

Correctional Newsfront

The official newsletter of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections



2016 News ~ October to December

Week of November 28...

Inmates Donate Murals to Local Humane Society

Over the past few years, SCI Somerset has worked with talented inmates allowing them to paint murals throughout the prison. In fact, so far 63 murals are gracing the walls of the state prison.

"A few months ago the inmates asked if they could do something for the local community," said Superintendent Trevor Wingard. "The results were canvasses that the life-sentenced inmates created."



The six inmates painted murals to donate to the Humane Society of Somerset County. They paid for the canvasses themselves and then donated them to the Humane Society of Somerset County on November 29, when officials from the local agency visited the prison to receive the donations.

According to Superintendent Wingard, the two ladies who serve on the Humane Society's board of directors were completely appreciative of this gesture and said that the paintings will be placed throughout their center.



A reporter from the Somerset Daily American was present for the donation and will write an article for the newspaper.

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Paying Tribute to a Fallen Officer



On November 16, SCI Pittsburgh's Honor Guard paid tribute to Canonsburg Police Officer Scott Bashoum, who was killed in the line of duty as he responded to a domestic disturbance call.



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The Story of Huntingdon's Cows

The publisher of the Huntingdon Daily News often sees beef cows in the pasture along Pennsylvania Avenue. To learn more about them, the paper sent a reporter to SCI Huntingdon.



"Years ago, SCI Huntingdon was fairly self-sustaining with dairy cattle and a farm. Former Supt. Ray Lawler had the idea to restore the beef cattle, so we started out with a few cows. SCI Rockview was kind enough to lend us the services of a bull, and the herd has grown since then. We use the beef here at HUN and share with the other institutions," said prison Public Information Officer Connie Green.



You will be able to learn more by reading the Huntingdon Daily News' article.

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National Prison Visiting Week

Fences topped with razor wire are designed to keep inmates from getting out. "Prison Visiting Week" – a national initiative launched by the Vera Institute of Justice – was aimed at giving the community a chance to look inside.

Pennsylvania joined 16 other states and local correction departments, as well as the Federal Bureau of Prisons, in this initiative to increase public awareness and visibility of prison and jail as well as conditions of confinement.

On November 17, Laurel Highlands hosted 13 community members from Somerset County and elsewhere in western Pennsylvania, including Allegheny County judge

John Zottola, representatives from area businesses, mental health facilities, non-profits and academia who had the chance to interact with jail staff and inmates, observe group activities and learn about the current state of incarceration.

After Superintendent Jamey Luther and her staff provided an overview of the programming available at the institution, the group took a walking tour of the facility where they were able to interact with inmates and staff.

Laurel Highlands is designated for geriatric patients and those with serious medical needs. End-of-life care has become a focal point of efforts to address inmates with terminal illnesses. In the hospice unit, tour group members talked to an inmate volunteer who tends to the needs of patients and ensures that no inmate dies alone. Highlights of the tour included a visit to the busy dialysis unit and the Transitional Housing Unit, where soon-to-be-released inmates were learning computer skills, preparing resumes and applying for jobs,

The group also visited the Restricted Housing Unit, the Therapeutic Housing Unit and the newly-opened "blue room" – a quiet mural-covered space where inmates can go to reflect while watching a TV playing nature videos. The room is part of a pilot initiative to decrease stress and reduce violence.

"SCI Laurel Highlands is proud to be one of 17 states involved in this endeavor," said Luther. "Pennsylvania understands the goal of rehabilitation and via this tour is able to highlight several programs utilized within the prisons to return a better citizen. As a neighbor, friend, co-worker, family member it's important to believe change is possible and see how it's being accomplished through incarceration and successful rehabilitation."

Ron Aldom, executive director of the Somerset County Chamber, called the tour "very enlightening" and "showed how the prison system is working to get these people educated and back into society." He added, "It was also nice to see what is happening at one of our largest employers in the county."

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Cocoa Brown Inmate T-Shirts

For the first time in the DOC's history, officials have decided to change the color of inmate t-shirts to standardize the color of t-shirts issued.

In July 2016, DOC officials approved cocoa brown t-shirts for basic issue for both male and female inmates.

The system's diagnostic and classification centers either are already in the process of or soon will begin ordering and issuing the new cocoa brown t-shirts.

Inmates already in the system will be permitted to wear both white and cocoa brown t-shirts. Eventually, through wear and tear, all white t-shirts will be eliminated.

Facilities and the prison's commissary system have been directed to continue providing white t-shirts to inmates already in the system until their supplies of white t-shirts run out. After that point only cocoa brown t-shirts will be provided/available for purchase via the prison commissary system.

The DOC estimates that it will take about six months to transition the entire system to the cocoa brown t-shirts.

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Three DCCs for Male Inmates

Earlier this year – in July – DOC officials opened two additional diagnostic and classification centers, bringing that number to four statewide.

Diagnostic and classification centers (DCC) are now operating at SCIs Graterford (in the eastern part of the state), Camp Hill (in the central part of the state) and Pittsburgh (in the western part of the state), and at SCI Muncy for female commitments.

DCCs are reception centers for all new inmates entering the state prison system. Upon reception, the individual undergoes extensive evaluation and testing to determine medical and mental health needs, education and treatment needs, risk assessments and more. After classification, the individual's "home" institution is determined, and the individual is then transferred to that prison upon availability of bed and transportation space.

Opening the two other DCCs for male inmates is expected to produce a more effective and efficient system. For example, individuals who are received at SCI Pittsburgh's DCC can be classified, programmed and released from that facility, thus eliminating unnecessary transportation from SCI Pittsburgh to SCI Camp Hill and increasing public safety.

It should be noted that the DOC had three DCCs for men at these same facilities prior to the 1990s, when officials decided to consolidate the diagnostic and

classification centers into one at SCI Camp Hill. As a result a special reception center building was designed around the intake process, and for nearly two decades, SCI Camp Hill served as the sole DCC for men entering the state prison system.

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Week of November 15...

DOC's Moore Smeal Featured in NIC Webinar

Earlier this week, Department of Corrections Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal was among a select group of national correctional leaders picked to lead a training session during a two-day nationwide conference.

The conference, "Restrictive Housing: Roadmap to Reform" was hosted by the National Institute of Corrections, under the U.S. Department of Justice, which is seeking ways to reduce the use of restrictive housing in correctional institutions.

Restrictive housing, also known as solitary confinement, is under intense scrutiny at the national level as well as in Pennsylvania where sweeping changes are being made to reduce violence and the need for restrictive housing.

Last year President Obama asked the Justice Department to look at the overuse of restrictive housing, saying that it too often led to inmates being more likely to commit violence when they were released.

Since 2015, under the leadership of Secretary John Wetzel, the Pennsylvania DOC has been actively developing and implementing a number of strategies to reduce the use of restrictive housing from improved staff training to changes in cell block design.

Moore Smeal's presentation highlighted a number of initiatives now underway in Pennsylvania facilities to improve conditions in restrictive housing units and reduce tensions that can lead to violence.

Among the most successful programs is the expansion of Certified Peer Support Specialists where inmates, who themselves have suffered from mental illness or



substance abuse disorder, are trained to help other inmates who are experiencing a mental health crisis.

Moore Smeal outlined design changes taking place to improve cells and common spaces in restricted housing units and the introduction of mural arts and dog training programs as ways to create a more humane environment.

One video featured Deputy Superintendent Wendy Nicholas and members of her treatment staff at SCI Muncy, one of two women's prisons in Pennsylvania, who have developed a team-approach to addressing those with mental illness to help them better reintegrate with their families upon release.

"There are programs for women that are gender responsive and that are effective and successful," said Moore Smeal, adding this and other changes can be made without jeopardizing safety or security.

Also highlighted was the Swift, Certain and Fair (SCF) punishment policy, which started as a pilot in January at SCI Somerset. The idea behind the initiative was to establish unacceptable behaviors and sanctions beforehand and then apply punishment swiftly and fairly.

The program has been recognized for reducing inmate-on-inmate and inmate-on-staff assaults and has been expanded to nine other prisons.

Moore Smeal also detailed the variety of different units developed to address inmates with diverse needs, whether veterans, those suffering from mental health disorders or those transitioning from restrictive housing to the general population.

"We're talking about changing the culture, humanizing the system," said Moore Smeal. "We need to look at each person as an individual and what is best for that individual."

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Philly Comes to the Mountain



SCI Smithfield hosted the first “Philly Comes to the Mountains” on November 15, 2016. Unit Manager Nancy Thomas came up with the idea because the majority of the population housed at the prison are from the Philadelphia area, and re-entrants from that area need information before they return home. Therefore, “Why not bring Philly to the Mountains?”

Reentrants spoke to approximately 175 men from the general population, and they shared how they have been able to successfully transition back into society. The gentlemen shared their personal stories of how tough, yet possible, it is to live a pro-social life after incarceration. It was stressed how important it is to build a strong network of family, friends and especially community, and they stated that giving back to the community shows that it is not just about the individual.

Through their presentation they informed those attending of the reentry housing, programming and job services that their non-profit agencies/organizations offer. Packets of information were also handed out.

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Quehanna Boot Camp Holds Apprenticeship Day Event

The Quehanna Boot Camp, in conjunction with the Builders Guild of Western PA and members of the Western Pennsylvania Joint Apprenticeship Training Centers (JATC), held an Apprenticeship Day event on October 25, 2016.

During the event, about 230 male and female individuals in the Boot Camp program heard from representatives from various unions, including the Builders Guild of Western PA, Ironworkers Local #3, Bricklayers Local #9, the Operative Plasterers and Cement Masons Local #526, Western PA Laborers Union, Steamfitters Local #449, Sheet Metal Workers Local #12, Roofers Local #37 and Keystone+Mountain+Lakes Regional Council of Carpenters.

The union representatives gave brief presentations on career paths and opportunities in the building and construction trades industry. The presenters stressed the importance of respecting yourself and others, taking pride in what you

do and continuing to learn and grow on the job. Following the presentations, teammates had an opportunity to stop at each union's table to obtain additional information and applications.

The Apprenticeship Day event is part of Quehanna Boot Camp's reentry initiative to assist reentrants with obtaining meaningful careers upon their release. As a result of the event held last year, several Boot Camp reentrants pursued union apprenticeships.



The Quehanna Boot Camp opened in June 1992 as the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections' first military-style motivational boot camp. The program must be judge recommended and individuals must meet medical and sentencing guidelines. Approved individuals assigned to the boot camp undergo a rigid six-month disciplinary and training program. Those successfully completing the six-month program are released but remain under state supervision until they reach their maximum sentence date.

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Teaching Inmates How to Manage Money

On October 17, 2016, members of the Criminal Justice Club from the University of Pittsburgh at Johnstown and staff from the Johnstown Federal Credit union



assisted DOC and SCI Laurel Highlands staff and Transitional Housing Unit (THU) participants in facilitating an interactive budget simulation.

Participants were each allotted an amount of money based on life sustaining employment with which they had to manage throughout a simulated month time frame. Throughout the simulation, the participants were given unexpected expense/incidents to contend with and manage into their budget. Upon concluding

the simulation they all met individually with a financial analyst who reviewed their monthly planning and budget to determine whether the participant was successful or not.

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Meet the DOC's Oldest, Active CERT Member

Have you ever met a 61 year old member of the Corrections Emergency Response Team (CERT)? Well, if you haven't, you're about to.

Meet Michael J. Proce, a lieutenant at the State Correctional Institution at Camp Hill. Mike can't work a smartphone, but he sure knows how to handle weapons and chemical munitions. Mike is currently the oldest active CERT member in the PA Department of Corrections.

Mike grew up in Brooklyn, NY, and enjoyed playing football and baseball while growing up. He enlisted in the military (Army) in 1973 and was active duty from 1973-1976. He continued his military service by joining the National Guard from 1985 – 2004 and retired from the military in 2004. He drove a bus for New York City Transit for four years but eventually came to PA in 1986 while he continued to work in New York (i.e. driving a bus). He then transferred to a bus company in Allentown, PA.

He began his employment with the PA Department of Corrections in the summer of 1990 (several months after the Camp Hill riots). He remembers that the institution had only started to build one new housing unit at the time, but there were still parts of the institution that showed extensive damage from the riots.

One of the "lessons learned" from the riots was the need to change CERT, since the PSP were the primary responders during the riots. Joe Miller (retired major from SCI Frackville who started at SCI Camp Hill) played an integral part in the evolution of CERT. Mike remembers that the department started to make changes to improve CERT, and they had implemented a pilot program (statewide). Lt. Glenn "Bud" Cooney, one of Mike's mentors, and now Regional Deputy Secretary Tabb Bickell, were among the first pilot group for CERT. Mike recalls that Lt. Cooney approached him about joining CERT, so he tried out and has been on the team ever since 1991. He actually joined CERT as a Phase 4 trainee. He attended a CERT class shortly after the "pilot" CERT class.



Through the years, he has seen many changes not only in corrections, but also in the evolution of CERT.

"Back in the day, we used to have competitions among CERT teams statewide down at the Training Academy, once a year," Mike said. They did weapons qualifications, PT courses, and other events, but it was "real competition" and "people went all out for this."

He said that it was "very intense" and a highly competitive environment. He has also seen significant changes in CERT equipment, firearms, uses of force, etc., over the years, as well as individuals' desire and commitment to the team.

"It's not like it was years ago.....people were waiting in line to join CERT. Now, it's not like that," Mike said.

When asked what made him stay an active member of the team for more than 25 years, Mike said, "I don't know....I just liked it. I like the camaraderie. I like being able to still compete among my teammates, some of them half my age, and still be able to hold my own. There are times when my mind says to keep going, but my body is telling me no."

Lt. Proce is a dedicated professional and exemplary role model and leader. SCI Camp Hill is extremely proud of his dedication to duty and commitment to excellence.

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FCPD's Gather at Training Academy

Facility Chaplaincy Program Directors met at the Training Academy this week for a week of intensive training. The training, led by their peers, is a precursor to the training that all current correctional chaplains will receive in 2017 and which all subsequent new chaplains will receive thereafter.



Front Row: David Klink (LAU), Rafael Torres (GRA), Sylvia Morris (SMI), Debra Reitz (MUN), Tami Hooker (PIT), Darlene Johnson (CBS), Mehmet Arvas (DAL), Ulli Klemm (BTS)

2nd Row: Samuel Anyanwu (FRA), Glenn McQuown (FRS), Jabulani Sibanda (GRN), Frank Lewis (FYT), David Boyles (RET), Tyler Parry (WAM), Joe Kosarek (MER), Fatih Akdemir (CAM/BTS), O. Larry Mills (CAM)

3rd Row: Aaron Duncan (COA), Mobolaji Wojuola (HOU), Ralph DeCecco (ALB), Matt McCoy (BEN), Nelson Zeiset (MAH), James Akrong (CHS)
Back Row: Kirt Anderson (PNG), James Stover (QUE), Darrell Wireman (HUN), Phil Maust (SMR), Tom Boldin (ROC)

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Hope In Handball Visits LAU

David Botero, who is the Community Policing Coordinator with Harrisburg Bureau of Police, recently visited SCI Laurel Highlands in October to participate in and guide an event called Hope In Handball. Several reentrants in the prison Transitional Housing Unit (THU) program participated with the volunteer handballers, David Botero and Andrew Reiersen, in a handball tournament.

Following the conclusion of the tournament, the “mentoring” portion of the event took place. It is quietly defined by the camaraderie, sportsmanship and respect that the players share on and off of the courts. With ‘handball’ as the common denominator – the players are able to discuss family issues, job explorations, coping strategies, faith, and just simply staying out of trouble.

One of the participating reentrants stated that “I think Hope In Handball is a very good resource for us who are struggling in our everyday lives.”

Another reentrant added that, “Hope In Handball was not just about playing handball, it was about bringing people of all parts of society together.”



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Week of November 7...



As we prepare to celebrate Veterans Day this year, we wanted to provide you with an update on our agency's work in the area of inmate veterans.

On May 23, 2016, SCI Houtzdale joined SCIs Dallas and Pittsburgh in operating a Veterans Service Unit (VSU). The VSU at SCI Houtzdale is located on G Unit, which is a custody level 2 housing unit that offers a max inmate capacity of 197. In order to better prepare our incarcerated veterans for reentry and to support their future success, VSU staff assesses the needs of the incarcerated veterans and helps them to identify and remove barriers that they will encounter as they re-enter society.



Listed above from left to right: Ricky Rafter, Chris Reed, Troy Hagen and Craig Petulla

Reentrant veterans participating in the VSU work toward overcoming the reentry challenges of finding employment, securing housing, obtaining healthcare and maintaining treatment. Various seminars, classes, workshops and other trainings are offered through trained facility staff, trained VSU incarcerated veteran facilitators and representatives from various outside agencies that have a community partnership with the VSU. Programs offered on the SCI Houtzdale VSU by trained facility staff include the following: Seeking Safety, Staying on Track and Parenting. Additional groups are facilitated on the VSU by trained

incarcerated veteran facilitators. These include Character Development, Video Discussion Group, Life Skills and Veterans Day and Memorial Day Services. The SCI Houtzdale VSU also coordinates with several community partners that provide reentry services. **Real Colors** is a communication workshop that helps people understand human behavior. The workshop helps people recognize, accept and

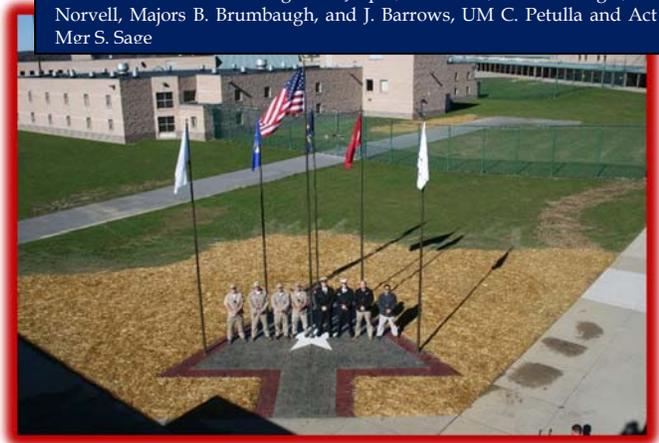
learn to value the differences in others. It is a tool to increase understanding, empathy and communication. It is facilitated by the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole. **Living Under Supervision** is a parole education seminar geared towards near term reentrant veterans and is facilitated by a reentry parole agent. **CareerLink** offers a veterans program that assists reentrant veterans by providing a full range of employment services to assist veterans in their search for work. This service is facilitated by CareerLink representatives.

Supportive Services for Veteran Families (SSVF) is a program facilitated by Community Action. The purpose of SSVF is to provide financial support to improve veteran housing stability. SSVF is facilitated by Community Action Representatives. **Office of Vocational Rehabilitation (OVR)** serves people that have disabilities that present a substantial impediment to their potential employment. Services are provided to individuals who can benefit from and who need assistance to prepare for, enter, engage in, or retain employment. OVR Seminars are facilitated by OVR Representatives.

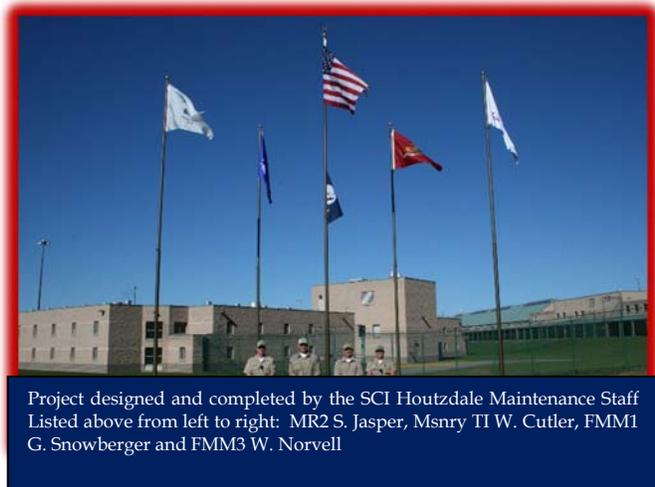
Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) provides incarcerated veterans with assistance in properly filing applications for service-connected disability claims. These workshops are facilitated by a certified Veterans Service Officer that is provided by the VVA.



Listed above from left to right: S. Jasper, W. Cutler, G. Snowberger, W. Norvell, Majors B. Brumbaugh, and J. Barrows, UM C. Petulla and Act Mer S. Sae



The SCI Houtzdale VSU offers three Certified Peer Support Specialists (CPS) which are all housed on the VSU. Each provides a variety of different services to incarcerated veterans participating in VSU programming. Additionally, the SCI Houtzdale Pup Program, better known as Relying Upon Furry Friends (R.U.F.F.), is also located on the VSU. The pup program has proven to enhance quality of life for incarcerated veterans at SCI Houtzdale in that it offers a calming effect for those residing on the VSU.



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SCI Coal Township Honors Volunteer of the Year

SCI Coal Township recently held its 21st Annual Volunteer Recognition Dinner. Facility Chaplaincy Program Director Reverend Aaron Duncan thanked all volunteers who selflessly donate their time to come in to the institution and make themselves available to the inmates at SCI Coal Township.

Reverend Duncan stated, "I know you could have been anywhere else, fulfilling your dreams and enjoying family and friends but you decided to put that aside for the ministry. Your sacrifice and time is greatly appreciated."



Robert Renn (left) with Coal Township Superintendent Thomas McGinley and Rev. Aaron Duncan.

All of Coal Township's 48 volunteers were recognized individually.

Robert Renn, a Coal Township resident, was honored as the Volunteer of the Year. As a member of the Prison Christian Growth Group, Mr. Renn visits the institution twice monthly to facilitate a Bible study group.

During his first group in 2013 he felt assured that this is what God wanted him to do. Mr. Renn states that "being a volunteer reminds me of my responsibility as a Christian to go and feed the hungry, help with the sick, and to visit the prisoners as mandated by God."

One of the things Mr. Renn learned is that given the opportunity everyone can change. This motivates him to continue to come back as he watches the inmates grow into "Men of God."

Of Mr. Renn, Inmate Richard said, "He is certainly a good role model to follow especially with his quiet demeanor."

Reverend Michael Comick noted that because of Mr. Renn's consistency in visiting the inmates, they appreciate him very much.

A delicious meal was prepared and served by SCI Coal Township food service staff and inmates working in the culinary department to all volunteers attending the banquet.

SCI Coal Township is always seeking religious and drug and alcohol awareness volunteers. Prison volunteers are trained in security awareness, Prison Rape Elimination Act and training associated to their specific vocation. Prospective volunteers can contact SCI Coal Township for information on the volunteer program.

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Huntingdon Names Goss EOQ for 4th Quarter



Michelle is very dedicated to her job, providing inmates with information and support to do their best. She works with staff throughout the jail to facilitate a team approach. She does this professionally and is always pleasant. She is also quick to help with questions and concerns that are brought to her attention. Michelle has been very influential in improving staff morale for over 5 years at SCI Huntingdon. She is a member of the Morale Committee, Social Events Committee and Empowerment Committee. As a member of the Morale Committee, she plays a huge part in the hoagie/sub fundraisers, sending cards to staff that are sick/hurt

and gathers supplies for Toys for Tots, Salvation Army, Pittsburgh House. She helps in preparing for the annual Blow Out picnic that staff members look forward to at the end of summer. Every month she gathers items for the Themed Baskets that is given to a staff member. She serves as Vice President of the Social Events committee. Michelle has been picking up the "special food items" such as the meats and cheeses and delivers them to 2 Gate. Michelle always does this with a smile on her face and she spends a lot of her own time in gathering up all of these items in order to help put smiles on the faces of staff at SCI Huntingdon.

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Week of October 31...

DOC, DHS Secretaries Advocate for Quality Early Education as a Key to Future Success

In Scranton on November 2, Department of Corrections (DOC) Secretary John Wetzel and Department of Human Services (DHS) Secretary Ted Dallas today made the case for continued investment in early care and education as the route to future success.



Governor Wolf's 2016-17 budget provided an additional \$200 million in basic education funding, as well as a \$30 million increase for early childhood education, that preserves the number of admissions slots for proven early childhood education programs like Pre-K Counts and state-funded Head Start. It also includes a \$20 million increase for special education, a more than \$10 million increase for Early Intervention.

"Improving early childhood educational opportunities for children, especially in the most disadvantaged communities, is an investment with guaranteed returns – both fiscally, and most importantly, in the lives of thousands of young people," said Wetzel, speaking at an event at Marywood University. "Investment in pre-k education is critical to ensuring that today's children do not become tomorrow's inmates."

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.

"We want to ensure that all Pennsylvania children, regardless of background, have a chance to develop, grow, and learn critical skills that will lay the groundwork needed to be successful for the rest of their lives," said Dallas. "We can invest in our young children now to help build the skills they need for success in school and beyond, or pay the public costs of remediation, public assistance, and corrections later when they don't reach their potential. I'd much rather invest in success than pay the public costs later."

Additionally, children who were previously enrolled in Pre-K Counts outperform their economically disadvantaged peers in third-grade math and reading.

Some studies further indicate that participation in high quality pre-k also helps lower the chance that high-risk youths will end up in prison.

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 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.

In Governor Wolf's first two years of office, he secured historic education funding increases totaling almost \$640 million dollars, including \$415 million in basic education funding, \$60 million for early childhood education, and \$50 million in special education funding.

The investment has created more than 6,000 slots for pre-k students statewide, but more must be done to provide expanded opportunities for Pennsylvania children to get a jump-start on their education.

Governor Wolf believes there is an immediate need to expand publicly funded pre-k and early care and education programs with the goal of universal pre-k for all children. There is also a need to revise Keystone STARS to make it possible for more child care and other early learning programs to earn high-quality STAR 3 and 4 ratings.

Early childhood programs only work if families, especially where children are most at risk, are aware of them and enroll their children.

To that end, Secretary Wetzel and Secretary Dallas, along with Education Secretary Pedro Rivera, collaborated earlier this year to launch an initiative to help families of the more than 80,000 children with incarcerated parents get access to quality educational programs for pre-schoolers.

The Child Resource Centers now provide material at all 26 state correctional institutions help connect families with early learning services and programs throughout the state.

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SPEND THE MONEY BEFORE THEY GET TO US.
ISN'T AMERICA ABOUT GIVING PEOPLE A FAIR
SHOT? IF WE CAN MAKE SIGNIFICANT
INVESTMENTS IN KIDS TO REALLY GIVE THEM
A FAIR SHOT, WHY SHOULDN'T WE DO THAT?

- John Wetzel, Secretary,
PA Department of Corrections



OUTSIDE PRISON WALLS

Understanding the impact on the
children of incarcerated parents.



THE CHALLENGE:

In Pennsylvania's prisons, tens of thousands of children live outside the walls. Few communities in the Commonwealth have been spared the crippling effects of fatherless and motherless homes. The astonishing numbers, combined with the impact on their lives, is a story that's only now beginning to be told.

A SNAPSHOT OF PENNSYLVANIA'S INMATES & THEIR CHILDREN



81,096

The number of children with a parent incarcerated in a PA state prison — 12,696 more than the seating capacity of Heinz Field in Pittsburgh.

75,747

Children of incarcerated dads.

5,349

Children of incarcerated moms.

A HARSH REALITY: INCARCERATION'S LONG SHADOW

"The arrest and removal of a mother or father from a child's life forces that child to confront emotional, social and economic consequences that may trigger behavior problems, poor outcomes in school and a disruption or severance of the relationship with the incarcerated parent that may persist even after the parent is released from prison." (Harrison 2007)

"I was able to access education from prison and, when I talked to my children regularly, they were excited about the fact that Mom was in school and that we had that in common. My ability to be in school while incarcerated motivated my children and me to work together on our separate educational goals." (Nashua, Amachi Pittsburgh parent)

"Communities typically wouldn't look to the Department of Corrections for leadership in early childhood education. Yet parental incarceration often means both developmental and academic delays for millions of children across the nation. I am so proud that Pennsylvania is a forerunner in promoting early and significant investments in young children to increase their prospects for success in school and life." (Anna Hollis, Executive Director of Amachi Pittsburgh)

"Children with fathers who have been incarcerated are significantly more likely than other children to be expelled or suspended from school (23 percent compared with 4 percent)." (Western)

CREATING NEW REALITIES SOLUTIONS THAT WORK

- 1 **Expansion of Nurse Family Partnerships** — a one-stop prevention program for low-income, first-time parents and their children.
- 2 **Access Early Childhood Learning** — a broad range of education programs and environments for young children of incarcerated parents.
- 3 **Promotion of Personal Mentoring** — Relationships that build character, provide stability and offer real life guidance for work and education.
- 4 **Encouraging Regular Family Visits** — restoring and maintaining the vital relationship between incarcerated parents and their children.

SCI Muncy Holds Second Annual Domestic Violence Awareness Day



On October 4, 2016, an event designed to draw attention to the impact of domestic violence on individuals, families and communities was held in the chapel and in the visiting room at SCI Muncy.

This Domestic Violence Awareness Event consisted of seven speakers and three presentations in the morning as well as four workshops in the afternoon. Over 80 inmates participated in the day's activities. Staff from Parenting, CK, Activities, Security, School, and DCC assisted in preparing for the event and several staff from various departments were in attendance for the morning speakers and presentations. Teri Woodling, corrections counselor 2/treatment specialist who facilitates the House of Hope inpatient and outpatient trauma treatment program, introduced the speakers and workshops. With the assistance of her two House of Hope Peer Assistants, Ms. Woodling planned and oversaw the important day's activities.

Among the speakers were Superintendent Robert Smith, Ms. Woodling, two inmate survivors- one House of Hope graduate and one House of Hope Peer Assistant and two survivors from the community—Nina and Christine—who in their healing journeys utilized support and guidance from Wise Options of Williamsport, Pa. and Transitions of Lewisburg, Pa. The four speakers, who identified themselves as survivors, inspired and touched the audience with their honest sharing about their past trauma and steps taken to heal and move forward in their lives. The women in the House of Hope delivered an empowering presentation, inspired in part by a poem written by one of its participants that included wearing the Clothesline Project T-shirts that they each designed as well as the use of visually striking masks that they each discarded as they committed to no longer hiding behind masks. The morning session ended with Ms. Woodling and House of Hope participants presenting donations, weaved blankets, to representatives of Wise Options and

Transitions to use at those facilities. The women of the House of Hope prepared the blankets. In addition, the women of the House of Hope expressed their appreciation to the two outside speakers by presenting crochet blankets that were made by participants. Lastly, Ms. Woodling and the women in the House of Hope presented Superintendent Smith with a blanket for his Administration's support of the House of Hope Program and of the Domestic Violence Awareness Day Event.

Following the morning's speeches and presentation, CK staff prepared a tasty lunch for participants, speakers, workshop presenters and others in attendance. During the afternoon, the participants were split up into four groups with each one attending all four workshops for approximately 25 minutes. Ms. Eckie Friar, Education Specialist at Transitions, presented a workshop entitled "CARE for Kids," which talked about ways to nurture the development of healthy sexuality among children. Ms. Heather Cattron and Tanner Widdowson led a workshop highlighting the services that OVA offers, including those that are available to incarcerated men and women. Another workshop involved one of the outside speakers, Christine, conducting a question and answer session as follow-up to her inspirational speech. Lastly, David Bever of OVA compared and contrasted the dynamics of healthy relationships with those involving various forms of abuse. Feedback from participants, outside guests and staff in attendance has been overwhelmingly positive.

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SCI Muncy Holds Breast Cancer & Domestic Violence Awareness Walks



On Friday October 14, 2016, SCI Muncy employees had the opportunity to participate in the fundraising efforts. They could pay \$1 to dress down and walk laps on their lunch break around the inner circle of the Institution. The Muncy Inmate Organization paid 50 cents for every lap completed. Staff also had the opportunity to make additional monetary donations. Staff donations totaled \$214.40, and they walked 75 laps, earning an additional \$37.50.

On Saturday, October 15, 2016, 546 Inmates attended the Breast Cancer and Domestic Violence Awareness Walk. The Muncy Inmate Organization paid 50 cents for every lap completed. In addition to walking, Inmates had the opportunity to learn more about Breast Cancer and Domestic Violence through informational and interactive tables set up throughout the yard. Inmates walked a total of 5,968 laps, earning a \$2,984.00 donation from the MIO.

To date, the fundraising efforts have reached a total of \$3,235.90. However, there is still a very large additional portion from the Inmate fundraiser that is yet to be determined. Final numbers will be distributed soon.

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SCI Muncy Holds Retiree's Luncheon



1st row, left to right: Esther Eiswerth; 2nd row: Ella Barkley, Donna Casselberry, Karen Robenolt, Ron Robenolt, Mary Gray; 3rd row: Ginny Rooker, Ed Jatko, Linda States, Shirley Kinley; 4th row: Ed Pickett Jr., James Zaccarelli, Richard Shuler, Karen Kemp, Dale Wertman, Kay Burgett, Christie Mann; Back row: Randy Kemp, Ed Fritz, Ken Kazar, Jeff Karschner.

On October 19, 2016, SCI Muncy hosted a Retiree Luncheon and Tour for past employees. Response was good with individuals attending the function, held in the institution's visiting room. Current staff participated in preparing a program regarding recent changes and historical facts about SCI Muncy. Superintendent Robert Smith, administrative staff and committee members were available to welcome and talk with past employees. Lunch was served and a tour of the institution was given. Retirees were also given the option to tour the areas in which they previously worked. Many retirees, took advantage and returned to their old work site. At the conclusion of the event, current and past employees were

Benner Township Names EOQs

Superintendent Tammi Ferguson recently announced that Corrections Officer 1 Joshua Emerick and Clerk Typist 2 Laurie Mann were named Employees of the Quarter for the fourth quarter.



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Fazio Represents DOC in National Reentry Discussion

DOC's Bureau of Correction Education Director Terri Fazio participated, on October 28, in "Reconnecting Justice: Pathways to Effective Reentry through Education and Training." This event, held by the Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP), was the second forum in a series on criminal justice, which included a keynote address by Nicholas Turner, president of the Vera Institute of Justice, as well as expert discussions connecting policy trends in correctional education and training with reentry opportunities that promote economic success. Approximately 150 people attended the event, while 600 more attended the live-stream webinar and others viewed it on C-SPAN.



According to information on CLASP's website:

Incarcerated individuals are disproportionately people of color as well as adults with low educational attainment. More than 650,000 ex-offenders are released from prison each year and recent research shows that two-thirds of those prisoners will be rearrested within three years of release. However, research also shows that access to correctional education can significantly reduce recidivism. If we're serious about breaking the cycle of incarceration, it's essential to invest in robust education and training opportunities for incarcerated people and to connect them to continued education and employment opportunities once they rejoin society.

Providing these opportunities is cost-effective for states and has significant community and economic benefits. For individuals and families, coupling education and employment with reduced collateral and systemic barriers leads to economic self-sufficiency and improved life outcomes. CLASP's forum will examine promising policy options as well as lessons from state and federal initiatives.

Director Fazio participated in a panel discussion titled "Bridging Opportunities: Connecting Systems for Successful Reentry." Joining her on the panel were:

- Rev. Vivian Nixon, Executive Director, College and Community Fellowship;
- Will Heaton, Director of Policy and Public Affairs, Center for Employment Opportunities; and
- DeAnna Hoskins, Senior Policy Advisor for Corrections and Reentry, U.S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Assistance.

Fazio talked about the Career Pathways grant along with the opportunities offered to all PA DOC inmates, special programming for inmates under 21, and her agency's increased focus on reentry.

Who is CLASP: The Center for Law and Social Policy (CLASP) is a national, nonpartisan, anti-poverty organization advancing policy solutions that work for low-income people. They offer nearly 50 years of expertise, a knowledgeable staff, and a commitment to practical yet visionary approaches to opportunity for all.

CLASP's mission is to advocate "for public policies and programs at the federal, state, and local levels that reduce poverty, improve the lives of poor people, and create ladders to economic security for all. We identify and seek to tear down barriers that hold people back due to their race, ethnicity, immigrant status, or geography, as well as low income. We look for large-scale opportunities to improve federal and state policy, funding, and service systems, and we work back and forth between levels of government to achieve maximum impact, bringing state and local innovations to the federal level and translating federal legislation and regulation into ambitious game plans for state and local change."

The link to the video and agenda can be found here:

<http://www.clasp.org/issues/postsecondary/pages/reconnecting-justice-pathways-to-effective-reentry-through-education-and-training>

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Inmate Work Crew

SCI Cambridge Springs' inmate work crew cleaned vehicles at the local Cambridge Springs Fire Station.



If you are a non-profit organization or county, state or federal agency, contact your nearest PA state prison to see how our inmate work crews can assist you.

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Happy Howl-o-ween!

SCI Cambridge Spring's pups wish you a Happy Howl-o-ween!



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Week of October 24...

SCI Fayette Inmates Donate to Domestic Violence Organization

The annual SCI Fayette inmate run-a-thon was held on October 13. Inmates paid a \$3 entry fee, and in the month leading up to the Run-a-thon, a "Healthy Snack Package" sale was held to raise additional money for charity. A total of \$1070.30 was donated to the inmate-selected charity – the Domestic Violence Services of Southwestern PA. Two representatives from the Domestic Violence Services were in attendance. There were 272 inmate participants and 31 committee members. Four employees participated all day with a few others doing a few laps here and there throughout the day to show their support. For entertainment, there was music playing all day. Gatorade and fruit was available for participants, and a bag lunch was provided at mid-day. All in all, the event was a success.

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Suicide Prevention

SCI Graterford Superintendent Cynthia Link said that her prison joined with the Montgomery County Suicide Prevention Organization (part of county services). They provided a meaningful and free 2.5 hour training for staff across all classifications on QPR; Question, Persuade, Refer.

"They gave us valuable resources and training on how to support our co-workers, family and friends should we see signs that may lead us to think someone is in danger of a critical life ending decision," Supt. Link said.

During the training, employees learned that it is ok to ask people if they are considering suicide and then what to do if the answer is "yes."

"I encourage others to look and see what resources their respective counties may offer to help support you in the effort of suicide prevention," Link said. "This training opened a new level of discussion between us as employees and brought forth a true drive to be part of the solution to this terrible issue."

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SCI Coal Township Employees Donate to Local Food Pantry

SCI Coal Township employees donated pantry items for the annual food drive which benefits Manna for the Many, located in Shamokin. Various food items were delivered to Manna on October 28th. Manna for the Many is a local food pantry established through the Shamokin Area Ministerium to serve those in need in the Shamokin/Coal Township area. Manna opened its doors in 2000 and is supported entirely by private donations and staffed solely by volunteers.

Pictured with some of the donated items is Jodi Britton, who has coordinated the food pantry collection for more than 10 years.



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Chester Holds Juvenile Lifer Reunification Day

On October 19, 2016, SCI Chester held a Juvenile Lifer Reunification Day.

The vision for the day was to provide a stronger support system for the juvenile lifers and families.

This event allowed the family members the opportunity to receive the necessary information pertaining to the process of resentencing and to show the collaboration with PA Department of Corrections, Probation and Parole and Community Corrections in preparing them for the resentencing journey.



From Left to Right: Major Jeraldo Aponte, Regional Reentry Administrator Lacosta Mussoline, Deputy Superintendent Kenneth Eason, Center Director Jackie Rupert, Regional Deputy Secretary Michael Wenerowicz, Bureau of Community Corrections Deputy Director Daniel McIntyre, K-9 Addie, Staff Assistant Dan Yingling, Administrative Officer Mande Quinn, Institutional Parole Director Garth Walls, Deputy Superintendent Mark Wahl, Superintendent Assistant Louisa Perez, ASCRA Agent Adrienne Jones and Corrections Counselor 2 Ryanne Piorko.

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Huntingdon Holds “Day of Responsibility”



SCI Huntingdon’s Lifers Association, in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Prison Society, sponsored a Day of Responsibility project in the prison’s visiting room on October 19.

A number of dynamic speakers presented topics discussing the impact of crime, incarceration and the effect of negative

behavior on families, victims and the community. An important part of the discussion was how to become a part of the solution instead of part of the problem. The program included small group discussions, and all guests had the opportunity to share their thoughts and impressions about their experiences and the program.

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LCCC Students Visit SCI Retreat

On October 26, 2016, Superintendent Vince Mooney welcomed 10 criminology students from Luzerne County Community College (LCCC). Students from the Intro. To Corrections Class had the opportunity to tour some areas of the institution, talk with staff regarding their job classifications in corrections, and they also had the opportunity to meet three inmates.

Parole Supervisor Jack Aversa discusses the Parole Process.



LCCC students pictured with their professor and DOC DATSS Jeff Dengler (left).



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Retreat Names Employee of the Quarter

Employees of SCI Retreat's Mailroom have been selected as Employees of the Quarter because they have been integral in the discovery of numerous attempts by inmates to have contraband, specifically SUBOXONE, introduced into the facility. In addition, their work with the Security Office is above no other. They provide a very valuable service on a daily basis for the Security Office in identifying and providing information pertinent to initiating investigations. It is through their diligence and desire to intercede that investigations have been started and introduction attempts are thwarted.



From left: Carin Ives, Catherine Mackin, Theresa Shibilski, and David Popek

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Two Officers Recognized for Reaching 20-Year Mark



From left: Major Stetler, Superintendent Mooney, CO1 Grebeck, CO1 Miller, and Deputy Kerschner

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Week of October 17...

Testing Concepts to Reduce Violence and Use of Restricted Housing

Since the fall of 2015, DOC employees of all classifications have been meeting to address the need to reduce the use of administrative segregation (known as restricted housing in Pennsylvania). The DOC is committed to doing this while reducing the incidents of inmate-on-inmate and inmate-on-staff assaults.

For nearly a year, employees have been assigned to and working on committees that look into a variety of issues.

The DOC also has joined forces with BetaGov, a non-profit organization that helps agencies take concepts and put them into workable and measurable concepts.

DOC employees suggest concepts and BetaGov helps put the concepts into action. Many concepts are now being piloted (or tested, in other words). Some concepts may prove useful, while others may not, and that's what makes the piloting of those concepts so important. We'll try something and if it works we'll implement it. But if we try something and it doesn't work, we move on to another concept to test.

Since the DOC partnered with BetaGov, DOC employees have submitted more than 100 ideas or concepts for trials ... all meant to reduce the need for the use of administrative segregation and all done while working to reduce inmate-on-inmate and inmate-on-employee violence in our state prisons.

Some concepts that are in some form of being tested include:

Swift, Certain and Fair (SCF) Pod – UNDERWAY, BEING EXPANDED SCI Somerset

SCI Somerset has taken a new approach to managing inmates' behavior through the use of Swift, Certain and Fair (SCF) responses to misconduct.

This began on January 1, 2016, when inmates assigned to one custody level 4 general-population housing-unit pod were given a list of nine behaviors that would no longer be addressed through the established misconduct process. Instead, the pod was informed that these behaviors would be addressed by staff on their unit, including the corrections officers, the unit sergeants and the unit manager. Certain behaviors would be handled through the SCF process.

The inmates were also informed of the consequences of these behaviors. They were given a progressive-discipline scale that provides for sanctions ranging from "reprimand and warning" to "cell restriction," which could be for the remainder of that day and up to the following five days, with several steps in between. These sanctions are

certain (i.e., specified) with respect to how many times a specific behavior is observed in the previous 365 days.

A preliminary review of results 90 days after the pilot began shows promising results.

The SCF pod has had fewer misconducts, infractions and grievances compared with other pods at SCI Somerset. Somerset leadership notes that staff are reporting positive interaction between the unit staff and inmates, reduced stress levels and an increased sense of security in their work environment.

Based on the early positive results, SCI Somerset has been granted approval to extend the pilot for 90 days and to begin another SCF pilot on another pod in the facility. External researchers are conducting a formal evaluation of SCF at SCI Somerset, and the DOC has decided to extend the pilot to 12 other state prisons.

Limited Privilege Housing Unit (LPHU) - UNDERWAY

SCI Laurel Highlands, Pennsylvania

Are segregation alternatives effective at producing desired behavioral changes in non-violent inmates? A groundbreaking pilot program at SCI Laurel Highlands will test that question by creating a new step in the facility's disciplinary process.

Instead of being placed in segregation, inmates with non-violent misconduct infractions who do not pose a security risk will be put in the facility's Limited Privilege Housing Unit (LPHU). Unlike inmates in segregation, LPHU inmates will be permitted to leave their cells every day without restraints for scheduled activities such as meals, showers, programming and time in the segregation yard with an additional inmate. All movements will be controlled and observed by the unit control center, and inmates will be subjected to weekly review by unit staff.



Other conditions typical to restricted housing units, such as intake property processing and suicide risk assessments, will remain the same. When not participating in scheduled activities, inmates will be in their cell with the door secured.

Adult Coloring Books – UNDERWAY SCI Mahanoy

SCI Mahanoy is currently conducting a trial to examine the effectiveness of an individual art program using adult coloring books to reduce anxiety and depression while inmates are in restricted housing.

Inmates held in restricted housing units for extended periods of time are often subject to exacerbated psychological stress. (Metzer & Fellner, 2010). The heightened stress experienced by these inmates can result in an outbreak of violence, suicidal attempts, and psychological disorders which jeopardizes the safety of prison staff and inmates.

Art therapy has been associated with a decrease in negative behaviors. As a therapy tool, use of adult coloring books may calm anxiety and elevate mood. Although coloring books in one's cell is not art therapy guided by a therapist, the outcomes may be similarly positive.



The RHU Coloring Trial started on September 12, 2016. Stage 1 will end on October 12th (30 days). Stage 2 will end on November 11th (60 days). If there are any remaining subjects from the baseline measurements, 90 day measurements will be collected on December 12th.

The Blue Room - UNDERWAY

SCI Laurel Highlands

It is well-known that segregation can have deleterious effects on inmate mental health. Research suggests that a natural environment, even if only simulated, can help reduce stress. Inspired by related work done at other institutions, SCI Laurel Highlands is seeking to transform its restrictive housing unit by creating a "Blue Room."

Aptly named, the Blue Room contains a television screen and chair so that RHU inmates can watch nature images and listen to tranquil natural sounds, such as a streaming river. The room's walls feature a soothing ocean mural; artificial indoor plants complete the scene. RHU inmates will be sent to the Blue Room for one-hour increments. Officials at SCI Laurel Highlands hope that this intervention will reduce tensions, violence, and noncompliance among inmates while also having a positive effect on their mental health.

Restricted Housing Unit (RHU) Tablets – UNDERWAY

SCI Smithfield

On May 1, 2016, SCI Smithfield began examining the use of a mobile kiosk and personal tablet devices as an incentive for good behavior for inmates housed in the restricted housing unit (RHU). The goal of this trial is to determine whether it reduces misbehaviors.



Inmates who have demonstrated a positive adjustment over a set period of time while housed in the RHU are eligible to use their previously purchased tablet or use the kiosk (if they don't already own a tablet device). The kiosk and the personal tablet allows the inmate to retrieve e-mail messages, submit internal paperwork and access approved music. While an inmate can compose messages on the personal tablet, the message cannot be sent without being connected to the kiosk. Tablets and kiosks are used daily by general population inmates, but RHU inmates are not permitted these items.

When criteria is met and approval is given for this privilege, if the inmate owns a personal tablet, it will be issued to him from his property and he will retain it in his RHU cell. All approved inmates with or without a tablet may then request to use the kiosk unit. The inmate submits a "Request For Use" form, and access is granted on a first come, first served basis. The inmate is then escorted to an individual treatment unit and secured inside. The portable kiosk unit is placed in front of the unit for the inmate to use for a 15-minutes.

The program has shown good potential as a useful tool for RHU and administrative staff at Smithfield. Grievances, misconducts and use of force incidents have all been on the decline. Not all of the reductions can be contributed solely to this program, but it is and has been an effective tool in some scenarios.

**Crisis Intervention Teams in Residential Treatment Units –
UNDERWAY**

SCI Greene



SCI Greene is currently hosting a trial to examine the effectiveness of Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training for staff members working on the Residential Treatment Unit's (RTU's). During this trial CIT-trained staff work one pod of the unit while non-CIT-trained staff are assigned to the other.

Inmates housed in the RTU often experience emotional crises. This trial will measure the effectiveness of CIT-trained staff for improving mental health outcomes for those housed in RTU's.

The RTU is designed to provide structure, consistency and support for inmates diagnosed with a serious psychiatric disorder and/or serious impairment to psychological functioning.

Data to be collected during the trial includes medication compliance, misconducts, program attendance, POC placement, self-injurious behavior and Diversionary Treatment Unit placement. The trial began August 1, 2016, and will last four months.

Medical Unit Mural - UNDERWAY

SCI Laurel Highlands

Vivid pops of bright yellow, hints of hot pink and strokes of electric blue immediately catch the eye, framing the mysterious shadow of a sunken ship in the distance. Orcas glide serenely through clear blue depths as gleaming rays of sunlight dance weightlessly in the water. Sharks swim past a school of fish, left undisturbed to graze in a coral reef.

This scene is not located in the Caribbean, but in a Pennsylvania prison. Officials at SCI Laurel Highlands have had the walls of the facility's medical unit painted in order to learn more about how changing spaces transforms human behavior. While art and nature therapy have been used successfully in a variety of contexts, the use of artwork in prisons is a relatively new concept. Gazing at the mural, one might not even notice the secured doors, meal tray slots and concrete blocks over which it is painted.

Aromatherapy – UNDERWAY

SCIs Frackville, Pittsburgh and Retreat

Prisons house hundreds of people who are all confined to a unit comprised of numerous cells that serve as all-in-one bathrooms, bedrooms and eating areas. As you can imagine, these areas have their own unique aromas.

While it may seem obvious, bad odors, like that of feces, can elicit a negative feeling, while good odors, like peppermint, can elicit a positive feeling. How we associate an odor directly influences our

mood, and our mood directly influences cognitive thinking and behavior.

Research findings show that people exposed to odors widely accepted as pleasant—like baked cookies or fresh coffee—were more likely to act kindly towards others than those who were not exposed to the pleasant odors (Herz, 2002).

SCIs Frackville, Pittsburgh and Retreat volunteered to test whether exposing inmates to pleasant odors reduces anxiety and increases productivity and prosocial behavior.

Frackville conducted its trial in the prison's behavior modification unit in July 2016. Results haven't shown a positive effect, but officials also noticed an issue with the delivery of the aroma. Therefore, another month of testing will be conducted.



SCI Retreat launched a lavender/eucalyptus aromatherapy trial on September 26, 2016, in its secure residential treatment unit. The trial is presently underway and will conclude on January 30, 2017. There are two diffusers on the unit that dispense lavender/eucalyptus scents.

SCI Pittsburgh is in the process of developing its trial.

Fish Tanks – ABOUT TO BEGIN

SCI Waymart

Two personal care units at SCI Waymart will participate in a trial to determine whether the placement of fish tanks in certain housing units reduces anxiety and increases overall well-being.

Studies suggest that environment has major effects on people, which can alter behavior for the better and for the worse. An unpleasant environment increases one's stress levels, which in turn can have negative psychological and physiological effects. Living in an isolated environment, like prison may cause feelings of depression and anxiety that can worsen over time, leading to a range of feelings from irritability to full blown rage (Shaley, 2008, p. 16). In efforts to reduce levels of anxiety, which can directly affect the safety of staff and other inmates, it is important to address any improvements that can be made to better prison environments.

There is a lack of extensive research relating to the benefits of aquariums; however, their appeal has been noted by divers, aquarium visitors, documentaries and people who own their own fish tanks. Introducing fish tanks into prison environments will add a natural component to the confinement of the built surroundings, which may aid in providing 'soft' fascination for inmates, drawing their attention away from their daily stressors. Lower anxiety levels may lead to reduced feelings of frustration and anger that can lead to violence.

Colored Bed Linens – ABOUT TO BEGIN

SCI Fayette

Prisons can be simple and mundane, with most cells having a basic, metal toilet and a bunk bed made of metal. Colors are generally very neutral. Studies show that inmates undergo psychological changes as they adapt to the prison surroundings and institutional routines. The dull palette of prison cells can increase stress experienced by inmates, which often can result in heightened aggravation that leads to violence. Changing the atmosphere through simple means could reduce inmate anxiety and increase psychological wellbeing.



SCI Fayette's pilot of this concept will begin on October 27, 2016, and will run through December 27, 2016, after which results will be reviewed to determine whether this should be expanded to additional prisons for further study.

Visitor Notification Letter – ABOUT TO BEGIN

SCIs Camp Hill and Pittsburgh

SCIs Camp Hill and Pittsburgh will host trials that study the effects of visitor notification letters. Beginning late-October or early-November, one group of visitors will receive letters informing them only of their addition to an inmate's visitor's list. The second group will receive letters of the same and also will include documentation outlining visiting policies and that emphasize consequences of bringing contraband onto prison premises.

The two groups at the two prisons will be studied to see if the number of contraband incidents occurring both in the parking lot and during visitation, along with associated inmate misconducts, are reduced.

Soothing Sounds – ABOUT TO BEGIN

SCI Benner Township

A trial to examine the effectiveness of noise generators on reducing misbehaviors, reducing violent assaults, and reducing psychiatric crisis will be conducted at SCI Benner Township in units that have both inmates with mental and behavioral issues.

One night of disrupted sleep can lead to one feeling unrefreshed and irritable, while frequent nights of disrupted sleep can impose poor health outcomes, impaired memory and cognitive ability, decreased alertness and productivity, increased stress and agitation and an overall poor quality of life.

Evidence states that "reducing sleep elicits psychotic experiences in non-clinical individuals, and that improving sleep in individuals with psychosis may lessen psychotic experiences. Anxiety and depression consistently arise as (partial) mediators of the sleep and psychosis relationship," (Reeve, Sheaves & Freeman, 2015).

Better management of inmates' chronic sleep deprivation is of utmost importance in ensuring the safety of staff and other inmates, and, in the longer run, the safety of our communities, since many inmates will eventually be released back into society.

White noise generators have been a go-to tool for aiding sleep. In simple terms, these sound machines mask out unwanted and disruptive sounds with other specific sounds (Nave, n.d.). It might seem counterintuitive to add noise to an already noisy environment; however, the sound emitted from the generator blends with other background noise, allowing the mind to no longer distinguish specific, disruptive sounds but instead blur all sounds together, which allows

inmates the ability to fall asleep quicker and maintain uninterrupted sleep. The National Institution of Safety and Health recommends that noise levels should not exceed 85 decibels for a maximum of 8 hours to reduce the risk of induced hearing loss. This recommendation has been applied to noise machines to prevent damage to infants' hearing.

For some, the typical static sound of a white noise generator can be more irritating than helpful. However, other sounds such as rain, crickets, and waves crashing can be pleasant and soothing, encouraging a calmer atmosphere in which to fall asleep.

Introducing white noise generators into units housing inmates with behavioral and mental problems may help to drown out the annoying and disruptive sounds during sleeping hours for inmates trying to fall asleep. The soothing sounds can serve as a meditating and mindfulness tool to relax inmates' anxiety and excessive and disruptive outbursts, resulting in an overall calmer environment. An achieved tranquil atmosphere can improve inmates' quality of sleep, which may reduce feelings of anxiety and depression, and aggressive behavior. The desired outcome of this trial is for inmates to experience a higher level of satisfaction of sleep quality and amount of sleep, while co-occurring a reduced amount of misconducts.

Canine Therapy Aides – IN DEVELOPMENT

SCI Waymart

The two open dorm Intermediate Care Units (ICU) at SCI Waymart will participate in a trial to determine whether the placement of a dog in one of housing units reduces anxiety and/or depression and also increases inmate compliance with mental health treatment and improves their overall well-being.

As with the fish tank proposal, studies suggest that "environment" has major effects on people, which can alter behavior for the better and for the worse.

Animals that have been introduced into other isolated environments, such as nursing homes, have been reported to have many beneficial results with the residents. Introducing dogs into prison environments will add a natural component to the confinement of the built surroundings, which may aid in providing 'soft' fascination for inmates and draw their attention away from their daily stressors. Lower anxiety levels may lead to reduced feelings of frustration and anger that can lead to violence. We are also hopeful that we will see an improvement in interaction with peers among the inmates, increased compliance with medication regimen, enhanced social skills, and improved compliance with recommended programs.

“Chill Plan” - COMPLETED

SCIs Cambridge Springs and Muncy

According to a number of studies and articles, female inmates are more prone to experience higher rates of mental health problems, and research suggest that treatments and programs help female inmates to reduce depression and anxiety, thus mitigating psychiatric disorders.

A concept being tested at the DOC’s two female prisons is called a “Chill Plan.”

This strategy equips inmates with crisis management plans as a coping mechanism that allows them to manage their emotional breakdowns and to prevent a mental crisis from occurring.

The Chill Plan help inmates to identify triggers and signs of escalating emotional crises and provides personalized strategies for calming themselves before emotion completely takes over and negative consequences ensue. Also with this information, staff can make earlier detection of an escalating emotional crisis and prompt the personalized strategy.

The Chill Plan encourages targeted inmates to take actions in dealing with their frustrations and negative feelings. It empowers inmates to learn how to manage emotions preemptively with proper tools, rather than powerlessly waiting for being disciplined after an infraction occurs.

During the trial, when a participating inmate experiences increasing emotional response, she will inform staff and request use of a self-managing tool listed on her “chill” plan. Staff will provide the inmates with requested resources to an attempt to “chill.” This could include quiet time, music, back-in-cell time or other activities that the inmate has identified as increasing the likelihood of being able to step back and chill out. The Chill Plan will be implemented with on-site staff’s support and suggestions.

The aim of this trial is to examine whether the Chill Plan results in a reduction in misbehaviors by empowering self-management. Using administrative data, the primary outcomes are the numbers of formal and informal misconducts recorded during the 60-day trial period. Secondary outcomes include types of infractions and inmates behavior performance reported by staff in the housing units.

The preliminary results from the Muncy trial indicate that another group of inmates – other than those in the DCC – may be more appropriate to participate, so a new round of tests may take place at Muncy in the near future.

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Planning for the Future

Representatives from a number of colleges and universities will visit with SCI Huntingdon officials for a tour of the prison and to meet with administrative staff. Sponsored by CareerLink, the get-together is intended to discuss the types of jobs available at the prison and the skills and education required to obtain those jobs. Participating in the meeting will be officials from Juniata College, Greater Altoona Career & Technology Center, Saint Francis University, Mount Aloysius College, Penn State Altoona, Penn Highlands Community College and University of Pittsburgh-Johnstown.



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Pittsburgh CCC Leads Way in Aiding West Virginia Flood Victims

The Pittsburgh CCC recently joined forces with the Riverside CCC to collect and donate much-needed items to victims of the historic and devastating flooding that occurred in southern West Virginia in June. Hundreds of people lost their homes and 44 counties in the state have been declared national disaster areas. The effort to assist the flood victims was initially proposed to Center Director Richard Dotson by Pittsburgh CCC Clerk Typist Missy Hill.



On July 24th, Hill, her son, and a friend drove a truckload of supplies to Webster County, West Virginia -- 4 1/2 hours away -- and delivered the supplies to the town of Camden On Gauley, which was totally destroyed by the flooding. The town of Camden On Gauley lost 55 homes alone, and many people were, and are, in need of food, clothing and shelter.

The supplies were donated by the reentrants and staff members of both Pittsburgh and Riverside CCCs, and the kindness and efforts of both reentrants and staff were greatly appreciated by the mayor and citizens of Camden On Gauley. Hill was greeted upon her arrival to Camden On Gauley by Mayor Lisa Prather.



Pittsburgh CCC Reentrants and staff will continue to collect and donate supplies to the citizens of Webster County, West Virginia, in an effort to help the people who lost everything as they work on trying to recover from the devastation they encountered as a result of the flooding.

Hill continues to have frequent contact with Webster County Emergency Services to keep updated on what particular items are most needed as the recovery efforts continue and will continue for quite some time.

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King's College Visits RETREAT!

On October 13, 2016, SCI Retreat Superintendent Vincent Mooney welcomed nine students from King's College. The students who participated in the tour had different majors, and all of the students had the opportunity to tour some areas of the institution, talk with staff regarding their job classifications in corrections, and they also had the opportunity to meet two inmates. The students asked questions of the staff and inmates pertaining to the inmates' daily lifestyle and available educational opportunities/programs while incarcerated. The group was so fascinated by the prison's Geese Dog Program and they asked if Joy could be in their group picture!



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Huntingdon Holds “Blowout”

Employees at SCI Huntingdon recently enjoyed their 5th annual end of summer “blowout.”

The tradition was started by Regional Deputy Secretary Tabb Bickell when he served as the prison’s superintendent and has carried on through to the current Superintendent Eric Tice. This year, at the suggestion of Supt. Tice, a chili cook off was added. Loren Wilkins (Wilky), electrical trades instructor, won the trophy and bragging rights this year.

The prison’s employee committees provided hamburgers, hot dogs and wings, and staff brought in their favorite dishes for all the shifts to enjoy.



Supt. Tice, Deputy Superintendent John Thomas, Major Curtis Grice, Classification and Program Manager Christian Garman and Unit Manager George Ralston stayed until 2 a.m. flipping burgers and cooking wings for the third shift.

Employees had the chance to win several different themed gift baskets. Planning is already underway for next year’s blowout and another great chili cook off.

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Rockview Holds Inmate Runathon

Forty-four SCI Rockview inmates participated in the annual runathon on Oct. 8. The inmates walked nearly 560 miles and collected \$663, which will be donated to Big Brothers/Big Sisters of Centre County.

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Muncy Holds Deer Hunt

On October 8, SCI Muncy's Employee Recreation Association (ERA) hosted an archery deer hunt on the institution grounds for Team Red, White and Blue (RWB).

Team RWB's mission is to enrich the lives of America's veterans by connecting them to their community through physical and social activity. Team RWB provided 10 hunters, while SCI Muncy provided 10 guides. The ERA provided a "meet and greet" meal at the Muncy Legion and provided lunch for the hunters and the guides.

Although only one deer was harvested, all of the hunters were thankful for the opportunity and the experience. SCI Muncy also sold regular and pink camouflaged shirts with the Team RWB logo on it. Through this fundraiser, the prison's employees were able to donate approximately \$200 dollars to Team RWB.

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A Team RWB member sits in a tree stand during a recent hunt on Muncy prison grounds.

Mahanoy Holds Reentry Fair



The fifth annual Reentry Fair was held at SCI Mahanoy on October 5, 2016. Principal Chester Beggs chaired the event which was well supported by the entire institution. Jason Kowalski, Alice Cole and Ann Marie Kushwarra helped Principal Beggs prepare for the event.

Thirty-five representatives from 22 organizations attended the event. They represented Dauphin, Lebanon, Luzerne and Schuylkill counties. Two hundred twenty-five inmates had the opportunity to view displays and speak with the representatives from employment, health care, mental health, education and ministry services.

Participants and represented organizations included:

- Aerotek
- AHEED
- Berks Connection
- Career Link
- Clinical Outcomes Group
- Employment Opportunity Training Center
- IMPACT SERVICES
- Jubilee Ministries
- Lehigh Carbon Community College
- Liberty Ministries
- Lifelong Learners
- Luzerne County Community College
- NEPA Manufacturers and Employers Council
- Parole
- Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole
- SAM, Inc.
- SARRC
- SCI Camp Hill
- Veterans' Administration
- Veterans' Employment
- Wyoming Valley Alcohol and Drugs
- Yokefellowship Ministry

SCI Mahanoy's staff received positive feedback from the participants who were extremely impressed with the operation of the facility and how safe they felt while visiting.

"Our mission is to help educate and prepare reentrants for transition back to their family and reentry to the diverse and ever changing world," said SCI Mahanoy Superintendent Theresa DelBalso. "This Reentry Fair is just one way we can help to

increase public safety, improve the health of communities, sustain families and improve the welfare of children and lower costly criminal justice expenses.”

DelBalso said that the Reentry Fair also gives the institution the opportunity to educate the public about the valuable education programs available to reentrants and the national, international and Commonwealth certification programs offered which include auto mechanics, OSHA, warehousing, electronics, business and barber.



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Waymart Begins Dog Training Program

SCI Waymart has begun working with True Friends Animal Rescue out of Montrose, Pa., for its new dog-training program called "Furever Frends." The program trains dogs to be more adoptable.

Pictured with "Ralphie," a two-year-old terrier/bull mix, are Unit Manager Bobbie Bassett and Deputy Superintendent Ronda Ellett.



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Week of October 3...

Coal Township Names EOQ

Amy Kluck-Leonowicz, psychological services specialist, was recognized as SCI Coal Township's Employee of the Quarter for the Third Quarter of 2016. Amy was nominated by her supervisor.

Amy's supervisor stated that she consistently provides services that are above those required of her position. Amy's been integral in trouble shooting problems within the mental health aspect at the prison since her transfer to the facility. She frequently offers solutions that are "out of the box" and has been fundamental in ensuring the prison exceeds standards indicated in policy.

Superintendent Thomas McGinley commended Amy's job performance and presented her with the award as Employee of the Quarter at a recent Administrative/Department Head meeting.



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SECA's Underway

The 2016 State Employee Combined Appeal – the annual workplace charitable giving campaign for commonwealth employees – is underway! For over 30 years, SECA has enabled employees to support their favorite charities through flexible and convenient giving options. To raise awareness, interest and funds, facilities hold their own “kick offs.” SCI Waymart recently did so with a cookout.

At the cookout, employees were able to purchase and enjoy hamburgers and hot dogs with all the fixings, cold beverages, macaroni salad and potato salad. Employees volunteered to cook and serve the picnic fare. All proceeds from the event were donated to the SECA campaign.



Pictured, from left to right: Dennis Cush, Kristina Quinn, Roberta Griffis, Michelle Griffin, and James Mitchell.

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