

Correctional Newsfront

The official newsletter of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections



2015 News ~ April to June

Week of June 29...

Riverside Continues Donations to Worthy Causes

During the month of June 2015, Riverside Community Corrections Center residents and staff collected for the local Humane Society.

Donations included bags of dog food, cat toys, pet shampoo, dog/cat toys and pens/notebooks for the Humane Society projects.

"This is our second time collecting for our local Pittsburgh Humane Society," said Dan Coulehan, a counselor at the center. "We look forward to working with them again in the future."



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Dedication of a Memorial Wall

On July 1, officials at SCI Laurel Highlands gathered to dedicate a memorial wall that had been in the works for quite a while.



Pictured with the memorial wall are, left to right, Kenneth Myers and Ryan Yoder.

The history of the project is described here by Food Service Supervisor Kenneth Myers:

"Several years ago I had the thought of creating a permanent memorial on the grounds of SCI Laurel Highlands in remembrance of our co-workers who have passed, and also as a tribute to the brave men and women who selflessly serve the United States with the U.S. military. It was early summer of 2012 when I first approached then Superintendent Trevor Wingard about making this wall a reality, and while he was fully behind the prospect of this idea, the timing just was not right, with inspection season coming to a head in the fall, so it was put on hold. But, as anyone who knows me can attest, once I have an idea in my head, I will not rest until it happens, so immediately after inspection season was over, I again approached Superintendent Wingard who told me to form a committee and get started.

Once the committee was formed many great ideas were hashed out, however the biggest hurdle to overcome was money. This wall could only become a reality through donations, and no state funds could be used. Different groups and organizations stood tall and made substantial donations for this, including the prison's Employee's Association and Empowerment Association and the PA State Corrections Officers Association. Even our registered nurse supervisors collected from within their ranks to make a donation.

The committee meet with representatives from the Somerset County Career Training Center to help with a design and construction. Once a design was created, Mr. Lyons from SCCTC and his masonry students came to construct the wall.

The wall is built entirely of leftover bricks from many years of construction all over the grounds. The keystone at the top of wall, which is a symbol of our great state, was hand cut by Mr. Lyons as his gift for the wall.

Mr. Bittner and his carpentry class were the masterminds behind the beautiful plaque which I designed and they brought to life in a way that can only be described as spectacular.

The Memorial Wall Committee here started as a very good size group from all areas within the jail, but due to promotions, retirements and other job-related duties, the committee now consists of myself and Corrections Counselor 2/Veterans Service Coordinator Ryan Yoder. We hope you are as proud of this wall as we are."

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SCI Albion Graduates 18 Certified Peer Support Specialists



On June 19, 2015, SCI Albion held its second graduation for inmates in the Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPSS) program. Eighteen inmates graduated this year, bringing the total number of CPSS at the prison to 33.

“Peer support is a system of giving and receiving help founded on key principles of respect, shared responsibility and mutual agreement of what is helpful,” said SCI Albion Superintendent Nancy Giroux. “The peer support concept has been used for several years throughout the DOC and has helped to calm inmates, help them to understand and follow prison rules and also has helped to defuse situations.”

The Department of Corrections began the CPSS program for inmates several years ago and now has several hundred inmates providing support and counseling services to inmates across the state prison system. The services cover a variety of issues, including mental health issues.

In order to become a CPSS, inmates have to meet specific criteria, including having had mental health treatment at some point in their lives. Inmates receive a two-week, 80-hour training aimed at developing peer support skills for the purposes of augmenting staff service with active listening skills and support of other inmates.

Continuing education is an important part of the program, and inmates meet regularly with the program coordinators to continue to hone their skills, share experiences and discuss new ideas and concepts. CPSS must complete 18 continuing education units each year to maintain their certification.

Following release from prison, these specially-trained inmates are eligible for civil service employment in the community based upon their training and experience.

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SCI Graterford Recognized for Project Involving Brain Injury Assessment in Offenders

On June 29, the DOC received The Organization Award from the Brain Injury Association of Pennsylvania at their 2015 annual conference, which was held in Lancaster.

The award is presented to an organization or group of individuals whose efforts to focus on needs and to improve the lives of persons with brain injury have been clearly evident and have positively impacted lives.

"This is yet another example of Gov. Tom Wolf's deliberate work in the area of multi-agency cooperation," Corrections Secretary John Wetzel said. "'Government that Works' means agencies working together to identify areas that need addressed and successfully working to meet those needs in a way that benefits individuals and the community as a whole."

Employees from the State Correctional Institution at Graterford were recognized for being instrumental partners with the PA Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD) and the Brain Injury Association of PA (BIAPA) in demonstrating the problem of brain injury in prisons.

"Our partnership with PCCD and BIAPA has allowed SCI Graterford staff to screen inmates for brain injuries to determine what impact those impairments may have on an offender's reentry," said DOC's Acting Regional Deputy Secretary (and former SCI Graterford Superintendent) Michael Wenerowicz. "New needs have been identified as a result of this work, and we are working with community resources to connect offenders with services specific to this unique need."

"We are proud to have been a partner in this project. Every day we learn more about the impact that brain injuries have and the importance of treating them appropriately. This is also a great example of government agencies working collaboratively to identify an issue and address it. I congratulate Secretary Wetzel and SCI Graterford on receiving recognition for their hard work," said PCCD Chairman Josh Shapiro.

The award nomination was submitted by Dr. Drew Nagele, who works with Woods, a leading advocacy and service organization for people with exceptional challenges, disabilities and complex needs. He also serves as the treasurer for BIAPA. In his nomination, Dr. Nagele highlighted work SCI Graterford, PCCD and BIAPA officials have done on a joint project, entitled "NeuroResource for Prison Inmates with Brain Injury to Improve Re-Entry."

The project involved screening 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.

Neuro-Resource Facilitation 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. In his nomination, Nagele wrote:

“Through countless organizational meetings over the last two years, SCI staff has worked with us to discover that 73 percent of those referred to us who were leaving the prison after completing their sentence had evidence of an event that could have produced a brain injury. Furthermore, 75 percent of them demonstrated evidence of cognitive impairment severe enough to cause difficulty being successful in everyday living or work. Those inmates were then worked with to connect them into brain injury services and supports, and were then followed into the community to ensure that they did in fact get these services and supports. The staff at Graterford has been trained to do the brain injury screening and NeuroCognitive assessment. In fact, we believe that SCI Graterford is the first prison in the country to have two of their employees become certified brain injury specialists through the BIAA Academy for the Certification of Brain Injury Specialists.

Wenerowicz said that this was a cooperative initiative that involved more than just the state prison. “We also need to give recognition to the PCCD, BIAPA, DOC’s Bureau of Community Corrections, the PA Board of Probation and Parole and the PA Department of Labor & Industry’s Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Many individuals worked together to make this a successful venture and to make a positive impact on an individual’s life.”

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Muncy Employees Participate in Camp Cadet

SCI Muncy's Corrections Emergency Response Team recently participated in the Susquehanna Valley Camp Cadet program. The cadets received an overview of SCI Muncy and the DOC and career opportunities in corrections from Superintendent Robert Smith.

CERT Leader Lt. Hummel talked about the mission of special teams and provided play-by-play of their demonstration. The cadets then had the opportunity to apply these tactics to successfully regain control of an unruly "inmate."



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PA Prison Society's "Prisoner of the Year"

Recently SCI Huntingdon inmate Gary B., who also serves as the president of the prison's PA Lifers Association, was honored by the Pennsylvania Prison Society for his "encouraging manner in facilitating a variety of projects with the nine other inmate board members." According to the society, the activities were focused on inmate families, the prison community and the borough of Huntingdon.

Each year the Pennsylvania Prison Society selects and honors an inmate for related good deeds performed while in prison.

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SCI Greene Holds Career Fair

On June 24, SCI Greene's Education Department held a career fair for inmates. Participating vendors discussed services and provided information to 124 inmates who are within two years of release from prison.

The following companies were represented at the career fair:

Amachi Pittsburgh - Child and Family Engagement Services

Career Link

GEO Day Reporting – Cambria County – Re-entry Services

GEO Day Reporting – North Pittsburgh – Re-entry Services

Mon Valley Initiative – Re-entry Services

Prevention Point Pittsburgh

Shumar Welding & Machine Services, Inc.

Small Business Development Center – University of Pittsburgh

Westmoreland Community College

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Week of June 22...

Kids Share their Ideas of "Staying Safe at Work"

In recognition of National Safety Awareness Month, children of SCI Benner Township employees were invited to participate in the art project sponsored by the Office of Administration for the "Staying Safe At Work" campaign.

All children who participated will receive a certificate signed by Pennsylvania's First Lady Frances Wolf and a gift card sponsored by the Benner Employee Association. Ten submissions were received from children ranging in age from 18 months to 10 year of age.



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Overview of the DOC's Veterans Initiatives

By Christopher Reed, Veterans Coordinator, SCI Houtzdale

The Department of Corrections currently tracks approximately 3,722 incarcerated veterans within its 26 facilities.

"We regularly submit all of the names, dates of birth and social security numbers of our veteran inmates to the Department of Defense and they run our list through the Veteran Reentry Search Service (VRSS) to identify a list of our eligible veterans," Reed said. The purpose of doing this is to make sure we can match our veterans, a majority of whom will one day return home, with benefits for which they are or will return to being eligible for upon release from prison.

Reed said that the list isn't always accurate due to the fact that inmates provide falsified information during reception into the prison system.

"We take the VRSS list and use this as a guide to identify and verify our veterans," Reed added. "The only way to truly identify a veteran is by the DD-214. We have been educating our incarcerated veterans and our staff about how to obtain a copy of the DD-214 by using the SF180 or the online process."

As for specialized housing units, we have a Veteran Service Units (VSU) at SCI's Dallas and Pittsburgh. The VSU at SCI Pittsburgh has 48 beds and houses 44 veterans, and the one at SCI Dallas has 156 beds and houses 112 veterans. In 2014, 37 veterans paroled or completed their sentence while from the VSU's.

These units prepare veterans for successful release back into society through a variety of programming, such as addressing life skills, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, Traumatic Brain Injury, anxiety disorders, depression, substance abuse issues and homelessness. The following needs also are addressed: vocational, financial, family-related, medical, educational, veteran's services, peer support/mentoring and connecting to community resources. Specialized treatment programming for inmates who test moderate to high risk for reoffending also is offered.

VSU staff assist veterans in obtaining vital documents needed for re-entry such as: birth certificates, Social Security cards and DD-214s. Veterans are aided with the enrollment for VA benefits, as well as connecting with Veteran Service Organizations such as The American Legion, Vietnam Veterans of America (VVA) and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW). VSU social workers support veterans by collaborating with VA Health Care for Re-entry Veterans (HCRV) staff to facilitate the ability of veterans to effectively connect with VA resources.

The majority of VSU staff are veterans and, for the most part, are drawn from the existing institutional complement. Each VSU consists of a unit manager, a case manager, a drug and alcohol treatment specialist, a psychological services specialist/associate, reentry parole agent, certified peer support specialist and a

social worker. Corrections officers, preferably ones who have served in the Armed Forces, make up the majority of the security staff on the units.

The Department of Corrections also has contracted community corrections facilities that specifically house this special veteran population as they transition from the institution back into their community.

Through our work in this area, our DOC has helped the Delaware Department of Corrections establish a VSU at Sussex Correctional Institution, and the Connecticut DOC is interested in our program and has already made a trip down to see our VSU.

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Pioneer Institute's "Better Government Competition"

Earlier we mentioned that the DOC, along with other non-profit community groups and law enforcement agencies from across the U.S., will be recognized in Boston as a runner-up winner for the Pioneer Institute's "Better Government Competition" awards dinner. That event takes place on June 29. Here is a video where Dr. Bret Bucklen and Dr. Kiminori Nakamura discuss the submission:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aO7M3LKXUNs&feature=youtu.be>

(our section begins at 1:13)

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Honor Guard at CPOF Project



SCI Huntington's Honor Guard recently attended the CPOF Project held at Metropolitan Park in Jacksonville, Florida. The CPOF Project honors fallen corrections employees from across the nation who have been killed in the line of duty the previous year. In addition to honoring those who have been lost, this annual CPOF event also provides support and counseling to surviving family members. Honor Guard teams from all over the US and Canada were in attendance during this year's ceremony.

Pictured L-R are: Sgt. Crile, CO1 McMahon, Lt. Harker, Lt. Dickson, CO1 Clark, CO1 McDermitt and CO1 Hall.

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Deploying with Children in Mind

Two of SCI Cambridge Springs' employees – Facility Maintenance Manager 2 Nicolia and Corrections Officer Ryden -- are with the 171st Air Refueling Wing, Civil Engineering Squadron of the Pennsylvania Air National Guard.

Their unit is deploying to Daugavpils, Latvia, and will be working alongside the Latvian military to remodel an orphanage. The squadron will be staying at a nearby school.

When Mr. Nicolia announced his two week absence at an administrative staff meeting, the prison's Human Resources Officer Misty Knaus asked, "How old are the children and what do they need?"

This question generated an email to all employees at the prison, and imaginations and good will took over.

Working through the Latvian Embassy, we were able to get the eyeglass prescriptions for 15 children, and Pennsylvania Correctional Industries contributed 15 pairs of eyeglasses to the orphanage.

The result of everyone's efforts and generosity is what you see in the photo.



Pictured, right to left, are: Misty Knaus, CO Ryden and FMM Nicolia.

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Thanking Those Who Allow Us to Celebrate

Each year, the first full week in May is proclaimed "Corrections Employee Week" in Pennsylvania.

As a result, each state prison has a committee of employees who plan events and activities for employees. These events/activities take place in a way that does not cost the DOC nor does it interfere with employee work.

The week also is a time to celebrate at work through food. Thanks to our food service employees, they provide everyone else with fun food items. But when do they get to celebrate?

At SCI Graterford, that celebration for food service employees happened recently thanks to the coordination efforts of Acting Superintendent Cynthia Link.

"Due to the extra work that is required of culinary staff during Corrections Employee Week they don't really reap many benefits from the celebration," Link said. "So we held our own celebration just for them to recognize their work during Corrections Employee Week and to allow them to celebrate as well. It was a great boost for them and allowed us to connect in a relaxed atmosphere."

So, better late than never... Happy Corrections Employee Week to SCI Graterford's Culinary Staff!



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FACT Mural Created

A few years ago, inmates at SCI Graterford began working with the prison administration to begin a DOC-approved group called Fathers and Children Together (FACT). The goal of the program is to allow incarcerated inmates who have children to continue their contact with their children and continue to parent them from behind the walls of the prison.

Part of the program involved partnership with the prison's Mural Arts Project. Another group of inmates at the prison works with the City of Philadelphia Mural Arts Program to develop, design and paint murals that are then affixed to various buildings throughout the City of Philadelphia.

FACT inmates and their children worked with the Mural Arts Project to design and paint a mobile, 60-panel mural. This mural recently was unveiled and dedicated as part of Father's Day activities in the city. The mural, as of June 23, is now at 55th & Woodland in SW Philadelphia.



To learn more about this and other murals, visit www.muralarts.org

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DOC Meets Aggressive Goal for Mental Health Training

(June 23) – Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel, today, announced that the agency has completed an aggressive initiative to train every employee in Mental Health First Aid in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency (PCCD).

“Over a year ago, I tasked my training academy director and my Psychology Office staff with training each and every DOC employee in the area of Mental Health First Aid within one year,” Corrections Secretary John Wetzel said. “With more than

15,000 employees, this certainly was a task that many had thought was unachievable."

Wetzel said that DOC Training Academy Director Michael Dooley and his staff took the challenge head on.

"I am extremely pleased and proud to report that we have trained all DOC employees as of March 31, 2015," said Wetzel. "This is yet another example of a dedicated staff, in the face of many challenges, pulling together, seeing the end goal and getting the job done."

Moving forward, new DOC employees will receive the course during their basic training.

Similar to traditional First Aid and CPR, Mental Health First Aid is assistance provided to a person developing a mental health problem or experiencing a crisis until professional treatment is obtained or the crisis resolves.

"All too often we find that those incarcerated suffer from mental health issues. It is important that all parts of the justice system know how to identify the signs of mental illness and how to respond appropriately. That is why the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency has and will continue to fund these programs," said PCCD Chairman Josh Shapiro.

Employees complete an eight-hour training program that teaches them a five-step action plan to assess a situation, select and implement appropriate interventions and secure appropriate care for an individual experiencing a mental health problem. They also learn risk factors and warning signs of mental illness and about available mental health treatments.

The National Council oversees Mental Health First Aid nationally and credentials trainers. The DOC had 35 employees trained by the National Council to deliver the program in March 2014, and the DOC was the first organization to obtain and administer the new law enforcement version of the program. These staff trainers, with assistance from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, were deployed throughout the state prison system to plan and implement the program between April 2014 and March 2015.

The MHFA trainers were formally recognized for their dedication and commitment to meeting this challenging goal at the May 6, 2015, DOC Employee Awards Ceremony.

Corrections agencies seeking information on this program should contact DOC Training Academy Michael Dooley at (717) 364-9070.

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Week of June 15...

Highlighting Palliative Care Program

No one should have to be alone at the end of his/her life, regardless of the circumstances and the surroundings. This is the belief of a special group of employees and inmates at the State Correctional Institution at Camp Hill.

At this state prison, a special program for inmates nearing the ends of their lives – the Palliative Care Program -- is coordinated by Lenora Astore. Astore is the prison's medical records director, and she has been involved with the program since December 2014.

"Yes, these patients are inmates; however, they are also human beings," Astore said. "This program might be the patient's last chance to be given the opportunity to obtain some dignity....and this dignity might be the first time that the patient has ever been given in his entire life."

The ultimate goal of the program is to ensure that an inmate is not alone at the end of his life. The inmate specialists provide companionship for the very ill, and they also assist the medical staff in sitting with the inmate whenever staff has other things to do such as provide care to other patients in the infirmary. Some of the specialists have even been called to the infirmary to stay with the patient during the night time hours. Should anything happen, the specialist is there to get to the nursing staff immediately.

Thirteen inmates have completed training in order to serve as specialists in the Palliative Care Program. Training consists of 32 hours -- with 16 being class work and the remaining 16 involving clinical skills. Inmates must pass the skills test in order to graduate from the class.

During instruction, inmates learn about how different cultures and different religions handle death and dying. They also learn how to handle confidentiality, how to use different types of beds, how to feed an individual, how to help brush teeth and how to assist nursing staff when appropriate and approved.



No one should have to be alone at the end of his/her life,
regardless of the circumstances and the surroundings.

Lenora Astore, SCI Camp Hill



Inmates volunteer for the program, although plans are in the works to possibly pay them an hourly rate in the future. Inmates earn .19 to .43 per hour depending upon their assigned job. Those who volunteer to participate in the program are voted on by their housing unit managers and counselors. Once approved, they then begin instruction.

Once they graduate from the class, the specialists are under the supervision of the infirmary officer, the nurse on shift and Astore. They are checked on frequently throughout the day to make sure everything is going ok and that the specialist is where they are expected to be -- with the patient. Monthly meetings that to go over any issues that may have come up are held. A meeting also is held as soon as possible after an inmate death to provide support to the specialist and medical staff.

"I believe it takes a special kind of person to want to be a part of this program," Astore said. "They all have a heart and are very caring....otherwise, they would have never wanted to be a part of this. One of the specialists actually told me that he took so much from life before he became incarcerated that he believed it was time for him to give something back."

Similar programs are operated at SCIs Albion, Cambridge Springs, Dallas, Graterford, Greene, Laurel Highlands, Muncy and Smithfield and are known as "end of life" or "hospice" programs.

Statewide Efforts to Ensure Consistency

The consistency with which these institutions deliver this service is due to a partnership between DOC officials and Penn State University researchers. In 2011, the two entities worked together to study practices in this specific area and to develop guidelines for such a program.

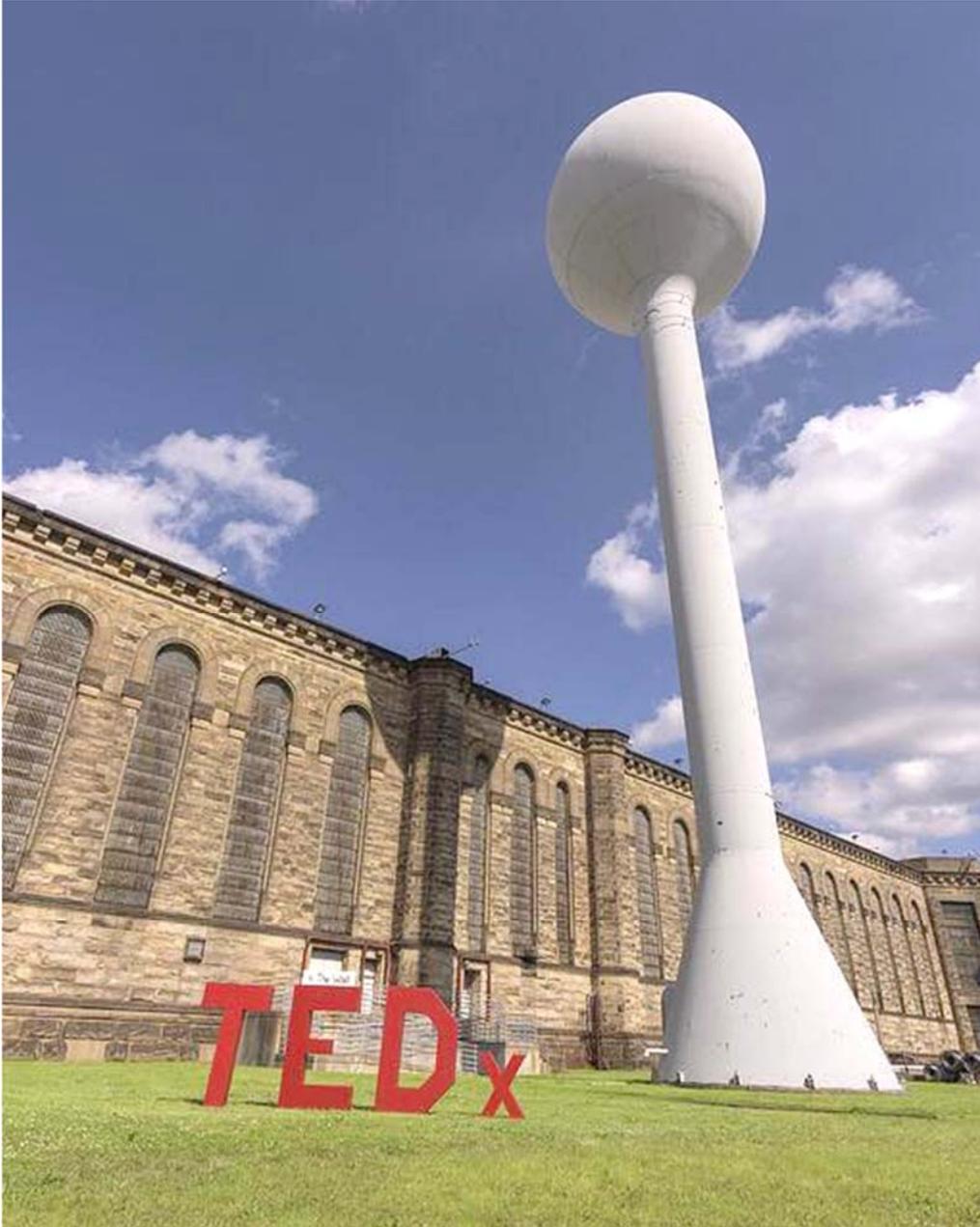
Penn State University conducted the study with a three-year grant from the National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Nursing Research. In 2010, researchers interviewed staff and inmates at six state prisons. In addition, the researchers and a group of DOC officials visited model end-of-life prison programs in California and Louisiana. The nurse-researchers developed a series of learning modules to raise awareness and provide best practices in the delivery of end-of-life care in corrections settings.

The end result was a "Toolkit for Enhancing End-of-Life Care," which was disseminated during the project and is now being converted into a computer based learning modules for DOC employees sometime in 2016.

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SCI Pittsburgh Hosts TEDx Event

On June 17, DOC officials held their third TEDx event at SCI Pittsburgh.



Speakers included:

Admiral Jonathan Greenert, chief of Naval Operations;
Award-winning multidisciplinary artist Vanessa German;
John Fetterman, mayor of Braddock, Pa.;

“Leadership Freak” Dan Rockwell;

Terri Robert, mother of the shooter of young Amish school girls in Lancaster in 2006;

Andrew Assini, assistant professor of psychology at Rowan University;

Judge John Zottola, Allegheny County Court of Common Pleas;

Dr. Christian Conti, creator of the "Yield Theory", a powerful approach to combining radical compassion with conscious education, and;

Sister Sue Fazzini, drug and alcohol treatment specialist supervisor at SCI Greene.

In addition to these speakers/presenters there were a number of inmate musical and dance performances and a performance from a Central Office employee, who played guitar and sang a song specially written for the event.

The event was covered by Pittsburgh Tribune-Review's Donald Gilliland, and the article he wrote can be viewed here: <http://triblive.com/news/allegheny/8577401-74/prison-wetzel-tedx#axzz3dNWx24c1>

Why are TEDx events important?

As quoted in the Tribune-Review article, Secretary Wetzel said,

**“If we're going to be talking
about prison reform, we should
do it in a way that's real.”**

As Gilliland wrote: That means upping the intellectual ante inside prisons and getting prison voices heard outside the walls, which is why Wetzel has put Pennsylvania forefront in the nation in the use of TEDx talks in prisons.

The DOC's first TEDx event was held at SCI Graterford in June 2014, and the second one – which was the first in the country to take place in a female prison – was held at SCI Muncy in November 2014. This was the first TEDx event specially aimed at prison staff.

DOC coordinators are Special Assistant to the Secretary Janet Kelley, Superintendent Marirosa Lamas and Deputy Press Secretary Susan Bensinger, with much logistical assistance provided by each host facility.

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Week of June 8...

Wetzel Confirmed

John Wetzel, on June 8, was confirmed 47-1 by the Senate as the DOC's secretary of corrections. He was nominated earlier this year by Gov. Tom Wolf.

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Laurel Highlands Celebrates Employees Week in June

While Corrections Employee Week in Pennsylvania is officially celebrated in May, officials at SCI Laurel Highlands postponed the celebration until June due to weather concerns.



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CEA Accreditation

Eight state prisons have earned accreditation through the Correctional Education Association (CEA). They are SCIs Benner Township, Chester, Coal Township, Fayette, Forest, Houtzdale, Laurel Highlands and Pine Grove.

“Employees of these facilities should be commended for a job well done. It takes a lot of work to prepare for this audit,” said Jeff Chiampi, chief of the Bureau of Correction Education’s eastern region.

The CEA Performance Standards for Adult and Juvenile Correctional Education Programs provide nationally-accepted guidelines for the operation of correctional education programs. The accreditation process, administered by CEA Standards Commission, furnishes correctional facilities with an independent evaluation of their education program against these recognized benchmarks. The Performance Standards for Adult and Juvenile Correctional Education Programs are comprised of 67 Standards in the four major categories of administration, personnel, program and students. To Be CEA accredited, all 24 of the required standards and at least 90% of the non-required standards must be passed.

The audit process has been streamlined by the electronic submission of state documentation prior to the auditor’s visit. This electronic submission allows the auditor an opportunity to become familiar with the local institution and how programs are expected to run. On audit day, auditors can now spend more time observing the delivery of programs. The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections has become a model for other states in the presentation of electronic education documentation to CEA.

CEA accreditation validates that our programs offer top quality education to incarcerated adults. Obtaining CEA accreditation gives our educational programs the credentials that rate them among the best in the nation.

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Week of June 1...

Center Residents Continue Donations to Local Initiative

During May 2015, residents at the Harrisburg Community Corrections Center (CCC) collected and donated 1,091 fruit, vegetable and flower seed packets to Green Urban Initiative.

The Green Urban Initiative (GUI) is a grass-roots nonprofit organization dedicated to fostering sustainable living in Harrisburg. Its community vegetable gardening program assists individuals, families, community groups, churches, businesses - or anyone else who's interested - in putting fresh, affordable, nutritious food on the table by establishing a network of gardens throughout the city of Harrisburg.

GUI assists in garden planning and installation, with gardeners taking on maintenance and caretaking responsibility after garden creation. GUI provides lumber, screws, soil, seeds, and gardening tips.

The residents of Harrisburg CCC have been donating seed packets to GUI each May for the past three years.



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Corrections Department to Receive Recognition

Incentive Language Used in Community Corrections Contracts Showing Positive Results

(June 4) -- The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, along with other non-profit community groups and law enforcement agencies from across the U.S., will be recognized in Boston in June as a runner-up winner for the Pioneer Institute's "Better Government Competition" awards dinner.

"This award adds to the national recognition our agency already has received for implementing performance-based contracts with privately operated halfway house providers in order to incentivize recidivism reduction," Acting Corrections Secretary John Wetzel said.

For this year's competition, which focused on innovative ways to address over-incarceration, recidivism, crime lab processes and other areas of America's troubled criminal justice system, 150 entries were submitted covering the topic of "Improving Public Safety and Controlling Costs in America's Criminal Justice System."

The DOC's submission -- Paying for Success in Community Corrections, by Dr. Kiminori Nakamura and Dr. Bret Bucklen – discussed an original approach to community corrections that directly builds the performance goal of recidivism reduction into contracts with privately operated halfway houses, providing financial incentives for recidivism reduction and penalties for increases in recidivism. The use of contractual recidivism performance targets helps 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. The Pioneer Institute award highlights not only the benefit of the performance-based contracting model, but also the benefit of this ongoing partnership model with Dr. Nakamura.

"During the first period of these new contracts, 11 community contract facilities (CCFs) significantly reduced their recidivism rate and thus qualified to receive a 1 percent pay increase," Wetzel said. "Overall, for the entire CCF system, the recidivism rate went down by 16.4 percent during this first period. It is estimated that this prevented approximately 58 potential victims of crime in Pennsylvania during this short first period. These are very encouraging and positive results."

Wetzel said that the department is eagerly awaiting the results from the second period of the contracts, which should become available in July 2016.

Pioneer Institute's Better Government Competition, founded in 1991, is an annual citizens' ideas contest that rewards some of the nation's most innovative public policy proposals. As Pioneer's signature event, the Better Government Competition Awards Dinner attracts hundreds of leaders in the business, non-profit, government and media communities.

Pioneer Institute is an independent, non-partisan, privately funded research organization that seeks to improve the quality of life in Massachusetts through civic discourse and intellectually rigorous, data-driven public policy solutions based on free market principles, individual liberty and responsibility, and the ideal of effective, limited and accountable government.

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Top Gun



SCI Greene Corrections Officer Trainee Alex Pinkney was presented the "Top Gun" award for demonstrating outstanding marksmanship with weapons while attending the Department of Corrections Training Academy April 20th to May 15th, 2015. Please extend your congratulations to him for a job well done.

Pictured, left to right, is Superintendent Robert Gilmore and COT Alex Pinkney.

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Graterford Employees Help Habitat for Humanity

On a warm Saturday morning in May, SCI Graterford employees gathered in Reading to lend a hand to the Habitat for Humanity of Berks County.

The idea was that of Empowerment Committee Chair Kerry Kerschner, who has been involved with the organization since working at Wernersville CCC.

Employees helped to break up and remove concrete and dirt from the basement of one of the units the organization is currently refurbishing.

While it was dirty, sweaty, hard work, the group left with a sense of accomplishment.

They completed their task long before the scheduled quitting time and were quickly invited back any time.



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SCI Greene Employees Participate in Relay for Life

By Tina St. Clair

The annual American Cancer Society Relay for Life kicked was held May 2 – 3, at the Waynesburg Raider Field of Pride. This year's theme was "Disney" and 37 Relay Teams participated, including a team of SCI Greene employees.

SCI Greene chose "Jungle Book" as its theme with Deb Haring and Leslie Wynn decorating the camp site. The Greene Team raffled a quilt (made by SCI Greene staff, the Pine Tree Quilt Shop, and Quilting by Olive), a summertime gift package and a kid's fun summer gift set.



Other events held were the Ms. Relay Contest, the best decorated spirit stick contest, and best decorated camp site. Team Sparx won for the best decorated camp site. The Entertainment Committee made sure to have something for people of all ages throughout the 24 hours such as soccer, Relay Queen contest, a live band and much more! This year all

walkers moved to the grandstands during the luminary service, which is always a beautiful touching service. At the close of the day, SCI Greene was at the platinum fundraising level.

Again, for the 9th year in a row, SCI Greene had walkers on the track for the entire 24 hours! This is pretty amazing as for the past seven years we were the ONLY team to accomplish this! Way to go SCI Greene!

Unofficial final results are that SCI Greene raised \$10,000 for the 2015 year. Official results will be announced later this week.

Thank you, SCI Greene employees, for all of your support and dedication to this very important cause.

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Canine Partners for Life Update

By Mike Smith

SCI Greene's service dog program through Canine Partners for Life (CPL) is progressing extremely well. All five canines successfully passed their 12-month training evaluations, and will shortly move on to specialized training at CPL, and will be matched to their recipient.

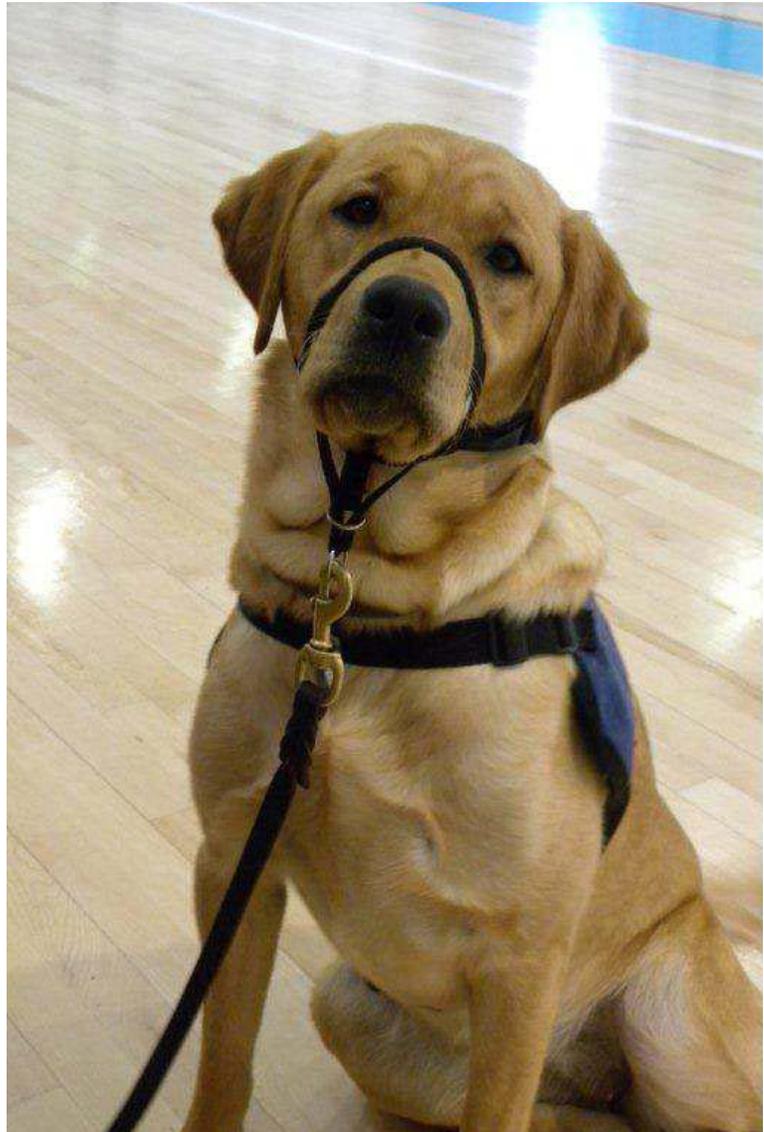
Canine "Amee," based on her physical attributes, will be utilized as a breeder for CPL, so hopefully in the future we may be lucky enough to train her litter.

The graduation date for our canines is yet to be determined, but CPL anticipates it will be in late June.

SCI Greene continues to house the canines until CPL has sufficient kennel space to begin their next phase of training. During this transition period, and to continue advanced training, the inmate trainers -- under the supervision of Erica Engel -- have been teaching skills such as "paying cashiers" and the "up" command for turning off/on light switches. This also helps our inmate trainers learn a variety of skills.

For those that may not have heard or seen, Channel 11 News -- WPXI-TV, Pittsburgh -- did a feature on our canine program, which aired in May.

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SCI Greene Holds "Hot Shot" Challenge

By Bob McCombie



SCI Greene's Activities Department recently held the 9th Annual Tim Seibel Memorial "Hot Shot" Challenge to benefit the American Heart Association. Tim Seibel was the prison's activities specialist who passed away from heart complications in May 2006 at the age of 49. The "Hot Shot" event is held each year in Seibel's honor. Seibel's wife and immediate family, who were in attendance, continue to be extremely grateful for the tribute and respect received from SCI Greene staff and inmates.

The staff event consisted of 19 male and female participants competing in a timed free throw and 3 point competition. The Activities Committee of Enrichment (ACE) sponsored the inmate part of the event, which included 37 participants who made charitable donations as well.

The winners were:

Men

FREE THROW

- 1st Jason Spiker
 - 2nd Tim Oswald
 - 3rd Craig Haywood
- Ladies

3-POINT

- 1st Darrin Grimm
- 2nd Michael Smith
- 3rd Jason Spiker

FREE THROW

- 1st Kayla Shaner
- 2nd Patricia Burd
- 3rd Angie Novak

3-POINT

- 1st Kris McCann
- 2nd Kayla Shaner
- 3rd Regina Gresko

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Riverside CCC Residents, Employees Continue to Give



In May, employees and residents of Riverside Community Corrections Center collected items for the Hill House's Accelerated Support Services for Older Person (ASOP) Program.

The Hill House, which is located in Pittsburgh's Hill District neighborhood, specifically asked Riverside CCC to donate laundry detergent, house hold cleaning products and non-perishable food items among other goods.

Their ASOP program provides intense care management to senior citizens, 60 and older, who were once released from prison or have had legal issues. Much like Riverside CCC and the Bureau of Community Corrections as a whole, this program helps to re-establish him/her in the community.

The picture speaks volumes for the amount of interest Riverside CCC residents took in this program and in helping those in need. Riverside CCC looks forward to continuing to volunteer our time and efforts to the Hill House and their generous programs.

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Inmates Give Back

SCI Retreat inmates recently donated \$445 to Hannah's Hope Pregnancy Shelter and \$351 to Gino J. Merli Veteran Center. The inmates raised the money via a fundraiser at the prison where inmates purchased donuts, with a portion of the proceeds benefitting these organizations. Several inmates also made direct contributions.

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Cleaning Up the Roads

SCI Graterford's inmate work crew is out and about cleaning up litter from alongside Pennsylvania's roadways. Most recently they were on Rt. 422 near King of Prussia.



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Inmates Complete Certified Peer Support Specialist Training

In May, 21 inmates at SCI Benner Township completed and graduated from Certified Peer Support Training.

Employees pictured with the inmates are: Front row - Roy Traina; Second Row - Jen Rossman, Terrance Smithers, Becky Costea, Brea Beish and Melissa Urbanick; Third Row - Troy Edwards and Jodi Stevens.



What is a Certified Peer Support Specialist?

Every Pennsylvania State Correctional Institution has trained select inmates as Certified Peer Support Specialists (CPS). In fact, more than 300 inmates system wide are now providing peer support and counseling services to the DOC inmate population, covering a variety of issues, including mental health issues.

In order to become a CPS, inmates have to meet specific criteria, including having had mental health treatment at some point in their lives.

These inmates receive an 80-hour training aimed at developing peer support skills for the purposes of augmenting staff service with active listening skills and support of other inmates. Continuing education is an important part of the program. Inmates meet regularly with the program coordinators to continue to hone their skills, share experiences and discuss new ideas and concepts.

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Graduation Ceremony Held

SCI Graterford held its commencement ceremony for the Class of 2015 on May 21, 2015.

A total of 57 men graduated, however only 27 participated in the ceremony. Of those 57, eight men graduated with a bachelor's degree from Villanova University, which they paid for themselves. All others were graduating from various vocational programs offered at the institution.



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Rockview Holds Turkey Calling Contest, Hunt

SCI Rockview conducted a turkey calling contest in April 2015, with judges being provided by the Nittany Valley Longbeards Chapter of the National Wild Turkey Federation (NWTF).

Four winners were chosen to guide four disabled veterans for a two-day Spring Gobbler hunt on Rockview property.

Through multiple meetings with the NWTF, a committee was set up and the event was planned and coordinated by Deputy Superintendents Mark Garman and Eric Tice and Lt. Sherm Lowery.

Four veteran hunters were chosen and participated in the two-day hunt, on May 21 and 22. All four veterans were successful in bagging spring gobblers.

Thanks goes out to the local PSCOA membership, who supported the event and hosted a reception for the hunters, the Nittany Valley Longbeards Chapter of the NWTF, and the Pleasant Gap American Legion for also supporting the event.

No cost was incurred by SCI Rockview. An article covering this event will appear at a later date in Turkey Talk magazine, which is the national magazine of the NWTF. SCI Rockview was honored to give back to these local wounded veterans.



Veteran DJ Emery from Howard, Pa., and CPTI Dimoff.



Veteran Vincent Reynolds from Lamont, Pa., and COI Hall.



Sgt. Intallura and Veteran Wade Swinehart from Lock Haven, Pa.



Veteran Angela Whitchey from Lock Haven, Pa., and Sgt. Kuhns.

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Sharing Beauty

Inmates at the State Correctional Institution at Cambridge Springs, located in Crawford County, have been working in the prison's greenhouse. Officials wanted to share the products of their labor.



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Week of May 25...

Swearings In

(May 28) -- Congratulations to Shirley Moore Smeal, who was sworn in today as executive deputy secretary for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections.

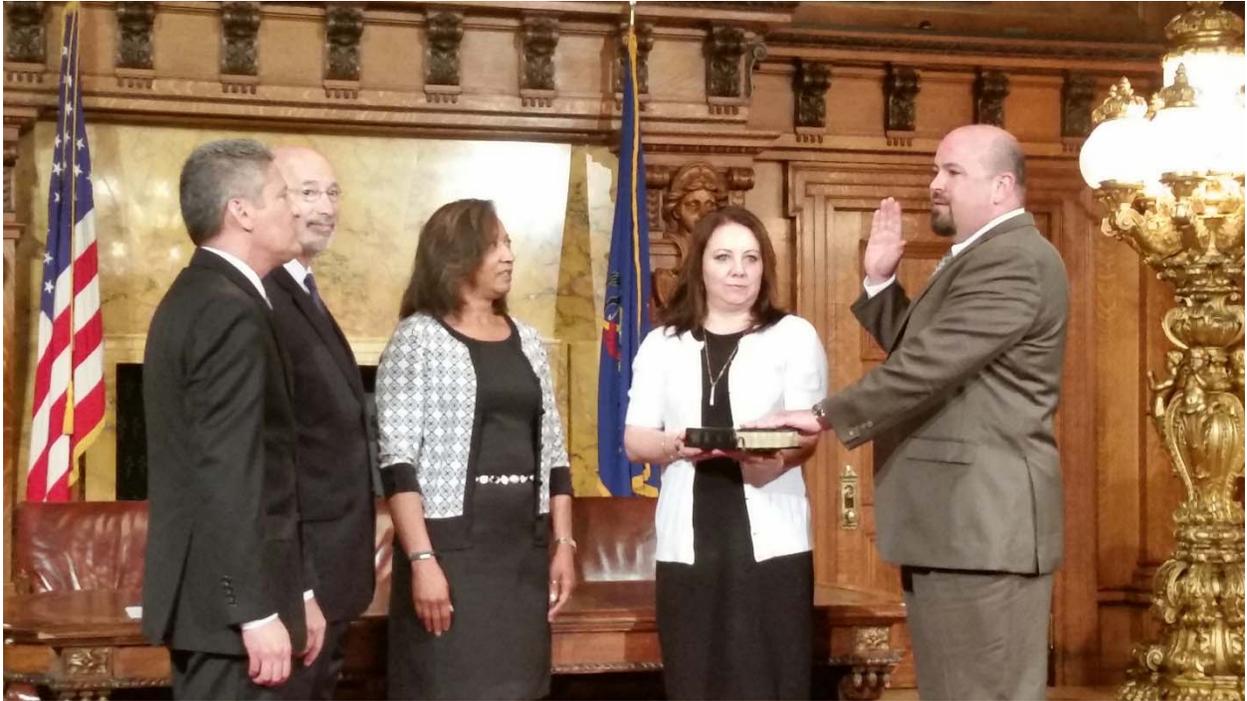
Moore Smeal has served in this capacity since 2010.

She began her corrections career in 1987 as a clerk typist at SCI Huntingdon. Since then she's served as purchasing agent, superintendent assistant, unit manager, executive assistant to the secretary of corrections and the deputy secretary of administration, superintendent, regional deputy secretary and executive deputy secretary.



Also sworn in today as DOC Deputy Secretary for Administration was Christopher Oppman. Oppman previously served as the DOC's director of Health Care Services since 2013. He began his DOC career in January 2010 as the health care administrator at SCI Pittsburgh. Oppman has experience in the private sector having worked as practice manager, center administrator, controller, contracts manager and human resource manager.

Congratulations, Deputy Secretary Oppman!



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Adult Corrections Professional of the Year

Recently, Sue Fazzini, drug and alcohol treatment specialist supervisor at SCI Greene, was awarded the PA Association of Probation, Parole & Corrections' Adult Corrections Professional of the Year award in recognition of her outstanding service provided to PA's criminal justice system.

Pictured are: SCI Greene Superintendent Robert Gilmore and Sue Fazzini.

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Patrone Appointed Corrections' Mental Health Advocate

Department of Corrections Acting Secretary John Wetzel, today, announced the appointment of Lynn Patrone as the head of the DOC's newly-created Office of Mental Health Advocate. In this capacity, Patrone reports directly to the secretary of corrections.

"We have made and continue to make significant improvements to our mental health services, and Lynn's appointment as our mental health advocate ensures that offenders are getting the treatment they should receive while in prison. Working independently from the DOC's Psychology Office, Lynn will ensure that offenders are connected with benefits upon their release from prison," Acting Secretary Wetzel said.

Wetzel said that Patrone's appointment will complement the already-existing checks and balances used in the DOC's mental health system.

"Lynn has a strong history of advocacy in this area," Wetzel said. "She also is a peer support specialist supervisor, is trained and in suicide prevention, and soon will be certified as a mental health first aid instructor. I can't think of a more-qualified individual to work closely with our Office of Psychology to ensure offenders with mental illness receive the treatment and benefits they deserve."

Patrone most recently served as executive assistant to the deputy secretary at the Office of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services (OMHSAS).

Prior to her work at OMHSAS, Patrone, who earned master's degrees in health education from both York College and Penn State University, worked as program director for the PA Behavioral Health & Aging Coalition.

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Fight Crime: Invest in Kids

Corrections Secretary John Wetzel and area district attorneys, police chiefs and sheriffs right now are releasing a new report from the anti-crime organization Fight Crime: Invest in Kids outside of State Correctional Institution Camp Hill.

The report shows how the \$120 million state funding proposal for expanding high-quality pre-kindergarten programs would boost high school graduation rates, reduce the number of people who are incarcerated in Pennsylvania and lead to more than \$350 million annually in Corrections and other cost savings over the lifetimes of the children served. The report highlights significant research documenting the impact of quality early childhood programs on educational and life outcomes for at-risk children and crime reduction.

Fight Crime: Invest in Kids ... www.fightcrime.org/pa



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Memorial Day Happenings...



Left: SCI Coal Township's Honor Guard participated in the area's Memorial Day Annual March.

Below: SCI Camp Hill employees, their friends and family members, along with the Enola American Legion Riders (led by their Road Captain Sergeant Cassell) placed flags on veterans' graves at Rolling Green Cemetery.



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Holocaust Survivor presentation at SCI Graterford

Submitted by Juanita Wilcox

On May 20, 2015, SCI Graterford employees were invited by Corrections Counselor 2 Juanita Wilcox to attend a presentation where Holocaust survivor Erica Herz Van Adelsberg -- who was accompanied by Beth Razin, manager of the Holocaust & Israel Programs at the Jewish Federation of Greater



Philadelphia – discussed her experiences from 1942-1945 when she was in two concentration camps: Westerbork and Bergen Belsen.

She also spoke of how in the Netherlands 120,000 Jews were taken and 102,000 were killed and how yearly the names of those 102,000 killed are read. Erica passed pictures around for staff to see where part of the railroad that took the Jews to the concentration camp has now been lifted. She described how now the rail points towards heaven. Erica's time in captivity ended with two weeks on a cattle train going east when they were liberated by Russian soldiers on April 23, 1945. Erica then returned to Amsterdam and attended school for one year. She later arrived in America in July 1946 and through the Quakers, Erica was admitted to and graduated from Olney Friends School in 1947. She was their first Jewish student.

Erica received her BS and MA degrees from Columbia University and has a Supervisory Certificate from the PA Dept. of Education. Erica speaks English, Spanish, German, Dutch and French. In 2006, Erica and her brother Ernest, who lives in London, attended the Bergen Belsen Memorial Site event. Erica's parents, now deceased, were Holocaust survivors and happy to have lived in America. Erica was married to Martin van Adelsberg, who was also a Holocaust survivor.

Erica is an amazing woman who survived the unthinkable. She mentioned ISIS and Cambodia and the horrors that still go on today. But we must never forget, and remember 4 words: Persecutor, Victim, By-Stander and Rescuer.

Through our Days of Remembrance event, SCI Graterford seeks both to commemorate this tragic history and to reflect on the lessons it holds for our lives today. We also pay tribute to the rescuers who risked their lives to save others during the Holocaust and to the American soldiers who liberated the concentration camps.

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Retirement of Regional Deputy Secretaries

Two regional deputy secretaries recently retired from the DOC – Michael Klopotoski and Daniel Burns. Both served many years with the DOC rising through the ranks all the way up to regional deputy secretary.



Regional Deputy Secretary Michael Klopotoski – front row center -- with prison superintendents from his region.



Regional Deputy Secretary Dan Burns – far left – with the superintendents from the western region.

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Eric Williams Race for Justice

Four members of SCI Dallas' Corrections Emergency Response Team (CERT) participated in the 1st Annual Eric Williams Run for Justice, which was held on Saturday, May 16, 2015. They had a time of 23:59 and came in second place in the law enforcement division, second to Canaan's SORT Team Members. This four-mile relay race was run at approximately 30 sites across the country.

The purpose of the event was to raise awareness pertaining to prison safety for corrections officers and staff and to raise money for the already-existing Eric Williams Scholarship Fund.



Photo (left to right): Deputy Zakarauskas, Joseph Moss, Joseph Maskalis, Joseph Fye, Brian Beers, Supt. Mahally, and Major Cirelli.

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Muncy Takes Pups to School

Recently, SCI Muncy staff visited Watsonstown Elementary School, where they gave a presentation on the dog training program. Here, Alice, waits to show off some of her newly-learned skills.

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Fishing Rodeo

On May 16, DOC Secretary John Wetzel co-hosted a fishing rodeo with Senator Rich Alloway for the Boys and Girls Club, Big Brothers/Big Sisters and Hoffman Homes in Ortanna.

The event was aimed at providing an opportunity for less fortunate youth throughout the 33rd Senatorial District to experience the wonders of fishing.

Each child participating in the event received a beginner fishing kit donated by Keystone Country Store. The Adams County Trout Unlimited Chapter provided prizes for the "First Fish Caught" and the "Biggest Fish Caught."



Staff of the Pennsylvania Fish and Boat Commission and members of the Adams County Trout Unlimited Chapter were on hand to assist youth in hands-on skills instruction. The youth rotated through stations throughout the morning and learned about casting, equipment, knots, fish, regulations and where to fish. There also was plenty of opportunity for open fishing.

Lorne Peters of the Butcher Block provided the luncheon, with Knouse Foods donating juice and applesauce for the kids.



In this picture, Sen. Alloway shares his knowledge of fishing with a young angler.

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Riverside CCC Residents Continue Cleaning Spree

On Friday May 15, 2015, Riverside CCC residents and staff conducted a litter pick-up of Beaver Ave. (road in front of Riverside CCC) and the Riverfront Trail, which runs along the back of SCI Pittsburgh.

Residents picked up bags worth of litter, as they combed through concrete and weeds to make the surrounding area a cleaner place for the citizens of Pittsburgh to walk and enjoy.

The residents of Riverside CCC also were able to feel a sense of pride for their hard work when they received positive feedback from the community.

Riverside CCC plans to continue cleaning up the city of Pittsburgh in order to show their dedication to the community and to make the city a more beautiful place for all residents.



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Week of May 11...

SCI Somerset Begins Work with Canine Partners for Life



From left to right: Nathan Jamison, Fetch-n-Go; Melanie Pyle, Unit Manager; Trevor Wingard, Superintendent; Jennifer Swank, Canine Partners for Life; Dr. Michael Nosko, Animal Medical Center; Kathy Bell, former employee and CPL volunteer trainer.

Superintendent Trevor Wingard, today, welcomed the Canine Partners for Life (CPL) Program and five puppies to the State Correctional Institution at Somerset.

This program uses inmates to train puppies to work as certified service dogs for individuals with physical and cognitive disabilities. The organization was started in 1989 by Darlene Sullivan, who started it in her home and has expanded to a 45-acre state-of-the-art kennel and campus that has placed more than 500 dogs in 43 states.

Earlier today, SCI Somerset received five puppies that will be trained at the facility for approximately one year. While the dogs are at the prison, they will be trained in basic obedience skills and provided socialization opportunities.

Carefully screened and selected inmate handlers will share their cell space and their lives for the next year as they work with the dogs. The CPL organization provides training to the inmate handlers and staff volunteers prior to the dogs' arrival. A former SCI Somerset employee, Kathy Bell, will work as the CPL volunteer trainer and will visit the prison at least every two weeks throughout the program to provide ongoing training and evaluations.

"This program, which is completely voluntary and involves no compensation for the inmates, will instill a sense of responsibility, discipline and social awareness for the inmates involved," Superintendent Wingard said.

Local veterinarians have volunteered to sponsor the dogs and will provide their resources to make sure the dogs receive the necessary medical care. The veterinary partners are Laurel Highlands Animal Health, Richland Veterinary Hospital & Animal Medical Center. In addition Fetch-N-Go Feed & Pet Supply will work with the prison to supply food and other canine supplies for the dogs.

"These sponsors make this type of program possible, and we greatly appreciate their assistance and efforts," Wingard said.

Prison employees also will volunteer their time to oversee the program, and they have the opportunity to help train dogs and take them home for weekend visits after completing a 12-hour training.

After a year at SCI Somerset, the dogs will return to the CPL campus, located in Cochranville, Pa., for advanced training for an additional year to be able to adapt to the particular needs of a person with limited mobility. This training includes tasks such as turning on light switches, helping a person change clothes, assisting with a wheelchair, retrieving items such as a phone and similar duties that help people become more independent. SCI Somerset will receive a new group of puppies to train in the same manner.

"We are excited to have this opportunity and to train puppies. It allows our employees and specifically our inmates to give back to society by enriching the lives of those in need.

To learn more about Canine Partners for Life, visit their website at <http://k94life.org/>

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Presentation of ACA Certificate

This morning, Regional Deputy Secretary Tabb Bickell presented employees at SCI Cambridge Springs with their ACA accreditation certificate. Congratulations, SCI Cambridge Springs!



Pictured in photo from left to right:

First Row: Louis Woodward, Amy Boylan, Deputy Secretary Bickell

Second Row: Kim Sittig, Cindy Ondish, Tony Rentz, Superintendent Torma, Deputy Przybrowski

Third Row: Robyn Sye, Mark Nicolia, Major Lang, Rev. Johnson

Fourth Row: Debra Applebee, David Wescott, Barbara Healy, Misty Knaus

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Presentation of ACA Certificate

Last week, Regional Deputy Secretary Dan Burns presented employees of SCI Albion with their ACA accreditation certificate. Congratulations, SCI Albion!



Pictured, left to right: Deputy Superintendent Michael Clark, Superintendent Nancy Giroux, Major of Unit Management Melinda Adams, Deputy Superintendent Barry Smith Jr., Regional Deputy Secretary Dan Burns, Classification Programs Manager Valarie Kusiak and Superintendent Assistant Roni Martucci.

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Retirees' Breakfast

As part of Corrections Employee Week, SCI Coal Township hosted a breakfast for prison retirees on May 7. It was attended by 53 retired employees.



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Smithfield holds retirees breakfast

SCI Smithfield hosted a retiree's breakfast on May 8 in honor of Corrections Employee Week. Part of those festivities included a flag retiring ceremony conducted by the institution's honor guard. The retired flag was presented to Superintendent Kauffman.



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Chester Holds Employee BBQ

As part of Corrections Employee Week, SCI Chester held an employee BBQ.



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Balloons Were Flying

As part of Corrections Employee Week, SCI Forest senior staff agreed to be sitting targets for a water balloon slingshot fundraiser. They raised \$161 to benefit the wounded officers at SCI Houtzdale.

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SCI Benner Township Hold Staff Essay Contest



Left to Right: Lt. Klinefelter, Micah Doggett and Deputy McMahon

“What Corrections Means to Me”

Submitted By: Micah Doggett

Being part of the Department of Corrections is a huge responsibility. It is more than just a method of punishment for those who violate our civil laws. If punishment were the Department of Corrections' only purpose, it could be called department of timeout. However, this is not the case. We are to help guide, direct, and discipline those who have made wrong choices and be a catalyst or agent of change promoting what is right. Inmates that get paroled out of prison should not be the same as when they entered into our prisons. Rather, they should be changed and remorseful for their actions and thankful

for the opportunity to have another chance in the world. Their time in prison should help remold or correct their thoughts, behaviors and actions so their desire is to turn from their former ways and be changed. Sadly, this is not always the case. Far too often we end up seeing the same faces resurface back in prison.

The impact we have and the impact we choose to have can differ drastically by our approach. I am reminded of Aesop's fable with the wind and the sun competing against each other to see who can make the coat come off the man walking. As the fable goes, the wind boast about his strength and blows to try and make the man's coat come off. As this does not work, the wind tries even harder by blowing an even bigger gust of wind. Surely the wind thought that the coat would be blown off the man. But to the wind's dismay, the man clutched his coat and held it even tighter. Discouraged, the wind gave up. Now it was the sun's turn to see if he could make the man's coat come off. Instead of trying to force the coat off the man like the wind, the sun beamed brightly and warmed the day. The sun made the day so warm that the man became hot and took off his coat. The moral of the story is that being forceful is not always the best way to accomplish a task.

As a parent, I am constantly faced with having to correct my children. My intent in correcting is not to be mean, but rather to guide and instill morals of what is right and wrong with a hope that they listen and embrace the good I have taught them. I can be a legalistic dictator telling my kids to do this or don't do that, but this approach is not received well. The reciprocal of this would be for me to be an example of what I want my kids to exemplify, and encourage them when they make good choices and make corrections as I see them straying from good decisions. As Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe said, "Correction does much, but encouragement does more."

Corrections for life is altering the way things were done after being enlightened that there is a better way. Webster's Dictionary defines the word correction as, "a change that makes something right, true, accurate, etc." In the Department of Corrections we are entrusted to give guidelines and to enforce the rules by being firm, fair and consistent with our corrective measures. This too is not meant to be mean but to expose and correct flawed behavior that is not accepted. Corrections is more than just discipline. It is a deliberate act of making corrections. It is instilling a paradigm shift from the former ways inmates acted. The prison system is a structured place for making corrections to inmate's behavior. That is why it is called the Department of Corrections.

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Greene Holds Events to Celebrate Corrections Employee Week

SCI Greene employees celebrated Corrections Employee Week with a variety of organized events, including the Retiring of the Flag and Memorial Wall Ceremony, a facility perimeter walk, pizza party and with the administrative staff serving lunch.



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Week of May 4...

CORRECTIONS EMPLOYEE WEEK

Gov. Tom Wolf has
proclaimed May 3-9, 2015, as
"Corrections Employee Week"
in Pennsylvania.

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PROCLAMATION
CORRECTIONS EMPLOYEE WEEK
May 3-9, 2015

WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's correctional system is the oldest in the nation, evolving from the establishment of Philadelphia's Walnut Street Jail in 1773 and the Eastern Penitentiary in 1829; and

WHEREAS, the "Pennsylvania System," as it became known, was the leading influence in the development of penology throughout the 19th Century and the forerunner of modern corrections; and

WHEREAS, today, Pennsylvania faces new and difficult challenges in corrections. With 25 state correctional institutions, one motivational boot camp, a training academy, 13 community corrections centers and 43 contract facilities, 63 county prisons and jails and 15 federal facilities and offices, our correctional facilities house more than 101,000 inmates; and

WHEREAS, the secure and safe operation and management of those facilities on a daily basis rests in the hands of more than 31,000 trained, skilled and dedicated corrections professionals. They are administrators, corrections officers, counselors, treatment specialists, educators, clerical support staff, business administrators and purchasing agents, personnel and labor relations specialists, clergy, medical professionals, food service specialists, computer technicians, planners and research analysts and skilled craftspeople upon whose skills, efficiency and professionalism the functions of the Pennsylvania correctional system depends; and

WHEREAS, although each of these dedicated professionals works in a different field and specializes in a specific area, all are committed to a common goal: the secure, safe and humane operation of our commonwealth's correctional facilities where employees work to reduce future crime through the delivery of programs to change offenders' criminal behavior.

THEREFORE, I, Tom Wolf, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, do hereby proclaim May 3-9, 2015 as CORRECTIONS EMPLOYEE WEEK in Pennsylvania. I encourage all Pennsylvanians to recognize the vital role these dedicated professionals play in ensuring the effective operation of our correctional system in the interest of public safety.

GIVEN under my hand and the Seal of the Governor, at the City of Harrisburg, on this twenty-first day of April in the Year of our Lord two thousand and fifteen, and of the Commonwealth the two hundred and thirty-ninth.



TOM WOLF
Governor

Employee Safety

DOC officials, particularly those from the Bureau of Operation, have been charged with helping to improve employee safety at all of the state prison system's facilities as part of a statewide safety initiative.

The result of their efforts was the first ever Safety Fair that was held at SCI Pittsburgh in early April. Including vendor displays highlighting safety related items, the fair was successful with more than 300 employees from the western region attending.

Blood pressure and blood sugar level screenings were conducted by medical staff, and the DOC's Security Division display items that had been confiscated during searches and provided information on what to look for when dealing with inmates. SCI Pittsburgh's Food Service Division displayed many items related to food safety.

Participants had an opportunity to sign the Safety Pledge Poster. Each signature received a packet card indicating their commitment to safety.

Additionally, the Office of Administration's director of Absences and Safety donated two \$10 gift cards to be awarded to the two finalist that submitted safety suggestions.

In addition, the DOC's Agency Scorecard was on display. According to the scorecard, the DOC has improved safety through an 11 percent reduction in employee accidents.

DOC officials continue to plan for additional Safety Fairs, with the next regional one scheduled for July 28 and 29, 2015, at SCI Mahanoy.

The DOC also will distribute a safety booklet to all DOC employees. The booklet is intended to provide safety tips and information to help result in fewer workplace accidents.

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Donations for Local Organization

Riverside Community Corrections Center residents and staff collected dry erase boards, dry erase markers, dry erase erasers, stickers and other art supplies for Urban Impact's Educational Department.

The dry erase supplies were crucial as they will be utilized in the literacy program of Urban Impact's Educational Department.

Urban Impact's philosophy is to start kids off on the right path so that they will lead us to greatness. Urban Impact is changing Pittsburgh's North Side one person, one family, one block at a time – and it all starts with a child or young person.

Urban Impact believes that if we impact the lives of children early on by giving them options and hope for the future, they will become productive members of the community and have a positive, lasting impression on society.

Riverside CCC and the Department of Corrections also has a similar philosophy. It's with this connection that Riverside CCC will continue to volunteer our services to Urban Impact.



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Recidivism Rates Drop in PS State Prison System

Harrisburg, PA – Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel today announced what he called “exciting” statistics on recidivism in the state corrections system demonstrating that prison reform efforts are showing concrete results in the area of public safety.

The DOC released updated statistics that show six-month, one-year and three-year recidivism rates for the years of 2000 through 2013 that show all three rates dropped in the latest year.

“These are exciting numbers and show that we're making real increases in public safety,” Wetzel said. “I look forward to continued work with the General Assembly, the law enforcement community and Governor Wolf to continue this important trend.”

For example, based on the latest one-year recidivism rate drop from 2013 to 2014, there were approximately 1,028 less individuals released from the DOC who broke the law or violated the rules of their supervision.

Wetzel noted that the reduction in overall recidivism rates took place at the same time that crime rates were dropping in Pennsylvania. The DOC’s overall recidivism definition is the first instance of any type of rearrest or reincarceration after an inmate is released from prison.

“The sizes of the one-year and six-month drops in the recidivism rate are especially noteworthy,” Wetzel continued. “These rates reflect DOC’s most recent performance since the Justice Reinvestment Initiative was enacted.”

Wetzel pointed out that, in addition to these drops in the recidivism rates, the DOC, over the last few years, has experienced the largest decrease in prison population in decades and, in 2014, experienced the lowest number of court commitments in seven years.

The DOC statistics show:

- The latest three-year recidivism rate is the lowest rate the DOC has ever recorded.
- The latest three-year recidivism rate is also the second largest drop in the three-year recidivism rate from the previous year (from 61.4 percent in 2010 to 59.5 percent in 2011).
- The latest one-year recidivism rate is the second lowest the DOC has ever recorded.

- It is also by far the largest drop in the one-year rate from the previous year (from 40.4 percent in 2012 to 35.1 percent in 2013 – or a drop of 5.3 percentage points).

- The latest six-month recidivism rate is the lowest the DOC has ever recorded.

- It also is the largest drop in the six-month rate from the previous year (from 24.1 percent in 2012 to 19.0 percent in 2013, or a drop of 5.1 percentage points).

“The decrease in new court commitments, which is a driver of this recidivism reduction, is proof that the efforts of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative are working. All stakeholders in this process – including the General Assembly and district attorneys – should be credited for their on-going, bi-partisan efforts,” Wetzel said.

Wetzel also acknowledged ongoing DOC and PA Board of Probation and Parole employee accomplishments that continue to improve cooperative efficiencies – showing that in the state’s criminal justice system, government works.

In 2013, DOC officials released a groundbreaking recidivism report, which included the last recidivism numbers reported by the DOC before these new numbers. The 2013 recidivism report also included an updated definition of recidivism, which provided a more accurate and

Year	Overall Recidivism Rates			Crime Rates	
	6-Mo Rate	1-Yr Rate	3-Yr Rate	Part 1	Part 2
2000	21.4%	37.2%	63.4%	2,816.1	5,139.4
2001	22.6%	38.6%	63.1%	2,612.0	4,653.9
2002	21.7%	37.7%	63.1%	2,601.3	4,898.7
2003	21.0%	37.6%	63.0%	2,603.1	4,912.9
2004	20.7%	37.5%	63.8%	2,635.6	5,037.8
2005	22.2%	38.6%	64.4%	2,673.9	5,015.2
2006	20.2%	36.4%	62.7%	2,727.0	5,184.0
2007	19.9%	35.8%	62.2%	2,715.5	5,285.4
2008	20.6%	37.0%	62.0%	2,791.7	5,303.7
2009	20.8%	35.5%	61.1%	2,617.0	5,060.1
2010	20.0%	35.0%	61.4%	2,537.6	4,796.5
2011	23.5%	39.1%	59.9%	2,586.9	4,689.9
2012	24.1%	40.4%		2,534.5	4,650.3
2013	19.0%	35.1%		2,402.8	4,478.2

NOTE: Crime Rates represent the number of reported crimes per 100,000 PA residents. Part 1 crimes are more serious crime types, and Part 2 crimes are less serious crime types. All crime rates are taken from the PA State Police Uniform Crime Report (UCR) published numbers.

comprehensive view of recidivism in terms of an individual’s contact with the entire criminal justice system. It also provided a baseline for moving forward that focuses on performance-based recidivism reduction outcomes.

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Annual Awards Ceremony Held

On May 6, officials gathered during Corrections Employee Week to recognize DOC employees for their outstanding performance, heroic actions, for serving as mentors and for being exception, dedicated employees.

Nearly 120 employees were nominated for the 17 awards.



Pictured here are the recipients of the DOC's Outstanding Performance Award, along with Secretary John Wetzel.

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Week of April 27...

Victim Speaks to Coal Twp. Employees, Inmates

On April 23, in honor of Crime Victim's Rights Week, SCI Coal Township introduced a special guest speaker, Erica Clark, from a distinct group of people called, "Resilient Voices." This group is based out of the Office of Victim Assistance (OVA).

Clark explained she had been asked to participate in a documentary titled, "Finding Jen's Voice." This documentary is about a pregnant woman who was shot and killed by her lover in Lehigh County, Pa. During Clark's research preparing for the documentary, she discovered that homicide is the leading cause of death of pregnant women. She found this very alarming, and as she researched further, she discovered a link to OVA and the group "Resilient Voices." Clark said she had always wanted to speak out about being the victim of violent crimes and felt that she could use her negative experience to do something positive.

More than 50 inmates and 25 employees attended the presentation and sat captivated as Clark shared her own story of being a young woman involved with an abusive boyfriend and the struggles she went through feeling as though it was her fault. Clark was able to move past the relationship and went to college. One night, during her senior year, while walking across campus at nighttime, she was attacked and savagely raped by another student. Clark shared how her own parents were overcome with grief and blamed themselves for not protecting her. She said that was a turning point for her in her fight against violent crime.

"You don't have the right to make my dad cry," Clark said.



Pictured, left to right, are: Treatment Specialists Mike Schmid and Jill Fisher, Erica Clark and Superintendent Vincent Mooney.

She spoke about how her struggles affected her family and even her marriage, eventually leading to divorce. She told the inmates that in order for the forgiveness progress to begin, they first have to forgive themselves and to be more than the DOC letters written on their backs. Clark was willing to take questions from the audience. Following her presentation, she was presented with a certificate of appreciation from Superintendent Vincent Mooney for her unwavering efforts for victims of violent crimes.

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Meet the New Drug Interdiction Unit Cadet

Please meet the new Drug Interdiction Unit (DIU) cadet, Corrections Officer 1 Christine Grove. She began her career in April 2006 at SCI Houtzdale and was recently transferred to the DIU on March 23, 2015. Officer Grove began her 11-week drug detector dog team training on April 20.

The pictures are of Officer Grove and K-9 Diesel (black lab) and Officer Grove and K-9 Gaston (red Vizsla) on a rapport walk.



Rapport walks are done to build rapport between dog and handler. During the walk handlers stop at intervals to teach grooming, ear cleaning and taking temperatures. Emergency muzzling and common first aid practices are also taught. Rapport walks are usually 2-3 miles per dog. Officer Grove will train with both dogs during the 11-week academy and will then be teamed with the canine that is best suited for her.

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Employees Recognized

Six SCI Coal Township employees and one Northumberland County Prison employee were recently recognized as SCI Coal Township's Employees of the Quarter for the First Quarter 2015.

The award recipients were nominated by their fellow workers and honored by the institution for their outstanding performance during a recent crisis situation whereby each employee demonstrated exceptional professionalism and teamwork.



Pictured, left to right, are: Sgt. Yoder, NCP Sgt. Pugh, Sgt. Gonzalez, RN Lynette Rich, CO Passarretti, CO Batiulk and CO Burgos.

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Center Residents Continue Cleanup Efforts

On April 18, Riverside Community Corrections Center residents and staff participated in the "Love our Block: Manchester Beautification" cleanup. Riverside CCC's primary role was planting eight trees on the site of a local playground. Residents learned about the process of planting such large trees and worked together as a team to accomplish this task. Riverside CCC has partnered with Manchester in the past and will continue to volunteer our time and effort to help this local community.

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