

# *Correctional Newsfront*

*The official newsletter of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections*



## **2017 News ~ January to March**

Week of March 27...

### **Corrections Leaders Visit with White House Staff on Key Criminal Justice Issues**



Earlier this week national and state corrections leaders visited the White House this week to discuss several central issues that they believe impact public safety in their states and others across the country.

The leaders, representing Alabama, Kentucky, Pennsylvania and Utah, discussed a range of issues with members of President Trump's Domestic Policy Council and the White House's Intergovernmental Affairs team, including the importance of reentry and the value of Congress's Second Chance Act, the need to get business leaders' insight on putting formerly incarcerated people to work, and more closely examining crime nationally and locally to understand the latest trends.

"The Trump administration has made their commitment to public safety clear, and we met to discuss how the good work of corrections officials to reduce recidivism and improve public safety can be a key part of that equation." said Kevin Kempf, former director Idaho's Department of Correction and now director of the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA). "Corrections administrators collectively oversee more than 400,000 staff members and supervise more than 8 million people. The impact we can make is enormous, and following a very productive meeting with the White House, we're excited about the next steps."



Kempf was joined by members of ASCA, including Commissioner of the Alabama Department of Corrections Jefferson Dunn, Secretary of Pennsylvania's Department of Corrections John Wetzel and Utah Department of Corrections Executive Director Rollin Cook, as well as Kentucky's Justice and Public Safety Cabinet Secretary John Tilley, and Michael Thompson, director of The Council of State Governments Justice Center.

"It's important for people to fully grasp the evolution of corrections in this country. We've passed the days when a corrections administrator's sole duty was to keep people from climbing over the wall," said Commissioner Dunn. "We've realized that

90 to 95 percent of the people in our facilities are eventually going back to the community, and we need to think about how we can manage that transition to make it both safe and successful."

Secretary Wetzel added that the decreases states are seeing in recidivism amount to the same kind of crime reduction that the White House is championing.

"Every industry learns new ways to be successful and updates its practices. Corrections should be no different. Doctors don't put leaches on people anymore in order to cure the flu. We need to continue to apply the strategies that are proven to work to ensure people don't come back here," Secretary Wetzel said. "Successful reentry is real crime reduction, and corrections officials' have a huge role to play in improving our nation's public safety."

This week's meeting came on the heels of President Trump's creation of the White House Office of American Innovation, which will look to business models to help inform improvements in the operation of government. Secretary Tilley noted the benefit of insight that can be gained from the business community when tackling the challenges formerly incarcerated people face when reentering society.

"Ask any person in prison to name the most important thing they need to succeed in the community upon their release. The response will almost always be the same: 'I need a job,'" said

Secretary Tilley. "I've been working in criminal justice for 25 years and I've never seen the business community this engaged in these issues. With those leaders at the table, we can better understand the opportunities and challenges associated with hiring a person with a criminal record."

"Every industry learns new ways to be successful and updates its practices. Corrections should be no different. Doctors don't put leaches on people anymore in order to cure the flu. We need to continue to apply the strategies that are proven to work to ensure people don't come back here," Secretary Wetzel said. "Successful reentry is real crime reduction, and corrections officials' have a huge role to play in improving our nation's public safety."

---

John E. Wetzel, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections

The meeting also came shortly after the U.S. Department of Justice announced the formation of Crime Reduction and Public Safety Task Force, which will be charged with developing strategies to reduce crime and improve public safety. All the corrections leaders agreed that thoughtful approaches to reducing recidivism will be an important part to ensuring those the efforts of the task force prove successful. "The transition process needs to begin the day these folks are incarcerated," said Executive Director Cook. "I've been in corrections my whole adult life, and we know

now that just incarcerating people doesn't stop recidivism. And if we don't properly address that, our communities are the ones at risk."

Learn more about this week's visit to Washington by viewing this video:

<https://youtu.be/PryCM6ADFqE>

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **"Celebration of Gender Diversity"**

Last week two DOC employees were presenters at last week's "Celebration of Gender Diversity," a statewide conference that drew 700 people to the Sheraton in Harrisburg.



Dr. Wayne Popowski (left) is the senior psychologist with the Bureau of Health Care Services and the agency's LGBTQ specialist. David Radziewicz is the Prison Rape Elimination (PREA) coordinator for the DOC. The topic of their talk was "Providing Support Systems for Transgender Inmates."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Pittsburgh Hosts Friends and Family Day

On March 24, 2017, SCI Pittsburgh held a Friends and Family Day event for juvenile lifers at the facility. This event was coordinated to give the juvenile lifers and their friends and family members an opportunity to meet with staff members from different departments and agencies in order to learn about initiatives and procedures that have been developed and implemented to prepare these individuals for potential release.



The following individuals spoke at the event about the topics identified:

- Mark Capozza, SCI Pittsburgh superintendent – welcoming remarks
- Rene Adams, acting deputy superintendent for centralized services – overview and introductions
- Robert Hammond, DOC Central Office staff assistant/project manager - history and juvenile lifer initiatives
- Francilla Allen, psychological services specialist - support groups
- SCI Pittsburgh juvenile lifers - discussion of experiences
- Parole Supervisors Justin Schaup and Ebony Marcelle-Rudolph - parole procedures
- Julian Rubeo, program manager, and Brian McCollim, contract facility coordinator – overview of the Bureau of Community Corrections
- Rebecca Witt, corrections counselor, and Tim Ross, SCI Laurel Highlands parole agent - experience with two successful juvenile lifer releases
- Questions and answers

A number of DOC and PBPP officials also attended the event, which received positive feedback from all in attendance.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## CIT De-escalation Training Held

Last week, the DOC's Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training Program Manager Lt. Virgil Meyer and SCI Frackville Unit Manager Rhonda Tomcavage attended CIT De-escalation Training at the Holiday Inn Harrisburg/Hershey. The training was delivered by Dr. Randolph Dupont, Dr. Thomas Kirchberg and Major Sam Chochran (Retired), the founders of the Memphis CIT Program.



The training covered the Memphis Model Crisis Intervention Team verbal de-escalation strategies, advanced verbal skills training, training scenario development, stages of an escalating crisis and complete teach backs of the lessons instructed during the conference. The Memphis CIT team critiqued and provided constructive feedback to enhance our skills as a trained CIT instructor. We earned 18 credit hours from the University of Memphis Department of Criminology and Criminal justice, CIT Center School of Urban Affairs and Public Policy.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Wetzel Speaks at Kutztown University

On March 24, DOC Secretary John Wetzel was a speaker at Kutztown University on the topic of social justice for the family environment.

This is the first of a three-part trilogy conducted by the university that will address various family experiences – starting with incarceration and followed later by addiction and then military veterans.

Attendees, of which there were about 700, included faculty, students, community leaders, government officials, agency directors and social work professionals from across Pennsylvania.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **April 2 – 8 is National Crime Victims' rights Week**

On Monday, April 3, Commonwealth Victim Advocate Jennifer R. Storm will join crime survivors, representatives from the District Attorney's Association and the Crime Victims Alliance of PA, for a rally at the state Capitol to kick off National Crime Victims' Rights Week. The event begins at 11 a.m. in the Capitol Rotunda.

The Office of Victim Advocate planned this rally to show support and to raise awareness about crime victims' issues and rights. Last year, more than five million individuals were a victim of a crime, and there were nearly 15 million property victimizations, according to the 2015 National Crime Victimization Survey conducted by the Bureau of Justice Statistics.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **How DOC Facilities are Honoring Crime Victims' Rights Week**

### **Albion:**

- Art Contest with an uplifting logo and theme/quote. One logo will be geared towards adolescents, one geared for adults and one universal one. The end result will hopefully be converting the winners into a mural in the visiting room and possibly place them onto t-shirts, which would be given to local agencies.

### **Benner Township:**

- An Inmate Essay Contest entitled "Strength, Resilience and Justice" is being held. Various Staff will read and judge all essay submissions. Monetary prizes will be awarded to the inmates with the top 3 essays. Additionally, the winners will be asked to read (or have a staff member read) their essay during the Crime Victims' Week Ceremony.
- A Ceremony will be held in the Chapel recognizing/honoring victims on Tuesday April 4th from 1:30 - 3:30 p.m. Victim speaker will be the Guest Speaker for this event. This ceremony will also include the reading of the above noted essays, Staff will read the Poem "Moonlight Ride", a moment of silence will be held, and victim related posters and various crime statistics will be posted in the Chapel.
- Various brochures will be made available to both Staff and inmates.
- Daily quotes in honor of Crime Victims week will be sent to all SCI-Benner Staff via email from 04/03/17-04/07/17.
- Crime facts and quotes will also be placed on the Inmate Channel.

### **Cambridge Springs:**

- Movies: A movie will be offered daily on the institutional channel during the week. All movie themes will provide material that will bring awareness to victims.

- Creative Poster Contest: Inmates will be asked to create a poster about their crime as if they were the victim. Poster theme: Strength, Resilience and Justice.
- Bulletin Board Contest: Participating inmates will create a mural in their housing unit dayroom focusing on this year's theme: Strength, Resilience and Justice.
- Big Screen Movie Fundraiser: On April 5<sup>th</sup>, the showing of a newly released video will be offered to the general population. Concessions will be offered during the movie. All proceeds generated from the concession items and admission will be donated to Women's Services in Meadville, PA.
- A Day of Responsibility will be held on April 5<sup>th</sup>
- Skits for Awareness Fundraiser: On April 8<sup>th</sup>, inmates will be able to act and express themselves in a theatrical performance focusing on the theme: Strength, Resilience and Justice.
- Victims' Awareness Play: Held on April 8<sup>th</sup> for general population

#### **Camp Hill:**

- Crime Victims' Rights Event will be held on Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup> in the chapel. Victim speakers as well as OVA will be participating in this event. Camp Hill will also be starting a new Impact of Crime Class this week.

#### **Chester:**

- Victim Awareness Seminar will be held on Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup> from 1315-1500 in the gym. To foster an awareness of the aftermath of crime in the lives of victims, a victim speaker will share her family's experiences and journey to healing. She will present the audio documentary she co-produced, "A Life Sentence: Victims, Offenders, Justice and My Mother" to the population. A discussion and Q&A will follow.

#### **Coal Township:**

- Victim speaker will be sharing her story on Tuesday, April 4<sup>th</sup>. Collecting donations for Marley's Mission, which is the program that the victim speaker created after her daughter was victimized.

#### **Dallas:**

- Statistics about crime and information/quotes about "Strength, Resilience and Justice" will be playing on the inmate channel and posted on the block bulletin boards all week.
- Peer Assistance will be going to each housing unit to facilitate informational sessions about crime, its ripple effect, crime victims' rights and about this year's theme: "Strength, Resilience and Justice"
- Donations will be collected for the local Victims' Resource Center.

- Assembly Style Event on Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup> at 1:30 p.m.: speakers from Victims' Resource Center, from the chapel and possibly a victim speaker will be in attendance.

#### **Fayette:**

- Event scheduled for April 4<sup>th</sup>: A Homicide Survivor will be speaking in the AM; OVA will have a question and answer session in the afternoon.
- Poster and Poem Contest
- Showing of Impact of Crime Video and have a "Meet and Discuss" Session with approximately 20 inmates
- Collecting donations for the Crime Victims Center of Fayette County

#### **Forest:**

- The Day of Responsibility will be held on April 27<sup>th</sup> by our Inmate Organization, HOPE for CHANGE.
- Impact of Crime Class started in March and will continue through June. The group will discuss Crime Victim Rights during this week to ensure they understand not only the impact to victims, but also their rights.
- We will have postings, table tents, and fliers throughout the facility to explain Crime Victim Rights, awareness, and resources for support for visitors, inmates and staff.
- Information will be shared via hard copy postings, daily e-mails, and inmate FYI Channel.
- Throughout the week, videos will be shared with staff and inmates through the in-house television channel regarding victim impact and rights.
- Statements from our recent Operation NO MORE campaign against Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault will be shared with staff and inmates to further promote awareness.

#### **Frackville:**

- Guest Speakers:

Family member of a murder victim: Monday April 3<sup>rd</sup> @ 9:30 a.m.

Sexual Assault victim: Tuesday April 4<sup>th</sup> @ 1 p.m.

Marley's Mission (Equine therapy for victims): Thursday April 6<sup>th</sup> @ 9 a.m.

OVA Speaker (Understanding Victim Advocacy): Friday April 7<sup>th</sup> @ 9 a.m. for inmates and 1 p.m. for staff (ERA will provide light refreshments for the staff session)

➤ Contests:

Wednesday April 5<sup>th</sup> inmates will be reading poetry and essays, and there will be an inmate art display all generated from contests beginning March 29<sup>th</sup> and judged by staff.

➤ Inmate Education:

Ms. Bindas (Treatment Specialist) is facilitating a special Victim Awareness Education Program Monday, 4/3, Tuesday, 4/4, and Wednesday, 4/5 – 2.5 hours each day. Sign up began 3/17/17.

➤ Movies:

Each day during Victim Awareness week a different movie will be played on the inmate channel. These movies will focus on various types of victimization and will be within the parameters of policy.

**Graterford:**

- A Call to End Harm daylong event will take place on Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup> to include victim speakers, OVA staff, LCU volunteers and SCIG staff.
- Videos will be aired with victim awareness themes on the Graterford inmate channel.
- Quotes from Howard Zehr's book Transcending: Reflections on Crime Victims will be posted around the institution.

**Greene:**

- Program  
SCI Greene will be displaying essay, poems and art pieces, submitted by inmates, depicting this year's theme, "Strength, Resilience, Justice."
- Various crime victim statistics will be displayed around the institution to help drive home the impact of crime on victims.
- Inmate Participation  
Inmates will be invited to send essays, poems and art pieces depicting this year's theme, "Strength, Resilience, Justice." The essays, poems and art pieces submitted by inmates will be displayed throughout the institution during the Crime Victims' Rights Week.

**Houtzdale:**

- Monday/Tuesday: Several Movies will be aired on the inmate channel to include Voices of Survivors and DUI: Carl and Carlie.
- IGWF Committee and JFC Organization will be sponsoring an Essay/Poem Contest  
(Submissions will be displayed and the winner will be announced at Closing Ceremony on Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup>)
- Wednesday, April 5<sup>th</sup>: Opening Ceremony/Apology Letter Symposium.

- Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup>: Homicide Survivor will be speaking about the impact of the loss of her daughter.
- Friday, April 7<sup>th</sup>: Closing Ceremony

#### **Huntingdon:**

- Two essay themed contests will be conducted by the Jaycee's (inmate organization):
  - Theme 1: A letter to the victim's family regarding remorse for their crime
  - Theme 2: An essay about how their crime has impacted their family
- Art Contest will be conducted by the Jaycee's. The artwork is to depict sorrow for their actions. Top 3 for each category will be selected for prizes. Winner from each group (3) would be given the opportunity to present/read at an event scheduled for Crime Victims' Rights Week.
- The Jaycee's are also planning a small event schedule for that week (still in developmental stages of planning)
- Therapeutic Community will be focusing on victims of crime and the impact of crime during with week with specialized discussions.
- Staff from the Morale Committee will be donating proceeds from a Bake Sale to a Victim Advocacy Group in Huntingdon County.

#### **Laurel Highlands:**

- Ms. Dana Benn and Mr. Gene Galentine will start the Impact of Crime class on April 12<sup>th</sup>.
- Posters from NCVRW Resource Guide will be posted throughout the institution and will be placed on the dedicated channel.
- The Activities Department will place information about NCVRW and the impact of crime on the dedicated channel.
- AOD staff will be conducting seminars on the impact of crime and on this year's theme, "Strength, Resilience, Justice" on the Therapeutic Communities.
- Staff will present a similar seminar on the Limited Privilege Housing Unit.
- Inmates on the THU will be donating paintings they have done to Somerset County Victim Services.
- The Phoenix Group (Inmate Organization) will be donating \$500.00 to a local victim services agency (recipient to be determined).

#### **Mahanoy:**

- Day of Responsibility being held on Thursday, April 6<sup>th</sup>. OVA will be participating in this event.

#### **Mercer:**

- Impact of Crime Class will show and discuss movie: A Cry for Help: The Tracey Thurman Story

- April 8<sup>th</sup>: Victim Speaker will speak on sexual abuse and AWARE will give a short presentation on Domestic Violence.
- Writing Contest called Artistic Expression
- From 0730 on Saturday, April 8<sup>th</sup> to 0730 on Sunday, April 9<sup>th</sup>, no movies will be shown on the inmate movie channels. Also radio station will be set to channel 1 during this time.
- Inmate Nischan has painted the National Crime Victims' Rights Week poster which will be displayed on the window of building 14 during the week.
- Inmate Activities Committee will sponsor two fundraisers to benefit AWARE
- Activity Books for children will be made to give to AWARE.
- Informational sheets printed on colored paper for children will be in the Visiting Room from McGruff, The Crime Dog.

\*AWARE is the only domestic violence/sexual assault center servicing Mercer County. They have been helping adults, teens and child victims since 1976.

### **Muncy:**

- Bulletin Board campaigns are among the most effective strategies for showcasing our NCVRW activities because of their wide reach. Each BB is strategically placed in high-traffic areas, this will help spread important messages throughout the facility regarding our NCVRW activities and messages.

Specifically, we can challenge each block to raise awareness about major victims' issues, including:

- Domestic violence,
  - Human trafficking,
  - Child abuse, and
  - Elder abuse
- Art Contest and Exhibit
 

Art is a powerful medium to convey their experiences. This contest will help our community empathize with the trauma of victimization. Participants will be invited to submit artwork that conveys their interpretation of their own personal experience. The art pieces will be judged and the top three pieces will receive corresponding awards. 1<sup>st</sup> Place Ribbon, 2<sup>nd</sup> Place Ribbon, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Place Ribbon. All art will be on display in the Visiting Room through the end of April 2017.
  - Spoken Word
 

Performing arts activities deepen the entire community's understanding of what it means to be a crime victim by allowing people to use their talent to shine a light on the challenges crime victims face. The contest will encourage our community to express their experiences and share their knowledge through words.

➤ Notable Quotables

We will host a Quote Contest and publish the following on our CCTV:

A key NCVRW goal is to inspire and motivate our community to support victims' rights. Our speeches, announcements, and presentations will benefit from including powerful quotations to underscore this message of collective support. The quotations compiled here build on the 2017 NCVRW theme—Strength. Resilience. Justice.

➤ Poetry and Essay Contest

Poetry: The emcee will introduce each participant as they come to the stage. It is the participant's responsibility to announce both their name and the poem's title.

Each recitation limited to 3-4 minutes

Essay: Writers will submit non-fiction stories of their diverse experience as long as it connects to the subject of: "Victimization." Stories must not exceed 5k words.

➤ Make the Chain Campaign

This contest will test the participant's ability to summarize their involvement with crime into one sentence. This sentence will be transcribed onto a paper chain. The paper chain will be on display in the VR during the Recognition Ceremony.

➤ Recognition Ceremony

We look to honor public officials and criminal justice professionals who have shown particular concern for victims:

- Victim Service Agencies, i.e., Rape crisis centers, domestic violence shelters, district attorney's victim advocates, and homicide support organizations. By collaborating with other victim service agencies that share our mission and challenges, it will produce wider audiences and a more powerful impact for our events. This is an opportunity for us to make that connection between victim advocates allowing us to collaborate and ultimately pinpoint the current gaps in the community's response to victimization.
- Healthcare Professionals – Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANEs)
- Law Enforcement Professionals
- Prosecutors
- Community Corrections Professionals
- Mental Health Professionals
- Youth-Serving Organizations. The reasoning behind this is because young people are more likely than any other age group to be victimized by crime. Potential organizations include the YMCA and YWCA, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, and Big Brothers and Big Sisters.

This day will tentatively take place on 6 April 2017 which will potentially consist of a Guest Speakers, all artwork, essay and poetry contestants, and performances.

- Public Awareness Posters will be placed on each housing unit as well as crime and victimization fact sheets
- Sexual Violence Awareness: This is an opportunity to reinforce PREA under another program. Distribute Sexual Violence Pamphlets containing information surrounding the topic, to include statistics
- Donation Drive: Personal Hygiene items will be collected for Wise Options; Wise Options is a safe haven and source of support for the people of Lycoming County, giving help and hope to men, women and children surviving domestic violence, sexual assault and other violent crimes.

#### **Pine Grove:**

- A Day of Responsibility will be held on Monday, April 10<sup>th</sup>. Guest speakers to include victim speakers, individual in long term recovery from Veteran's Place, individual from Ops Manager Citizens Ambulance and individuals from the Alice Paul House, victim service agency in Indiana County.

**Pittsburgh:** Nothing at this time due to closing

#### **Quehanna Boot Camp:**

- In observance of National Crime Victims' Rights Week the Quehanna Boot Camp is going to offer an art contest to the inmates. The Activities Dept. has already posted sign-up sheets in the housing unit to illicit participation. Upon completion of the Crime Victims' Rights Week themed art projects, Staff members will vote on the pieces. The overall winner of the contest will have their art framed and donated to the Clearfield County Victim/Witness Office (located in the Courthouse) on behalf of the Quehanna Boot Camp.

#### **Retreat:**

- In honor of this week SCI Retreat will be having an art contest. The theme of your submission must relate to Strength. Resilience. Justice.
- In honor of this week SCI Retreat will be having a writing contest. The theme of your submission must relate to Strength. Resilience. Justice.
- Inmates looking for other ways to contribute to National Crime Victims Week can also sign up for the Impact of Crime Class or write a letter to the Inmate Apology Bank.
- We further ask that in support of National Crime Victims Week that all staff members who currently facilitate groups make an effort to incorporate discussions of victim rights into their groups. Resources will be sent to all applicable staff members that relate to victim rights and the impact of crime on victims.

## Rockview:

- Activities: We are doing that “hoop for a cure” 3 on 3 basketball tournament, the way it works is that each inmate that signs up donates \$2.00, teams may have a max of 5 players, double elimination tournament and the winning team gets a free ice cream product from the stand once we get opened up. The new breeds will match the amount of money collected up to a certain dollar amount (up to a certain point) and the money will be donated to a local battered women’s shelter.
- Impact of Crime Instructors: Are setting up a victim speaker to share their story with inmates & staff.
- Education: We’re having a Poster Contest and each teacher will be integrating Crime Victims’ Rights Week into their respective classrooms.
- Chapel: Crime Victims' Rights Week 2017 will be celebrated April 2-8, 2017. The Chapel will be featuring this year’s National Theme—*Strength, Resilience, Justice, at all services this week in the Prayers of the Faithful, Intercessory Prayers and Theme Reflections. This year’s theme* which reflects a vision for the future in which all victims are strengthened by the response they receive, organizations are resilient in response to challenges, and communities are able to seek collective justice and healing which Rockview is part of.

### Crime Victims' Rights Week at Rockview

- National Theme in the Prayers of the Faithful at all services
- National Theme in the Intercessory Prayers at all services
- National Theme in the Service Reflections at all services
- Poster in the Chapel explaining Crime Victims' Rights Week
- Poster that promote victims' rights and services in the United States
- Poster explaining award ceremony held in [Washington, D.C.](#)
- Poster showing that this celebration was established by [Ronald Reagan](#) in 1981
- Forestry Program: Weather permitting, we a going to plant a tree from our facility nursery & designate it specifically in recognition of crime victims’ rights week. If possible, we’d like to do this the same day the victim speaker is at the facility & invite them to participate.
- Housing Units: Poster’s will be placed on bulletin boards identifying April 2-8<sup>th</sup> as crime victims’ rights weeks & this year’s theme

## Smithfield:

- Smithfield Inmate Organization (SIO) in conjunction with the Education Department will sponsor a poetry contest, writing contest, and art contest with a fifteen dollar award given to the first place winner in each category. The theme of the contests is: Strength, Resilience, and Justice. Submissions will be placed on display.

- The SIO and PLA in conjunction with the Activities Department will hold Crime Victims Tournament Week. Participants and spectators will be required to pay a \$2 donation for participation. All donations from the proceeds of this event will be sent to Huntingdon House, a shelter for victims of domestic violence. Winners of each tournament/contest will be given a \$15 award from the SIO and PLA organizations.

Monday: 3 on 3 Basketball

Tuesday: Pickle ball

Wednesday: 4 on 4 Volleyball

Thursday: Cross fit competition

- A victim speaker from the Impact of Crime class will give a presentation for staff on a date to be determined.
- A tour has been arranged to occur as requested by a victim who desires to see where the offender was formerly housed prior to transfer. The tour will include the housing unit, education, treatment building, recreation yard, dining hall and maintenance shop.

#### Somerset:

- Essay Contest
- Poetry Contest
- Create a Crossword Puzzle Contest
- Art Contest
- \*All contests will be using the theme: Strength, Resilience, Justice
- The Inmate Organization (SOAR) plans to make a donation to Victim Services Inc. that serves Somerset, Cambria and Bedford Counties. A representative from Victim Services will be here to receive the donation.
- Videos from the Office of Victims of Crime will be shown on the inmate channel all week.

#### Waymart:

- A Day of Responsibility will be held on 4/19/2017
- Posters honoring crime victims will be prepared by reentrants in the Batterers Intervention Program. These will be on display in common areas in the institution.
- Reentrants that are participating in the SUD Therapeutic Community will be decorating a bulletin board honoring victims of crime.
- SCI Waymart's Annual Geranium sale will take place in April in support of the Wayne County Victims Intervention Program.
- Reentrants in the SUD Therapeutic Community will create informational brochures that will be made available to the reentrant population.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



## Houtzdale Accomplishment and Tour

Earlier this week, DOC Regional Deputy Secretary Tabb Bickell presented the prison's administration with their accreditation certificate that was achieved through a regular auditing process conducted by the American Correctional Association.



Also, last week, State Representative Tom Sankey and Senator Wayne Langerholc, Jr. visited and toured SCI Houtzdale. Staff showed them the prison's Veterans Service Unit, the Residential Treatment Unit, the dog training program and the education and activities departments.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## BCC Recognizes DOC Dog Handler

DOC Bureau of Community Corrections (BCC) Deputy Director Dan McIntyre and Major Mike Gourley presented a certificate of appreciation to DOC Sgt. Brian Henderson from DOC Security Division's Drug Interdiction Unit in recognition of his "positive energetic presence and professionalism" during a facility search at Center #2 in Philadelphia.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Coal Township's Employees of the Quarter – Its Entire Mailroom!

The Mailroom Staff at SCI Coal Township were recognized as Employees of the Quarter for the First Quarter of 2017. Mailroom Supervisor Tracey Brokenshire and Mail Inspectors Jodi Britton, Maegan Zarkoskie and Ashley Rumberger were commended for their dedication and work performance in the mailroom, which is a critical part of the overall institutional security. Their attentiveness to their job duties assists the Security Office in keeping contraband out of the institution, making Coal Township a safer place.

Superintendent Thomas McGinley commended the mailroom staff and stated, "The staff in the mailroom have been diligently working to ensure that contraband is not reaching the inside of our facility. They are to be commended for their dedication in assisting to keep our facility a safer environment."

Awards were presented at a recent administrative staff meeting.

Congratulations Tracey, Jodi, Ashley and Maegan!



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## SCI Camp Hill Employees Participate in Cougar Career Carnival

SCI Camp Hill Corrections Counselor Theo Nugin represented the prison at a "Cougar Career Carnival" held at Harrisburg High School March 23, 2017.

Representatives from local businesses, training institutions and workforce development partners attended the "carnival" to provide students with their "ticket to opportunity" where the local job industry is concerned.



According to organizers, the event was intended to feature career exploration, employment opportunities and other activities focused on helping students develop a "career pathway to payday." Specifically, to:

- Provide students with opportunities to develop skills in communication, self-presentation, networking, and research which will prepare them for job interviews and other professional interactions.
- Develop relationships with area employers which could lead to internships opportunities, class visits, educational field trips, service-learning projects, and other work-based learning partnerships.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Status of SCI Pittsburgh/Riverside CCC Closure

The closure process for SCI Pittsburgh/Riverside Community Corrections Center continues to progress.

As of March 24, 2017, SCI Pittsburgh's population is 811; and Riverside CCC has 11 reentrants.

Several housing units at the prison already have been closed, while others continue to be taken out of operation as the inmate population continues to be reduced.

Effective March 23, 2017, the DOC's hiring freeze related to this closure was lifted, and normal hiring/placement process resumed throughout the DOC.

The first major employee relocation movements are set to begin on April 9, with 41 employees relocating to other DOC facilities within the DOC's western region.

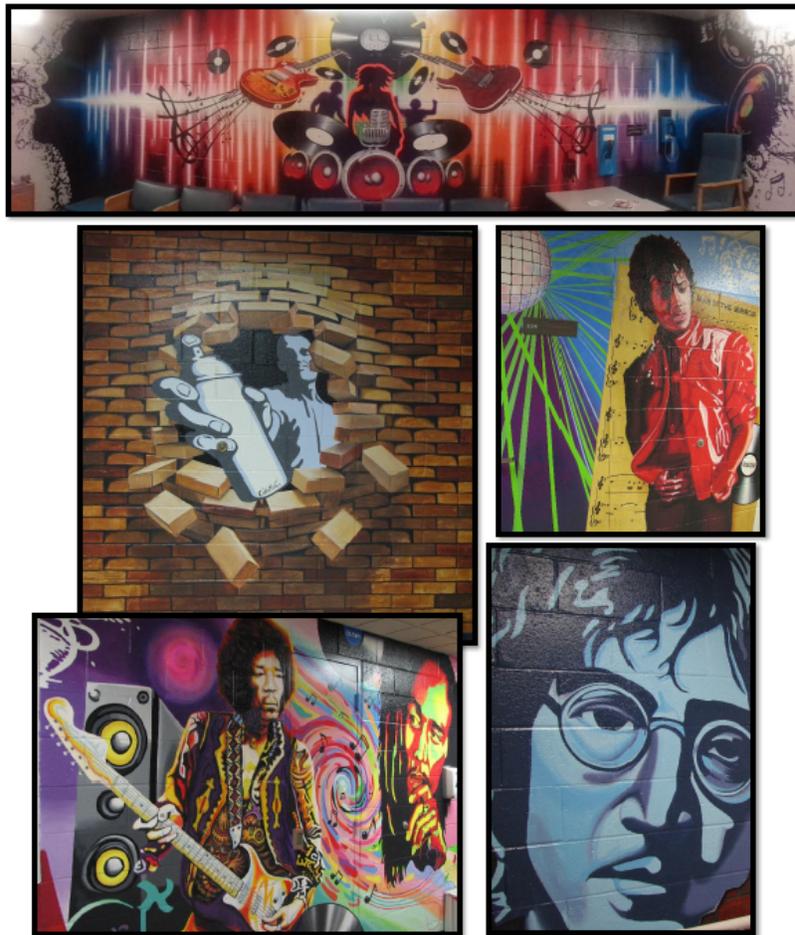
Beginning April 3, SCI Greene will serve as the reception center for inmates committed to the DOC from western region counties.

The DOC's Bureau of Operations continues to work with the Department of General Services on the surveying of prison property and the planning for the use of various utilities through June 30 and beyond for mothballing purposes. We are in the process of determining how long the DOC will be responsible for maintaining the facility.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## SCI Somerset Murals

SCI Somerset and its inmates continue to paint murals throughout the facility. Here are some that are in the medical areas:



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Juvenile Lifers

By Eric Frazier, Unit Manager, SCI Somerset

Juvenile Lifers continue to be at the forefront of the DOC.

Here at SCI Somerset we have had inmates going back to court for resentencing. We have had six inmates so far have their sentences overturned and now have the chance to return to a world they never thought they would get to enter again.

We have had two inmates get 20 to life sentences from Alleghany County. Both of these inmates were seen by parole within a month and a half of returning from the county. This was a great team effort on the part of SCI Somerset staff and parole to ensure that these inmates got an appearance before the board. This effort ended in both inmates receiving parole and both are now home.

One inmate from Philadelphia County received a sentence of 30 to life. The efforts of staff once again made it a quick turn around, and the inmate was seen by the board and he is currently waiting for a decision. Another inmate from Indiana County received a 20 to 40 year sentence and since he has served 37½ years, staff here did another outstanding job and got him an appearance before the board. He was granted parole and is currently waiting for a bed at a community corrections center.

The final inmate that was resentence in court was from Crawford County and he received 35 years to life. He was quickly processed by staff and went before the board. His outcome this time was unlike the others that went before him and he received a one-year hit from the board. He continues to keep a positive attitude.

The population has been busy with meetings from individuals from the Bureau of Community Corrections who have apprised the inmates of all the services that they can provide for them once they are released. Central Office has had two video conferences for them in the last two months -- one for general information to answer any questions they might have from Central Office staff, and another allowing the inmates to hear the Batts V. Commonwealth of PA court hearing, which is a case that could affect them with the ruling in the future.

The PA Department of Banking sent in a speaker to go over all aspects of banking and financial dealing the inmates will have to deal with if released. She went over what banking services were available to them and services like payday loans that they should steer clear of for their predatory practices. They have been participating in a group presented by Mr. Herdman on the technological gadgets they will be bombarded with upon release. The final thing that we have going on for the inmates is starting in April, an outside mentor group contracted by the DOC will be speaking to the inmates on a regular basis about reentry back into society. Staff have been busy and will continue to be busy preparing to get these inmates back into society.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

# Assault Management Application Course (AMAC)

By Randy Pritts, Lieutenant, SCI Somerset

In January 2013, the DOC assembled a Defensive Tactics (DT) Committee to evaluate and revise the DT program. The committee found fundamental and pervasive problems with the existing program and in response, developed the Assault Management Application Course (AMAC) program to replace the DT program in its entirety.



The AMAC program is an assault management strategy that is unique to the correctional setting. AMAC includes proven techniques adapted from the Army Combatives, Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu, and Mixed Martial Arts (MMA). As a solution, specific to corrections, however, AMAC departs significantly from what is commonly understood as MMA. Because the DOC operates as a team, AMAC uses a team-based strategy to enhance effectiveness while recognizing that the individuals committed to the care of the DOC cannot be addressed as enemy combatants. The DT Committee carefully crafted the AMAC program to address all the requirements necessary for effectiveness and to satisfy the diverse needs of a DOC operating within our criminal justice system.

In December 2015, the DOC's Training Academy rolled out the AMAC instructor course for correctional staff in preparation for the implementation of the program. Currently SCI Somerset has seven staff members certified as instructors: LT Randy



Pritts, LT Vincent McNevin, COI Jennifer McKendree, COI Matt Foster, CCII John Shearer, CCII Matt Helsel and CFSM Damion Renna.

In January 2016 the DOC started training all seven courses of AMAC to new corrections officer trainees (COT) during their five-week basic training course conducted at the DOC Training Academy. SCI Somerset alone has 43 COT's and officers who recently became COI's complete all seven courses of AMAC while attending training.

Recently SCI Somerset began instruction of courses 1 and 2 of the AMAC program for all uniformed staff during their annual block training, and as a result 98 staff members have completed courses 1 and 2.

As with any new program there is optimism when something new is introduced outside of the normal standards of instruction previously taught, but it's exciting to see the opinions change and to hear the positive compliments at the conclusion of

the initial AMAC instruction. I'm truly satisfied with all our staff members' positive attitudes in the classroom and during the instruction on the mats. It speaks highly of the staff members representing SCI Somerset and the Department of Corrections. As instructed by Diemon Dave Ninja School, "*Don't go ninjun anyone that don't need ninjun.*"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Crisis Intervention Training (CIT)**

By Jennifer McClelland, SCI Somerset

Crisis Intervention is a technique used to offer immediate, short-term help to an individual experiencing a crisis (i.e., an event that causes emotional, mental, physical, or behavioral distress). It involves resolving a crisis by recognizing the signs and symptoms of mental illness, using proper de-escalation techniques and utilizing a multidisciplinary approach to help the individual resolve his or her issues. Crisis Intervention is a preventative approach to behavior management, which can help decrease assaultive behavior and use of force incidents. It is a valuable tool for all of us that work in corrections, because it can increase both staff and offender safety.

Over the four days of CIT training, participants were given information about mental health diagnoses and treatment and also had the opportunity to listen to individuals share their personal experiences with mental illnesses. We were also put through a series of role plays to enhance our crisis intervention skills.

With the return of seriously mentally ill inmates to our prison and inception of the Residential Treatment Unit (RTU) and Diversionary Treatment Unit (DTU) at SCI-Somerset, the skills learned in Crisis Intervention Training will become even more important when performing our job duties. Many, if not all of us, will be dealing with seriously mentally ill individuals on some level.

The DOC defines serious mental illness as "a substantial disorder of mood or thought, which significantly impairs judgment, behavior and the capacity to recognize reality or cope with the ordinary demands of life." Individuals in this category might suffer from symptoms related to Schizophrenia, Bipolar Disorder and Major Depression, to name a few.

One of the most profound moments in the training occurred when the class was asked to come up with a list of terms commonly used to refer to those who suffer from mental illness. We were then asked to come up with a list of terms used to refer to those with cancer – big difference! The task was aimed at helping to illustrate the stigma associated with mental illness. Please remember in working with these individuals, that none of them asked to be mentally ill; just like no one asks to have cancer, heart disease or diabetes. While staff safety is always a priority, please try to be patient and empathic when dealing with these inmates. A little kindness goes a long way!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of March 20...

## **Wetzel, Bucklen Pen Op-Ed Against Mandatory Minimum Sentences**

From the Harrisburg Patriot-News/Pennlive.com (03/21/2017)

[http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2017/03/mandatory\\_minimums\\_still\\_dont.html#incart\\_river\\_index](http://www.pennlive.com/opinion/2017/03/mandatory_minimums_still_dont.html#incart_river_index)

Mandatory minimums still don't work, Pa. lawmakers: Bret Bucklen and John E. Wetzel

By Bret Bucklen and John E. Wetzel

Most Pennsylvanians would agree that ensuring public safety is what they want most from the criminal justice system.

When it comes to law and order we are all willing to pay to be safe, and we recognize that decisions about public safety must never be made based simply on balancing budgets.

At the same time, many Pennsylvanians are uninformed about a current policy discussion underway in our criminal justice system, which is mostly going unnoticed and hides under the false guise of improving public safety.

The debate is over mandatory minimum sentencing.

Several mandatory minimum sentencing laws were found to be unconstitutional by the Pennsylvania Supreme Court in 2015.

Legislation to reinstate these laws are right now being considered by the General Assembly, which might be fine if there was any evidence that mandatory minimum sentences enhanced public safety.

But the record is clear that they don't.

Statewide crime numbers are only available through 2015, but show that the violent crime rate in Pennsylvania remained the same in 2015, while both property and drug crime rates declined.

Local statistics from Philadelphia and Harrisburg reveal that crime rates for major crime types dropped in these cities during 2016.

Crime in Pennsylvania is lower now than it was in 1970, before mandatory minimums existed.

If mandatory minimums are supposed to enhance public safety, this is not reflected in Pennsylvania's crime rates, which have continued to drop without them.

Mandatory minimum sentencing laws require courts to treat all defendants the same, regardless of the facts of the case or the person's circumstances.

This one-size-fits-all approach does not work when it comes to healthcare or education policy, so why should we think it works in criminal justice?

Some prosecutors argue that mandatory minimums are needed because some judges are too lenient. The fact is that judicial discretion is already structured in Pennsylvania under sentencing guidelines.

Judges in Pennsylvania sentence within the recommended guidelines 90 percent of the time, and the seven percent of cases where judges depart below the guidelines is mostly due to a recommendation by the prosecutor. Sentencing guidelines render mandatory minimum sentences unnecessarily rigid.

There is no good evidence that mandatory minimums do anything to make the public safer.

Take one purpose of sentencing, to deter future criminal behavior. The science on deterrence is now clear that it is the swiftness and certainty of punishment that deters, not the severity.

Mandatory minimums target the severity of punishment by unnecessarily ratcheting up sentence lengths. For criminals who tend to be impulsive, inconsistently delivered and arbitrarily long sentences do nothing to deter future crime.

A study by the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing found that the imposition of a mandatory minimum sentence was not a predictor of criminal re-offending.

Mandatory minimum sentencing wastes taxpayer dollars and diverts limited resources away from pursuing more serious offenders and supporting law enforcement.

Estimates are that if Pennsylvania's Legislature reinstates mandatory minimums it could cost taxpayers as much as \$85.5 million per year.

For all of these reasons, a bi-partisan consensus has built around the country that mandatory minimums are ineffective and should be scaled back or eliminated.

More than 30 states have now reconsidered mandatory minimum sentencing laws. Conservative groups like Koch Industries, the American Legislative Exchange Council (ALEC), and the Commonwealth Foundation here in Pennsylvania, have all expressed opposition to mandatory minimums.

Yet many in our Legislature are ignoring these realities and moving forward to quietly reinstate mandatory minimums. This puts Pennsylvania out of touch with the facts.

**Dr. Kristofer "Bret" Bucklen is the director of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections' Office of Planning, Research & Statistics. John E. Wetzel is the secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections. They write from Hampden Twp., Pa.**

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Sergeants Complete K9 Training**

Last week Pennsylvania Department of Corrections K9 handlers Sergeants Alfred DeAngelis and Anthony Spagnoletti graduated from the U.S. Customs and Border Protection's "Concealed Human/Narcotics Detection Instructor Course." Held in Front Royal, Va., it was an intensive 12-week course. Their successful completion triples the DOC's trainer cadre.



**Left – Sgt. Al DeAngelis; Right – Sgt. Anthony Spagnoletti**

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## DOC Milk Purchased from Pennsylvania Affiliates

In November 2016, the DOC awarded, through an RFP process, a Food Procurement Services and Food Management Software System contract to Aramark Correctional Industries that will initially save the commonwealth \$8 million annually with potential for additional savings in the future. It is a three-year contract with two one-year renewal options. The DOA already has begun implementation.

The current contract with the DOC implements a model through which the DOC has complete control over creating the food menus, inspecting the food and preparing and serving it. Aramark will manage the purchase, logistics and food inventory for all SCIs across the state.

Aramark has committed to purchasing \$292 million in food products from Pennsylvania-based companies – or 63 percent of the total. In addition, there will be a Pennsylvania warehouse that will entail hiring local staff.

Dean Foods of Texas, which has four Pennsylvania-based affiliates, was named to source dairy products.

Dean Foods, in turn, is procuring dairy products from Lehigh Dairy in Lansdale; Swiss Lenkerbrook in Lebanon; Meadowbrook Dairy in Erie; and Dean Milk in Sharpsville. All four companies are headquartered in Pennsylvania and nearly all of the milk comes from dairy cows in Pennsylvania.

Other vendors are encouraged to reach out to Aramark to see if there is the possibility of establishing a business relationship with the company.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### *About Aramark:*

- More than 10,900 Pennsylvania residents are Aramark employees
- More than \$354.3 million paid in payrolls in taxes
- Aramark purchases more than \$430 million annually from suppliers in the state
- Aramark projects to purchase an additional \$35 million annually from suppliers for PA DOC
- Aramark is committed to purchase approximately \$5.8 million annually from local small diverse business and small business in the state of Pennsylvania

## Meetings with Chaplains

The Bureau of Treatment Services held meetings recently with Muslim chaplains who provide services to DOC inmates. The first meeting for central and eastern region facilities, was held at the DOC's central office in Mechanicsburg on March 9. The second meeting, for western region facilities, was hosted at SCI Mercer on March 22.

During both meetings, several religious issues (such as the DOC policies, Bureau of Treatment Services memo, Ramadan, Islamic services and inmate radicalization) discussed.

Employees from the DOC's Bureau of Health Care Services/Medical and Office of Special Investigations & Intelligence joined the meetings and answered chaplains' questions.

Both meetings proved to be very helpful and enlightening for the attendees.



**Attendees at a meeting for Muslim Chaplains at Central Office March 9, 2017**

**Standing (L to R):** Rasheed Salahuddin (GRA), Bryant Davis (CHS), Radouan Resli (MAH), Mohamed Abdel-Mageed (QUE), Bilgin Erdogan (HUN), Hatem Akanan (SMR & LAU), Fatih Akdemir (BTS & CAM), Mehmet Arvas (DAL), Basri Dursun (BEN), Amjad Ali (COA), Yasin Kucak (RET & WAM).

**Seated (L to R):** Safiyah Jihad-Levine (MUN), Abdulrahman Abumurad (HOU), Abdel-Hamid Hnesh (MAH). **Not pictured** (who joined meeting via video conference): Yusef Aliyu (SMI), Dawud Abdul-Alim (PIT).



**Attendees at a meeting for Muslim Chaplains at SCI Mercer March 22, 2017**

**(L to R):** Superintendent Brian Thompson (MER), Fatih Akdemir (BTS & CAM), Tanko Ibrahim (FYT), Abubakar Mohammed (GRN), Wael Almasri (PNG), Abdusemih Tadese (ALB & MER).

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Forest Recognizes Employee of the Month**

SCI Forest Superintendent Michael Overmyer recognizes Sgt. Stimmell as the facility's employee of the month for March 2017.

Sgt. Stimmell was nominated by his peers for being a model of professionalism. As utility sergeant, Stimmell is consistently the "go to" officer who ensures things are done correctly and completely. He also is a resource for the shift commander and the prison's executive staff.

Congratulations, Sgt. Stimmell!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



## Retreat Welcomes Criminal Justice Students

On March 22, 2017, SCI Retreat Superintendent Vince Mooney welcomed a group of criminal justice majors from Luzerne County Community College.

The students had the opportunity to meet three inmates and ask them questions about being an inmate in today's prison system. The class also talked with some staff members about their job in corrections and they also had a surprise guest, Joy, who is one of the prison's geese dogs.

The students are under the leadership of Drug and Alcohol Treatment Specialist Supervisor Jeff Dengler. Their up-beat and curious attitudes were contagious as staff members passing by them also took time to speak with them.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Greene CWP Crew Remodeling House**

Inmates assigned to the Community Works Program at SCI Greene are working to remodel a house for the Greene County Redevelopment Authority.

The crew is supervised by Vince Giachetti.



Non-profit organizations or other state, county government entities who are looking to have work done should contact their nearest state correctional institution to inquire about the inmate Community Work Program.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Saving Lives One Pint at a Time**

DOC Central Office staff in Mechanicsburg, Pa., recently donated blood to the Central Pennsylvania Blood Bank recently. Twenty-four donors provided for the collection of 20 pints of blood which will save 60 local patients' lives. Way to go!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

# Financial Training for Inmates

In March, Becky MacDicken continued her tour of DOC facilities as she taught inmates about financial issues. MacDicken, who is a Department of Banking and Securities employee, is spending a period of time helping the DOC in this area of financial learning. Topics covered include banking basics, understanding credit reports and scores, budgeting and other financial matters.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Inmates Give to Community Charities/Organizations**

The SCI Cambridge Springs Phoenix Organization, a group of inmates aiming to contribute to community services and promote good will and self-growth to members of the general population, sponsored several events and raised more than \$21,000 to benefit the local community in 2016.

The organizations that benefitted from Phoenix fundraising efforts included Big Brothers/Big Sisters, Meadville Women's Services, the local Fire Department and the Cambridge Springs Elementary School.

When giving back and working within this organizational structure, the inmates at SCI Cambridge Springs connect to their peers and the surrounding community.

Superintendent Torma applauds the work of the SCI Cambridge Springs Phoenix Organization and recognizes the importance of community involvement by our inmate population and the positive motivation and self-worth that comes with achieving desired outcomes. The Phoenix Organization hopes to meet or exceed the 2016 donation amount in the 2017 calendar year.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Taking a College Course Alongside Inmates**

On March 20, 2017, SCI Smithfield's Inside Out Program was highlighted on WTAJ-TV.

The program allows Juniata College students to attend introductory to sociology course together at the prison.

Lori Pompa is the founder of the program, which she said connects these two surprising communities. Grants fund the program, which began in Philadelphia in 1997 and now involves more than 30,000 students across the U.S.

Watch WTAJ'sp segment here: <http://www.wearecentralpa.com/news/when-campus-life-meets-prison-life/676589138>

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## SCI Laurel Highlands Inmates Provide Services for Local State Park

SCI Laurel Highlands' Community Work Program crew is presently providing services at the Laurel Hill State Park Complex, which consists of Laurel Hill, Kooser and Laurel Ridge State Parks.

CWP supervisor Craig Rodman took pictures of inmates cutting and clipping firewood and chipping trees.

"This work is in preparation of the park's opening for spring activities such as camping, hiking, fishing and picnicking," Rodman said.

This is the 20<sup>th</sup> year at SCI Laurel Highlands has been doing projects for state parks.

Past projects have included trimming and cutting vegetation; painting and staining buildings; demolition of old buildings; cleaning; repairing window screens in the cabins; and cutting and splitting firewood.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## More than 400 SCI Frackville Employees AMAC Trained

As of March 2, 2017, SCI Frackville became the first Pennsylvania state correctional institution to complete the Assault Management Application in Corrections (AMAC) courses 1 & 2.

Now, with more than 400 employees trained in this new, much needed form of self-defense, the staff at SCI Frackville is eager and looking forward to next year when they will get courses 3 & 4 and build on the technics learned this year.

Along with the staff at SCI Frackville, Wernersville Community Corrections Center (CCC) joined in to start their training by sending 15 employees to SCI Frackville and additional staff to SCI Mahanoy during their training days as well. With a highly trained and motivated training team at SCI Frackville, along with instructors from SCI Mahanoy and Wernersville CCC, the introduction of AMAC was an astounding success.

Many employees came to the training not knowing what to expect and left pleasantly surprised and wanting more.

Thanks to the training team at SCI Frackville, along with AMAC instructors from Wernersville CCC and SCI Mahanoy, this training provided staff with a higher level of self-defense than in previous years.

Even the superintendent and both deputy superintendents of SCI Frackville took time out of their busy schedule to participate in the training.

Employee training doesn't stop here – it's an ongoing process. In fact, while the instructors provided AMAC training, they also provided a variety of training for employees, such as Mental Health First Aid, OC, professional boundaries and cell extraction. Some trainings took place at SCI Mahanoy, while others took place at SCI Frackville and other SCIs across the state.

SCIs Frackville and Mahanoy and Wernersville CCC join forces to train employees of these facilities due to their relatively close proximities. This provides for a more efficient use of resources.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of March 13...

## **National Coalition Recognizes Corrections Secretary John Wetzel for Innovative Effort to Treat Substance Use Disorder in Prisons**

Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel was recognized by a national drug abuse awareness coalition for leading the effort to transform the way prisons address substance use disorder.

Earlier this month, Wetzel was one of six individuals honored by the Addiction Policy Forum at a ceremony in Washington D.C. with the 2017 Pillar of Excellence award. The annual award recognizes work across the country in the six pillars of a comprehensive response to addiction (prevention, treatment, recovery, overdose reversal, law enforcement, and criminal justice reform).

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections has been a leader nationally in addressing the opioid crisis by greatly expanding access to medication-assisted treatment for the growing number of inmates struggling with substance use disorders.

In the past 10 years the number of individuals entering prison with opioid use disorder (OUD) has doubled from six percent to 12 percent.

In 2012, the DOC launched a pilot program to provide Vivitrol - a medication that reduces drug cravings and blocks the "high" of drugs and alcohol - to women inmates with substance use disorder at SCI Muncy. The program has now expanded to 11 other prisons. Treatment is continued through Medical Assistance when the individual moves into the community.

"I am very proud of these accomplishments, but they could not have occurred without the dedication and forward-looking approach of the DOC staff, so this award is for them," said Wetzel. "More than 65 percent of DOC's population struggle with substance use disorder. With successful treatment at every step of the way we can be confident that they leave as healthier individuals, better prepared for success in the community."

"Secretary Wetzel was awarded the 2017 Pillar of Excellence award for the innovative work being done within Pennsylvania corrections to bring treatment to those in custody struggling with substance use disorders," said Jessica Nickel, president of the Addiction Policy Forum. "Providing medication assisted treatment and the needed follow up during reentry is a game changer in how states can improve treatment outcomes and end the cycle of recidivism so often fueled by addiction."

The Addiction Policy Forum is a diverse partnership of organizations, policymakers, and stakeholders committed to working together to elevate awareness around addiction and to improve national policy through a comprehensive response that includes prevention, treatment, recovery, and criminal justice reform.

The Forum was a driving force behind the passage of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA). The bipartisan legislation, signed by President Obama in July 2016, authorizes \$181 million annually to fight the opioid epidemic. It recognizes the need to treat addiction like a disease through evidence-based practices such as medication assisted and individualized treatment.

The act supports community-based prevention efforts and long-term, robust recovery support and expands access to naloxone that reverses overdoses and saves lives. The act also helps educate prescribers and helps law enforcement divert individuals who are struggling with a substance use disorder so that they can be treated in their communities instead of in the criminal justice system.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

### **Huntingdon Inmates Perform Work for State Fire Academy**

Recently, one of SCI Huntingdon's Community Work Program crews and a carpenter trade instructor assisted the Pennsylvania State Fire Academy in Lewistown with a new roof. The new roof will cover a shelter that will be used by individuals training at the Fire Academy.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Mercer's CWP Helps Local Food Bank

Pictured on March 3rd is SCI Mercer's Community Work Program (CWP) crew at the Greater Pittsburgh Community Food Bank Lawrence County Distribution Center in New Castle.



Monthly, SCI Mercer's CWP crew assists the distribution center with loading trucks with food products bound for 16 food pantry sites within the area.

This is just one example of the many community projects the CWP crew is involved in locally to enhance the relationship between the PA DOC and the community.

Man hours provided by Mercer's CWP in 2016 included: churches and church camps-1,852 hours; fire departments-2,333 hours; food bank-938 hours, federal and local government agencies-721 hours; various local fair associations-2,248 hours; and PennDOT's Adopt-a-Highway litter pickup-1,267 hours collecting 1,585 bags of litter.



The DOC CWP program is a vital outreach service, contributing an inmate work detail that not only greatly assists community organizations, but also allows the inmates an opportunity to “give back” to the people of the Commonwealth. It also helps the inmates to develop the skills required to successfully reintegrate into society upon completion of incarceration. The inmates who participate in the CWP program display motivation, enthusiasm, and pride during the completion of the many community projects.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Women's History Month Fact**

Of the DOC's nearly 15,600 employees, 4,043 are women. They work in a variety of classifications ranging from clerks to corrections officers and from drug and alcohol treatment specialists to unit managers, to name only a few.

This month on Facebook, we are highlighting our female superintendents, but all female employees should be recognized for the contributions they make on a daily basis!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **SNOW!**

During the March 14<sup>th</sup> snow storm, SCI Retreat inmates helped to shovel snow off of the modular housing unit roof.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## SNOW in Harrisburg!

Through a coordinated effort involving Rep. Patty Kim, PennDOT, the DOC's Harrisburg Community Corrections Center (CCC) and the PA Board of Probation and Parole, reentrants from the CCC are helping to shovel out a number of Harrisburg City residents.



Photo Credit: Rep. Patty Kim



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Reentrant, Recognized Trainer Addresses Inmates/Staff**

On March 2, Matt Kerr, former SCI Mercer Corrections Adoptive Rescue Endeavor (CARE) Program dog handler, spoke to current dog handlers and other attendees at the facility about his successful reentry into society.

Kerr is the sole owner of Matt's Mutts University, a successful dog training business in eastern Pennsylvania, which he started as a result of his experience in Mercer's CARE dog training program. He has been featured on celebrity dog trainer Cesar Millan's website, UK Daily Mail, and other newspapers worldwide.

Matt has become a respectable member of his community and engages in charitable work for veterans. In addition, he is a sub-contractor with the Federal Bureau of Prisons, where he also speaks about the success of his dog training business. Kerr credits his success to the CARE dog training program and staff at SCI Mercer.



**Pictured, from left to right, are: Unit Manager Randy Rickert, who is the coordinator of training the dogs for the CARE program; Counselor Tammy McGranahan, who was Mr. Kerr's former housing unit officer at Mercer; Unit Manager Lisa Graves, CARE Program Coordinator; Mr. Kerr; Superintendent Brian Thompson; and Treatment Specialist Lisa Foust, who was Mr. Kerr's Counselor on the housing unit.**

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Secretary Wetzel Speaks about Children of Incarcerated Parents

Giving a kid a first chance is the best way to make sure he won't need a second chance down the road. That's the message Secretary Wetzel gave during a presentation last week at to Ambassadors For Hope, a group that works with children whose parents are in prison. He said his "First Chance Act" envisions a public charitable trust that would help support those children with the education and services they need to get the best start in life.

His remarks were covered by Lancasteronline.com on March 12, 2017:

[http://lancasteronline.com/news/pennsylvania/pennsylvania-secretary-of-corrections-focuses-on-kids-early-childhood-education/article\\_589ad084-069b-11e7-835e-4372cff6869b.html](http://lancasteronline.com/news/pennsylvania/pennsylvania-secretary-of-corrections-focuses-on-kids-early-childhood-education/article_589ad084-069b-11e7-835e-4372cff6869b.html)

Pennsylvania secretary of corrections focuses on kids, early childhood education

SUSAN BALDRIGE

The state secretary of corrections has a lot of ideas about keeping people out of prison.

But surprisingly, very few of them actually have to do with prison.

"If I could fund one single program," John Wetzel said, "it would be early childhood education."

Wetzel has overseen a decrease in the overall state prison population during his six years in that office, and is asking for fewer state funds for his budget this year than last.

Wetzel was in Lancaster this week to speak about children of incarcerated parents. There are more than 81,000 such children in Pennsylvania.

He also was promoting The First Chance Act, which will be proposed as legislation this year. The proposal centers on funding early childhood education programs through public charitable trusts.

The lecture at the Ware Center was sponsored by Ambassadors for Hope and was filled to standing room. Wetzel ticked off elements of the First Chance Act that he believes are ways that future state prison populations can be reduced.

"The Nurse Family Partnership, which goes into homes to teach parenting from 20 weeks into the pregnancy until the child is 2 years old, is a great return on investment," said Wetzel.

"And pre-K and Head Start and mentoring, it's about how do we keep kids in school and how do we make them successful?"

Wetzel said half the state prison population has no high school diploma.

"The best indication of someone who is going to stay out of the prison system is if they are reading on grade level," he said.

Wetzel's visit was sponsored by the local chapter of Ambassadors for Hope.

The group successfully lobbied the county more than two years ago for a family services advocate to manage needs for children whose parents are in the county jail. There 3,000 such children who face that situation each year in Lancaster County.

So far, the advocate, Jen Strassenburgh, has overseen the welfare of several hundred children, who have one or both parents in jail.

The program is funded through a commission on the contract to provide commissary items to prisoners. It does not use taxpayer funds.

Mary Glazier, director of the Center for Public Scholarship and Social Change at Millersville University, said children with parents who are incarcerated is not just a city issue.

"They're all over the county and from virtually every single school district," she said.

About half the children are under the age of 2 years.

Glazier is also a member of the Ambassadors for Hope, a community network of agencies and faith-based institutions whose purpose is to strengthen families impacted by incarceration in Lancaster County.

Wetzel said the group and the family services advocate make Lancaster County unique in the services it provides to support families in trauma from one member being arrested and put in jail.

He said police across the state need more training in handling arrests so they don't traumatize children who may be present.

"We're not great with that, yet," said Wetzel.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Mercer Celebrates Its Employees of the Quarter for 2016

SCI Mercer's Employees of the Quarter for 2016 were selected for going above and beyond their normal duties and are worthy of the recognition. Superintendent Brian Thompson commended all on their job performance and presented each with a certificate of appreciation at the administrative meeting during the quarter they were selected.

Pictured with each awardee is Superintendent Thompson and the employee's supervisor, including Dr. Cynthia Wright, LPM; Dennis Sansotta, CFSM; James Oppman, School Principal; and Major Rodney Painter, respectively.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

# SCI Huntingdon's CWP Projects Continue

One of the CWP crews at SCI Huntingdon took advantage of the spring-like weather recently and worked at Riverside Park in Smithfield Township clearing brush and cleaning up the area.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Community Corrections News...

### Giving Back

In response to a need, reentrants from both Philadelphia Centers #2 and #4 adhered to the call! Donating \$800 worth of baking supplies which included small appliances, hand held mixers, baking sheets and baking goods to North Philadelphia Boys & Girls Club to help offset the cost of a baking project the neighboring facility is planning to conduct for the children to engage in!



Picture (clockwise): Boys & Girls Club Unit Director Shakir Johnson, Mentor Professional & Reentrant Flood.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

From the Reading Eagle (03/13/2017):

<http://www.readingeagle.com/news/article/editorial-helping-ex-convicts-find-work-benefits-us-all>

## Editorial: Helping ex-convicts find work benefits us all

**THE ISSUE:** A job fair in Reading gives former prisoners a second chance.

**OUR OPINION:** Providing this service is good for both the job-seekers and society.

It allows people with shaky pasts to focus on steadier futures. It lends hope to those whose transgressions have wrought hardship. It's a fair that offers a fair shake.

And we're all for it.

Because the Career Fair for Returning Citizens is about more than redemption; it's about rejuvenation. Not just for the ex-prisoners, but for all of us who believe that life's winters give birth to its springs, and that no person bent on betterment should be denied another chance - particularly after paying an adjudicated price for a previous mistake

That's why the event, held this month at the DoubleTree by Hilton, 701 Penn St., heartens us so.

"The people coming in are just people who made a bad decision and served time for it," Peggy Kershner, co-executive director of Berks Connections Pretrial Services, told Reading Eagle reporter Jim Lewis the day of the fair. "We don't want to punish them indefinitely."

No, we don't.

Kershner and Berks Connections do more than talk the talk; they have produced the job fair since 2012 and helped connect those with criminal records to those too-rare employers open to hiring them.

"It's amazing," a giddy Yomaira Correa told Lewis after landing a job with Wyomissing Restaurant and Bakery during the event. "I'm ready. I'm so ready."

Correa wasn't sure anyone would ever hire her. She wore a mask and toted a pellet gun in a Lancaster bank four years ago, exiting with her

would-be co-robber when bank employees spotted them heading toward the vault. She spent three years behind bars.

As you'd suspect, her subsequent job searches didn't go smoothly. Correa tells her story, employers cringe and the interview hits a wall.

"Everybody has a mistake," Correa said, "but it doesn't determine who you are."

Local restaurateur Hamid Chaudry agreed, and hired Correa on the spot at the Returning Citizens fair.

"I'm not worried about skeletons, just tell me why you got into that situation and what you are doing so you don't relapse," said Chaudry, who has hired former inmates before. "I'm looking for somebody who wants to improve, who wants to change their life.

"If I don't give them a chance," he wondered, "who will?"

We should all give them a chance. And employers should remember that this fair does not just present overdue opportunities for former criminals; it presents meaningful opportunities for those who hire them. Opportunities to help people intent on self-improvement. Opportunities to lower recidivist crime rates by giving people with records a reason to work hard for an honest day's pay. Opportunities to lower ex-criminals' reliance on others and raise their reliance on themselves. Opportunities to increase productivity with motivated, appreciative workers.

Opportunities to help us all by helping the most desperate among us become less desperate, and thereby more likely to contribute to the community in positive ways.

We understand the human hesitancy that accompanies hiring someone who's been convicted. But if our societal beliefs in forgiveness, respect and amends are more than mere words, then we must also believe in giving these fellow citizens a chance to put wrong things right.

They have, after all, paid their debt to society. Society, in turn, should pay them the respect of a second chance.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

From the Reading Eagle (03/04/2017):

<http://www.readingeagle.com/news/article/ex-criminals-find-second-chances-at-career-fair-in-reading>

## **Ex-criminals find second chances at career fair in Reading**

By Jim Lewis

Two women, armed with pellet guns and wearing masks, entered a Lancaster bank in 2013 and headed toward the vault, turning and leaving quickly when bank employees approached them.

Yomaira Correa, now 26, admits her role as a would-be robber, and she served three years in prison for it. Now free, Correa has struggled to find employment, as job interviews often end abruptly after she reveals her past.

But her fortune changed on Friday.

A restaurant owner hired her during a Reading job fair for people with a criminal record. Correa will bus tables, make waffles and tend to the salad bar at Wyomissing Restaurant and Bakery, and she was expected to start immediately.

"It's amazing," she said. "I'm ready. I'm so ready."

Correa was one of more than 20 people hired on the spot Friday at the Career Fair for Returning Citizens at the DoubleTree by Hilton hotel on Penn Street. The job fair, held by Berks Connections Pretrial Services since 2012, attempts to connect people with criminal records and employers willing to hire them.

The event drew a steady stream of men and women searching for a job. In addition to those who found jobs immediately, many left with future interviews with one of about 40 employers, including landscapers, manufacturers and restaurants.

"The people coming in are just people who made a bad decision and served time for it. We don't want to punish them indefinitely," said Peggy Kershner, co-executive director of Berks Connections.

Correa searched fruitlessly for a job for two months before restaurateur Hamid Chaudhry hired her at the job fair. She sat down in a chair before him, insisted she wanted to work, then admitted her past crime.

"Everybody has a mistake, but it doesn't determine who you are," she said.

Her honesty and energy impressed Chaudhry.

"I'm not worried about skeletons, just tell me why you got into that situation and what you are doing so you don't relapse," he said. "I'm looking for somebody who wants to improve, who wants to change their life."

Correa isn't the first former inmate Chaudhry has hired at his restaurant. He estimates that 15 percent of his staff have a criminal act in their past.

"If I don't give them a chance, who will?" he asked.

For Brandy Darrow, a 40-year-old Reading resident with an aggravated assault charge on her record, searching for a job has been a bigger struggle than she imagined.

"I didn't realize how hard it would be," said Darrow, who was hired on the spot by Monterey Mushrooms of Temple to join the company's packaging crew.

Raymond Diggs, who served nine months in jail for a misdemeanor charge of receiving stolen property, estimates he's filled out 100 job applications since getting out of prison, with no result. But at the fair, the 24-year-old father of three landed a job as a waiter at the Queen City Family Restaurant.

"I'm raring to go," said Diggs of Reading. "I'm very excited. Words can't explain how excited."

DoubleTree hired three people at the fair, including one man with tattoos covering one side of his face. He feared the tattoos would scare employers, but he was intelligent and well-dressed, said Alneasa Jordan, the hotel's director of human services.

She was so impressed that she offered him a job as a dishwasher.

"You have to look past the exterior and look into the interior," Jordan said.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of March 6...

## Reducing Violence and the Use of Admin Segregation

Work in the area of reducing violence and the use of administrative segregation continues in the DOC. Here is an article provided once before that we've updated to show you the status of various pilot projects – *updates are in **GREEN** text and/or strike throughs.*

### 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.

**UPDATE: A total of 160 ideas or concepts for trial have been submitted by DOC employees.**

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

*NOTE: Updates to this article that was initially written in October 2016 are in **GREEN** text and/or strike through formatting.*

# UNDERWAY

## Swift, Certain and Fair (SCF) Pod – UNDERWAY

SCI Somerset

**UPDATE: SCF has expanded out to six units at SCI Somerset, and the prison staff continues to move toward the entire facility operating under this model by 2018.**

**EXPANDED to (and are either being developed or are underway) Albion (underway), Benner Township (concluded), Cambridge Springs, Coal Township, Fayette, Frackville, Houtzdale, Mahanoy, Mercer and Muncy.**

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

11/6/2016 Auditor general touts discipline program used at SCI-Somerset | Somerset | dailyamerican.com

### Auditor general touts discipline program used at SCI-Somerset

• By BRUCE SIWY [bruce@dailyamerican.com](mailto:bruce@dailyamerican.com)

A pilot program being expanded at SCI Somerset to help reduce prison violence is being recommended for statewide use by Pennsylvania's auditor general.

In a report released Oct. 20, Eugene DePasquale said that the Department of Corrections should experiment with new methods to make prisons safer. His audit of the department revealed that there were approximately 4,198 assaults within the prison system over the 15-month period of January 2015 to March 2016 — an average of 65 assaults on staff and 136 inmate fights per month.

His recommendation: the implementation of Swift, Certain & Fair, a new disciplinary approach recently tested at SCI Somerset and six of the other 25 other state prisons.

"Knowing a prison has a violence problem is one thing, but taking appropriate actions and having enough well-trained staff to prevent the violence in the first place is key," DePasquale said. "While it is encouraging that the Department of Corrections is keeping good records on violent incidents, they must continually review and improve policies, programs and procedures to prevent inmate violence to protect correctional officers, other DOC staff and the general public."

According to DePasquale, agency administrators also need to assess staffing and other resources. His complete 40-page audit can be viewed at [www.paauditor.gov](http://www.paauditor.gov).

"As we have observed as recently as last year at SCI Houtzdale, where five correctional officers were injured, inmate violence can quickly escalate," he said. "We must use every tool possible to prevent such violent outbreaks to maintain a safe environment in our correctional institutions."

"Having thousands of violent incidents in a prison system of 48,000 inmates does not mean to translate into a safe prison environment."

Swift, Certain & Fair — first used in a single unit at SCI-Somerset in January — involves giving correctional officers the authority to discipline inmates for minor infractions such as failure to stand for count, failure to go to work or school, and punching someone. This speeds up the time between an offense and punishment.



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.

## **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 and **Retreat (COMPLETED)**

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~~ UNDERWAY**

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.

**UPDATE: The trial began the first week of January 2017. A 75-gallon fish tank was placed on K1 block of the Personal Care Unit (PCU). The second block of the PCU, K2, did not receive a fish tank. At the beginning of the trial, inmates on both floors of the PCU were given self-report surveys to complete. Staff regularly assigned to the PCU were also given surveys to complete. In addition, staff completed a short assessment form on each inmate on the PCU. At the end of the trial (four or five months), staff and inmates will again complete the self-report surveys. Staff assessment forms will be done several times throughout the trial. It is hoped that inmates will report an improvement in their levels of anxiety and sense of well-being on the floor with the fish tank and that this will be corroborated with improved observed objective behaviors by staff.**

## **Visitor Notification Letter – ~~ABOUT TO BEGIN~~ UNDERWAY**

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.

## **COMPLETED**

## **Colored Bed Linens – ~~ABOUT TO BEGIN~~ COMPLETED**

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.

### **Crisis Intervention Teams in Residential Treatment Units – ~~UNDERWAY~~ COMPLETED**

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.

## **“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.

## **Soothing Sounds – ~~ABOUT TO BEGIN~~ COMPLETED**

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.

March 2017

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## SCI Mercer Holds Second Polar Bear Walk

On Saturday, March 4, SCI Mercer's Inmate Activities Committee held a Polar Bear Walk to benefit the St. Nicholas Center Men's Outreach Program in Sharon, Pa. The event raised \$350, which will benefit the emergency shelter and/or the Bridge Housing Program at the Center. This event was held to help raise awareness of homelessness and to provide assistance to a local nonprofit organization. This year's event was the second hosted by the Inmate Activities Committee.

On this brisk 18 degree Saturday morning, 15 inmate participants each walked nine laps (equivalent to two miles) around the track. Each individual was encouraged, but not required, to under-dress for the weather conditions while still meeting the minimum clothing requirements appropriate for the yard. In this way, they could experience what it may be like to be in the cold without shelter and to understand situations of others.

After the walk, Father Timothy gave a short presentation to the group on St. Nicholas's programs.



Pictured are Activities Specialist Chad Ford and Father Timothy Kjera from the St. Nicholas Center.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Songs in the Key of Free

Inmates at the State Correctional Institution at Graterford have had the honor to work with visitors from the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia. They have been tutoring and providing the inmates with workshops.

On Monday, March 6th, Heloise Carlen-Jones visited the prison. Carlen-Jones plays the harp and provided a serenade, as well as answered questions. Carlen-Jones currently studies at the Curtis Institute, but is from Paris. Through this program, "Songs in the Key of Free," the musicians at Graterford, along with the visitors from the Curtis Institute, are writing and composing original music.

A concert will be held in May at Graterford and also will be simulcast at the Philadelphia Free Library.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **DOC/Harrisburg CCC Holds “Financial Reality Fair” for Reentrants**

As part of its ongoing effort to improve the transition from prison to the community, the Department of Corrections on March 4th held its first “Financial Reality Fair” for 70 reentrants currently housed at the Harrisburg Community Corrections Center (CCC).

The fair, held in partnership with Department of Banking and the Department of Labor & Industry’s CareerLink initiative and the Pennsylvania Credit Union Association, was aimed at improving the financial literacy of those coming out of prison by teaching participants how to plan a budget, while helping them achieve their career goals by focusing on job skills.

“Properly managing money and budgeting one’s finances is a hurdle for many people, especially those coming out of correctional facilities,” said Executive Deputy Secretary of Corrections Shirley Moore Smeal. “Providing these individuals with the basics of financial literacy will ensure they return to the community on a stronger footing and increase the chances of future success.”

The fair helped reentrants learn how to manage a “real life” budget, including paying for rent and utilities, their court costs, restitution and, for many, child support. There were financial counselors on hand to assist the reentrants as they moved through the workshop, managing life expenses.

“The financial services marketplace is growing increasingly complex, and Pennsylvanians are asking for more information on issues such as banking services, credit, saving for retirement, and buying a home,” said Secretary of Banking and Securities Robin L. Wiessmann. “Through the Reality Fair we are pleased to work with our partners to give Pennsylvania residents the tools they need to make good decisions with their money and achieve financial independence.”

“Pennsylvania’s more than 60 PA CareerLink locations across the state are available to offer personalized help to all job seekers, and the Financial Reality Fair is a great way to introduce fair visitors to the many services to help them identify skills and choose a career path that is rewarding both personally and financially,” said Labor & Industry Secretary Kathy Manderino.

In a cooperative agreement with the Department of Banking and Securities, the DOC has for the first time brought on an outreach specialist from banking to work fulltime with institutions and community corrections centers to hold financial workshops covering banking basics and budgeting.

The event was one of many programs held during the month of March that focus on financial topics as part of Governor Tom Wolf’s Consumer Financial Protection Initiative. **READ MORE!** [This event was covered by the Central Penn Business Journal](#) – click the link to read their coverage.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Eagles Visit Graterford

On March 3, the Eagles landed at SCI Graterford. We're talking about two of the Philadelphia Eagles, that is. Safety Malcolm Jenkins and defensive end Steven Means are interested in the issue of mass incarceration and wanted to see a prison from the inside. Superintendent Cynthia Link gave them a tour of some of the housing units before stopping at the Correctional Industries shops, and the Re-entry Lab. There Major Gina Clark explained the efforts of prison staff to help inmates prepare to return to the community. Jenkins and Means also spent time meeting with a small group of inmates in the auditorium. The players were joined by Bill Cobb of the ACLU.



**William Cobb, Acting Major Gina Clark, Malcolm Jenkins, Steven Means and Superintendent Cynthia Link walking down the main corridor at SCI Graterford.**



**William Cobb, Steven Means, Superintendent Cynthia Link and Malcolm Jenkins looking inside one of the Correctional Industries shops.**



**Superintendent Cynthia Link, Acting Major Gina Clark, William Cobb, Steven Means and Malcolm Jenkins on B-Block.**



**Malcolm Jenkins on B-Block.**



**Acting Major Gina Clark with Malcolm Jenkins in the Re-entry Lab.**



**Steven Means and Malcolm Jenkins in the Re-entry Lab.**



**Steven Means, William Cobb, Malcolm Jenkins and Acting Major Gina Clark in the Re-entry Lab.**



**William Cobb, Steven Means and Malcolm Jenkins in the auditorium with some of Graterford's inmates.**



**Malcolm Jenkins in the auditorium speaking to a group of inmates.**



**Steven Means, William Cobb, Superintendent Cynthia Link and Malcolm Jenkins in the main corridor.**

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Highlighting Reentrants' Volunteer Work

The Sharon Community Corrections Center (CCC), which has operated in its current location under a lease with the United Way for 30 years, has become a focal point of a community discussion around the future use of the historic home and the property on which it is located. Some in the community have expressed concern about the housing of sex offenders at the center. In fact, the center serves as a vital community resource, providing assistance in city clean up and maintenance projects, as well as providing housing and programming to help individuals successfully reenter society. Recently Bureau of Community Corrections Director George Little took reporters on a tour of the center for a peek inside and to learn about how it helps transition reentrants home after incarceration.

One group grateful for Sharon CCC's contributions is VisitMercerCountyPA:

lines for righting the wrong and complying with the laws of nature (God reigns!).

For openers I visualize a day when we, collectively, come to our senses and do what is required to calm our desires and to seek mutual understanding. The time for tit-for-tat is over. Overzealous feelings aside, we need to pause and reflect on the good side of human nature, which brings a harvest of humility, forgiveness and faith in our lives.

Halfway house  
volunteers helpful  
with center repairs

**Peggy Mazyck**

I am writing to acknowledge the work of Sharon halfway house individuals that participated in community service at VisitMercerCountyPA Visitors Center. Not only did they perform community service with us, they told me that they performed

community service for many nonprofits and churches throughout the area. I found the volunteers that came to us to be hardworking and respectful. Many had diverse talents that were very helpful to us. They helped in the area of light maintenance and their work frequently received compliments from visitors and community residents who came to our center for information or meetings. Most of halfway house volunteers showed a willingness to help in whatever areas we needed from unloading boxes to assisting with mailing packets to potential visitors.

We are grateful for the service they have given over the years. I hope as issues concerning their living situations are worked out that the volunteers who have done well and faithfully served nonprofits and churches throughout the Sharon area realized that their services are appreciated.

---

PEGGY MAZYCK is President/  
CEO of VisitMercerCountyPA.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of February 27...

## **DOC Donates Confiscated Cell Phones to Help Domestic Violence Victims in Lebanon County**

(Feb. 27, 2017) -- The Department of Corrections (DOC) today donated nearly 4,000 cell phones to Domestic Violence Intervention of Lebanon County to ensure that victims of domestic violence have a lifeline to help should they need it. The phones were confiscated from residents of several dozen community corrections centers across the state.

"We are very pleased to be able to make this donation to help ensure the safety of people in our community who may be at risk of domestic violence," said Corrections Secretary John Wetzel. "We must do everything we can to ensure that individuals who are threatened by violence have every tool at their disposal in order protect themselves and find help."



The issue is personal for Secretary Wetzel who lost a close childhood friend to domestic violence. Mt. Gretna business owner Stacy Seldomridge Pennington was stalked and murdered by her ex-boyfriend outside of her shop in 2015.

"Stacy did everything right. She reported him, she filed charges, and secured a protection from abuse (PFA) order," said Wetzel. "She trusted the system and the system failed her."

Wetzel has been advocating for ways to reform the bail system which he calls inadequate and lacking in uniformity.

Through Pennsylvania's Justice Reinvestment Initiative, which has been looking at ways to reform the criminal justice system, Wetzel is developing a working group dedicated to bail reform. He says there needs to be a way to make sure those who need to be behind bars prior to sentencing are in jail and that non-violent offenders who cannot afford to post bail are provided alternatives.

All men coming into the Department of Corrections are screened for domestic violence and, if necessary, are provided programming to reduce the risk of violence when they are released. There is also programming for women who are incarcerated that have a history of violence.

Wetzel was joined at the event by House Rep. Frank Ryan of Lebanon, Jennifer Storm, director of the state Office of Victim Advocate, Ellen Kramer, deputy director program services, Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence.



"Domestic violence is a pervasive and prevailing issue in our commonwealth and it is the great work of non-profits such as DVI of Lebanon County on the front lines providing vital life-saving services to victims and survivors that make a difference," said Storm. "I am proud to join with Secretary Wetzel on this donation that will ensure victims have safe and secure access to cell phones to seek safety when needed."

“When I got the phone call telling me that the Department of Corrections was donating thousands of phones I was overwhelmed,” said Jennifer Snyder, executive director of Domestic Violence Intervention of Lebanon County. “This donation will go a long way toward helping victims of domestic violence and supporting the services we provide 24/7.”

Domestic Violence Intervention of Lebanon County provides education, advocacy and support services for domestic violence victims and their children and the community. The organization runs a 24-hour hotline and offers emergency shelter, food and counseling and other services for victims and their dependent children.

Last year the organization directly served 1,134 adult and child victims and served an additional 3,000 county residents through educational programming.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



# Women's History Month is March 1 – 31, 2017

Women's History Month is an annual declared month that highlights the contributions of women to events in history and contemporary society. It is celebrated during March in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Australia, corresponding with International Women's Day on March 8, and during October in Canada, corresponding with the celebration of Persons Day on October 18.

As part of Women's History Month, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections highlights the women who lead this agency and run one-third of its prisons.

## Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal DOC Central Office, Mechanicsburg, Cumberland County

Shirley Moore Smeal is currently the executive deputy secretary (EDS) for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, a position she has held since April 2010. As chief operating officer, she is administratively responsible for the day-to-day operations of a 49,000 inmate system and ultimately responsible to oversee the 15,000 employees.

Moore Smeal began her career in corrections in 1987 as a clerk typist at SCI Huntingdon and was promoted to purchasing agent at SCI Smithfield in 1988. She later was promoted to corrections superintendent's assistant at SCI Albion, a position she held until 1999, when she was promoted to unit manager at SCI Camp Hill. In 2001, she was appointed as the executive assistant to the secretary of corrections and deputy secretary for administration. She moved progressively up the correctional ranks serving in increasingly responsible positions of deputy superintendent, superintendent of SCI Muncy, regional deputy secretary and acting secretary of corrections.

Moore Smeal has been instrumental in the implementation of Justice Reinvestment Initiatives, administrative segregation reduction efforts, restructuring the mental health system and strengthening and enhancing reentry efforts. An advocate for doing the right thing because it is the right thing to do, Moore Smeal was influential in implementing a leadership training program designed to recognize and appreciate diversity; provide opportunities for growth and development; and networking.

Moore Smeal is a member of the American Correctional Association (ACA), ACA Corrections Healthy Culture Committee, Advisory Council to the Safe



Alternatives to Segregation Initiative with Vera Institute of Justice, Pennsylvania Prison Warden's Association (PPWA), and is president-elect for the Association of Women Executives in Corrections (AWEC). She has served as chairperson for many leadership conferences, participated in several corrections-related webinars and workshops. She is the recipient of National Organization of Black Women in Law Enforcement's 2012 Trailblazer Award for becoming the highest ranking female in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections. She is the receiver of the Lifetime Achievement Award from PPWA and Distinguished Alumnae Award. Moore Smeal holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Edinboro University.

## **SCI Benner Township, Centre County**

### Superintendent Tammy Ferguson



Tammy Ferguson is a native of Lewistown, Pa. and a 1984 graduate of Halifax Area High School. Ferguson began her career at SCI Smithfield in 1995 as a corrections officer trainee. In April 2003, she earned sergeant stripes. Remaining at SCI Smithfield, Ferguson was promoted to lieutenant in 2005 and three years later she was named captain. In May 2009, Ferguson transitioned to Central Office as a central region inspection captain. She remained at Central Office and was promoted to chief of security in 2010. Transitioning to SCI Rockview in 2012, Ferguson was named deputy superintendent for centralized services. When SCI Benner Township opened, she moved to that facility in the same capacity. She was named superintendent of SCI Benner Township in 2014.

Ferguson has served in the United States Air Force and Pennsylvania Air National Guard. She is a 2013 graduate of the Pennsylvania Leadership Development Institute and a member of the Pennsylvania Prison Warden's Association and Association of Women Executives in Corrections.

## **SCI Cambridge Springs, Crawford County**

### Superintendent Joanne Torma

Joanne Torma, a native of Beaverdale, Pa., was named superintendent of SCI Cambridge Spring in 2014.

She began her corrections career in 1979 as a part-time ABE/GED teacher at SCI Mercer. After two years she left corrections to attend Pittsburgh Theological Seminary. Upon graduation, Joanne served as a local church pastor for seven years until she returned to corrections as the facility chaplaincy program director (FCPD) at SCI Mercer.



In 1995 she transferred to SCI Muncy as FCPD, where she remained for seven years until she was promoted to the Central Office position of administrator for religious and volunteer services. In 2003 Joanne was promoted to DSCS at SCI Muncy. During her five years there she served as DSCS for 2½ years and DSFM for 2½ years. Joanne moved to the Training Academy in the fall of 2008, where she served as the associate director for facilities management until her appointment in 2010 as the director of the Office of Population Management at Central Office.

In 2014, Joanne was named superintendent at SCI Cambridge Springs.

Joanne is a graduate of Slippery Rock University with a Bachelor of Science degree in Secondary Education and a Master of Arts degree in History and Pittsburgh Theological Seminary with a Masters of Divinity. She is the proud mother of Samantha and grandmother of Grascen and Maklen. She divides her non-corrections time between them and long walks with her Saint Bernard, Sophie.

## **SCI Camp Hill, Cumberland County**

### Superintendent Laurel Harry



Laurel, a native of Waynesburg, PA., was named Superintendent of SCI Camp Hill in 2012.

She began her corrections career in 1996 as a full-time psychology intern at the Federal Correctional Institution in Morgantown, WV. Later that same year, she became a drug/alcohol case management specialist in Washington County.

In 1999, Laurel began her career with the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections as a Drug and Alcohol Treatment Specialist (DATS) at the State Correctional Institution in Waynesburg. A few years

later, she was promoted to DATS Supervisor and, for seven months, served as acting unit manager.

When SCI Waynesburg closed, she transferred to SCI Fayette, which had recently opened in Fayette County. In 2004, she was named unit manager at SCI Fayette and then transferred laterally to SCI Greene in 2005.

In 2008, Laurel was named corrections classification and program manager (CCPM) at SCI Camp Hill, a position she held for 16 months before serving as a staff assistant to the deputy secretary for the Central Region at the department's Central Office.

For more than a year, Harry served as deputy superintendent for SCI Waynesburg and was responsible for overseeing contract negotiations with property owners as officials were contemplating reopening the facility. In

December 2010, she was transferred to deputy superintendent for centralized services (DSCS) at SCI Greensburg. In February 2011, when the decision was made not to reopen SCI Waynesburg, Laurel was appointed DSCS at SCI Graterford where she worked until accepting the Superintendent position at SCI Camp Hill, the department's Central Diagnostic and Classification Center.

Laurel graduated with honors from West Virginia University in Morgantown, WV, with a Bachelor's degree in Psychology and a Master's degree in Counseling.

## **SCI Chester, Delaware County**

### Superintendent Marirosa Lamas

Marirosa began her corrections career in 1990 as a counselor at SCI Camp Hill. While still working at the prison, she also served as unit manager. In 2004, she served as staff assistant to the regional deputy secretary at the department's headquarters. In 2005, she was named DSCS at SCI Frackville. The following year, she assumed the same duties at SCI Rockview. Marirosa was appointed superintendent at SCI Muncy in 2008, and as SCI Rockview's superintendent in March 2010. When SCI Benner Township opened on the grounds of SCI Rockview, Marirosa was named superintendent of both facilities.



In 2013, she was tasked with serving as a coordinator and trainer in the area of Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training, which played a major role in helping the department to achieve its goal of training employees that deal with mentally ill offenders and how to respond to and deescalate situations and to provide offenders with appropriate services.

Marirosa was named superintendent of SCI Chester in July 2016.

A native of Puerto Rico, Marirosa is a professionally certified and trained hostage negotiator. She earned a bachelor's degree in administration of justice from The Pennsylvania State University. She also holds a Master's degree in Administration of Justice from Shippensburg University.

She is a member of the Pennsylvania Prison Warden's Association and the American Correctional Association.

## SCI Frackville, Schuylkill County

### Superintendent Kathy Brittain



Kathy Brittain began her DOC career in 2000 as a corrections counselor 2 at SCI Dallas. In 2001 she was promoted to DATS supervisor and was tasked with opening a 46-bed AOD therapeutic community (TC).

During her tenure as a drug and alcohol treatment specialist supervisor, she also served as an adjunct faculty instructor overseeing a five-day experiential therapeutic training program, as well as serving on several central office committees that produced the new standardized cognitive behavior-based programs used currently in the agency.

In 2006, Brittain was promoted to unit manager, where she supervised specialized blocks, including the special needs unit, a therapeutic community and two areas with special medical cases. In 2008 - 2009, she was the acting major for unit management.

Prior to leaving SCI Dallas, Brittain served as acting corrections classification and program manager (CCPM) before being promoted to a similar position at SCI Retreat in 2011.

In 2013, she was promoted to deputy superintendent for centralized services (DSCS) at Retreat.

Brittain earned her bachelor's degree in social work from Millersville University and master's in social work from Marywood University. She is a Pennsylvania licensed social worker and was for 10 years an internationally certified addictions counselor. She has been an adjunct faculty member at Keystone College since 2008 where she teaches sociology and psychology courses.

Throughout her 25-year career in social work and correctional settings, she has taken a particular interest in program development/delivery, staff training, and working with the seriously mentally ill and multi-disciplinary team collaboration.

In her "spare time" she enjoys activities with her spouse and son, plus two adorable Labs.

## SCI Graterford, Montgomery County

### Superintendent Cynthia Link

Link began her corrections career as a corrections officer in 1987 at SCI Graterford. Over the years she rose through the officer ranks having served as sergeant, lieutenant and captain, again all while at SCI Graterford. She left the DOC for a few years – during which she owned/operated her own business, served as deputy state constable and as director of security for a local brewing company.

She returned to SCI Graterford in August 2007 as a unit manager. In 2011, she was named major of the guard at SCI Chester. In January 2014, she returned to SCI Graterford as acting DSCS. She officially was appointed to serve in that capacity in August 2014.



Link is a graduate of Council Rock High School and has attended Bucks County Community College. In addition to her DOC duties, she serves as a police firearms instructor and a defensive tactics instructor. It should be noted that Link was the first female instructor for these two courses at Graterford. She is a 2013 graduate of the Pennsylvania Leadership Development Institute and has presented workshops in a number of areas related to interpersonal communications, team building and empowerment.

## SCI Laurel Highlands, Somerset

### Superintendent Jamey Luther



Raised in Ashville, Pa., Jamey graduated from Penn Cambria High School. She is a graduate of Penn State University where she earned dual degrees: Bachelor of Science in Psychology with a minor in business and Bachelor of Science in Recreation and Parks Management with emphasis in therapeutic recreation.

Her first job ever was working at the Twin Lakes Center.

Jamey Luther began her corrections career in 1996 as a DATS 2 at Quehanna Boot Camp. In 2000, she moved to Johnstown Community Corrections Center as a corrections counselor 2. In the same year, she went to SCI Pine Grove as a drug and alcohol treatment supervisor. In 2006, Jamey was promoted to DSCS. The following year she transitioned

to DSCS at SCI Cresson. With the closing of SCI Cresson, she became DSFM at SCI Laurel Highlands. She was named superintendent in June 2014.

When asked what her favorite corrections job has been and why, Jamey said, "My current position because I feel like I've worked my whole life to get to this position. I have always strived for that next position, not allowing myself to ever sit back and get too comfortable."

If Jamey could have any job in the world, what would it be?

"The best job in the world is one I already hold...mother," Jamey said. "Fortunately the DOC has always worked with me and allowed me to take that next step in my career while at the same time never compromising the importance of being a good mother. Not all women are afforded this opportunity but I was able to have the best of both worlds."

## **SCI Mahanoy, Schuylkill County**

### Superintendent Theresa DelBalso

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



Throughout her career, Teri has been involved in numerous special committees and State Civil Service Commission test development and grading. She is a proponent for education, programming and treatment, and job training to enhance an offender's opportunity for successful re-entry into the community. Her professional philosophy is that identifying unwanted or hurtful behavior, accepting responsibility for personal actions, and the unwavering motivation to make better choices for a lifetime are requirements for positive and lasting change.

In addition to her DOC resume, Teri is currently a Lieutenant Colonel in her 27th year in the Army Reserves. As a military police officer, she served two combat tours in Iraq and various short tours on overseas and state-side assignments. She is currently the Commander of the 424th Military Police Detachment in Ashley, Pa.

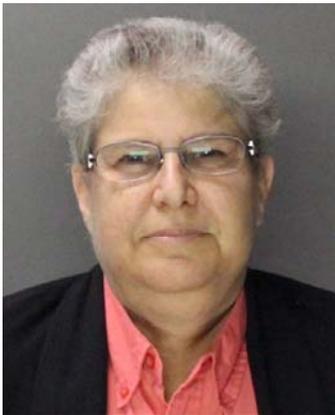
Prior to starting her DOC career, Teri was employed as a police officer for over seven years and was an instructor in the Municipal Police Officers Education and Training Commission Act 120 Program.

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

In her personal time, she enjoys spending time with family – including the furry ones, motorcycle riding, camping, home improvement projects and working around or roaming outside her home in the woods.

## **Quehanna Boot Camp, Clearfield County**

### Commander Mary Natoli



Mary was raised in Clearfield, Pa., and graduated from Clearfield Area High School. She attended Indiana University of PA, majoring in criminology.

Her first job ever was as a youth care worker at the Central Counties Detention Center. Before coming to the DOC she worked for Centre County Mental Health, Mental Retardation and Drug and Alcohol Center as an intake worker and crisis intervention worker. She later worked as a senior counselor for an inpatient drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility.

Mary was hired in 1991 as a DATS 2 at the Quehanna Motivational Boot Camp. In September 1994, she was promoted to DATS supervisor. The Quehanna facility expanded, and she was promoted to CCPM in June 2001. It was in May 2007 that Mary was appointed to the position of major and deputy commander of the Boot Camp. In June 2011, she became the deputy superintendent/commander under the supervision of SCI Houtzdale's superintendent. The position of superintendent/commander was appointed in January 2015, which gave back to the facility an independent superintendent.

When asked what corrections job has been her favorite and why, Natoli said, "I believe my favorite is being a superintendent. I am able to use many different types of skills to impact both staff and inmates in a positive way hopefully. I find it challenging and each day can bring different thought provoking issues/problems. I love being a leader for such a great staff who are committed and dedicated to the mission that we are assigned to accomplish."

If Mary could have any job in the world, she would like to be a Major League Baseball manager because she loves coaching and she loves the game and the smell of the grass.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## SCI Greene Hosts Friends and Family Day

SCI Greene held a Friends and Family Day on Feb. 27th for the juvenile lifers housed at the prison. Representatives from the PA Board of Probation and Parole, the Pennsylvania Prison Society, Department of Corrections Central Office and institutional staff presented attendees with topics that will help prepare and offer assistance to the individuals should they be released from incarceration. Those in attendance enjoyed the presentations as well as beverages and pastries provided by the prison's bakery department.



Similar events have been held throughout the state prison system for juvenile lifers.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Graterford Employees Celebrate Black History Month

On Thursday, February 23<sup>rd</sup>, SCI Graterford staff coordinated a luncheon to celebrate Black History Month. Staff donated food and prizes for raffles. A presentation was provided, as well as guest speakers.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## CCC Donates Items to Local Organization

Residents and employees of the Scranton Community Corrections Center collected art supplies and sport equipment in February. The items, estimated to be worth \$1,400, were donated to the local Catholic youth center.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



## Employee Recognized for Performance

At a recent weekly administrative meeting, SCI Mercer Sergeant Frankie Morales was awarded a certificate for his excellent performance on January 14, 2017.

On this date, Sergeant Morales provided quick intervention to deliver first aid to an inmate in the main dining hall who was choking on food. The sergeant's swift actions directly saved the inmate from a life-threatening situation and reflected great credit upon himself, SCI Mercer and the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections.



Sergeant Morales' sense of professional responsibility and willingness to act are greatly appreciated.

Pictured with Sergeant Morales is Superintendent Brian Thompson and Deputy Superintendent for Facility Management Michael Mahlmeister.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Students Tour Mercer

On February 24<sup>th</sup>, students from Youngstown State University's Correctional Strategies class toured SCI Mercer. Each semester Professor Phil R. Dyer, YSU Criminal Justice and Forensic Department, schedules his class to visit this institution. Professor Dyer states that the tour at "SCI Mercer is a very crucial part of our YSU students' getting the utmost level of inauguration to the Criminal Justice System."

Schools interested in touring SCI Mercer as part of their curriculum may contact Corrections Superintendent Assistant Andrea Shiock to make arrangements.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Graterford's Shopping Day

On February 24<sup>th</sup>, SCI Graterford conducted its first internal "Shopping Day."

Employees from the various departments within the prison were invited to drop off any excess or unused office supplies the day prior. The items were sorted and set up for browsing and taking by other offices who may need the items.

The efforts were part of Graterford's cost saving measures. The event was quite a success.

Kudos to employees for finding ways to save money!



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Forest Holds Blood Drive

On January 31<sup>st</sup>, 21 SCI Forest employees donated blood to the American Red Cross.

The Red Cross says that the efforts of SCI Forest always have been greatly appreciated and the prison's support of the community blood program will go a long way toward replenishing blood supplies and ultimately saving lives.

The prison has planned its next blood drive for March 31.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## News from the Bureau of Community Corrections

### Berks Connections success story

Timothy Kowalsky

Timothy Kowalsky was referred to the Berks Connections/Pretrial Services (BCPS) Workforce Development program in May 2016. He completed the mandatory group sessions in a timely manner and moved on to one-on-one job search assistance with BCPS staff. Kowalsky was very engaged in the job search process and seemed sincere and motivated.

BCPS partners with another local non-profit -- The Opportunity House -- and the local Workforce Development Board in a grant-funded, paid training opportunity for reentrants.

Kowalsky's compliance and enthusiasm with the program made him a great candidate for this opportunity. He completed the training and earned OSHA and Forklift Operation certifications as well as valuable warehouse experience.

Since completing the training, Kowalsky has secured full time employment with Hoffman Industries. When speaking to Kowalsky about the program he stated, "The resources you provided were extremely helpful in my transition back into society. The professionalism, compassion, empathy and courteousness were beyond reproach."

He continued on to highlight what we in community corrections hope to instill in all of our clients by explaining, "The failure that I faced along the way was something you made me realize I had to defeat, this isn't a hand out, it's a hand up!"

About BCPS:

Berks Connections/Pretrial Services is a community based organization that provides direct services, through professional staff and trained volunteers, to adult defendants, inmates, returning citizens and their families.

Their mission is to create a safer, more prosperous community by providing services, support and community-based outreach to adult offenders, at-risk youth and their families including the successful community reintegration and pretrial-related assistance.

Learn more at [www.berksconnections.org](http://www.berksconnections.org)

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

# THANKS



Family Promise<sup>®</sup>  
of Harrisburg Capital Region

525 Hummel Avenue  
Lemoyne, PA 17043  
(717) 737-1100

[fpbcrdirector@gmail.com](mailto:fpbcrdirector@gmail.com)  
[www.familypromisehcr.org](http://www.familypromisehcr.org)

*A community response for homeless families.*

February 22, 2017

Dear Harrisburg Community Corrections Center,

I was over-whelmed to receive your generous donation of 300 toothbrushes! With your donation, our families will be able to have a new toothbrush when they move into the program to keep up with their basic needs while focusing on their stability goals! *We've served 71 families (including 94 adults and 170 children); 71% of whom have gained full-time employment and then moved into apartments.*

This was accomplished through the hard work of our guests, the love and support of volunteers, and work with our mandatory savings plan, life skills curriculum, and case management with staff. Your gift helps us to accomplish our mission of empowering families through relationships and skill building to move from homelessness to home.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kristina Marshall".

Kristina Marshall, MSW  
Executive Director

*Thank you for this  
awesome gift!*



*"We now keep track of all of our bills on a white board to make sure everything gets paid. That's not something we were able to do before."*

Chris, Abby, Jaxon, and Christianna

2016 graduate family

\*Your contribution is tax-deductible to the extent allowed by law. This acknowledgment certifies that you have made this donation as a charitable contribution, and you are not receiving any goods or services in return. Please keep this receipt and discuss this with your tax consultant when completing your taxes.\*

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## BCC Success Story ~ David G.

David, a 45-year-old single male was admitted to the Bureau of Community Corrections (BCC). David has never held a permanent full time job throughout his life. His last incarceration was 2012 where he lost custody of his son that he raised since he was a newborn.

David was released to Harrisburg CCC and then moved into a rooming house, while continuing to work with temporary employment agencies.

His case manager found a temporary employment agency that was hiring for a new meat packing company and gave David the resource. David was hired and remained at the company earning \$10 per hour. Three months after his start date he was offered a permanent position with benefits. He obtained a raise and began earning \$13 per hour.

David's goal was to maintain employment, petition the court for family reunification, obtain housing large enough for his son and never return to the criminal justice system. He enrolled at Harrisburg Area Community College and began classes with the end goal of obtaining his carpentry degree. He has earned 12 credits to date.

David has remained in his apartment, has begun visitation with his son regularly, maintained employment now for more than two years, earns \$15.65 per hour with benefits, he has 15 credit hours to complete his carpentry diploma and will decide if he would like to continue on for his associates in building trades.

David has completed the BCC's Re-Entry Housing Assistance Program but has volunteered, utilizing his skills from HACC, in assisting transitional housing case managers with preparing empty transitional units with painting, cleaning and repair minor damages.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Legislator's Staff Visits CCC #4

Individuals from State Representative W. Curtis Thomas' office -- Dr. Palmer (Executive Assistant) and Charlotte Greer (Community Outreach Specialist) -- recently visited CCC #4 to talk to and to provide reentrants with information about an upcoming job fair Rep. Thomas' office is sponsoring. The officials also spoke with the center director about having reentrants perform future volunteer work.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



## Quehanna Gives Back!

Through the generosity of the Quehanna Boot Camp (QBC) staff, the QBC Empowerment Committee was able to make a \$1,000 donation to the Karthaus Fire Company for 2016. Funds are raised through raffles, hoagie/sandwich sales, etc., and a percentage of the proceeds is donated to a charitable organization each year.



Pictured above from left to right are: Kim Ralph, treasurer; Matthew McGonigal, Karthaus Fire Company chief; Mary Natoli, superintendent; and Earl Snyder, committee member.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of February 20...

## Reimagining Prisons

On February 23, Secretary Wetzel traveled to Chicago to participate in an event that is a collaboration between The Vera Institute and Chicago Ideas and is intended to host discussions about reimagining prisons. At the event, the secretary was part of a panel that addressed an audience of 300-400 civic and community leaders about reimagining the prison system.

Chicago Ideas is a dynamic cross-platform organization and one of the nation's preeminent conveners of ground breaking thought leaders and communicators. Its programming amplifies voices and solutions through on-stage programs, hands-on workshops, thoughtful online features and youth community outreach. Learn more at [www.chicagoideas.com](http://www.chicagoideas.com)



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Art Gallery or Dog Spa?

Art gallery or dog spa? How about both? The pups enrolled in SCI Houtzdale's service dog program just got a new bathtub that doubles as a gallery of canine art. The four puppies in training with the United Disabilities Service program - and those for many years to come - will get scrub-a-dubbed in their new wash station. The wash room walls are decorated with gorgeous murals depicting Labrador Retrievers that were painted by talented inmates. The wash tub itself was built by Houtzdale's Sheet Metal Tradesman Eric Legars.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



### SCI HOUTZDALE R.U.F.F. Program



What started as an idea became a reality on January 10, 2017 when the SCI Houtzdale R.U.F.F. Program received its latest addition. Thanks to the hard-work of the Institution's maintenance department the United Disabilities Service-sponsored canine program became the beneficiary of a much needed dog wash station. Once installed, four inmate artists housed on the unit proceeded to improve the appearance of the room by painting various murals. Additionally, the exterior of the room was painted to resemble a wooden structure. The wash station as well as the artistic additions have not only improved the appearance of the housing unit but also improved morale among staff and inmates alike.



## Puppies!!!

There's no better way to end a work week than by looking at pictures of adorable puppies!

Please welcome the next class of eight-week-old puppies to be trained at SCI Pine Grove. North, Polar, Kato and Packer arrived yesterday and met with prison staff and their inmate handlers.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Did You Know???**

That SCI Albion Superintendent Michael Clark serves on the Erie County Criminal Justice Advisory Board?

Clark, along with 29 other area officials who work in the juvenile and adult criminal justice fields in Erie County meet regularly to provide a forum for the advancement of criminal justice issues in the county.

The group strives to educate and inform the Erie community in a proactive way by:

- identifying and solving criminal justice issues through open community forums,
- evaluating services,
- consulting with departments/agencies before major changes are implemented
- reaching out to the public through media sources,
- acting as a clearing house for information, and
- building collaboration with local state and federal government officials to find solutions that benefit the community.

The advisory board also includes members from local public non-provide human services organizations, public safety representatives and other members at large as nominated and voted on by the membership.

Meetings are held at least quarterly, and the board operates under a set of by-laws that are reviewed at least annually.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training**

SCI Muncy's Lt. Virgil Meyer has been selected to manage the DOC's Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training program. This is a temporary assignment with an expected duration of four months. Lt. Meyer brings a wealth of experience to the program. He is a 10-year veteran of the DOC, is currently the training lieutenant at SCI Muncy, has worked three years as a training instructor at the Academy, was a past member of CERT, and is currently an adjunct instructor for AMAC. He has been substantially involved in the CIT program having attended the program and as a member of the training team. He also represented the DOC providing testimony on mental health issues in corrections to congressional representatives on Capitol Hill in May, 2016. The DOC's goal is to rotate through the program, managers with CIT training and experience and have them work in this capacity for four-months each.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## **Domestic Violence Screening, Treatment Programs**

Upon reception to the DOC, male inmates are screened for domestic violence as part of the diagnostic and classification process using the DOC-authored Batterer's Quick Screen.

If, based upon the results of the Batterer's Quick Screen, it is determined that domestic violence programming is needed, the inmate will be recommended for Batterer's Intervention. The DOC uses the 26-session domestic abuse intervention based on the Duluth Model. This model addresses men who batter women.

The Duluth Model, or Domestic Abuse Intervention Project, is a program developed to reduce domestic violence against women. Its approach keeps the voices of victims central and helps abusive men look more closely at their actions, intentions and beliefs and the effect their actions had on their partners and others.

Sessions are delivered twice per week and are co-facilitated by a male and a female employee. The male-female co-facilitation is for modeling positive male-female interaction, because modeling is a key component of Social Learning Theory.

This group challenges the batterer's beliefs and behaviors regarding his intimate partner(s). There are eight themes that are addressed: non-violence, non-threatening behavior, respect, support and trust, honesty and accountability, sexual respect, partnership and negotiation and fairness.

Participants are given the opportunity to practice communication skills, learn how to gauge their partner's mental status as well as their own, confront others in the group on minimization, denial and blame issues, and use assertive behavior as opposed to aggressive behavior. These concepts are achieved through role playing, modeling and homework assignments, and through participating in group sessions aimed at learning non-violent alternatives (all components that are cognitive behavioral in nature).

Female inmates who have a history of domestic violence are placed in the Living Safely Without Violence program, which is a gender-responsive, 40-session cognitive behavioral intervention which focuses on strategies that help women end self-harm and aggressive behavior.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of February 13...

## Virtual Reality Eases Anxiety

The DOC uses virtual reality to help "juvenile" lifers prepare for their parole to a community corrections center after their sentences are changed by the courts. Some of these individuals have spent decades in one prison, and the ability to show them virtual reality footage helps to familiarize them with that center.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## SCI Pittsburgh Celebrates Black History Month

In true SCI Pittsburgh tradition, the City and prison come together recently to honor Black History Month.

Local celebrity WTAE-TV News Anchor & Sports Director Andrew Stockey was a keynote speaker for one of the final activities being held in the Pittsburgh facility.

In the midst of a closure and when morale is not at its strongest, a local star conveys a positive message to inmates and staff. Although he works in the news and the stories are tragic on a daily basis, he looks for the positive; even if it is very small. His words echoed the message of perseverance.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## GO-TIME: DOC Food Procurement Services & Management Software System Contract to Save an Estimated \$16.6 Million Over Three Years

*Unique business model illustrates innovation, leverages resources, while solicitation process ensures use of small diverse and small businesses*

(Feb. 15, 2017) -- Pennsylvania Department of General Services (DGS) Secretary Curt Topper and Department of Corrections (DOC) Secretary John Wetzel today

announced another GO-TIME success with the award of a Food Procurement Services and Food Management Software System to Aramark Correctional Industries, LLC that will save the commonwealth \$16.6 million over the three year-term of the contract.



The contract is worth an estimated amount of nearly \$154 million for the three-year initial term. There are two one-year renewal options and the first prison is expected to go online by the end of February 2017.

“GO-TIME, or the Governor’ Office of Transformation, Innovation, Management and Efficiency, has changed the way the commonwealth looks at our operations,

purchases, and ways of doing business,” Secretary Topper said. “The awarding of this contract is the latest in a long line of successful examples that show how when action is taken to leverage resources, streamline processes, and create efficiencies, we all benefit from increased quality and decreased costs.”

The contract implements a unique and innovative model in which the DOC has complete control over creating the food menus, inspecting the food to maintain quality and nutritional standards, preparing the food, and then serving it. Through the use of a software system, Aramark will manage the purchase, logistics, and food inventory for the DOC’s 26 facilities across the commonwealth.

“Ensuring the quality and nutritional value of the food we serve at our facilities is a priority for the Department of Corrections,” Secretary Wetzel noted. “This contract model enables us to leverage our buying power to realize significant savings without having to sacrifice quality in any other areas. We are still able to maintain our staff-delivered food operations within our institutions, including educating inmates on food preparation, determining portions, and adhering to food regulations.”

The commonwealth bid the contract out using the Request for Proposal, or RFP, method which factored in the technical capabilities of the supplier, cost, use of a domestic workforce, and subcontracting with small diverse and small businesses. “In addition to supporting a Pennsylvania-based business and keeping those dollars in the commonwealth’s economy, we are seeing nearly 12 percent of the total contract value being committed to subcontracting with a small diverse business and a small business,” Secretary Topper said. “We’ve taken several steps to improve on the RFP process to reward prime contractors for committing to spending contract dollars with small diverse and small businesses and we are seeing progress.”

The implementation of the contract will occur through a transition period at each facility. The DOC and Aramark will work together to coordinate the transition period for each facility to ensure a seamless transfer of services.

GO-TIME leverages inter-agency coordination and collaboration to maximize efficiency, modernize state government operations, and provide the highest quality services. The Executive Order signed by Governor Tom Wolf tasks state agencies with finding cost savings from efficiency and innovative initiatives to better leverage state government resources and taxpayer dollars.

Efforts through this initiative have saved more than \$156 million in FY 15-16, exceeding the \$150 million savings goal set by the Governor. The Governor is now challenging GO-TIME to build upon this success by achieving \$500 million in savings by 2020. To learn more about GO-TIME, visit [www.governor.pa.gov/go-time/](http://www.governor.pa.gov/go-time/).

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

**Pics of Honor Guard who attended funeral services for DE DOC Lt. Floyd...**

From Benner Township:



From Left to Right: Lt. L. Berry, Sgt. D. Bowman, CO1 B. Knepp, CO1 M. Wilson



PA DOC Honor Guard on the Right Side of the Photo

From SCI Forest...



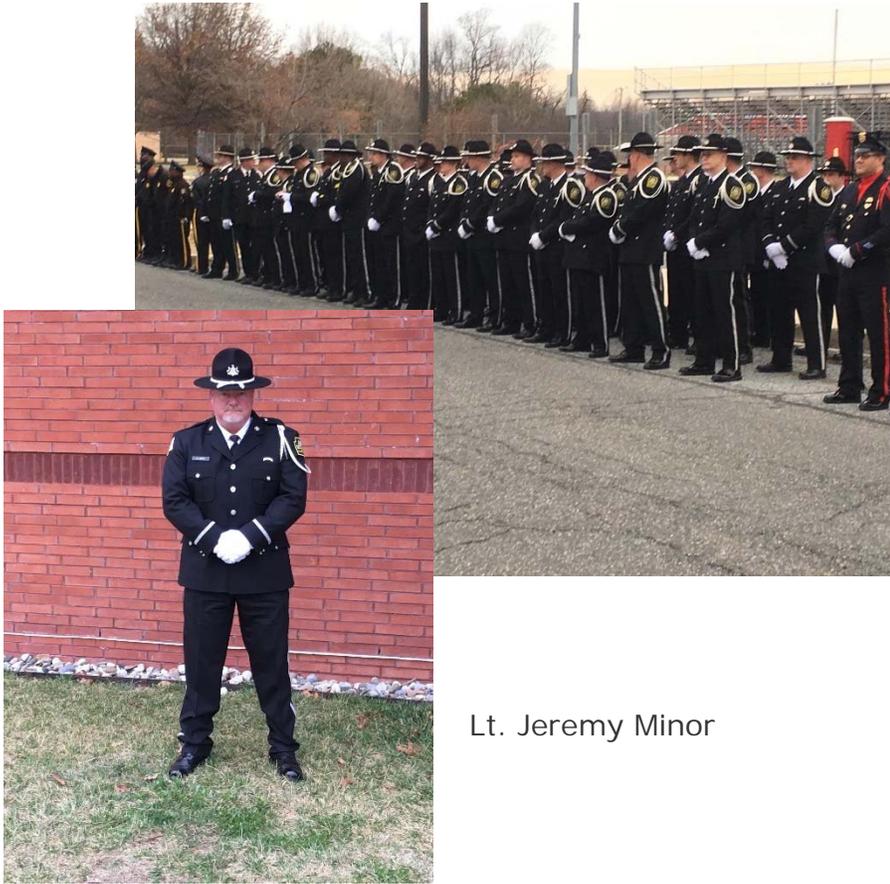
SCI Forest Honor Guard is in the first row (left to right) – CO1 A. Baumcratz, CO2 M. Turek, CO3 J. Dietrich, CO2 W. Harriger.

From SCI Huntingdon...



Sgt. Doug Crile, Lt. Darren Dickson, CO1 Bryan Peroni, and Lt. Sam Harker

From SCI Pine Grove...



Lt. Jeremy Minor

From SCI Albion...

Lt. Shannon McBride and  
Team Leader Lt. Mark McLaurin



Submitted by Major Scott Bowman...



From SCI Cambridge Springs...



CO1 D. Slye and CO2 R. Gage

From SCI Frackville...



From Left to Right: CO Rice, CO Alshefski, Sgt. Reed, CO Corby, Lt. Hannon, and Sgt. Resendes

From SCI Camp Hill...



From SCI Smithfield...

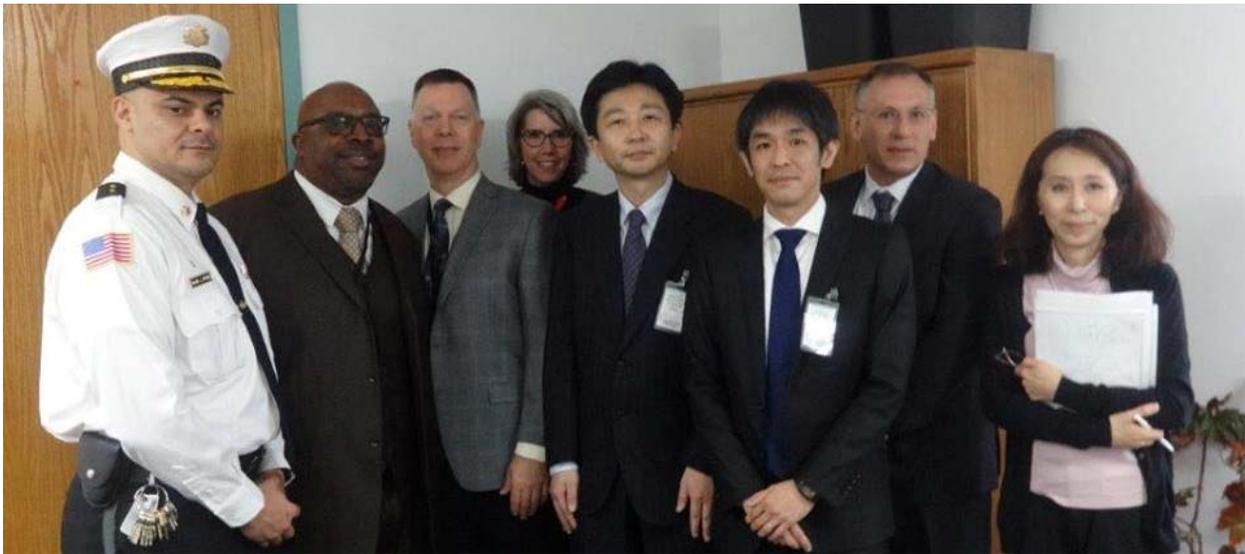


~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of February 9...

## **Delegates Tour Chester and Graterford**

A delegation from Japan's Ministry of Justice spent the past two days touring SCIs Chester and Graterford. The delegates visit at Chester commenced with a meeting with Regional Deputy Secretary Mike Wenerowicz and Chester administrative staff. The delegates were interested in both the physical plant and the day-to-day operations. During their tour they visited the control center, general housing units, the Restricted Housing Unit and education area. They also saw the operations of the laundry, commissary and food service. In addition to discussing planning and design, the delegates were provided an overview of alcohol and drug treatment programs. While touring the commissary, they expressed amusement at the popularity of Ramen noodles. The homemade prison "casserole" known as chi-chi was explained to them, and that process seemed to delight the delegation.



**Pictured from left to right: Major Jeraldo Aponte, Deputy Superintendent Kenneth Eason, Deputy Superintendent Kenneth Wahl, Superintendent Marirosa Lamas, Gimpei Hori, Chief Technical Official, Makotoa Yaki, Technical Assistant Director, RDS Michael Wenerowicz and Kimiko Tonogai, Interpreter.**

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

# Students Tour SCI Huntingdon

On February 7, SCI Huntingdon hosted students from the Huntingdon County Career and Technology Center. The 10th through 12th grade students are enrolled in a career development program which includes Law Enforcement, Corrections, Fire, EMS and Homeland Security. The students were taken on a tour throughout the institution and ended the morning with an information session attended by administrative staff.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Stancavage Reaches 20-year Mark

Tradesman Stephen Stancavage celebrates 20 years of service.

Congratulations!



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Retreat Announces EOQ



Chaplain David Boyles was named SCI Retreat's Employee of the Quarter for the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2017 due to his always giving above and beyond his normal duties. He is on the board of directors for the PA Prison Chaplain Association and is chaplain for the SCI Retreat Pride Motorcycle Club. Also, last year, he took initiative and proposed a therapeutic garden at the prison in order to change the prison's atmosphere AND to help special needs inmates with their recovery. He provides support to staff, especially during the recent anticipation of prison closures. He is a credit to the DOC and worthy of the recognition.

Congratulations Chaplain Boyles!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Central Office, Harrisburg area YWCA team up to benefit homeless veterans

The YWCA of Greater Harrisburg recently hosted the 11<sup>th</sup> annual Veterans' Stand Down event, which provides critical services to support homeless and at-risk veterans from communities throughout South Central PA. The event provided services, meals and clothing to various veterans in the Harrisburg region. Donations were collected by Central Office personnel and were transported to the Harrisburg Armory, where the event took place.



Pictured, left to right, are: Executive Staff Assistant Robert Hammond, Special Assistant Janet Kelly, Special Assistant Amy Schwenk and Statewide Veterans Coordinator Ryan Yoder.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

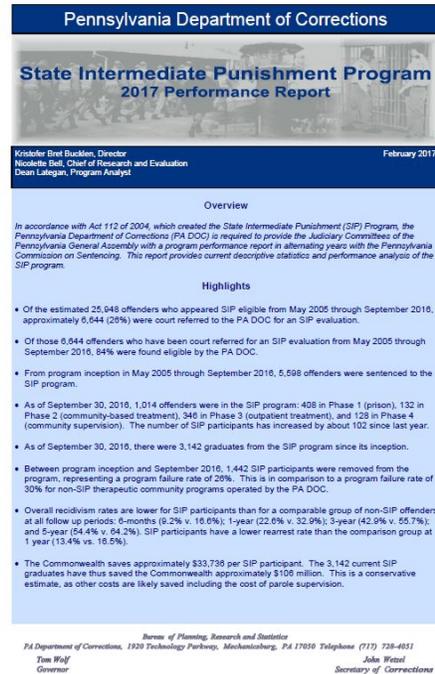
Week of January 30...

## DOC Issues 2017 SIP Performance Report

We've just posted the 2017 performance report for State Intermediate Punishment.

Some highlights are:

- Of the estimated 25,948 offenders who appeared SIP eligible from May 2005 through September 2016, approximately 6,644 (26%) were court referred to the PA DOC for an SIP evaluation.
- Of those 6,644 offenders who have been court referred for an SIP evaluation from May 2005 through September 2016, 84% were found eligible by the PA DOC.
- As of September 30, 2016, there were 3,142 graduates from the SIP program since its inception.
- Overall recidivism rates are lower for SIP participants than for a comparable group of non-SIP offenders at all follow up periods: 6-months (9.2% v. 16.6%); 1-year (22.6% v. 32.9%); 3-year (42.9% v. 55.7%); and 5-year (54.4% v. 64.2%). SIP participants have a lower rearrest rate than the comparison group at 1 year (13.4% vs. 16.5%).



View the entire report at [www.cor.pa.gov](http://www.cor.pa.gov) - click on the STATISTICS link and then choose the "Reports" link.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

*The following article is reprinted with permission from MHI Solutions magazine.*

## **CTE's *Fundamentals of Warehousing & Distribution* curriculum utilized in Pennsylvania correctional institution vocational programs**

*By Angela Jenkins, MHI Director of Career & Technical Education (CTE)*

While you probably know that MHI's Career & Technical Education (CTE) program, which includes the four *Fundamentals of Warehousing and Distribution* textbooks, has been adopted nationwide by multiple high schools, community colleges and technical schools, you might be surprised to discover that our second adopter of the program was the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections.

"The program originated with the development and writing of the first *Fundamentals* textbook by MHI staffers Dick Ward and Allan Howie at the request of the United States Marine Corps Institute in the 1990s," recalls John Nofsinger. He served as MHI's CEO during those years and is currently an Executive Advisor to the organization.

"The Marine Corps Institute had contracted with MHI to prepare materials that were designed specifically for people entering the logistics field while in the military," Nofsinger says. "The idea was to develop content that was not geared toward university-level learning, but rather took more of a vocational, skills-based approach."

The program included a testing component, graded by MHI, which then issued a certificate to military logisticians transitioning out of service. "The idea behind the certificate was to help them demonstrate proficiency in the field as they returned to civilian life," Nofsinger continues.

It was that very program that Rich Jacobs, instructor at the Pennsylvania State Correctional Institution at Graterford, stumbled upon in 2008, when he was tasked with finding a warehouse training program that could be used for instruction of inmates approaching parole.

"The previous year, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections had received additional funding to start some new vocational programs, including one named 'Warehouse Operations and Material Handling.' I was a corrections officer at the time, but had worked for many years as a forklift operator and warehouse associate prior to that, so when they created this position at our facility, it was a good fit," he recalls.

Although Jacobs did a lot of research into different education programs, most of it was targeted toward the managerial or collegiate level. "There was almost zero content for entry level instruction," he says. "When, by chance, I connected with Allen Howie at MHI, I explained my problem. He suggested that MHI could re-work

the textbook they'd written for the military and repurpose the testing and certificate program for our needs—and that's what they did."

To make it more useful for training in general warehousing applications, MHI edited the Marine Corps Institute edition of the original *Fundamentals* textbook to remove military-specific terminology and handling requirements, adds Nofsinger. "The relationship with the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections really was the origin of today's Career & Technical Education program at MHI," he says.

The program with the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections was formally instituted in 2009 and is based on MHI's *Fundamentals of Warehousing and Distribution, Volume One* textbook. Students gain an understanding of the basic concepts of warehousing as they apply to the logistics of handling materials. It gives an overview of the warehousing function and the various tasks intended to accomplish this function: movement, storage, control, and protection.

In addition to providing the five-unit textbook, MHI also grades the tests administered to the Pennsylvania inmates at the conclusion of each unit. Those who pass with a cumulative average of 80% or higher across all five tests receive a certificate from MHI. This acknowledges successful completion of coursework and verifies that a student demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of concepts in the material handling, logistics and supply chain workforce. A nominal fee is required of each inmate for his testing evaluation.

Currently, the Warehouse Operations and Material Handling class is offered at four other Pennsylvania State Correctional Institution locations outside of Jacobs' program at Graterford: Albion, Houtzdale, Huntingdon and Mahanoy. To qualify for enrollment, inmates must already have a high school diploma or first complete their General Educational Development (GED). They also have to be approaching their initial date of parole eligibility so that the knowledge attained in class is fresh—making them more appealing to potential employers.

In addition to the certificate of completion from MHI, students also receive a certificate of course completion from the Pennsylvania Department of Education. Several of the locations also offer forklift certifications.

Jacobs' class runs for three months—160 total hours—and also includes an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) certification, and construction flagger certification. In addition to hands-on forklift experience, he's created a mock warehouse with 100 slots and wood-block inventory. Students learn how to pick, cycle count, label, and file documentation. Each class typically has 15 students; he estimates he's had roughly 360 inmates complete the course over the past eight years.

"Although we're not allowed to maintain contact with the inmates after they leave, I have heard later from guys who are still here that many former students of mine did get a job in warehousing or a related field," he reports.

Over at the Mahanoy facility, located in Frackville, Jacobs' counterpart Randy Millard has been teaching the Warehouse Operations and Material Handling course since October 2009. Previously an instructor in the plumbing trades, Millard's military background in the U.S. Army ("everyone in the Army is in logistics," he says) made the position a good fit.

He teaches two classes of 16 students each, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. Each class is six months long, enabling him to use not only MHI's *Fundamentals of Warehousing and Distribution, Volume One* textbook, but also the second and third volumes as well.

"I also contacted a few local businesses to find out exactly what type of on-the-job skills they look for in employees so that I could be sure to include that in my curriculum," Millard explains, noting that like Jacobs, he has created a mock warehouse for hands-on experience in signposting, labeling, navigation and picking. "My goal is to get the students up to speed with terminology and the basics, but also expose them to what happens on up into the supply chain beyond just being a material handler on the warehouse floor."

Millard has had more than 380 students complete the course, which also includes forklift certification. To incentivize performance, the Mahanoy facility offers the top three test scorers reimbursement of their test evaluation fee, he adds. "It gives them a little bit more motivation to try to do their best throughout the whole class," he says.

Informally, Millard has tried to track ultimate outcomes of past students through Department of Corrections records. From what he can tell, since 2011 80% of his graduates have stayed out of prison.

"Occasionally I will hear that someone was able to use the certificates they earned in my classes to get a job," he reports. "Because they walk out of here with an automatic, employable skill, it's one of the most popular courses we offer here—the others being automotive technology, electronics, specialized carpentry and computers."

What remains now, say both instructors, is for companies to be more willing to consider former inmates as potential employees. Equipping them with knowledge and certificates is only the first step. To learn more about MHI's CTE programs, contact me at [ajenkins@mhi.org](mailto:ajenkins@mhi.org).

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Dear Mr. Murray,

On behalf of the PA CareerLink<sup>®</sup> Mercer, I want to offer this letter as appreciation for 4 volunteers from the Sharon Community Corrections Center for taking time to offer our outside areas free of litter.

Mr. Tyler Siple, Mr. John Rice, Mr. John Mesko, and Mr. Jonathon Butterfield were respectful and demonstrated a team effort in completing the needed task. In less than 2 hours, this team was able to remove over 6 large garbage bags of litter and other refuse.

As spring begins to approach us, and in order to maintain their initial work, I would like to contact the Sharon Community Corrections Center for this team to return, or to have another team come to ensure our grounds are free of litter.

Again, my sincere gratitude and thanks to this team for contributing to a cleaner ground and landscape of our center.

Respectfully,

  
Christine E. Burger

Site Administrator, PA CareerLink<sup>®</sup>- Mercer

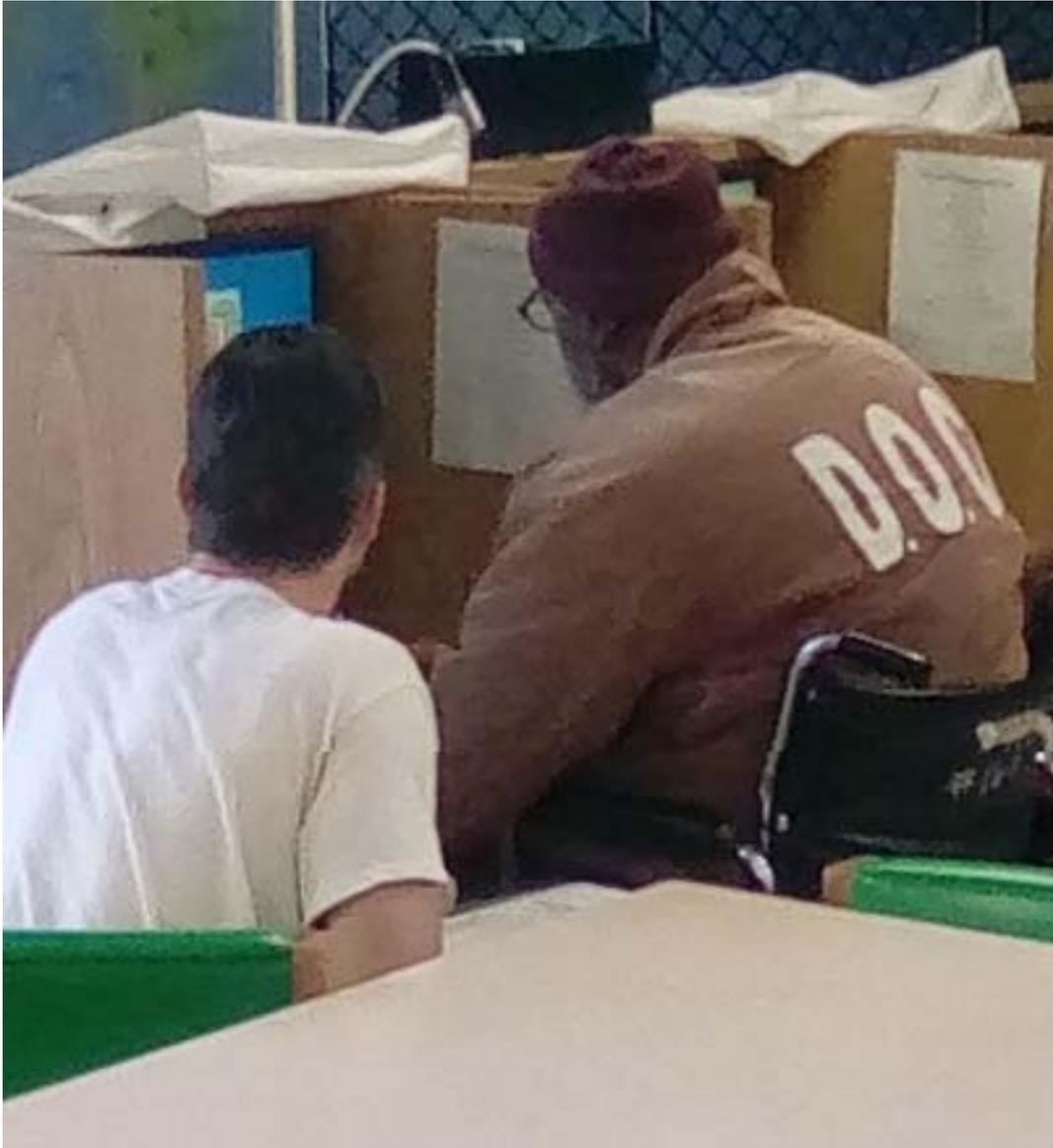
CC: Sharon Beautification Commission, Bill Drolsbaugh

## Sharon CCC Receives Letter of Thanks

"It's not often we receive positive notes about the work Sharon CCC reentrants are doing, so when we do we share it," said CCC Region 3 Director Morris Richardson.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Re-Familiarizing Themselves



“Juvenile lifers” at SCI Laurel Highlands are pictured using the Transitional Housing Unit computers to brush up on some long lost – or perhaps even never-learned -- skills such as keyboarding in preparation for possible release. Over the years skills may have dwindled or may have been forgotten due to minimal use or opportunity, especially in the aging population. In the picture, one juvenile lifer is assisting an elderly juvenile lifer with the keyboarding program. Laughter as well as frustration could be heard as they progressed through the screens on the monitor.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of January 23...

## **Wolf Administration Announces Plan to Close Only SCI Pittsburgh**

On January 26, 2017, Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel announced that the Wolf Administration will close the State Correctional Institution (SCI) at Pittsburgh by June 30, 2017.

Closing SCI Pittsburgh by June 30, will enable the department to realize an estimated annual net savings of \$81 million. The other four prisons under consideration will remain in operation.

“Closing an institution is a challenging process, and this decision, made in consultation with Governor Tom Wolf, only came after considering input from stakeholders and an extensive review of all of the institutions and took into consideration several factors including the age, size, location, programming, and economic impact on local communities,” said Wetzel. “While we initially felt that closing SCI Pittsburgh would present challenges for closure, upon review of the information, we feel confident that those challenges can be mitigated by relocating the services and specialized units to other facilities.”

Every employee of SCI Pittsburgh will be offered a job within DOC and that inmates will be relocated safely to appropriate facilities with available beds.

“With this announcement, we can focus on helping employees transition to other DOC facilities, relocating inmates within our system and beginning plans that enable the closure of this prison by the end of June,” said Wetzel. “The DOC is sending support staff to the facility to provide employees with resources and support services.”

On January 6, the DOC announced that it was evaluating five prisons with the intention of closing two facilities due to the historic reduction in the inmate population and anticipated budget deficit.

The other prisons under consideration were SCIs Frackville, Mercer, Retreat, and Waymart. After an extensive evaluation outlined below, the DOC made the decision to only close SCI Pittsburgh to minimize the impact to the staff, economy, and community, while still achieving necessary cost savings. Closing a larger institution like Pittsburgh made it possible to not close two smaller prisons to reach similar savings.

One of the key deciding factors was the relative strength of Allegheny County's economy compared to other counties where prisons were also considered for closure. The robust business community in Pittsburgh combined with the site's location, near transportation infrastructure and the industrial corridor, is optimal for reuse and revitalization of the site.

The following specialty units at SCI Pittsburgh will be relocated to other institutions: a regional diagnostic and classification center, a mental health unit, multiple therapeutic communities (in which those with substance use disorder receive treatment), a veterans service unit, and the oncology unit. In addition, the hemophilia unit – which only impacts six inmates who require a hospital visit once a year – will be housed at another prison.

The Wolf Administration's top priorities in this process were the safety of the public, DOC's employees and the inmates committed to DOC's custody. Wetzel said that his agency will be able to safely absorb relocated employees and inmates at its other existing state prisons.

Wetzel said the decrease in DOC's inmate population over the past several years has resulted in more than 6,000 unused beds throughout the state prison system. The DOC has identified beds that will be brought back into operation throughout the system, with a majority of those being available at SCI Camp Hill.

Inmates will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and relocated throughout the system depending upon their custody levels and their treatment and medical needs.

After the closure of the state prisons in Westmoreland and Cambria counties in 2013, a protocol for prison closures was created, in consultation with the legislature, to improve notification and communication with employees, as well as state and local officials.

"Throughout this process transparency was vital, and we used the facility closure guidelines to ensure the process was more inclusive and efficient than the one used in 2013 when we closed SCIs Cresson and Greensburg," Wetzel said.

Wetzel said that from the beginning of the facility closure process, a DOC committee was established to compile and analyze facility information and data about the five facilities – including their operating costs, physical plant, the unique programs they provide for inmates and the impact upon the local community, as well as employees' travel times and proximity to other facilities.

The DOC also collaborated with other state agencies -- the Departments of Community and Economic Development (DCED), General Services, Human Services and Labor & Industry and the Office of Administration -- for input and assistance in the process.

The committee's objective was clearly identifying and establishing a mission statement and objectives; conducting a cost-benefit data analysis; collaborating with the DCED and other agencies to determine economic and local impact; notifying legislators so they could provide input through calls, letters, meetings and petitions; notifying employees in a more timely manner; and posting information, including decisional documents, to the DOC's website throughout the entire process.

“We worked extensively to gather the information in order to make the best decision in a timely and transparent fashion, all the while sensitive to the impact this will have on staff, inmates and communities,” Wetzel said.

This closure also impacts the regional office of the Bureau of Community Corrections and the Riverside Community Corrections Center – both of which operate out of the front building at SCI Pittsburgh. The regional office will be relocated, while the center will be closed. Center employees will be offered jobs within the DOC, and reentrants will be housed elsewhere in the community corrections system.

The second phase of DOC’s cost-saving process, which calls for the 50 percent reduction of community corrections contracted beds and contracted county jail beds, is in the planning process and will be completed by June 30, 2017.

Additionally, the DOC plans to reduce positions at the agency’s central office in Mechanicsburg by 10 percent.

SCI Pittsburgh, which opened in 1882 and is known locally as “Western Pen,” was previously put into “mothball” status in January 2005. The prison was reopened in June 2007 to help the department deal with its then-increasing inmate population. The prison currently houses 1,921 inmates and employs 555 individuals.

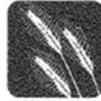
The DOC has created a dedicated email account ([ra-crdocclose@pa.gov](mailto:ra-crdocclose@pa.gov)) and a toll-free number (888-316-8950) for staff, inmate families, and others seeking additional information.

For additional information, please visit the [Prison Closures page on the DOC’s website](#).

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of January 16...

## Mercer Receives Letter of Thanks



COMMUNITY  
*Food* WAREHOUSE

OF MERCER COUNTY

January 10, 2016

**PRESIDENT**

George Gerhart

**VICE-PRESIDENT**

Owen Martino

**SECRETARY**

Jennifer Bell

**TREASURER**

Gary Rose

**BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Gary Dalesandro

Carnie Gerba

Carole Girski

Bernadette Harry

Rev. Glenn Hink

Joan Humphrey

Michael A. Joannov

Susan Lorenz

Joseph Mielecki

Robin Miller

Gino Nicastro

Tessa Simmons

Madge Tamber

**ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

The Honorable Francis J. Formelli

Pat Langley

Paul O'Brien

Michael A. Roth, D.O.

Barnay Schell

Michael Wright

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

Lori Weston

State Correctional Institution at Mercer  
Inmate General Welfare Fund  
801 Butler Pike, Route 258 South  
Mercer, PA 16137

Dear Friends,

On behalf of the Board of Directors, and myself, I would like to extend our gratitude for the donation of \$816.53 to the Community Food Warehouse, in November 2016.

These funds will be used to purchase food for families in need throughout Mercer County. The Community Food Warehouse currently serves over 4,200 households throughout Mercer County, including many children and senior citizens.

It is because of donors like you that we can continue to fulfill our mission of providing supplemental food assistance to our residents in need. We are grateful for your support.

Sincerely,

*Community Food Warehouse of Mercer County*

Lori Weston  
Executive Director



A Member of

No goods or services were received for this donation. As a donor of \$25 or more, you are a member of the Community Food Warehouse of Mercer County. As such, you are entitled to attend the annual membership meeting in the fall and vote to elect the Board of Directors for the upcoming year. The date and time of the annual meeting will be posted on our website and published in the Herald newspaper.

*"For I Was Hungry and You Gave Me Food"*

109 S. SHARPSVILLE AVENUE, SUITE A | SHARON, PA 16146 | 724.981.0353

## SCI Coal Township's CWP Receives Thanks

Dear Joe, James, Cruz, José,  
Ian, & Dan

Thank you for All your help  
with the 2016 Salvation Army's  
Christmas food boxes.

All your helping hands passed  
along good to those in need.

We wish All of you good  
things in the new year!!  
😊

Happy New Year  
The Salvation Army  
Giveaway Crew

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of January 9...

## **Braille Program Continues to Benefit Visually Impaired Individuals**

SCI Cambridge Springs has a Braille program that actively provides services for the visually impaired throughout the state of Pennsylvania. Since the program's implementation in 1993, inmate workers/students have amassed a library of 1,500 books. They provide material for visually impaired elementary and high school students in Pennsylvania via the



intermediate units, and they also provide Braille work for college students, private organizations and municipal organizations in the state.

The following is a list of projects that went through the Braille lab in 2016:

- Report Abuse posters for Erie County Care Management
- SERS Spring and Fall newsletters
- Kidney-Friendly Cookbook for blind citizen
- Jobseekers Guide to CS Employment, Veterans Preference booklet, Power-Point Presentation for SCSC
- Lease Agreement for Mercer County Housing Authority
- We Have Human Rights Handbook, Block Grant Narrative for Crawford County Human Services

The eight inmate workers/students that are enrolled in the Braille program at the facility gain certification through the Library of Congress and work under the direction of the National Federation of the Blind and the Keystone Blind Association. In addition, the local Lions Club has served as a valuable partner over the years by providing assistance with equipment and material.

The inmates take a great deal of pride in the work that they produce and the ability to help the community in this unique way.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Houtzdale, Quehanna Facilities Send Representatives to Funeral

To show respect to fallen PSP Trooper Landon Weaver, several SCI Houtzdale and Quehanna Boot Camp (QBC) Honor Guard members attended the trooper's recent funeral.



Pictured, left to right, are: Corrections Officer 1 Daniel Francisko, Lieutenant Kelley Laird (QBC), Lieutenant Jeremy Jones, Corrections Officer 1 Brian Hall, Lieutenant David Johnson (QBC), Lieutenant Matthew Maney (QBC). Back Row: Lieutenant Stephen Sinclair.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Benner Township Also Paid Respects



In the front row, left to right are: Sergeant Davis, Corrections Officer 1 Wiseman, Corrections Officer 1 Knepp, Lieutenant Dively and Sergeant Bowman.

Back row: Corrections Officer 1 Dixon, Lieutenant Berry, Corrections Officer 1 Nicholas and Corrections Officer 1 Wilson.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Donation to CPOF

The family of an SCI Benner Township employee received a donation from the Correctional Peace Officers Foundation during a time of need.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Albion's Holds Holiday Decorating Contest

For the holidays, SCI Albion held a holiday decorating contest on the housing units. Murals were painted on each block and were then judged by administrative staff. The theme was "snowmen."



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of January 2...

## **Department of Corrections Discusses Plans to Close Two State Prisons in Cost-Cutting Measure**

**(Jan. 6, 2017)** – Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel met with union officials and the agency's leadership team to discuss the plan to close two prisons and reduce by half the community corrections population by June 30, 2017, as part of spending reductions in response to the state budget deficit.



"We have implemented a variety of cost savings initiatives over the past several years yet we are again in the position where the Department of Corrections must make significant reductions because of the dire budget forecast," said Wetzel. "The most significant reduction we can make as an agency is a prison closure."

"Every affected employee will be offered a position elsewhere in the Department of Corrections," said Wetzel. "We understand that moving to another facility may be difficult, but we will try to make the transition as seamless as possible."

Five prisons are under consideration for closure: SCI Mercer in Mercer County, SCI Retreat in Luzerne County and SCI Frackville in Schuylkill County, SCI Waymart in Wayne County and SCI Pittsburgh in Allegheny County.

Wetzel said that the DOC can close prisons without a security risk because of the historic reduction in the inmate population. Also, an additional one thousand unused beds were recently made available at SCI Camp Hill making it feasible to close a second facility.

The department will announce its final decision on January 26.

In making its decision the agency is taking into consideration the ages, sizes, locations, operational costs, and specialty functions of the prisons, as well as economic impact on the affected communities.



SCI Waymart and SCI Pittsburgh, present significant challenges for closure. SCI Waymart serves inmates with serious mental health conditions. SCI Pittsburgh is a diagnostic and classification center for incoming inmates and provides medical specialty services, such as an oncology unit. Transition of these services would be extremely difficult and the agency would incur significant additional costs.

The department closed two institutions - SCI Cresson in Cambria

County and SCI Greensburg, Westmoreland County – in 2013.

In anticipation of those closures, the DOC initiated a hiring freeze which allowed vacancies to remain open so that they could be filled by employees displaced by the closures. Similar actions will be taken in this case.

Wetzel said he is committed to providing complete, timely information to all of those involved, including employees, inmates, legislators, and the affected communities.

In addition to the closures, the department is considering several other internal cost-saving measures, such as reducing staff overtime and reducing capacity at community corrections facilities (or halfway houses).

The DOC has created a dedicated email account ([ra-crdocclose@pa.gov](mailto:ra-crdocclose@pa.gov)) and a toll-free number (**888-316-8950**) for staff, inmate families and others seeking additional information.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Frackville is First PA Jail to Roll Out AMA

On Jan. 5, 2017, SCI Frackville became the first jail in Pennsylvania to roll out the Assault Management Applications in Corrections (AMAC) Course to its staff.

Until now the new course, which replaced the old defensive tactics, was only taught at the DOC Academy in Elizabethtown. Twenty-eight H1 members in Blue Group were the first to receive this new training in the field.



AMAC, as it's called, is based on jujitsu & Army combatants bringing a whole new form of defending yourself not only in the jail setting but also in everyday life. AMAC teaches how to prevent an assault before it takes place and how to survive and control an assault if and when it happens. AMAC will be taught over a 3-year period involving 6 courses; 2 courses per year will be taught until all 6 have been completed. At that time the courses can be matched anyway the instructors deem necessary. Thursday's training was the first time most of the H1 members saw or did anything like this. As the training day finished up, most of the staff was requesting more training in AMAC. With overwhelming positive response to the class and participations much of the remaining staff at SCI Frackville are eager to start their own color group training. One day after the training was received 1 participant slipped on a patch of ice imploring the "Break Fall" technique taught just the previous day which shows how to tuck your chin and land using your back muscles and not to reach out causing injuries to your extremities. By using this technique the staff member sustained no injuries.

AMAC instructors include: SCI Frackville AMAC Coordinator COII K. Mains, COI S. Letcher, COI J. Evan, COI T. Evans of SCI Frackville, COI White CC2 Fauseyp of SCI Mahanoy, and Monitor Phillips of CCC Wernersville.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Paying Tribute to a Fallen State Trooper

Pictured are representatives of Honor Guards from SCIs Huntingdon, Rockview, Smithfield and Muncy who participated in the funeral service for fallen State Police Trooper Landon Weaver.



Left to right: CO Eric Hess, CO David McMahon, Sgt. Doug Crile, CO Bryan Peroni, CO Scott McDermitt, CO Doug Clark, Lt. Darren Dickson, CO Larry Zilch, Lt. Donald Keel, CO Travis Walker, CO Todd Fletcher, CO Amelia Peek, and Lt. Beth Brittain.



Also, SCI Huntingdon's employees made a pine swag for delivery to Troop G Huntingdon barracks of the Pennsylvania State Police in honor of the fallen State Police Trooper Landon Weaver. Included with the swag were cards of sympathy signed by numerous staff for the

barracks and Trooper Weaver's family.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Pennsylvania Issues ITQ for Reentry Services

Jan. 4 -- The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) and Board of Probation and Parole (PBPP) today announced that they are issuing an Invitation To Qualify (ITQ) to vendors who are interested in providing one or more types of reentry services. The ITQ is being issued through the Department of General Services.

"The reentry process will affect 90 percent of our prison population," DOC Secretary John Wetzel said. "In addition to the DOC and PBPP providing evidence-based programs while individuals are in prison, we continue the transition from prison to community by providing a variety of reentry services."

The Invitation to Qualify (ITQ) program gives interested vendors the opportunity to prequalify for statewide contracts for specific services categories that can be used by state agencies to procure those services more efficiently.

"This ITQ is different from ones issued in the past because instead of having vendors tell us what they charge for a service, we are telling them what the DOC and PBPP will pay for them," Wetzel said.

Wetzel said that the programs outlined in this ITQ allow reentrants to continue treatment while building and/or maintaining familial relations, obtaining and retaining jobs and connecting with mentors to help guide reentry.

"Our parole staff provides evidence based supervision planning, case oversight, as well as the majority of guidance and motivational efforts designed for parolees," Board of Probation and Parole Chairman Leo L. Dunn said. "However, these specialized services furnish a bridge to critical components of the reentry structure, without which our parolees are placed at higher risk of recidivating."

The ITQ consists of 11 "service categories" for services which all are related to assisting reentrants with a successful return home after state prison incarceration. They are:

- Service Category 1: **Sex Offender Treatment** -- Supplier(s) will provide up to 12 months of outpatient sex offender treatment to include individual, group counseling and the completion of one sexual history polygraph test.
- Service Category 2: **Day Reporting Services** -- Supplier(s) will provide up to 12 months of Day Reporting Center services for those clients who are unemployed or under-employed, or clients that need refresher assistance in one or more areas of services provided.
- Service Category 3: **Housing Assistance Program** – Supplier(s) will provide up to 24 months of housing coordination for the purpose of assisting the client and, where necessary, their dependents, in attaining independent

living by securing safe and affordable housing that meets the standards established by the DOC and PBPP.

- Service Category 4: **Mentoring** – Supplier(s) will facilitate up to 12 months of Mentoring services for clients to focus on addressing the client’s need for pro-social relationships and engagement in the community. Mentoring services may begin at the state correctional institution (SCI) and continue through community placement of the client, as needed.
- Service Category 5: **Transitional Client Workforce Development Services** - Supplier(s) will provide up to 12 months of employment and vocational support opportunities to clients. These services should be individualized and structured to assist each client according to their individual needs. Services may begin at the SCI prior to release and continue through community placement of the client, as needed.
- Service Category 6: **Family Reunification** – Supplier(s) will provide up to 12 months of family reunification services in a non-clinical setting that help to address the impact of an client’s incarceration on the family. Programming should address areas including, but not limited to, effective communication strategies, identification of reasonable expectations, establishing pro-social goals, and breaking the cycle of incarceration. Family Reunification services may begin at the SCI and continue through community placement of the client, as needed.
- Service Category 7: **Outpatient Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) Services** -- Supplier(s) will provide up to 12 months of services to clients with a recent history of problematic alcohol or drug use where outpatient treatment is the appropriate level of care. This programming must focus upon assessment, group therapy and individual counseling that is based upon cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and/or motivational enhancement therapy (MET).
- Service Category 8: **Cognitive Behavioral Interventions** –Supplier(s) will provide up to 12 months of group cognitive-behavioral therapy to high- and moderate-risk clients that addresses anti-social attitudes, values, beliefs, thinking and/or other criminal cognitions.
- Service Category 9: **Outpatient Mental Health Services** – Supplier(s) will provide up to 12 months of mental health case management and outpatient mental health treatment services to seriously mentally ill clients transitioning to or living in the community. These services provide treatment to clients with a current mental health diagnosis and assure the continuum of care is occurring at an appropriate level.
- Service Category 10: **Batterers’ Intervention** – Supplier(s) will provide up to 12 months of Batterers’ Intervention Services (BIS) based upon an approved curriculum deemed appropriate by the Pennsylvania Coalition

Against Domestic Violence. The services will address men who batter and challenge the batterer's beliefs and behaviors.

- Service Category 11: **State Intermediate Punishment (SIP)** – Supplier(s) will provide SIP services to clients. These services should be individualized and structured to assist each client according to their individual needs. SIP Level 3 participants are to successfully complete a minimum of six months of AOD outpatient treatment, to include both group and individual sessions.

Vendors who are interested in providing services or have questions about the Reentry Services ITQ, can visit the [DGS Invitation To Qualify page](#) for more details.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## SCI Fayette Inmates Raise Money for Food Bank

The SCI Fayette's Activities Department recently conducted a bake sale with items available for inmates in general population to purchase. Orders were taken during November and distribution was December 14th. All bake sale items were purchased locally from the Grindstone Foodland and included donuts, muffin breads, pies, pumpkin rolls and cheesecakes. More than 500 inmates participated in the sale, and a total of \$609.70 was raised for donation to a charity. Keeping the local community in mind, inmate representatives approved for the proceeds from the bake sale to go to the Fayette County Community Action Food Bank.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Holidays Behind Bars



SCI Huntington traditionally uses red and green tablecloths in the inmate dining room for the Christmas holiday. This year staff and inmates enjoyed a roast beef dinner. The festive tablecloths were well-received by all.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

## Sharing Success!

Peggy Kershner, co-executive director of Berks Connections/Pretrial Services, shared these success stories...

As 2016 draws to a close, we thought we would share just a few of the many success stories realized through BCPS's DOC contracted Workforce Development and Housing Programs.

We appreciate the support and assistance we have received from the PA DOC, the DOC's Bureau of Community Corrections and the PA Board of Probation and Parole as we work toward improving lives of referred reentrants!

We have had a successful first year with many reentrants obtaining stable employment and finding affordable housing. We greatly value the ability to work with this population to not only help improve the lives of the reentrants, but lives of their children and families as well.

Here are just a few of our program successes from 2016...

Tiffany Buxton was referred for our Housing and Workforce development programs in April. She was formerly incarcerated at SCI Cambridge. She successfully completed all requirements of our Workforce Development Program. Through the program she obtained employment at Wells Fargo Assembly through a temp agency. She worked as a temp for several months and recently was hired by the company as a permanent full-time employee with health insurance and vacation time! Tiffany had been living in the ADAPPT halfway house. Tiffany has fulfilled all requirements of our Housing Program and recently signed a lease for her very own apartment! She will be receiving temporary financial assistance through our Housing Assistance Program to help her maintain her goal of independent living. We are all so proud of her accomplishments!



Tiffany Buxton

Elvis Wheeler, a former resident of the Wernersville Community Corrections Center, had been referred to the BCPS Workforce Development and Housing Programs in May. He successfully completed all requirements of the Workforce Development Program, and we were able to include Elvis in a paid training program run through a partnership between BCPS and Opportunity House, funded by the PA Department of Labor & Industry. Elvis completed the training program and became Forklift and OSHA certified. Elvis received rental

assistance through our Housing Assistance Program helping him transition out of the CCC into a place he could call his own. Elvis has worked on his budget regularly with the BCPS Financial Literacy Program Coordinator and has been able to begin paying his own rent and utility bills and provide for his wife and his two young children.



Elvis Wheeler and Family

Elizabeth Wallace entered the BCPS Workforce Development Program in June. She completed the classes in a timely manner and met with her case manager regularly as requested to job search. After a few of months of hard work, Elizabeth received a job with Flagger Force working full time as a team member. Shortly after being hired by Flagger Force, she was promoted to crew leader and has her own work truck.

BCPS is a community based organization that provides direct services, through professional staff and trained volunteers, to adult defendants, inmates, returning citizens and their families.

According to the BCPS website:

*"BCPS believes that people can change. Adult offenders can reenter society and become contributing members of our society. It is difficult to return to society from incarceration; therefore, people need help reentering life outside of jail or prison. The work we do and the way we do it improves the success rate of returning citizens. While people are incarcerated, their families are negatively impacted as well. These family members, young and old, need assistance and it is an essential component of our mission and vision to help them.*

*BCPS is a tax-exempt charitable organization funded through the County of Berks, the United Way of Berks County, the PA Department*

*of Corrections, state and federal grants, foundation grants, local church groups and the generous ongoing support of businesses and individuals."*

~ ~ ~ ~ ~