies.



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# Harrisburg CCC Supports Our Troops

In January 2016, Harrisburg CCC residents collected and donated 2,595 manufacturer's coupons for the Support Our Troops Troopons program.

As a result of this work, the Support Our Troops organization sent this letter to the center.

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**877-879-8882 SUPPORTOURTROOPS.ORG**  
*providing morale and well-being to the troops and their families worldwide*

March 11, 2016

Harrisburg Community Corrections Center  
27 N Cameron St  
Harrisburg, PA  
17101

Dear Harrisburg Community Corrections Center:

*Thank you for being part of the Support Our Troops Team and contributing coupons to the Troopons® program. Last year was unique, in that we conducted a scientific survey to measure the impact Troopons are making on military families' budgets. Some of the results are below. The feedback from the survey is clear: **Your support IS MAKING A DIFFERENCE!** We have posted the survey results on the Troopons' program page of SupportOurTroops.Org. In addition, here is an example from the hundreds of Thank You Letters we receive:*

*"It is AMAZING to me how many coupons are sent and how much we can save by using them! It is truly a blessing to us all! Thank you for your dedication to supporting our military and their families overseas! P.S. LOVE the baby, diaper, and Pull-Ups coupons! Oh, who am I kidding, I love ALL the coupons! THANK YOU!!!!!" - Dawn -Happy Military Spouse and Mommy to Two Wonderful Angels, currently in Germany*

We want the troops to know that people here at home care about them, and so we include a note making sure the troops know they were gathered and clipped by folks who are very grateful for what they are doing for all of us. And the postage to mail them overseas is made possible by Patriotic Partners like Goodyear Tire & Rubber Company which raised over \$338,000 for SOT® last year alone.

The effort and time you graciously provide to reduce the pinch on troops' budgets has made a significant difference! Aside from the thank-you letters we receive, we now have scientific data to PROVE that your efforts are making a BIG difference! A **scientific survey** was conducted, which asked families and troops using Troopons to provide feedback. The objective was simple: *Is the Troopons program really working?* The results clearly demonstrate that YES! It really is working!

**\*\*\* Users of Troopons® receive real financial assistance \*\*\***

- 60% said the savings from Troopons goes to paying other bills.
- 25% said the savings go to their child's education.

**\*\*\* Users of Troopons® stretch their grocery budget \*\*\***

- Over a third of families reported saving between \$26 and \$50 per month with Troopons.
- 29% reported savings between \$51 and \$150 per month.
- Nearly 10% reported savings over \$150 per month.

In appreciation for your hard work, please find free Troopons patches enclosed. They may be ironed or stitched on. They will not be sold, and will be given only to those working in the program.

SupportOurTroops.Org will be grateful for anything you can do to help spread the word about what we do and how to donate. It is impossible to do enough for these amazing people, and the more folks that learn about SupportOurTroops.Org and get involved, and the more money that is raised, the more we can do.

*Again, thank you for your good work to support those who do so much for all of us!*

Sincerely,  
Support Our Troops®  
By:   
Heather, Support Our Troops Team

**They Support Us – Let's Support Them!®**  
Unified national mailing address: P. O. Box 70, Daytona Beach, FL 32115-0070

Week of March 7...

## Rockview Begins Dog Training Program

SCI Rockview employees are excited to have their first-ever dog program. New Leash on Life is a unique one-year program designed to rescue dogs from high kill shelters and pair them up with participating inmate trainers. These inmates are given extensive training so they can in-turn, train the dogs for service to United States veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder.

Along with training the dogs for future service, these inmates, some of which have not been around animals for over 40 years, are getting the opportunity to bond with these dogs, which is giving them a new outlook and purpose during their incarceration. These dogs and their handlers also will be active within the institution, visiting hospice patients and inmates in the specialized housing units.

Though it has been a long time in the making, Rockview's first four shelter rescue dogs arrived on Monday, March 7, 2016. Already, their presence is changing the atmosphere of the institution for the better. The dogs are quickly becoming a welcome part to the institution, and they travel almost everywhere with their handlers.



Writer Roger Caras once said, "Dogs are not our whole life, but they make our lives whole."

"I believe the dogs can make our institution a better place as well," Unit Manager David Morningstar said. "If you have an opportunity to visit SCI Rockview, make sure to stop by our unit. It won't be hard to find. Just follow the crowd of people with smiles on their faces."

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## Read Across America Day

On March 2, Canine Partner's for Life volunteers and six service dogs from SCIs Greene and Somerset visited Lafayette Elementary School in Uniontown for Read Across America Day.

More than 300 elementary students got to meet the puppies, learn how staff and inmate handlers are training them and how the puppies will change the lives of their future partners... All while encouraging students to keep up their love for reading!



Photo L-R: Jim Engel , Tina Staley, Ellen Boros, Jamie Reader, Kayla Shaner, Susan Fleming, Erica Seaver-Engel, Kathleen Smith Bell, Connie Hart

Dogs L-R: Rene, Lucee, Jett, Dusty, Flower, Bingo

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## **Polar Bear Walk Held at SCI Mercer**

On Saturday, March 5, SCI Mercer's Inmate Activities Committee held a Polar Bear Walk to benefit the St. Nicholas Center Men's Outreach Program in Sharon, Pa. This event was held to raise awareness of homelessness and provide assistance to a local nonprofit organization.

Forty inmates participated in the event, which required them to walk nine laps (equivalent to two miles) around the yard. Those attending the event were encouraged, but not required, to under-dress for the weather conditions while still meeting the minimum clothing requirements appropriate for the yard. In this way, participants could experience what it may be like to be without shelter in the cold and to help them understand situations of others.

Inmates donated \$3 each to participate in the event, which raised \$302 that will benefit the organization's Emergency Shelter and/or Bridge Housing Program.



Pictured are Father Timothy Kjera from the St. Nicholas Center and Corrections Activities Specialist Andrew McLaughlin.

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## **Volunteer Work Recognized**

Ulrich Klemm, who serves as the DOC's Religion, Volunteer, and Recreational Services Program administrator, will be honored March 12, 2016, for his volunteer work with those with special needs. Klemm will receive the Luther S. Beers Distinguished Award, which is given annually to a deserving volunteer, at the annual banquet of The Arc of Cumberland & Perry Counties (CPARC).

Beers was one of the founders of CPARC, and was the first president of what is now known as the S. Wilson Pollock Center for Industrial Training. As a volunteer, Beers worked tirelessly for the rights of individuals with intellectual disabilities. Upon his death, CPARC established the Luther S. Beers Distinguished Service Award in recognition of his many years of outstanding service. Nominees are individuals who have given unselfishly of their time and talents in furthering the rights of individuals with special needs, and who exemplify volunteerism.

**Congratulations, Ulli!**

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## PREA Audit

SCI Muncy staff recently received a Certificate of Compliance for passing their Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) audit.



Pictured back row left to right: Captain Boyer, Major Ransom, Classification and Program Manager Nicole McKee, Training Coordinator Jon Tallman, Classification and Treatment Manager Marci Boyer, Superintendent Robert Smith, Facility Maintenance Manager 3 Harding, Lt. Savage.

Front Row left to right: Deputy Superintendent for Facility Management Wendy Nicholas, Human Resource Office Marshall and Deputy Superintendent for Centralized Services William Frantz.

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## PA DOC in the News

Johnstown Tribune-Democrat (03/03/2016)

[http://www.tribdem.com/news/latest\\_news/corrections-officer-receives-commendation-for-aiding-policeman-during-traffic-stop/article\\_817b268e-e1b7-11e5-aac3-9b7caf1f9df6.html](http://www.tribdem.com/news/latest_news/corrections-officer-receives-commendation-for-aiding-policeman-during-traffic-stop/article_817b268e-e1b7-11e5-aac3-9b7caf1f9df6.html)

### Corrections officer receives commendation for aiding policeman during traffic stop

By Kecia Bal



**Jeff Keafer (second from left), a corrections officer at SCI Somerset, is congratulated by Somerset Borough police Officer Christopher Pile after receiving a commendation for helping Pile when a suspect he was arresting fought him. At left is Somerset Borough police Chief Randy Cox, who presented the commendation to Keafer on Thursday (March 3, 2016) at the state prison. (Thursday, March 3, 2016. Thomas Slusser/The Tribune-Democrat, Johnston, Pa.)**

SOMERSET – Early Monday, toward the end of his shift, Officer Christopher Pile encountered the type of frightening situation he knew could come while responding to a domestic call, making a traffic stop or any of the other calls he answers daily while in uniform.

An auto theft suspect assaulted Pile in a struggle that ensued after the officer pulled him over, police said.

Pile said he eventually reached a stalemate: He was to subdue the suspect, but was unable to reach his handcuffs.

That's when he noticed a shadow and heard an offer to help. A corrections officer, Jeff Keafer, happened to be driving past the traffic stop along Berlin Plank Road on his way to work at State Correctional Institution-Somerset. Keafer helped Pile complete the arrest, an act that police and prison officials said prevented what could have been a far worse outcome.

Pile, standing with his wife, Sheena, during a ceremony to honor Keafer's actions, said he's grateful. He has injuries that will heal, and he was able to return home to his family.

"I had angels out there," he said.

His wife, who knew something was wrong after her husband didn't return from work when he was supposed to – in time to take their two children to school – said the same.

"He was sent from above, a higher power," she said.

The two also said that the officer's father, the late veteran police Officer Clifford Pile, was watching over them.

During the ceremony, Keafer turned to Chris Pile and told him that Cliff Pile was one of his instructors at Johnstown Police Academy in the mid-1980s.

"We're very thankful for whoever sent him," Sheena Pile said.

Borough police Chief Randy Cox presented a commendation to Keafer at the prison on Thursday, and said the police department is in his debt.

Keafer's actions highlighted community support for law enforcement officers and helped to connect two entities that don't often get the chance.

"Sometimes, (police) don't give you the credit you deserve," Cox said. "I can say thank you, brother, on behalf of everyone in this room."

Borough Mayor Scott Walker said Keafer "saved the day."

"Most people run from danger," Walker said. "This gentleman walked into danger to see what he could do to help."

Pile said he thinks Keafer's response came from his character, not just his profession.

"He's just a good person," he said.

"He would have done it the same way whether he was in uniform or in the supermarket.

"My family, my wife and my children thank you," he told Keafer.

Pile was treated and released after the incident.

Police charged Robert Glenn Mitchell, 35, of Stoystown Road in Somerset, with stealing the vehicle and assaulting Pile.

Keafer said he was surprised at the community's reaction, and didn't know that hundreds had shared a letter from Cox to his supervisor, Superintendent Trevor Wingard, until Wingard pointed out the posts online.

Wingard said the incident brought people together in a positive way, beyond interactions between police and corrections officers that often center on handling or processing offenders.

"In this case law enforcement came together in the community," he said.

NOTE: The following article is about a dog that had been in the dog-training program at SCI Muncy.

West Chester Daily Local News (03/06/2016)

<http://www.dailylocal.com/general-news/20160306/from-prison-to-stage-carrie-is-a-star>

## **From prison to stage: Carrie is a star**

By Chris Barber

EAST NOTTINGHAM >> Carrie, a 2-year-old yellow lab, couldn't make it as a service dog because she was too sensitive to new people and situations.

But she gained recent fame and public affection after her performance as "Sandy" in the Oxford High School musical's "Annie," which drew large crowds this past weekend.

There she played her part and took bows at the conclusion to great applause from the audience.

In the musical, Sandy is the stray dog that Annie found and adopted after she first attempted to escape from the orphanage.

But this pup was not always adept at being in the spotlight.

Carrie was born into the Canine Partners for Life program as a potential service dog. The organization, based in Cochranville, has graduated more than 600 assistance dogs over the years. The dogs are trained to help their owners with tasks as amazing as alerting them to imminent seizures, opening and closing doors, shopping for groceries and doing the laundry.

In only eight to 12 short weeks after their births, the pups — including Carrie — are sent off to prisons in Pennsylvania and Maryland, where they are raised for a year by two-person-teams of inmates.

Carrie was placed in a women's prison upstate for her early training, but, although she was happy and comfortable there with her trainers, she got too nervous with changes in the environment. So she was released from the program and offered for adoption.

Luckily for Carrie, she was adopted by Susan and Jose Reyes of Nottingham, who have three other service dogs.

According to Susan, Jose works with some people who were building props for this year's musical and asked him if one of his dogs might be able to play Sandy.

"Our other dogs were too high anxiety," Susan said. So they "decided to give it a shot" with Carrie.

Apparently it was a good fit, because she did fine, and the only thing they had to be careful of was that the kids in the show (other than Natalie Giovan as Annie) didn't pat her, lest she get distracted from her role.

Carrie had learned other skills during her time at the prison, including sitting, coming, walking with humans and lying down. And she easily adapted to being called "Sandy" in the show.

"Maybe because the end of the name sounds the same — Carrie-Sandy," Susan Reyes said.

It was also striking how much Carrie seemed to enjoy it.

"When I said it was time to go to play practice, I think she was happy," Susan Reyes said. "I'm really excited that she did so well."

Canine Partners for Life Executive Director and Founder Darlene Sullivan said the organization's dogs learn basic skills at the seven Pennsylvania prisons and three Maryland prisons: socialization in public, how to walk with a leash, how to have their toenails snipped and obedience.

She said the prisoners love having the dogs. "They tell me, 'We have done harm to society, and this is an opportunity to give back,'" she said.

"They get very attached to the dogs, and we try to keep them informed about how the dogs are doing (after they leave). Sometimes we bring the dogs back to the prisoners for a visit. The tough part is saying good-bye. Sometimes we take a (trained) dog and give them a new little dog," Sullivan said.

Canine Partners for Life was founded by Sullivan in 1989. It was one of the first organizations to be accredited by Assistance Dogs International. The cost to raise each CPL dog is more than \$30,000, according to Sullivan.

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Week of Feb. 29...

### **Celebrating Black History Month**

On Feb. 12, Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal visited SCI Benner Township, where she served as a keynote speaker for the prison's Black History Month celebration.



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### **Muncy Achieves Accreditation**

SCI Muncy's accreditation audit was held November 3-5, 2015. The prison received 100 percent compliance with mandatory standards and a 99.8 percent with non-mandatory standards. Muncy's next re-accreditation will be in 2018.



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## Mercer's Advanced Carpentry Project

The carpentry vocational program at SCI Mercer, taught by Jason Dunkleberger, utilizes the NCCER Core and Carpentry L1 curriculum, teaching students about basic safety principles and hand/power tool operation, including roof and ceiling framing as well as stair layout and construction.



Students learn through classroom presentation and lecture sessions and then demonstrate their skills using current hands-on techniques.

The building that you see in the pictures is typical of the student's work, consisting of floor, wall, ceiling and roof framing. The stairway in the picture, however, is an advanced project, which was completed by an inmate. After receiving permission, the inmate completed all necessary drawings and mathematical calculations to construct the completed stairway, including stringer, complete balustrade, handrail extension, as well as labels indicating each particular part. The staircase stands as an instructional tool to help future students visualize a finished stairway and the many parts required to complete it.



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Week of February 22...

## **State Officials Push for Pre-K Education Funding**

*Agencies Also Unveil Child Resource Centers*



On Feb. 26, 2016, Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel joined state and local officials at the State Correctional Institution at Muncy to push lawmakers to take action on the state budget to ensure early childhood education opportunities for Pennsylvania's children. He was joined by Department of Human Services Secretary Ted Dallas, DHS Deputy Secretary Michelle Figlar and state Representative Patty Kim.

Secretary Wetzel has been an outspoken supporter of early childhood education because research shows these programs help get kids on the right path early and keep them out of the criminal justice system later in life.

"We must choose the path that avoids cuts to Pre-K programs and invests even further in proven early childhood education programs to keep kids out of the criminal justice system later in life," said Secretary Wetzel. "In Pennsylvania, there are approximately 80,000 children with at least one incarcerated parent, and these children, simply because they have at least one parent in prison, are more likely to end up in the criminal justice system at some point in their life.

“Currently, Pennsylvania spends more than \$2 billion annually—about seven percent of the state budget—to house about 50,000 inmates. Yet, only 30 percent of Pennsylvania children in some of our most needy families are enrolled in high-quality Pre-K programs. We must change this reality to truly stop the growth of our prison system.”

Studies show that children who participate in high-quality pre-kindergarten perform better in school, graduate at higher rates and earn more throughout their working lives. And in some cases, children without Pre-K were 70 percent more likely to be arrested for a violent crime by age 18.

A recent report by a non-partisan law enforcement-led group called ‘Fight Crime: Invest in Kids’ estimated that Governor Wolf’s proposed \$120 million state funding increase for early childhood education will also eventually lead to \$350 million in Corrections and other cost savings for the commonwealth every year.

Governor Wolf’s 2016-2017 budget includes a \$60 million (30.5 percent) increase in high-quality early childhood education. This funding increase builds upon the \$60 million investment in 2015-16 to enroll about 14,000 additional children in Pennsylvania Pre-K Counts and the Head Start Supplemental Assistance Program.

In 2003, Pennsylvania joined the ranks of states that offer full-day pre-kindergarten for 3- and 4-year-olds. Currently, only 30 percent of Pennsylvania children in families earning up to three times the federal poverty level – or \$72,750 for a family of four – are enrolled in high-quality Pre-K programs.

Studies show that children who participate in high-quality pre-kindergarten perform better in school, graduate at higher rates and earn more throughout their working lives compared to peers that do not have access to early learning programs. Additionally, children who were previously enrolled in Pre-K Counts outperform their economically disadvantaged peers in third-grade math and reading.

Also at today’s event, officials unveiled Child Resource Centers, which are an inter-agency partnership project with the Department of Education and the Department of Human Services.



“These Child Resource Centers serve as an excellent example of cross-agency collaboration and cooperation,” said DHS Secretary Ted Dallas. “But more importantly, they provide one area where caregivers can obtain a wealth of information about services their child may be eligible to receive. We are excited to work with our sister agencies on yet another way to educate our citizens about these vital programs.”

“This administration believes in breaking down barriers among agencies,” Secretary Wetzel said. “True partnerships like this are unprecedented, and we know we need to tap into that to make big changes happen.”

Wetzel noted that the resource centers are being placed in every DOC visiting area and further emphasized their importance, “By connecting families of an incarcerated persons with all the information they need from a single location, they’ll be more likely to contact those who can help. Keeping these kids on target, both at home and in school, sets them up for success and can stop them from eventually ending up with us.”

The Child Resource Centers include information about early intervention, Head Start programs, PA Family Centers, PA Pre-K Counts, child care programs and home visiting programs. All materials have clear and direct contact numbers, websites, age ranges and eligibility requirements.

The centers also include a Quick Reference Guide with additional information for raising healthy, well-adjusted children. Links and contact numbers connect caregivers with important topics like child milestones, immunizations, autism services, how to deal appropriately with behavioral issues and other educational areas of interest. It also lists support resources for caregivers themselves, like contact information for COMPASS, Office of Child Development and Early Learning, Department of Education and Department of Human Services, as well as hotlines for domestic violence, child safety, suicide prevention, and addiction treatment/recovery.

Materials from the Child Resource Centers are available in electronic form on the [DOC’s website](#). Select the “Initiatives” drop down menu, and then “Child Resource Center.”

For more extensive information on early intervention and early learning services and programs, visit the [Office of Child Development and Early Learning’s website](#).

Following the event held in SCI Muncy’s visiting room, a tour of Project IM-PACT (Inside Muncy – Parents And Children Together), a special visiting atmosphere for children as they visit their incarcerated loved one, was provided.





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## Community Corrections' Employees of the Quarter

Several Wernersville Community Corrections Center employees were named Employees of the Quarter recently for their exemplary actions.

On Dec. 24, 2015, two center residents were found unresponsive on the State Intermediate Punishment Unit. As a result, the center's on-duty monitors reacted quickly. They

cleared the area of other residents, provided doses of Naloxone to the victims and began CPR and AED procedures.

They had great communication with the management operations center, emergency personnel on scene and the Pennsylvania State Police.

Prior to this incident, Corrections Counselor Amanda Aungst worked tirelessly with both young men to address their addictions through on-site and off-site treatment services. In spite of these staff members' efforts, both residents succumbed to their heroin addiction on Christmas Eve.

Center Monitors Christopher Schmidt, Sonya Wentzell, Nathan Bauman and Michael Schrack worked as a team using their knowledge of policy and first responder training to meet this tragedy with professionalism and integrity.

Counselor Aungst never stopped trying to get these young men help and even reached out to their families offering condolences and support after this tragedy.

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## **Black History Month Celebration – “Hallowed Grounds”**

By Louise Mumenthaler

Black History Month was celebrated at SCI Graterford on February 24. An abundant covered dish luncheon, which was contributed to by many staff members, was enjoyed by all.



Staff members Clerical Supervisor Ann Smith, Corrections Counselor Liaison Carmen McCallister, Corrections Records Specialist Supervisor Kim Nixon, Corrections Counselor 2 Pamela Sellers, Corrections counselor 2 Ronessa Edwards, Corrections Unit Manager Juanita Wilcox and Corrections Records Specialist Bernard Williams joined together to bring this year's theme "Hallowed Grounds" to the institution.

Speaker Corrections Counselor 2 Ronessa Edwards spoke of various culturally rich places that honor the Black Experience, and Corrections Officer 1 Adrienne Sawyer reflected on her family and the respect and pride toward her parents.

The employees of Graterford were appreciative of the committee's efforts and also of the prison's executive staff for encouraging and supporting this and the many events held at SCI Graterford.

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## Veterans Outreach Event Held

On February 19, SCI Laurel Highlands hosted a Veterans Outreach Event for all incarcerated veterans to attend. The event was coordinated by Ryan Yoder, who is a corrections counselor as well as the institution's veteran services coordinator.

A panel of veteran service professionals accompanied Mr. Yoder in providing pertinent information and materials to the inmates. The panel consisted of Chris Reed (PA DOC), Otis Nash (PA DOC) and Tim Susengill (Veteran Service Officer for Vietnam Veterans of America.)

Mr. Yoder is currently coordinating plans for a future training day event for DOC staff to attend and benefit from related veteran information and resources.



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## Learning about a Transitional Housing Unit

WJAC-TV's Lindsay Ward and photographer Johnie Freiwald visited SCI Laurel Highlands earlier this week to do a segment on the prison's Transitional Housing Unit, a special unit that helps to prepare inmates for their return home.

Look for it to air during the 5 and 6 a.m. broadcasts on Feb. 26. Make sure to tune in!



Pictured are: Re-entry Parole Agent Timothy Ross; WJAC photographer Johnie Freiwald; Re-entry Specialist Counselor Rebecca Witt; WJAC News Anchor Lindsay Ward; and THU Unit Manager Susie Shoff.

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# Last Week: A Huge Week for Criminal Justice Reform in Pennsylvania

By: J.J. Abbott, Deputy Press Secretary

You may have read headlines like these this week:

- [Pennsylvania Gives Ex-Criminals Chance for Clean Slate](#)
- [Nonviolent misdemeanors may be sealed under new law](#)
- [Gov. Tom Wolf, state leaders launch new look at Pennsylvania's criminal justice policies](#)
- [State launches new effort to revamp justice system](#)

If you're wondering what changed this week, Governor Wolf took two big steps to change Pennsylvania's criminal justice system for the better – meaning lower costs for taxpayers, better outcomes for offenders, and less crime in the commonwealth.

Here's exactly what happened:

## Reducing Recidivism through Opportunity for Rehabilitated Pennsylvanians

On Tuesday, Governor Wolf joined sponsors, Sen. Greenleaf (R-Montgomery) and Rep. Harris (D-Philadelphia), and supporters of Senate Bill 166 [to sign the legislation into law](#). SB 166 makes it possible for low-level ex-offenders, who have served their time and not committed any crimes for 7 or 10 years, to ask the court to seal their criminal records, which will help them to get jobs and not return to prison.

### What Governor Wolf said:

“The United States is the world leader in incarceration and a criminal record often carries a lifetime of consequences that often lead to poverty or re-incarceration. This law is a commonsense, positive and unprecedented step to help Pennsylvanians with minor or dated criminal records have a fighting chance at opportunities for gainful employment.”

### Why this is important:

Too many first-time and low-level offenders are serving their time and unable to improve their lives after leaving the system because they have a criminal record. And, they are too likely then to return to the system. As Governor Wolf said, we must do more to break this cycle; it is robbing too many of their lives and it is costing taxpayers far too much

## Public Safety Initiative that will Tackle Drivers of Cost, Incarceration and Recidivism

On Thursday, Governor Wolf joined PCCD Chairman Josh Shapiro, Corrections Secretary John Wetzel, Parole Board Chairman William Green, and leaders from both political parties and all three branches of government to [launch an extensive review of the state's criminal justice system](#) as part of a new Justice Reinvestment Initiative designed to reduce ineffective corrections spending and invest those savings in proven public safety strategies.

### **What Governor Wolf said:**

“A broken criminal justice system is a failure to deliver on the promise of a fair and just society, and we must all work together to ensure Pennsylvania leads the nation in rehabilitation and not incarceration. While much progress has been made, there is more we can do and today is the beginning of an important process to look at how we can improve our criminal justice system from sentencing guidelines to our bail system. Working together, we can make many significant changes that will make our system fairer, improve public safety and save millions of dollars.”

### **Why this is important:**

Pennsylvania currently has the highest incarceration rate among all states in the Northeast, despite reducing its prison population in recent years. Between 2004 and 2014, corrections expenditures increased by 40 percent, from \$1.5 billion to \$2.2 billion. Over the same period, the state’s incarceration rate increased by 20 percent. Conversely, New York and New Jersey saw their incarceration rates drop by 20 percent and 21 percent, respectively.

Here’s the Governor’s Press Release on this issue:

## **Pennsylvania Leaders Launch Public Safety Initiative to Tackle Drivers of Cost, Incarceration, and Recidivism**

Harrisburg, PA (Feb. 18) -- Governor Tom Wolf and leaders from both political parties and all three branches of government today launched an extensive review of the state’s criminal justice system as part of a new Justice Reinvestment Initiative designed to reduce ineffective corrections spending and invest those savings in proven public safety strategies.

“A broken criminal justice system is a failure to deliver on the promise of a fair and just society, and we must all work together to ensure Pennsylvania leads the nation in rehabilitation and not incarceration,” Governor Wolf said. “While much progress has been made, there is more we can do and today is the beginning of an important process to look at how we can improve our criminal justice system from sentencing guidelines to our bail system. Working together, we can make many significant changes that will make our system fairer, improve public safety and save millions of dollars.”

Pennsylvania currently has the highest incarceration rate among all states in the Northeast, despite reducing its prison population in recent years. The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center, a nonprofit, nonpartisan organization assisting the state in its justice reinvestment approach, today released an overview of the state’s criminal justice system. Preliminary findings include:

- Pennsylvania is one of only four states in the nation where corrections spending exceeds expenditures on higher education;
- Between 2004 and 2014, corrections expenditures increased by 40 percent, from \$1.5 billion to \$2.2 billion.

- Over the same period, the state's incarceration rate increased by 20 percent. Conversely, New York and New Jersey saw their incarceration rates drop by 20 percent and 21 percent, respectively.
- The Department of Corrections has requested \$2.3 billion in state funds for the 2015–2016 budget, a 7-percent increase over the prior year.

“When legislators from both sides of the aisle work together to tackle these tough issues, we create genuine results,” House Speaker Mike Turzai said. “We proved that with a justice reinvestment approach we took in 2012. That bipartisan spirit must be invoked again in order to build on the positive outcomes that we are seeing to create a safer and more cost effective system.”

Indeed, the justice reinvestment approach has already proven to be effective in Pennsylvania. After the state's prison population increased by 28 percent (from 40,090 to 51,184 people) between 2002 and 2012, a Justice Reinvestment Initiative conducted by the state in 2012 helped spur a decline in the population to 49,914 people by the end of 2015. These changes generated almost \$13 million in savings, close to \$4 million of which was reinvested in areas to enhance public safety, such as victims' services, effective policing procedures, strengthening probation, and local reentry strategies.

“Pennsylvania has certainly made significant headway over the last few years with strong improvements to our criminal justice system,” Senate President Pro Tempore Joe Scarnati said. “It is vital that we continue to work towards increasing efficiencies and reducing the costs of our corrections system. We need to reduce recidivism to benefit our communities and help ensure that taxpayer dollars that are being sent to Harrisburg are being used productively.”

Despite the impacts from the 2012 reforms, other drivers of incarceration and costs at the state and local levels remain unaddressed. Therefore, the latest justice reinvestment effort will focus on the front end of the system, including sentencing and pretrial policies.

“Our prisons were taking on increases of 1,500 inmates each year. In turn, our taxpayers were taking on enormous costs. The 2012 corrections and parole reforms halted a lot of that,” said John Wetzel, secretary of Pennsylvania's Department of Corrections and board member of the CSG Justice Center. “But Pennsylvanians aren't satisfied with simply treading water. They are counting on this process to curb costs while recalibrating our system so that resources are directed at strategies that can lower crime and recidivism rates.”

To support the state's new initiative, Gov. Wolf today also established a bipartisan working group of 35 representatives from the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of state and local government, as well as other criminal justice stakeholders.

“I am honored to lead this bipartisan panel of experts as we work together to reform our criminal justice system in ways that make our communities safer, enrich the lives of those involved in the system and protect the interests of taxpayers,” said Josh Shapiro, chairman of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and chair of the working group. “Working together we will develop a comprehensive policy package that will strengthen our Commonwealth.”

Throughout the year, the working group will guide the CSG Justice Center's analysis of state and local criminal justice system data in order to develop policy options for introduction in the General Assembly during the 2017 legislative session.

Chief Justice Thomas G. Saylor, who has joined the Governor and Legislative Leaders in supporting the process, noted: "Justice reinvestment provides a clear opportunity to do a thoughtful analysis of our criminal justice challenges. Judges, who are carrying out innovative practices in courtrooms across the commonwealth, have valuable perspectives that will help the working group identify practical policy alternatives."

The new initiative also received bi-partisan and bi-cameral support from all four chairs of the General Assembly's Judiciary Committees.

"The first wave of criminal justice reforms have finally started to drive down Pennsylvania's inmate population and costs and have provided a means of investing in successful strategies to further drive down incarceration; however, this was just the beginning," said Sen. Stewart Greenleaf. "We have broken the barriers to rethinking corrections policies on all fronts from rehabilitating non-violent drug offenders, to addressing mandatory minimum sentences, and expunging minor criminal records. I look forward to working with our partners on this latest justice reinvestment initiative to find more reforms and strategies to further reduce Pennsylvania's inmate population and corrections spending."

"Working together to find effective and efficient ways to improve public safety is a fundamental responsibility of state government," Rep. Ron Marsico said.

"JRI has helped us reduce our prison population and costs," Sen. Daylin Leach said. "It should be refined and continued, but it's also time to consider whether spending tax dollars on lengthy prison sentences for nonviolent offenders make us any safer."

"In this first year serving as Judiciary Chairman, I have already seen the stark differences in outcomes across populations, counties, and offenses.," Rep. Joseph Petrarca. "It is clear that we need to do more to control costs, protect the public, and improve outcomes for families"

The CSG Justice Center has helped 24 other states—including West Virginia, North Carolina, and Ohio—apply the justice reinvestment approach. The initiative is made possible through funding from The Pew Charitable Trusts and the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance.

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## Employees Recognized

SCI Laurel Highlands Superintendent Jamey Luther recently recognized Michelle Rice and Sherman England for their commitment to the prison and for their heroic efforts in the community.

During the major snowstorm on January 23rd, Rice and England were preparing their vehicle to report to work when a neighbor fell gravely ill. Without hesitation, the two attempted to provide lifesaving measures to the neighbor until EMS arrived. These two valued staff reported to work as usual despite the harrowing situation they had just experienced.



Front row L to R: DSFM Leo Glass, CHCA Annette Kowalewski, Michelle Rice CNA, C.O. Sherman England, Supt. Jamey Luther. Back row L to R: Major Tom Kinley, A/DSCS Houser, Captain Ed Evans.

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## Always in Training

SCI Laurel Highlands Superintendent Jamey Luther took home for the weekend one of the prison's Canine Partners for Life puppies. As you can see, the training and socialization continued with a visit to a grocery store.



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## The Push for Pre-K Funding Continued

On Feb. 19, DOC Secretary John Wetzel took his message of stressing the importance of funding pre-k services to SCI Chester.



State Representative Margo Davidson, left, spoke about the need for pre-k funding; DOC Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal (right) talked about how the DOC works to keep inmates connected with their families.

On Feb. 26, the message will be delivered at SCI Muncy, where he will be joined by Department of Human Services Secretary Ted Dallas and Deputy Secretary Michelle Figlar, along with several representatives. Stay tuned for coverage of this upcoming event.

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Week of February 15...

## **Wetzel's Op-Ed in "The Hill"**

<http://thehill.com/blogs/congress-blog/judicial/268790-we-have-a-responsibility-to-offer-a-second-chance>

We have a responsibility to offer a second chance

By John Wetzel

Corrections reform needs to begin by acknowledging that an individual's humanity is not diminished by incarceration.

As we talk about prison population reduction and recidivism reduction, we need to talk in terms of people - an investment in the people in our custody, in our corrections systems and in our communities.

It comes down to giving people, giving individuals, giving humans a second chance. If I was judged by my worst day, I wouldn't be sitting here. Fortunately, people judge me holistically. When I take a misstep, or our system has a misstep, I am judged through the filter of all my accomplishments.

We need to think about that when we think about individuals who commit crimes.

Yes, there needs to be accountability. We need to say to individuals who commit crimes, 'Your actions have had a negative impact on the community – but now, we're going to help you.'

We're going to put you on a path, not where you don't commit another crime, because that's a pretty low bar, we're going to put you on a path to be a successful, fully restored citizen. Wouldn't that be great?

We need to take ownership of the outcomes of individuals in our system.

And it really starts with the acknowledgement of the individual, regardless of what they did. Because if we don't value individuals, we can treat them any way we want.

We can talk about corrections, conditions of confinement, programming, what occurs day-to-day, how we treat them, do we give them jobs - all that says more about us than the individuals who commit the crime.

Because holding them accountable, creating an environment where they can be restored and valuing them, is exactly what our system should look like.

In the criminal justice system, when someone commits a crime, the response should be equal to the proportion of the action itself. Then we need to put individuals on a path so when they come out the back end of the system, they are less likely to commit a crime than when they came in the front end of the system.

Much like our expectations going to a hospital. When you're sick, you expect to come out feeling better than when you went in. Why are we dissimilar?

In the criminal justice system, we have as much of a stake as those folks going to the hospital.

We have an opportunity when somebody comes to us, to help that individual become a better person.

Today, the reality is we have 2.3 million individuals who are in our care.

Ninety percent of them will come out some day.

How do we want them to come out? What can we do?

We talk about reentry. When we open the back door, they leave. They've reentered. We haven't met our goal to restore them; they just reentered.

We need to not just give them a place to live, but teach them how to live.

We need to not just get them a job, but teach them the value of employment, of providing for themselves and providing for their families.

This is our responsibility.

Prison populations are down in nearly 30 state corrections systems, along with the federal prison system. More than that, crime continues to go down. The Second Chance Act, Justice Reinvestment Initiative and other investments are examples of government working together at its best.

Our consistent goal needs to be restoring individuals, giving people a second chance. We're reducing population, reducing crime and improving outcomes.

But the one thing we can't do is be satisfied. We're not there yet.

We have the opportunity to be better.

We need to create an environment where these individuals can succeed. As evidenced by events like the one this morning on re-entry sponsored by the bipartisan U.S. Justice Action Network and Coalition for Public Safety, America has a real opportunity to significantly change how we respond to crime.

When we talk about second chances, I challenge you to think about another group of people: the children and families of incarcerated individuals.

Because by giving incarcerated individuals a second chance, you're giving another group of individuals a first chance.

Take a second chance and turn it into first chance for kids who deserve it; a first chance for families; a first chance for communities.

The Second Chance Act is a first chance opportunity.

*Wetzel is secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections.*

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## **"Sleep Out" Benefits Veterans**

On Feb. 13, approximately 20 veterans, including 12 DOC employees, spent 24 hours straight outside of the Indiana, Pa., Wal-Mart in sub-zero wind chill weather. The purpose was to raise awareness of local homeless and in-need veterans and to raise funds to support and end homelessness of veterans. The event was coordinated by SCI Pine Grove's counselor and veteran coordinator Mike Weaver, who is very active in Team Red White Blue. Because of their efforts, the group raised \$3,200.



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## **EDUCATE instead of INCARCERATE**

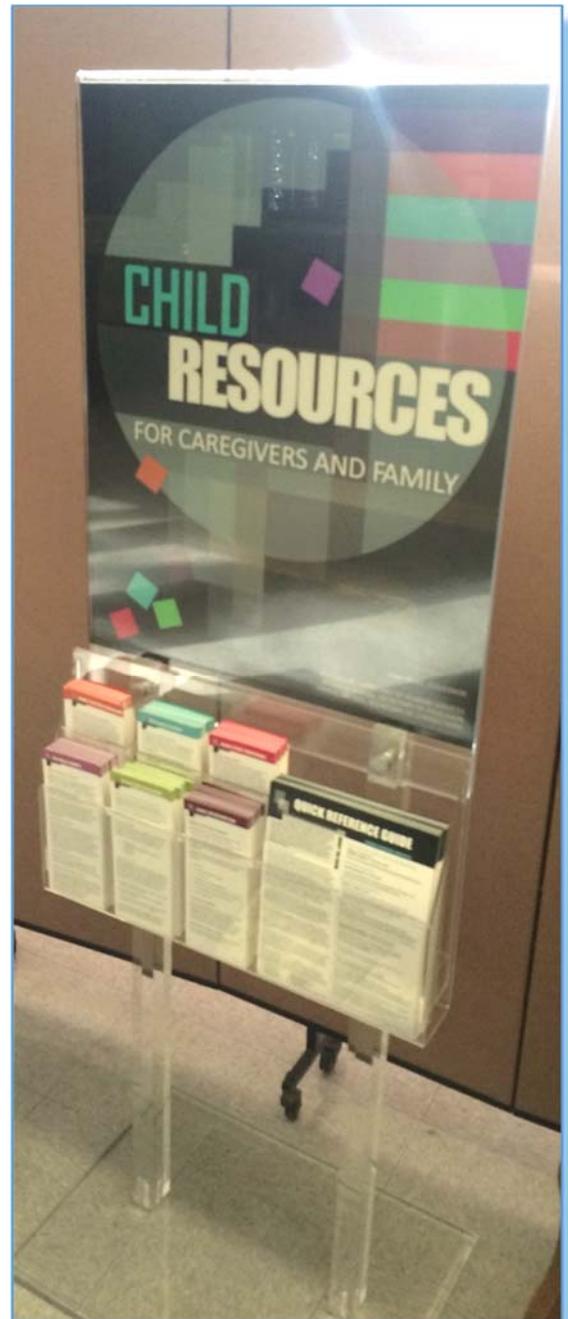
On Feb. 11, at the Riverside Community Corrections Center (CCC), and with assistance from Riverside CCC and SCI Pittsburgh employees, the DOC held a media event where Secretary John Wetzel and Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal discussed the importance of pre-k education.

In addition, the DOC also unveiled Child Resource Centers (a stand full of helpful documents) which will be placed in every state facility visiting area. The centers are intended to be a one-stop-shop where caregivers of children can learn about the variety of programs available and how to enroll.

Here are some links to articles about this event:

Pittsburgh Tribune-Review (02/11/2016)  
<http://blog.triblive.com/orp/2016/02/10/john-wetzel-prek-early-childhood-education/>  
Pennsylvania prison chief promoting early childhood education  
BY DONALD GILLILAND

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (02/12/2016)  
<http://www.post-gazette.com/local/city/2016/02/11/Corrections-chief-wants-prisons-to-include-a-youth-educational-program/stories/201602110175>  
Corrections chief wants prisons to include a youth educational program  
By Rich Lord



DOC officials have at least two more similar events planned. One for SCI Chester on Feb. 19 and one for SCI Muncy on Feb. 26.



In this picture, Deborah Parsons, a center monitor at Riverside CCC, is shown with the child play area she created for the event, as Riverside CCC's dayroom did not have a play area. We thank Deborah and everyone from SCI Pittsburgh and Riverside CCC for helping to make the event such a success!

### What Secretary Wetzel Said at the Event

He talked about his participation recently in a Washington Post live event about offender reentry and about how the PA DOC works to help offenders with a successful reentry.

[https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/postlive/what-successful-reentry-looks-like/2016/02/10/f7bcf442-d03e-11e5-90d3-34c2c42653ac\\_video.html](https://www.washingtonpost.com/video/postlive/what-successful-reentry-looks-like/2016/02/10/f7bcf442-d03e-11e5-90d3-34c2c42653ac_video.html)

And he talked about how the best reentry is no entry.

"We have an opportunity to do right by kids before they even get in this system," Wetzel said.

He talked about Gov. Tom Wolf's proposal for high-quality pre-k programs, which means 14,000 more kids in quality pre-k programs.

"Kids are not a partisan issue," Wetzel continued. "When you get kids engaged in education early, we keep kids engaged and creating tomorrow's leaders, tomorrow's lawyers and doctors."

Hear more of his speech at the DOC's Facebook page at "Pennsylvania Department of Corrections" where videos from the event are posted.

## About the Child Resource Centers

"There are approximately 80,000 children of incarcerated offenders in Pennsylvania," Secretary Wetzel said. "Many of these children are cared for by individuals other than their actual parents, and we want to make sure that their caregivers are aware of services and that the information can be easily accessible at one place."

Wetzel noted that often children of incarcerated parents are more likely to end up in the criminal justice system at some point during their lives simply because one of their parents is in prison.

Most of these children face serious trauma as a result, from experiencing the separation from and witnessing the arrest of a parent during the most formative years of their lives – early childhood.

Many also live in poverty and have fewer educational opportunities than other children. They might have developmental and learning delays and challenging behaviors that require special attention, such as early intervention and early learning services and programs.

And when a parent is incarcerated, grandparents or other family members usually become caregivers of the child left behind. They might not know which services are available, how to access them or if they could apply to the child suddenly in their care.

Now they will.

This effort is in partnership with the Department of Education and the Department of Human Services, and serves as an excellent example of cross-agency collaboration and cooperation.

"This administration believes in breaking down barriers among agencies," Secretary Wetzel said. "True partnerships like this are unprecedented, and we know we need to tap into that to make big changes happen."

In support of Governor Wolf's Expanded Pre-K initiatives to make pre-kindergarten instruction available to all children and to expand their access to early childhood educational opportunities, Child Resource Center handouts explain these and other available services and programs.

"Not only has early childhood education been shown to improve academic and employment outcomes, but it can spark an interest in lifelong learning at an early age," said Department of Education Secretary Pedro Rivera.

Wetzel further emphasized its importance, "By connecting families of an incarcerated persons with all the information they need from a single location, they'll be more likely to contact those who can help. Keeping these kids on target, both at home and in school, sets them up for success and can stop them from eventually ending up with us."

The Child Resource Centers will include information about early intervention, Head Start programs, PA Family Centers, PA Pre-K Counts, child care programs and home visiting programs. All materials have clear and direct contact numbers, websites, age ranges and eligibility requirements.

The centers also include a Quick Reference Guide with additional information for raising healthy, well-adjusted children. Links and contact numbers connect caregivers with important topics like child milestones, immunizations, autism services, how to deal appropriately with behavioral issues and other educational areas of interest. It also lists support resources for caregivers themselves, like contact information for COMPASS, Office of Child Development and Early Learning, Department of Education and Department of Human Services, as well as hotlines for domestic violence, child safety, suicide prevention and addiction treatment/recovery.

Materials from the Child Resource Centers are available in electronic form on the DOC's website at [www.cor.pa.gov](http://www.cor.pa.gov). Select the "Initiatives" drop down menu, and then "Child Resource Center."

For more extensive information on early intervention and early learning services and programs, visit the Office of Child Development and Early Learning's website at <http://www.dhs.state.pa.us/dhsorganization/officeofchilddevelopmentandearlylearning/>.

Other state agencies with questions about the resource centers should contact DOC Executive Research Writer Stacy A. Zicarelli at (717) 728-4121.

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## Correctional Industries Sanctuary Project

Pennsylvania Correctional Industries' (PCI) wood furniture factory at SCI Rockview recently designed and installed pews in the church at Ss. Peter and Paul Roman Catholic Church in Philipsburg, Pa. This was a big job that required a lot of coordination between the shop staff and the church, and the completed pews are just beautiful. By providing brass plates to the customer, PCI enabled the church to pay for the cost of the pews by making them available for "adoption" by parishioners.



Fr. John Gibbons, pastor/administrator for the church, helped make this possible as he provides Catholic services for SCIs Rockview and Benner Township and was familiar with the work done at the factory. The pews feature custom hymnal racks and upholstered kneelers, and the feedback from the church members has been outstanding.

"From the very beginning of the whole project one of the things I was really impressed with was PCI's timely response and the quick turn-around from the time we got the quote to the final installation and their ability to meet the critical deadline of having the pews installed by Christmas," Fr. John said. "I can't thank PCI Director Tony Miller and everyone at SCI Rockview enough for all the great work they did."

PCI appreciates the opportunity the project at Ss. Peter and Paul gave everyone at Correctional Industries. This project allowed inmate workers to hone their skillset with the type of work that will allow them to pursue successful reentry when they return home from prison.

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Week of Feb. 8...

## SCI Albion's Commitment to Helping Our Veterans

Around Christmas the SCI Albion Empowerment Committee led a donation campaign and raised more than \$750 for the Pennsylvania Soldiers' and Sailor's Home in Erie. Along with the monetary donations, staff members donated four boxes of books, toiletries, clothing and other miscellaneous items.



Then, on February 7<sup>th</sup>, the SCI Albion Empowerment Committee and Albion staff volunteered to sponsor Bingo at the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home. Employees donated all of the prizes for the residents. Along with Bingo, the staff collected enough money to donate a 55-inch flat screen television, four electric razors and another two totes full of books. The television will replace the 32-

inch television they currently use for their movie nights. The electric razors will be used for the men who cannot shave themselves, and the books will go into their library. Thank you to the Albion staff for being so generous and donating your time and/or money to help our veterans.

The Albion Empowerment Committee and Albion employees are committed to helping those in need, especially our veterans and the residents of the Soldiers' and Sailors' Home.

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## Santor-Barvitski Named Coal Township's EOQ

SCI Coal Township Food Service Instructor (FSI) Patti Santor-Barvitski was recognized as Employee of the Quarter for the Fourth Quarter of 2015. Patti, who was nominated by her supervisors, is a 14-year SCICT employee who does an excellent job as an FSI. Patti always goes above and beyond in her performance of



duties. She is consistent and treats both staff and inmates with fairness.

Over the years Patti has been tasked on many occasions to step out of her regular food service day to work and prepare for special functions. She takes ownership and makes sure it is a success and impresses all participants. This is truly evident as Patti volunteered and took

charge of two large events this past year, supervised the inmate details, ensured all food was prepared to perfection and the atmosphere was perfect, right down to the creative garnishes kicking it up to the next level. Congratulations, Patti!

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Week of Feb. 1...

## **Dallas Donated Poinsettias to Local Nursing Homes**

In December, and with the assistance of SCI Dallas Classification and Program Manager Michael Goyne, Activities Specialists Joseph Konigus and Frank Wojtash, Principal Karen Rider, Deputy Superintendent Norm Demming and Print Shop Foreman Gordon Demming and the greenhouse class, 230 poinsettias were donated to three different local nursing homes.

The inmate's Latin American Cultural Association paid \$500 dollars for the poinsettias and ribbon, the print shop printed the cards, the greenhouse class decorated the poinsettias with the card and ribbon and cared for the poinsettias prior to the delivery and the activities staff assisted in delivering the poinsettias to the three local nursing homes.

Birchwood Nursing, Nanticoke home received 121 poinsettias; N. Penn Manor, Wilkes-Barre received 67 poinsettias; and Plymouth Manor, Plymouth received 37 poinsettias.

The nursing homes' residents were very happy to receive the poinsettias for their holiday. Joseph Konigus, Frank Wojtash and April Gromel delivered these beautiful plants on December 14th.



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## **Wearing Red and Raising Funds**

In order to raise awareness about women and heart disease, SCI Fayette's Acting Superintendent Jay Lane encouraged employees to wear red to help celebrate "National Wear Red Day."

To show further support for the American Heart Association during February, SCI Fayette employees will be participating in a chili cook-off and a fundraising where hoagies, stromboli, pepperoni rolls and, of course, salads will be sold. Ribbons and epaulettes also will be available for a \$2 contribution.

All proceeds will go to the American Heart Association.



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## Parenting Program Donations

In January, Riverside Community Corrections Center (CCC) residents and employees collected donations for The NorthShore Community Alliance's Parenting Program.

The NorthShore Community Alliance has helped consumers overcome poverty, discrimination and isolation over the years. Their Parenting Program focuses on assisting mothers and mothers to be, who are in need of diapers, baby food and cleaning supplies.

This is the second year in a row that Riverside CCC has donated to The NorthShore Community Alliance. We look forward to future endeavors and a continued partnership with an organization that exemplifies Parenting and Responsibility for the residents of Riverside CCC.



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## Collecting for the Animals



Residents and employees of the Scranton CCC collected pet food and supplies during January to benefit local animal shelters.

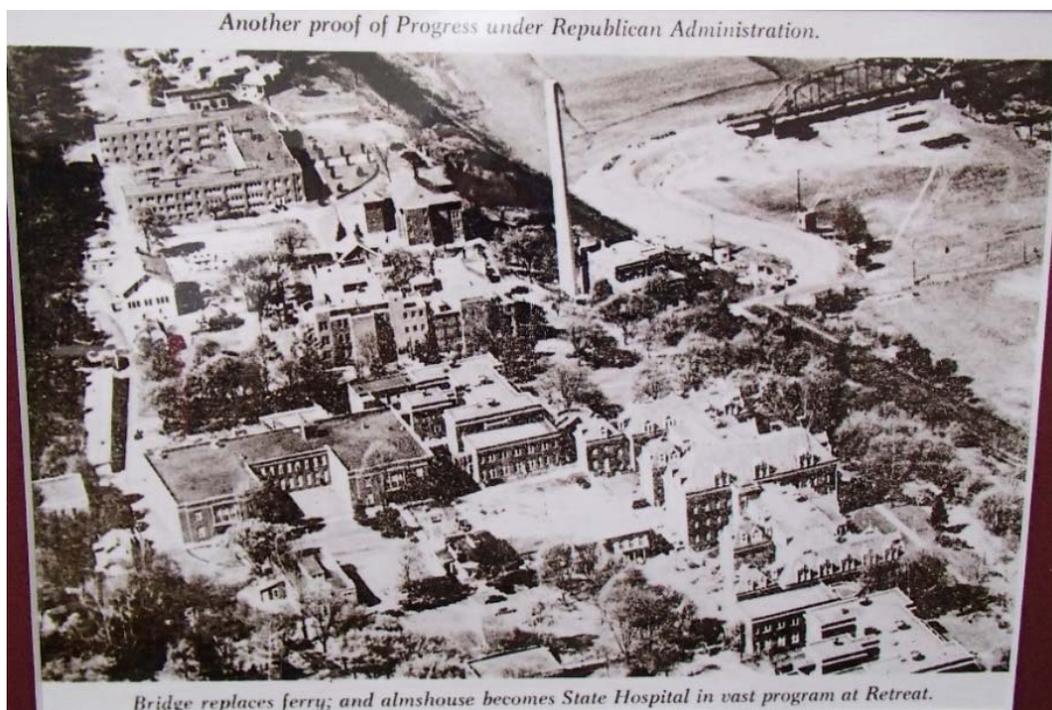
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## SCI Retreat Welcomes North Carolina Historian

SCI Retreat was recently visited by Anne Parsons, a historian from the University of North Carolina in Greensboro. The focus of her visit was to gain an understanding of Retreat when it was established as a state mental hospital in 1900. She also wanted to learn of its transformation to a state correctional institution in 1988. However, before being declared a mental hospital, Retreat was originally established as an "Almshouse" (poorhouse) in 1878.

With permission from Superintendent Vincent Mooney, Ms. Parsons spent the day at SCI Retreat on January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2016. She spent time reading some historical documents, newspaper articles and viewing old pictures. She also interviewed a staff member who has ties to the mental hospital as a young boy. Ms. Parsons was escorted about the grounds to points of interests which included touring some of the original buildings that remain from 1900. Her day ended with her viewing the old Mountainside Cemetery, where there are more than 300 individuals from Retreat's Almshouse and the mental hospital are laid to rest.

Ms. Parsons reviewed some documents and newspaper clippings that indicated in 1878 Retreat opened as an Almshouse. Only one building was erected for single women. Six years after, another building was constructed for males. On the grounds of Retreat, there was significant farmland where the farming was done by the males. Enough food was farmed to maintain the Almshouse population. It wasn't until the end of the 1800's that the number of people in mental hospitals increased drastically, which led to the first transformation - Retreat Mental Hospital.



In 1900, Retreat opened its doors as a mental hospital. Some of its first patients were transferred from Danville State Hospital because of the overcrowding at that facility. From early pictures, the grounds of Retreat looked like a little town. The

housing structures were built “cottage-like” to provide a more relaxed atmosphere for the patients. A tunnel system connected all of the buildings allowing patients and maintenance crews to travel throughout the facility in inclement weather. Retreat also had an auditorium, vocational training classes, a greenhouse and a cafeteria. Most patients were left to walk about the grounds unescorted. From the time Retreat opened in 1878 until 1951, a wooden ferry was the only way to cross the Susquehanna River. At times that was difficult due to the water levels, the current and also the weather. Because transportation to Retreat was often difficult, employees lived in houses that were built on the grounds. Now, a sound steel bridge allows people to travel to and from with ease.

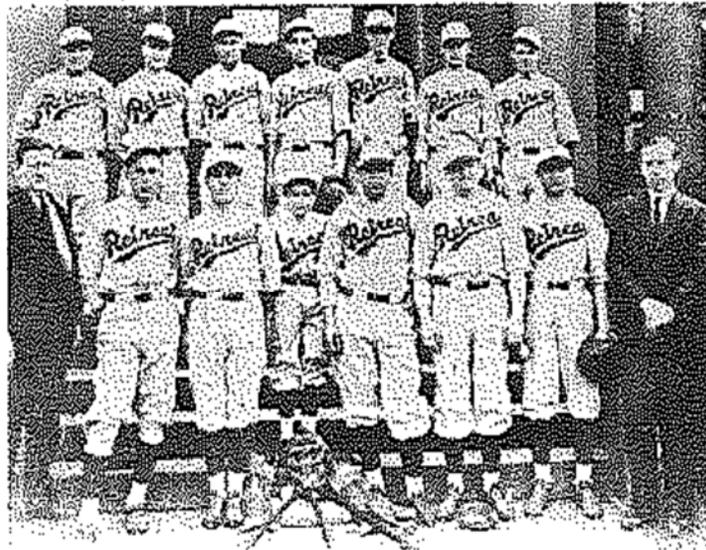


The Wood Ferry transporting across the Susquehanna River



Anne Parsons and Dave Piestrak

Ms. Parsons interviewed staff member, Dave Piestrak, SCI Retreat’s labor foreman, whose father worked at Retreat State Mental Hospital. Dave, his parents and his sister lived on the grounds in the employee housing. He told Ms. Parsons his memory is vague because he was only about six or seven years old. He recalls walking the grounds among the patients but not really knowing who they were. He did remember that Retreat had a nice baseball field, (Retreat even had their own baseball team). Whatever activities were planned on the grounds, both patients and employees could participate.



Male employees and boys who lived at the hospital formed this baseball team in 1938. They enjoyed competition from other teams in the Valley.

Retreat's Baseball Team 1938

Ms. Parsons was escorted to some of the original buildings such as: the Administration Building, Gymnasium/School Building, Carpentry Shop, Nurses Quarters and the Superintendent's Home.

Her tour ended with visiting the Mountainside Cemetery. The cemetery is located at the rest area on route 11. More than 300 people are buried in this area. The buried individuals include residents from the Almshouse and mental hospital whose family did not have money to bury them in their own family cemetery or the deceased did not have any family at all.



Anne Parson visits the Mountainside Cemetery with CIM, Lt. William Robbins

According to Ms. Parsons, the idea to close state mental hospitals was brought on by a dwindling in the population. This is because of the idea that patients could receive better care in private facilities or in the community rather than in state-run hospitals. Also, the push to close Retreat was a product of budget cutbacks in the Department of Public Welfare. In order to comply with Medicaid standards, the facility needed an update which would have cost millions of dollars; but, because of the dwindling population, it was not feasible. Employees have fought since the late 1970's to keep Retreat State Mental Hospital open. Representatives George C. Hasay, Frank J. O'Connell, Jr. and Fred J. Shupnik introduced a resolution to stay open in June 1977. However, in 1981, Retreat closed its doors as a state mental hospital and transferred its remaining patients to Nanticoke State Hospital.

Ms. Parsons' research indicated that while the population of state mental hospitals were declining, prison populations were rising due to mandatory minimum sentencing legislation and an increased penalty for drug crimes. In July 1981, Governor Dick Thornburgh signed an executive order transferring Retreat State Mental Hospital to a correctional facility. The facility was to open under the Bureau of Correction. Retreat was to house inmates from 15 different counties; however that plan never materialized; therefore, the Bureau kept the property and turned it into a State Correctional Institution.

The renovation cost \$22 million. The majority of the original buildings were demolished, with the remaining buildings having been renovated. Four inmate housing units were added to the compound. In February 1987, administrative staff reported to retreat and worked out of the garage as construction was still going on. The project was completed in the latter part of 1987. In the beginning of November 1987, staff reported to their assigned areas; and near the end of November 1987, SCI Retreat received its first 40 inmates to open the facility. SCI Retreat was officially opened and dedicated on January 6, 1988, with Dennis R. Erhard serving at the prison's first superintendent.

### **The Current SCI Retreat – An Aerial View**



Ms. Parsons is writing a book on her research of state mental hospitals that transformed into state correctional facilities in Pennsylvania. Her book will be completed in April 2017, with Retreat being in Chapter 7.

If anyone has any information they are willing to share with Ms. Parsons, she would greatly appreciate being contacted at: [aeparson@yncg.edu](mailto:aeparson@yncg.edu).

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## Gretchen Visits Local High School

What is so newsworthy about Gretchen visiting a local school? Well, Gretchen is one of SCI Laurel Highlands' puppies that is presently being trained to be a service dog.

Officials from Conemaugh Township High School asked the prison to bring a puppy to the school. They thought it would be a good idea because they have several special needs children who will require a service dog in the future.

Therapeutic Recreation Services Worker Bill Ladika took Gretchen to the school on January 29, where she was so well received by the children that the teacher is now asking Bill to return every month!



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Week of Jan. 25...

## Mooney Named SCI Retreat Superintendent

Vincent Mooney, a 31-year veteran of the Department of Corrections, was named recently, by Corrections Secretary John Wetzel, as superintendent of the State Correctional Institution at Retreat. He replaces Theresa DelBalso, who has been appointed superintendent of SCI Mahanoy.



"Vince has held a variety of progressively-advanced positions within our agency, and he constantly delivers no matter what is requested of him," Corrections Secretary Wetzel said. "For the past year, he has worked with the local county prison to accommodate its needs and allow it to operate from inside the state prison at Coal Township. This was no small feat, but Vince rallied his staff and everyone worked together to develop a great relationship with the county which continues today."

Mooney began his corrections career as a corrections officer at SCI Dallas in 1985. While at that facility, he earned the rank of sergeant in 1990. He moved to SCI Mahanoy when he was promoted to lieutenant in 1993.

In 1998, Mooney became an inspection lieutenant at the DOC's Central Office. He returned to SCI Mahanoy as a captain in 2000 and returned to SCI Dallas as major of the guard in 2005. Two years later he was promoted to deputy superintendent for facility management at SCI Coal Township, and in the same year he returned to SCI Dallas as deputy superintendent of facility management.

During his tenure at SCI Dallas, Mooney served as interim warden at Lackawanna County Jail. Upon his return to SCI Dallas, he was named deputy superintendent for centralized services. He was named superintendent of SCI Coal Township in 2013. This most recent appointment was effective January 19, 2016.

Mooney is a veteran of the United States Army.

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## DelBalso Named SCI Mahanoy Superintendent

Theresa DelBalso, a 22-year veteran of the Department of Corrections, was named recently, by Corrections Secretary John Wetzel, as superintendent of the State Correctional Institution at Mahanoy. She replaces Jack Kerestes, who retired after several decades of service to the DOC.



"Theresa is not only committed to the DOC, but she is committed to her country as evidence through her ascent into leadership roles over the years. And throughout Theresa's DOC career, she has been involved in numerous special committees. She is a proponent for education, programming and treatment and job training to enhance an offender's opportunity for successful re-entry into the community,"

Corrections Secretary John Wetzel said. "I am confident that Theresa will continue on this path leading the change in offenders' criminal behaviors so they are successful when they return to society following incarceration."

DelBalso began her corrections career in 1994 as a corrections counselor at SCI Mahanoy. While at Mahanoy, she was promoted to corrections counselor 2 in 1995, and in 2000 promoted to unit manager. In 2007, she transferred to SCI Dallas to accept the position of major of unit management. In June 2010, she was promoted to deputy superintendent of centralized services at SCI Mahanoy. DelBalso transitioned to SCI Retreat in August of that year to serve in the same capacity. She was appointed superintendent in 2013.

In addition to her DOC duties, DelBalso is currently a Lieutenant Colonel in her 25th year in the Army Reserves. As a military police officer, she served two combat tours in Iraq and various short tours on overseas and state-side assignments. She is currently the Commander of the 424th Military Police Detachment in Ashley, Pa.

Prior to starting her DOC career, DelBalso was employed as a police officer for over seven years and was an instructor in the Municipal Police Officers Education and Training Commission Act 120 Program.

DelBalso is a 1981 graduate of the former Hazleton High School and received a Bachelor of Science degree in Administration of Justice from Penn State University in 1985. In 2001, she earned a Master of Science degree in Criminal Justice from St. Joseph's University. She is a member of several DOC and military affiliated organizations.

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## DOC PROUD!



During the recent, historic snow storm, PEMA called upon SCIs Greene, Fayette and Pittsburgh to assist in the rescue of the stranded motorists on the Turnpike. Also, SCI Graterford resources were needed to send plow equipment to a local community. Thanks to everyone who assisted - from the staff at the prisons who coordinated efforts, the bus drivers, employees manning the EOC at PEMA, etc. During emergencies, we always come together and show what true teamwork is. Congratulations and thank you!

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## Helping With Snow Removal

Smithfield Township reached out to SCI Huntingdon asking for help with snow removal following the recent major snow storm, Jonas.

SCI Huntingdon Labor Foreman Robert Simpson had his inmate work crew out on Tuesday, January 26, helping to clear snow on the public sidewalks along Pennsylvania Avenue. They also will be working their way through Smithfield Township to help with snow removal on the roads.

One of the inmates remarked that it was nice to be helping the community and he appreciated the chance to be outside working.

Doyland Gladfelter, Smithfield Township, said that the township was really glad for the assistance.



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## Puppies have Arrived!

Before the historic snow storm arrived in Pennsylvania, puppies arrived at SCI Laurel Highlands on January 21, 2016, from SCI Somerset! SCI Somerset began the training for the puppies on December 21, 2016, until SCI Laurel Highlands completed the training. Merry, Ditto, Chancey, and Gretchen are now living with their handlers on HB unit.

SCI Laurel Highlands, like several other state prisons, is partnering with Canine Partners for Life (CPL). CPL is a non-profit organization dedicated to training service dogs, home companion dogs, and residential companion dogs to assist individuals who have a wide range of physical and cognitive disabilities. The mission of Canine Partners for Life is to increase the independence and quality of life of individuals with physical, developmental, and cognitive disabilities or who are in other situations of need. They achieve their mission by providing and sustaining professionally trained service and companion dogs.



Pictured, left to right: Acting Deputy Superintendent Michelle Houser, Superintendent Jamey Luther; H Unit Manager Ralph DiBridge and DOC Regional Deputy Secretary Steven Glunt.

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## Successful Reentry

DOC employees don't hear too often from former inmates, but when we do, and when that person tells us about their success after prison, we like to share that information...

A former inmate recently wrote to a drug and alcohol treatment specialist...

*"I actually found a job and have been working since October... A small family diner but the owner and manager are great and were very understanding of my past. I told them within the first three sentences of my interview and she was very happy I didn't try to hide it. (Sometimes people understand the need of second chances a lot more then we think.)*

*I've successfully gone through the last couple months with no relapses, and I am in very good standing with my parole officer. She is very happy with me and my progress since I have been home.*

*I was actually referred to get a drug eval done and completed it in November... I was not very happy about the way it went. She was asking me basically if I felt I needed a methadone maintenance program... And I had a whole melt down. For the first time in my life I just wanted someone to believe that I wanted to change. So, you spoke to my parole officer about everything and my counselor and I got the chance. (Believe it or not they are here to actually help us... I was shocked.)*

*So... I am doing well and still plan on the same for the future.*

*Thank you for everything ... I hope you had a great Christmas and new year. It was nice to finally be home for it this year!!!!"*

**#PADOCPROUD**

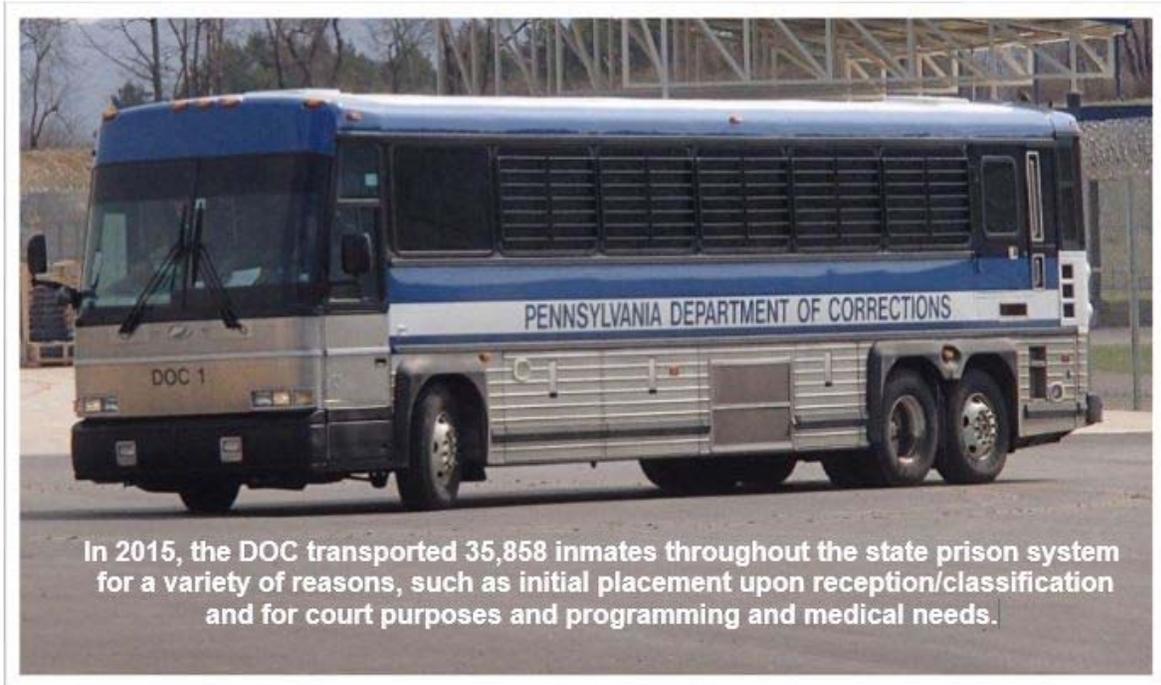
**#KeepUpTheGoodWork**

**#SuccessfulReentry**

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Week of Jan. 11...

## DOC Inmate Transports



In 2015, the DOC transported 35,858 inmates throughout the state prison system for a variety of reasons, such as initial placement upon reception/classification and for court purposes and programming and medical needs.

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## Burke Receives 2016 Brotherhood Citation Award

The Mifflin County Roundtable of Christians and Jews recently announced the recipient of its 2016 Brotherhood Citation Award ... Steve Burk.

Steve, who is the DOC's interagency liaison and works to assist offenders applying for clemency with the Pennsylvania Pardons Board, is one of only 60 people who have received this award since the group's inception in 1950.

He was nominated for this award due to his selfless service to his community through his church, the Lewistown Kiwanis Club, Habitat for Humanity, the LUMINA Center and the Burnham's Lions Club.

A banquet honor Steve will be held Feb. 23 in Lewistown.

Congratulations, Steve!

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## Employees Earn National Correctional Industries Association Recognition

Pennsylvania Correctional Industries employees Tony Rentz and Brad Patterson were recently selected by the National Correctional Industries Association (NCIA) to receive the NCIA National Staff Award and National Sales and Marketing Award, respectively.

Tony serves as PCI's Optical Lab supervisor at SCI Cambridge Springs, and Brad works out of PCI's Central Office in Camp Hill.

Both are deserving of the awards due to their daily contributions and efforts toward PCI's mission to provide offenders job opportunities and skills that greatly increase their potential for successful reentry when released.

More specifically, Tony was nominated for his work and success of the American Board of Opticianary certification program for the female offenders at the Optical lab at SCI Cambridge Springs. Brad was nominated for his work coordinating furniture needs for the SCI Phoenix construction project and his customer sales generated in the Southeastern region of Pennsylvania.

Both will receive their awards at the NCIA national conference, which will be held in Pittsburgh in April 2016.

Congratulations, Tony and Brad!

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## **SCI Retreat's Employee of the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter 2016 is DATS Amy Ramiza**

Amy Ramiza was selected as SCI Retreat's the Employee of the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter for 2016.

Amy was selected because of the enthusiasm she demonstrates regarding her work on the co-occurring therapeutic community. Her hard work on the Empowerment Committee, where she holds the office of vice-president, is noted due to the success of SCI Retreat's local symposium that was held in November 2015. Amy also volunteered her time as SECA Coordinator. Additionally, she is a member of SCI Retreat's Employee Association.

Amy is a six-year veteran of corrections. She previously worked at SCI Dallas and SCI Muncy prior to becoming a Drug and Alcohol Treatment Specialist at SCI Retreat.

Amy's career goal is to someday move to the facilities management side of corrections.

According to Superintendent Theresa DeBalso, "Amy is a credit to the Department of Corrections, and therefore, has earned this recognition. On behalf of the administrative staff, Thank You and Congratulations!"

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## **Is K2 an Issue for the DOC's Community Corrections Centers?**

By D. Scott VanGorder, Captain, Drug Interdiction Unit

Any illicit drug that finds its way into our facilities is an issue.

Synthetic marijuana, also known as K2, is one of the drugs that the DOC is taking proactive steps to interdict in its centers and in its prisons.

Steps have been taken to enhance our inmate urine testing program, update our electronic drug detection efforts and upgrade our K-9 detection efforts. These steps have been taken in an effort to keep pace with new and emerging drug trends that are seen in the civilian population.



Research is currently being conducted with West Chester University to analyze confiscated samples of synthetic marijuana. The information gathered from the research allows the DOC to maintain efficient inmate urine testing and stay up-to-date with the ever-changing formulas of synthetic marijuana. Another benefit of the research is that we can constantly upgrade our K-9 and electronic interdiction strategies.

The DOC conducts frequent K-9 searches of the community corrections facilities. Our K-9/Drug Interdiction Unit has been in operation since 1995 and is often contacted by other state DOCs for training and to learn about our best practices. In addition to these searches, the DOC also conducts regular urine tests of offenders.

The DOC's methods used to interdict new and emerging drugs changes to keep pace with security needs. We continue to train our dogs and handlers to search for new drug compounds, and we update our scanners used to clear visitors into our facilities with the same.

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## The Impact of Crime

Movita Johnson-Harrell and Robyn Burns from the CHARLES FOUNDATION visited SCI Graterford on December 29th, 2015, to give presentations to the Impact of Crime Class. The Impact of Crime Class is offered throughout the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections as a voluntary educational program for inmates to attend.



The purpose of the Impact of Crime program is to raise inmates' awareness of the impact that their actions have had on their victims and communities. The overall goal of the program is to increase the inmates' level of accountability and empathy for those they have harmed. At the same time, the presentations provide a healing platform for the crime victims who come in and share their experiences with the inmates who participate in the Impact of Crime program. It was apparent during the follow-up question-and-answer session that both of these objectives were accomplished.

The class members thanked the speakers for making them more aware of the effects that their actions have had on both their victims and communities, and the presentations were beneficial to both the inmates and the speakers.



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Week of Jan. 4...

## 2015 Accomplishments

In 2015, the [Pennsylvania Department of Corrections](#), under the leadership of [Secretary John Wetzel](#), completed several initiatives in keeping with Governor Tom Wolf's promise of Government that Works.

These accomplishments demonstrate the department's commitment to its mission: to reduce criminal behavior by providing individualized treatment and education to offenders, resulting in successful community reintegration through accountability and positive change.

### Reducing Crime

In 2015, Governor Tom Wolf supported Department of Corrections officials in their continued work to reduce recidivism. Through the use of performance-based contracts that hold vendors accountable for the programs they provide, the DOC announced an overall recidivism [reduction of 11.3 percent in the community corrections system](#). These results are the second consecutive period of reduction.

In addition to community corrections recidivism reduction, the DOC in 2015 also announced exciting statistics that show a decrease in the [six-month, one-year and three-year recidivism rates](#). The latest three-year and six-month rates are the lowest ever recorded, and the one-year rate is by far the largest drop from the previous year (a total drop of 5.3 percentage points).

### Reducing Reentry Barriers

In 2015, Governor Tom Wolf gave the support necessary for Department of Corrections officials to expand their work in the area of [Medication Assisted Treatment](#) (MAT). The goal is to help them eliminate the craving for heroin, which will help them to have one less barrier as they try to return to society as crime-free individuals. Individuals who don't crave drugs, won't use drugs or need to commit crimes to support their addictions. This results in safer communities.

## **Assisting a Neighboring County Prison**

While county prisons are not under the jurisdiction of the Department of Corrections, the DOC still serves as a resource for county prisons. DOC officials recently announced that, in 2016, [SCI Huntingdon will provide the neighboring county prison](#) with inmate and employee meals at a cost of \$2 per meal. This is the first time that such an agreement has been made with a county prison, and it also shows how state government is willing to assist county governments.

## **Improving Mental Health Services**

In 2015, the DOC [settled a lawsuit](#) with the Disability Rights Network of Pennsylvania, while it continued to improve and enhance services provided to mentally ill offenders.

Also, in 2015, every DOC employee was trained in [Mental Health First Aid](#); the DOC established an [Office of Mental Health Advocate](#); and a number of new diversionary housing units were established to ensure mentally ill offenders are not placed in restricted housing units. Work continues in this area continually improving the DOC's mental health.

## **Recognition**

In 2015, the DOC, specifically SCI Graterford, was recognized for being instrumental partners with the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency and the Brain Injury Association of PA in demonstrating the problem of brain injury in prisons. As a result they received the [Organization Award from the Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania](#).

The project for which the award was granted involved screening SCI Graterford inmates for brain injury and further assessments of those with positive screens to determine cognitive impairments that will impact re-entry into the community. The work also identified inmates who require Neuro-Resource Facilitation, which is a community service provided to individuals living with brain injuries and their families. Services provided include support in coping with the issues of living with brain injury and transition back to work and the community. Neuro-Resource Facilitation helps individuals find and apply for the most relevant programs and services to meet their needs and attain their goals and help them problem-solve any barriers that may arise.

Also in 2015, the Department of Corrections was one of several agencies that received the [Pioneer Institute's "Better Government Award"](#) for its work in the area of incorporating performance goals and measures of recidivism reduction into contracts with privately operated halfway houses. Financial incentives for recidivism reduction and penalty for increases in recidivism were used in contracts in an effort to reduce recidivism by making community corrections facilities more accountable for public safety outcomes.

Pennsylvania's community corrections performance-based contracting idea was developed by the Department of Corrections' Office of Planning, Research and Statistics, in conjunction with Dr. Kiminori Nakamura from the University of Maryland. Dr. Nakamura was brought to the department in 2011 under grant funds from the U.S. Department of Justice, as an "embedded criminologist." In this role, he serves as a research/evaluation partner and a general scientific advisor to the department. He has assisted in the development of many research-based initiatives throughout the department, including the development of the community corrections performance-based contracting model.

Additional DOC accomplishments can be reviewed by visiting the agency's website at [www.cor.pa.gov](http://www.cor.pa.gov)

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## York CCC Donations

In January 2016, York Community Corrections Center residents donated 198 household, food and craft items to the Children's Aid Society at The Lehman Center in York. The Lehman Center operates a crisis nursery and provides family support and advocacy services to at-risk children and their families.



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## Clothing Drive Held

The Scranton CCC hosted a winter clothing drive for the month of December. All donations benefited local homeless shelters.



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