

Correctional Newsfront

The official newsletter of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections



2017 News ~ July to September

Week of September 25...

Pennsylvania Reports Decrease in Serious Crime in 2016

Bucks a national trend, according to FBI report

The rate of crime in Pennsylvania across most major categories – including violent crime - declined last year, at the same time that other states reported overall increases in their violent crime rates, according to FBI statistics released Monday.



“This is significant news for Pennsylvania,” said Secretary of Corrections John Wetzel. “Adding to this positive crime data report is that it comes as the state prison population has shrunk at a record rate two years after the Pennsylvania Supreme Court struck down dozens of mandatory minimum sentences - evidence that the absence of mandatory minimums does not lead to increased crime.”

John Wetzel, Secretary of Corrections

The U.S. Department of Justice 2016 Crime in the United States, a compilation of crime statistics from local and state law enforcement agencies released Monday by the FBI, found a nationwide increase in violent crime (murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault), while property crimes declined overall.

Across the nation, the estimated number of violent crimes increased for the second straight year, rising 4.1 percent in 2016 when compared with 2015 data. By contrast, the number of violent crimes in Pennsylvania remained essentially flat in 2016.

Murder, the most reliably counted crime, increased by 8.6 percent nationwide, but declined by 0.6 percent in Pennsylvania. Rapes initially appeared to rise in Pennsylvania during 2016, but an anomaly in the reporting revealed that rapes

actually declined in 2016, dropping by nearly 1 percent. Total violent crimes appear to have dropped by the same percentage. The only violent crime category that went up in Pennsylvania was aggravated assault, which increased by 2.7 percent, compared with a 5.1 percent increase nationally.

Pennsylvania also recorded double the rate of overall property crime reductions compared with other states, dropping 3.9 percent compared with 1.3 percent nationally.

“This is significant news for Pennsylvania,” said Secretary of Corrections John Wetzel. “Adding to this positive crime data report is that it comes as the state prison population has shrunk at a record rate two years after the Pennsylvania Supreme Court struck down dozens of mandatory minimum sentences - evidence that the absence of mandatory minimums does not lead to increased crime.”

Bret Bucklen, director of planning, research, and statistics for the Department of Corrections, said the crime statistics show no correlation between higher crime rates and areas where more state inmates are being released.

“The largest number of prison releases have gone to counties where crime went down,” said Bucklen. “Among the 10 counties that saw the largest increase in parole releases to their communities during 2016, the serious crime rate went down 16 percent. While among the 10 counties that saw the largest drop in parole releases to their communities during 2016, the serious crime rate went up 1 percent. Police arrests of state parolees for violent crimes also went down during 2016.”

Wetzel attributed the crime rate decline in part to the success of the Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI), which aims to reduce the inmate population, while redirecting resources to crime prevention programs. Prior to JRI, the inmate population projection for June 2017 was 56,440 inmates. The state’s prison population today is 48,097 – or more than 8,000 inmates fewer than projected.

Wetzel said the 2016 Crime in the United States data supports the state’s effort to launch a new Justice Reinvestment Initiative – JRI 2 - which will continue to provide more dollars to counties to combat the opioid epidemic, reduce crime, and improve public safety.

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Encouraging Participants at Mental Health Court's Goal Achievement Ceremony

On September 28, DOC Secretary John Wetzel spoke before the First Judicial District Mental Health Court in Philadelphia. This court provides an alternative to incarceration for individuals with mental illness and co-occurring disorders by preparing individuals for re-entry into more effective treatment modalities in supervised community settings.

At the event, Wetzel encouraged and inspired program participants to continue making positive contributions as law-abiding citizens.

"People should not judge us by our worst day," Wetzel said. "We all have bad days ... we must work to have more good days and to celebrate those successes and let the good days define who we are from this point on."

Wetzel also encouraged them to stay on the path of success, even though there can be hurdles on that path. One such hurdle is how society label others.

"It's not fair or appropriate for people to place labels on others, but that unfortunately is the way some people in society do things," he said. "Do not accept a label of being mentally ill. You are a person with contributions you can make to society. Live beyond any labels that people may try to give you."



DOC Secretary John Wetzel, President Judge Sheila Woods-Skipper, additional judges and the mental health court team pose with celebrants at the September 28 achievement ceremony.

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Moore Smeal Speaks at CRESC Meeting

Executive Deputy Secretary (EDS) Shirley Moore Smeal was guest speaker at the monthly Capital Region Ex-Offenders Support Coalition (CRESC) meeting on September 26.

CRESC is a network of caring professionals and community leaders whose purpose is to provide encouragement, hope and resources for reentrants. It is their belief that every reentrant should have access to the services and resources necessary to maintain a productive, crime-free life.

In her speech, EDS Moore Smeal quoted Thurgood Marshall:

"When the prison gates slam behind an inmate, he does not lose his human quality, his mind does not become closed to ideas, his intellect does not cease to feed on a free and open interchange of opinions, his yearning for self-respect does not end, nor is his quest for self-realization concluded. If anything, the needs for identity and self-respect are more compelling in the dehumanizing prison environment."

Since Thurgood Marshall's time, and especially in the last six years, the focus has been to humanize the prison environment. Through the efforts of Secretary John Wetzel and the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, Moore Smeal believes the state has made significant process.

"The DOC tries to provide the best treatment possible for inmates. They begin by trying to keep individuals as close to their committing county as conceivable. Additionally, the DOC completes assessments when inmates first arrive to determine the best treatment, programming and security needs," Moore Smeal said.

Moore Smeal noted that the DOC provides success-oriented education programs designed specifically for the adult learner. Educational programs in the DOC have a 79 percent pass rate vs. a 65 percent pass rate for the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. State correctional institutions offer 28 vocational programs, including cosmetology and auto mechanics. Transitional housing units were put in place to help improve participants' skills and prepare them to be well-adjusted members of society.

Moore Smeal explained that the DOC has put focus on mental health and therapeutic activities.



“With 20 percent of the population having a mental illness, the social workers and therapeutic activity workers are crucial,” Moore Smeal said. “The DOC is also focusing on substance abuse because more than 35,000 individuals have a substance use disorder. The use of Vivitrol has recently expanded, and opioid-specific therapeutic communities have been created. Community corrections centers have similar programs in place to help their community, including mental health services, workforce development and family reunification.”

Moore Smeal was pleased to share her time with individuals who share the same goals as the PA DOC. CRESC’s mission correlates with the DOC’s mission to reduce criminal behavior by providing individualized treatment and education to offenders, resulting in a successful community reintegration through accountability and positive change.

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Representing DOC/Cambridge Springs

SCI Cambridge Springs staff participated in a job fair at the Erie Bayfront Convention Center on September 25. Several job seekers stopped by the DOC/SCI Cambridge Springs booth, where Lt. Murray DeForce and Human Resource Analyst Ira Doubet answered questions about employment opportunities, the civil service process and general hiring practices.



Lt. Murray DeForce (Training Lt.) & Ira Doubet (Human Resource Analyst).

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Reaccreditation Achieved!

SCI Cambridge Springs was determined by American Correctional Association (ACA) auditors to be 100% compliant with mandatory standards and 98.85% with non-mandatory standards during a recent reaccreditation audit. The prison is compliant based on this initial audit report finding. Actual compliance and presentation of a reaccreditation certificate will take place at the ACA's winter conference in January once facility representatives respond to ACA commissioners questions about their final visiting committee reports, which are issued by auditors/ACA following their audit.



SCI Cambridge Springs Corrections Officer 1 Murphy responds to questions from ACA Auditor J. W. Fairman, Jr.



PCI Optical Lab Supervisor Tony Rentz shows ACA Auditors Katherine Brown and J. W. Fairman, Jr. how eyeglasses are made.



Sgt. Wellington explains Control Center operations to the ACA Auditors.

SCI Albion's audit is next...



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Media Reports on Hurricane Dogs

When DOC Press Secretary Amy Worden heard about the fact that SCI Chester was going to take in some of the shelter dogs from Florida and other affected areas following Hurricane Irma, she immediately pitched the story to Fox Philly's Lucy Noland, who is a big animal advocate. Noland visited the prison on September 21, where she was provided with an overview of the prison's dog training program, information on the hurricane dogs and a tour of the prison.



While at the prison, Noland met with three inmate handlers – Graham, Lawrence and Jose; all pictured here with Noland. She also chatted with volunteers with Wags Rescue and Referral and prison staff, including Superintendent Marirosa Lamas.

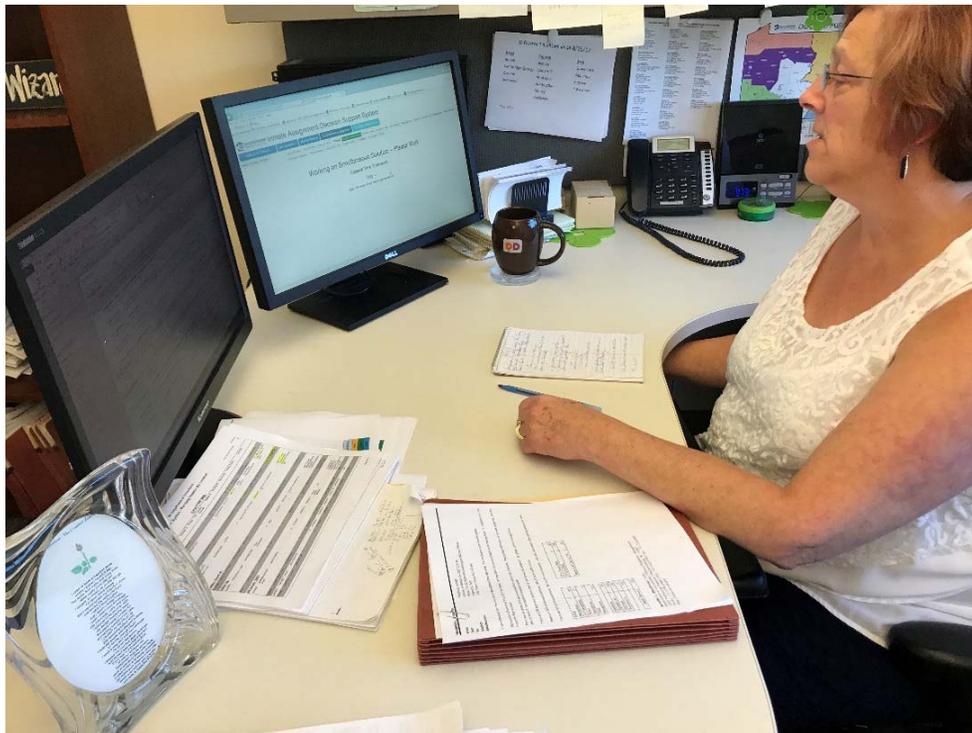
Make sure to keep an eye out for Noland's segment in the near future.

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New Inmate Assignment Tool Gets Media Attention

SCI Camp Hill Major William Nicklow, who most recently was the director of the DOC's Office of Population Management, just this morning conducted a phone interview with a reporter from the Allentown Morning Call!

The topic of the interview was the Lehigh University/DOC inmate reassignment tool. We've posted an article about this project previously here in "Correctional Newsfront."



Office of Population Management Chief Jennifer Hendricks uses the new inmate assignment tool to determine home institutions of newly received inmates.

The three-year project by Lehigh University has dramatically reduced the time it takes for the office to reassign inmates from one state prison to another, and it takes into consideration all of the factors that play a role in such transfers, including but not limited to proximity to committing county, security needs, program needs, etc.

This office annually receives about 50,000 inmate transfer requests from state prison.

Employees in the office could process about 1,000 requests per week without the system. What would normally take an employee several hours to do, the system can complete in about 10 minutes.

And while the DOC spent \$300,000 for this project -- which is in year two of a three-year timetable -- it is estimated the DOC will save \$2.9 million per year.

An important part of the savings is the reduction in the need to further transfer inmates throughout the system, which increases public safety. The fewer inmates we have being transported around the state, the safer the state.

Nicklow told the reporter that the DOC also is seeing success in the area of short minimum inmates -- or those who will be eligible for parole within 12 to 18 months of their DOC reception. Due to their short minimum, their placement into programs in a timely manner is vital in order for them to have completed all programming requirements in order to be parole eligible at their minimum. This new system places these inmates throughout the system using program availability information. We are seeing a decrease in program wait times and seeing parole eligible inmates be able to see the parole board on time or at or shortly after their minimum sentences.



SCI Camp Hill Major William Nicklow, is the former director of the Office of Population Management who oversaw the inmate reassignment system project.

This computer program also has other problem-solving potential within the PA DOC and perhaps even other DOCs. Finally, this tool is so innovative that Lehigh University is one of six contenders for a national award that will be granted later this month.

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DOC Represented at HACC Annual Career Day

Last week, the Department of Corrections was represented at Harrisburg Area Community College's 2nd Annual Career Day.

HACC's President John J. "Ski" Sygielski attended the event to welcome and thank the employers. While at the DOC table, President Sygielski talked about HACC's educational programs and related them to the rehabilitation mission of the DOC.

Through the years, President Sygielski and Pedro Gratacos, the DOC's diversity recruiter, have worked together on multiple initiatives, including diversity events. Gratacos praises President Sygielski on his ability to make himself available at any time to contribute to the PA DOC's mission.

"We hope to expand our relationship with HACC to include institutional tours, student information sessions, and other endeavors," said Gratacos.

Currently, Gratacos and Sygielski are working together to educate HACC students in the types of careers available with the DOC.

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DOC Diversity Recruiter Pedro Gratacos with HACC President John J. "Ski" Sygielski.

Assisting Allegheny County Jail

On September 25, SCI Greene staff visited Allegheny County Jail to assist with their upcoming American Correctional Association (ACA) audit. The facility provided a generous buffet of food and refreshments for those who volunteered. Staff toured the facility and conducted a cursory review of the standards and offered recommendations to assist the facility in their commitment to a successful audit. Warden Harper and his staff expressed their appreciation and thanked everyone for their assistance.

While the DOC is not responsible for operating county prisons, this is another example of how DOC employees work to be a resource for county prisons.

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Pine Grove Inmates Help Local Organization

SCI Pine Grove inmates who work on the prison's Community Work Program crew have been performing duties for the Indiana County Food Bank.



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Helping a Local Church

SCI Waymart's Community Work Program detail set up tables for the Christmas in September Festival at St. Michael's Orthodox Church in Jermyn, Pa. The annual festival featured a variety of ethnic foods, live entertainment, displays of Christmas items and a classic car show.



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SCI Benner Township's Community Work Program Helps at the Grange Fair

The 143rd anniversary of the Centre County Grange Encampment and Fair ("The Grange Fair") was held from August 18-26. The Community Work Program at SCI Benner Township assisted with putting up and taking down nearly 1,000 tents during this event.

During The Grange Fair, thousands of people camp at Grange Park in Centre Hall, Pa., in large, rented tents with asphalt floors. Families stay in the same tent each year and tent locations are often passed down through generations. Others stay in their own recreational vehicles, parked on the fair grounds. Thousands more people visit the fair daily for rides, food, bingo, animal shows, livestock contests and concerts performed by nationally known artists.



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Trauma Yoga Training for Inmates



A graduation recently was held at SCI Muncy recognizing 17 female inmates who participated in an extensive 50-hour Trauma Yoga Training.

This training was offered by the Transformation Yoga Project through Brianna Murphy and Colleen DeVirgiliis.

Trauma Yoga reaches beyond stretching and offers an avenue of coping and being at peace within oneself no matter your physical limitations.

The inmates have started using this practice with the prison's infirmed inmates, the older limited mobility inmates and inmates in specialized programming.

"This has been a welcomed practice in our institution, and we are working to continue to expand it throughout the prison," Superintendent Robert Smith said.

Brianna Murphy participated in the DOC's December 2016 TEDxChesterStatePrison, which can be viewed on our website (www.cor.pa.gov) and Youtube.com

For the past five years, Murphy has worked with detention centers, prisons and reentry spaces teaching about and providing trauma sensitive yoga and meditation. The purpose of the yoga and meditation is to help individuals heal from trauma, manage stress, understand emotions, develop self-awareness and recognize the depth of one's humanity.

About the SCI Muncy Trauma Yoga Project:

The Trauma Yoga Project provided a 50-hour yoga inmate-to-inmate training over the course of three days. Under the supervision of prison staff, inmates provided the preparation, administration and materials required to prepare and deliver a trauma-sensitive, mindfulness-based development training focused on training individuals who are incarcerated. The training also qualified inmates to lead simple and foundational yoga practices that integrate recovery from trauma, addiction and incarceration through breath, mindful-movement and guided meditation.

Specifically the training – conducted in accordance with all “Registered Yoga School” requirements – included but was not limited to:

- 5 hours pre-training: readings, yoga practice and homework assignment indicating a basic understanding of yoga, breathing and the benefits of the practice.
- 20-hour in-person training: yoga philosophy, practice and sequencing, fundamentals of instruction and practical application of yogic tools for stress management.
- 5 hours post training: Trainees mail in self-created sequences and completed exit exams to exemplify understanding of materials presented in training.
- 10 hour training: This segment was delivered 4 to 6 weeks after the first 20 hour segment with a goal of deeper instruction and troubleshooting.

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Waymart Kicks Off C.O.V.E.R.

On September 22, SCI Waymart employees officially kicked-off the prison’s C.O.V.E.R. program by providing cake and literature about the initiative.

Ingredients for the cakes were purchased using employee donations, and James Mitchell’s culinary class made the cakes that were available to all staff across the prison’s three shifts to enjoy with their meals. They made several chocolate cakes with frosting, and the cakes were set out on a table for staff members as they filled their dinner trays.



The cakes were used as a way to bring awareness to employees that the prison has a C.O.V.E.R. committee and to bring awareness to the need to look out for each other. As co-workers we are oftentimes the first ones to notice when someone we work with on a daily basis is struggling with an issue in life.

C.O.V.E.R. pamphlets were handed out and placed on each table in the staff dining room in the hope that employees would take them back to their offices and blocks where all employees could then access them. The pamphlets contain information on finding help for depression, substance abuse and suicide prevention and contain website information and phone numbers that can be used to get help.

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IUP Police Academy Cadets tours SCI Pine Grove

On September 26, the police academy cadets from Indiana University of Pennsylvania toured SCI Pine Grove. The tour included the young adult offender program, a housing unit that also is home to the prison's puppy training program, the inmate program services building and the prison's restricted housing unit. They also viewed inmate-made weapons that have been confiscated over the years at SCI Pine Grove.



The tour was led by Superintendent's Assistant/PIO Judy Smith, with Lt. Martynuska assisting.

Counselor Tammy Delosh discussed the TAILS dog training program while they visited her unit.

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“Pathway to Pardons”

Pennsylvania Lt. Governor Mike Stack and other state and local officials continue to hold “Pathway to Pardons” town hall meetings across the commonwealth.

Most recently, on September 12, officials joined forces in Carlisle, Pa., to educate the public about the pardons process.

These meetings are for Pennsylvania citizens who have made some bad decisions and choices in their past and now are inquiring about pardons from their misdemeanor or felony convictions in their past. They have addressed their areas of concern and now are demonstrating pro-social values and contributing to their communities and society.

A number of state experts are on hand at each meeting to explain the pardon process – which gives total forgiveness from the government, as well as limited access orders, and expungements.

There are many benefits to obtaining a pardon. Studies show that ex-offenders who get a pardon are more likely to obtain employment than those who haven’t. Those who obtain a pardon are then able to own and carry a firearm, serve in the military, travel outside of the United States and gain employment in a variety of fields, such as nursing, education, security and legal.

“I am a strong believer in forgiveness, and I support giving people second chances,” said Lt. Governor Mike Stack. “I understand that people make mistakes. I admit that I’m not perfect, and I’m sure we all have made decisions and taken actions that we regret.”

At the Carlisle meeting, Lt. Governor Stack was joined by several DOC officials, who provided information pertaining to the Department of Corrections.

DOC Bureau of Community Corrections Region 2 Program Manager Keith Fenstemaker; DOC Bureau of Treatment Services Activities Coordinator/ Administrative Officer 2 Dan Lorditch; Lt. Governor Mike Stack; Board of Pardons Secretary (and former DOC pardons case specialist) Steven Burk; DOC Statewide Veterans Coordinator Ryan Yoder; and Bureau of Treatment Services Chief of Classification and Assessment Ross Miller.



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Graterford CWP Helping at the Hosey

SCI Graterford's inmate Community Work Program (CWP) crew is currently helping out at a local fire company with general tasks around their facility. They are preparing for an open house this weekend.



By the way, the crew is scheduled to pick up litter from along Route 422 later this week.

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Mahanoy Achieves Reaccreditation

By Superintendent Theresa DelBalso

SCI Mahanoy hosted an American Correctional Association (ACA) auditing team in early June. They came to review our operations and make a recommendation regarding reaccreditation by the ACA.

As a result of the hard work and efforts by exceptional staff, SCI Mahanoy passed its reaccreditation audit with a score of 100% compliance in our mandatory standards and 99.77% compliance in our non-mandatory standards!

This was a great experience and opportunity for Mahanoy to shine, and that's exactly what happened at every turn - I am so proud to be the superintendent at a facility in which staff embraces and excels when a challenge presents itself!

Within the past year, we had our Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) audit, our Disability Rights Network (DRN) audit and now ACA and, every time, Mahanoy staff has proven themselves to be dedicated and proud corrections professionals committed to excellence! These aren't just nice words – this is what the auditors saw as they toured our facility and reviewed your work!

Once again, Mahanoy staff has been tested and has risen to the top!



Pictured in the photo left to right: Lt. Joseph Biscoe CIM; Cheryl Stanitis, Food Service Manager; Superintendent Theresa DelBalso; Jane Hinman, CSA; Second Row: Bernadette Mason, Deputy Superintendent for Centralized Services; Marie Strenchock, Superintendent's Secretary; and Luke Cronauer, Deputy Superintendent for Facilities Management.

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Training for Trainers Program Recently Completed

Moss Group Consultants Jane Parnell and Jack Shireman provided a “Professional Boundaries, Safety Awareness, & Expectations” training for trainers (T4T) program at the DOC’s Training Academy September 18-21. The goal of the training was to build and sustain training capacity within the agency for the professional boundaries curriculum.

Approximately 30 representatives from various state correctional institutions, the DOC’s Bureau of Community Corrections (BCC) and the York County Jail participated in the T4T and were trained by six master trainers who were selected to fulfill the T4T mission. Master trainers included Steven Soliwada (SCI MER), Sylvia Morris, (SCI SMI), Scott Letcher, (SCI, FRA), Melissa Dedman-Hiner, (Training Academy), Lucas Malishchak (Central Office) and Cynthia Spears (BCC).

In 2015, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections contracted with The Moss Group, Inc. (TMG) through a Bureau of Justice Assistance demonstration grant with the goal of further understanding and developing guidelines for proactive and responsive cross-gender supervision and staff sexual misconduct in correctional settings.

Professional Boundaries is a unique training in that was developed by staff for staff. The curriculum is facilitator-based and enables staff to have an open discussion about the challenges and possible solutions that can be exercised to create a healthy culture, a sexually safe environment, and prepares staff to have a courageous conversation with coworkers about suspected wrongdoing.

Professional Boundaries training has been ongoing throughout the DOC since June 2016 when the TMG trained the first class of facilitators. To date, nearly 60 staff members department-wide have been trained by the TMG.

To conclude the week’s training event, Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal provided closing remarks emphasizing hers and Secretary Wetzel’s commitment to sexual safety, the importance of professionalism in the workplace and being mindful of treating others with dignity and respect in all staff and inmate interactions.

Pictured, from left to right, are: former program manager and current Director of Standards, Audits and Accreditation Carole Mattis, Sylvia Morris, Lucas Malischak, Steven Soliwada, Cynthia Spears, Melissa Dedman-Hiner, Scott Letcher and Moss Group Consultant Jane Parnell.

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Helping Texas Corrections Employees

The members of SCI Benner Township's Empowerment Committee collected donations for the Association of State Correctional Administrators. These donations will help correctional staff that have been affected by the Hurricane in Texas. A total of \$250 was donated to this relief fund.



Some of Benner Township's Empowerment Committee, from left to right: Jolene Wesesky, Elizabeth Eckenrode. Back row: Chris Danison, Kassy McGarvey and M. Tucker.

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More Murals Being Painted



Troy Walsh, an activities specialist at SCI Waymart and an avid Pittsburgh Penguins hockey fan, coordinated the painting of several murals in the gym basement weight room. An inmate worker assigned to the Activities Department created and painted the murals.



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Educating Inmates, Employees About IMPACT Services Corp.

On September 12, Darron Thompson, job developer for IMPACT Services Corporation in Philadelphia, Pa., spoke to the Reentry Services Office (RSO) Program and “juvenile” lifers at SCI Benner Township concerning the IMPACT Program.



The IMPACT Program helps incarcerated and non-incarcerated individuals find housing assistance, employment, provides veterans services and assists with mentoring. Since the inception of the IMPACT program in 1974, they have placed more than 2,000 people back into the workforce and can help anyone looking for employment, transitional housing and workforce training in the Philadelphia area.

Their workforce centers help formerly-incarcerated individuals who are returning to the Philadelphia area and case managers develop job training, job readiness and placement back into the job market.

IMPACT provides both transitional and permanent housing for veterans, and they have two large facilities in Philadelphia that offer housing to approximately 200 men and women each year.

Thompson stated that all interested participants must be referred by the PA DOC's Bureau of Community Corrections (BCC) or the PA Board of Probation and Parole. The parole agent will submit a BCC re-entry services referral form through BCC services while they are incarcerated in the facility.

In order to participate in the IMPACT program, individuals must be from the Philadelphia area and be within nine months of their release dates.

Thompson's presentation was very informative to staff and inmates, and he is very knowledgeable about programs in the Philadelphia region.



In the picture, from left to right, are SCI Benner Township's employees Reentry Agent Tanja Hayles, Corrections Counselor 2 Michaele Eakin, IMPACT Services Job Developer Darron Thompson, Social Worker 2 Nicole Lydic and Corrections Counselor 2 Rick Hamor.

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Lordy-Lordy Together They Total 40!

Superintendent Vince Mooney recognized two SCI Retreat employees at his weekly staff meeting on September 26, for their years of dedication to the Department of Corrections.

Superintendent Mooney presented service certificates and tie/lapel pins to Corrections Officer 1 Timothy Kratz – 20 Years, and Laundry Foreman Carl Kuren – 20 Years.



Pictured, left to right, are: Timothy Kratz, Superintendent Vince Mooney, Carl Kuren and Laundry Plant Supervisor Justin Hudak.

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Suicide Awareness Contest

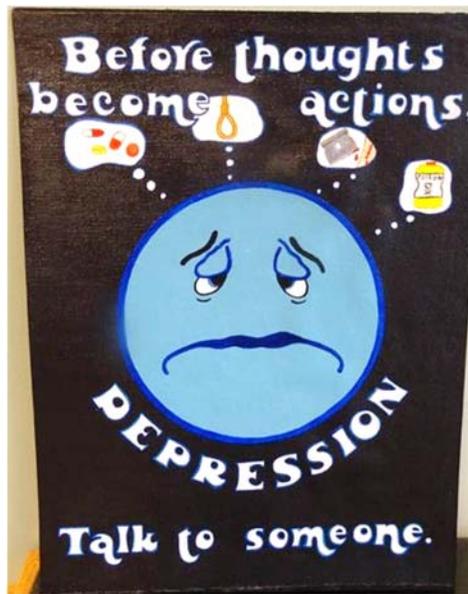
With September being Suicide Awareness month, SCI Mercer's Activities Department held a Suicide Prevention Poster Contest for the inmates. In order to bring awareness to this issue, each submission had to be related to suicide prevention.

Administrative staff voted on their top three favorites. Those selected included:

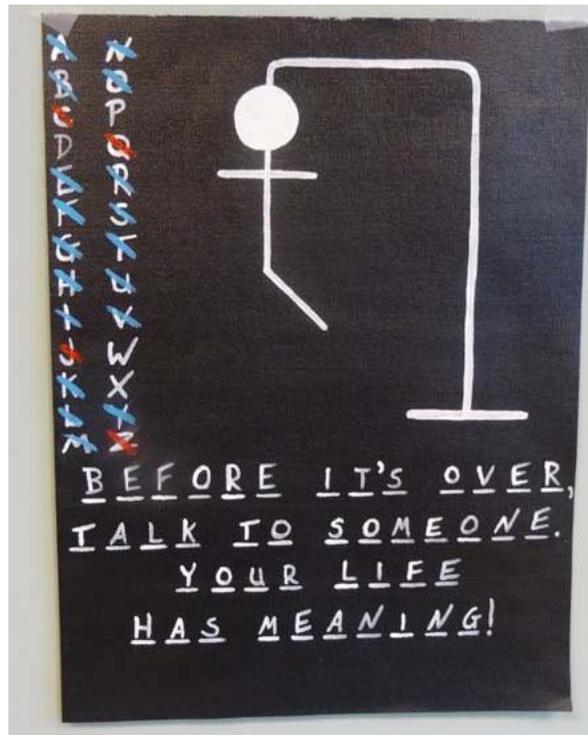
First Place...



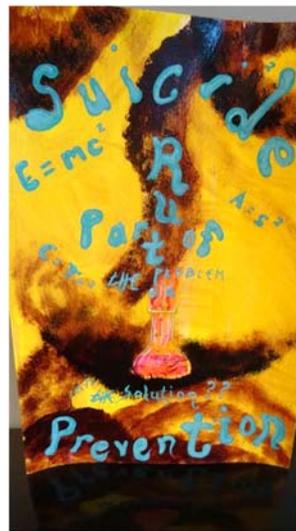
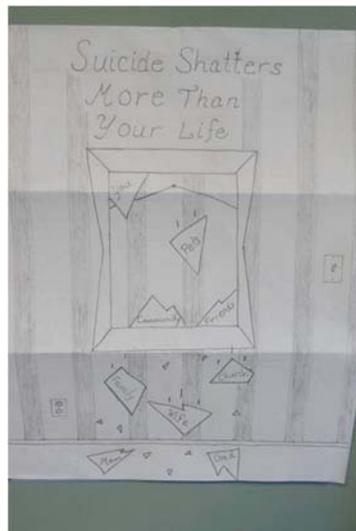
Second Place...



Third Place...



Other submissions...



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Mercer's Therapeutic Community Joins in the Voices for Recovery

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, an agency within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, each September sponsors a national Recovery Month. National Recovery Month is held to increase awareness and understanding of mental and substance use disorders and to encourage individuals in need of treatment and recovery services to seek help. Materials about Recovery Month are available at <https://recoverymonth.gov>. This year's theme was "Join in the Voices for Recovery: Strengthen Families and Communities."

To join in the Voices for Recovery celebration, SCI Mercer's Therapeutic Community (TC) program under the supervision of Drug & Alcohol Treatment Specialist Supervisor Michael Cole, held special events on September 15 and September 27 to bring awareness to recovery. Inmates currently enrolled in the TC program led the preparations for the events under Cole's supervision and delivered speeches, poems, skits and a song to other TC participants in order to share their personal stories about their recovery.



Pictured left to right is staff from Mercer's Substance Use Disorder Department who work in the Therapeutic Community: DATSS Michael Cole, DATS MaryAnne Bajorek and DATS Daniel Jacob (missing from photo is DATS Lesleyann Como).

The following topics were presented at the two day events:



Speeches: Science of Addiction; Anonymity (Reading and Understanding); Change, Education and Knowledge; Disease of Addiction; The Life Story; The Meaning of Tattoo ["The Puppy" The Heroin Mindset]; On Recovery/

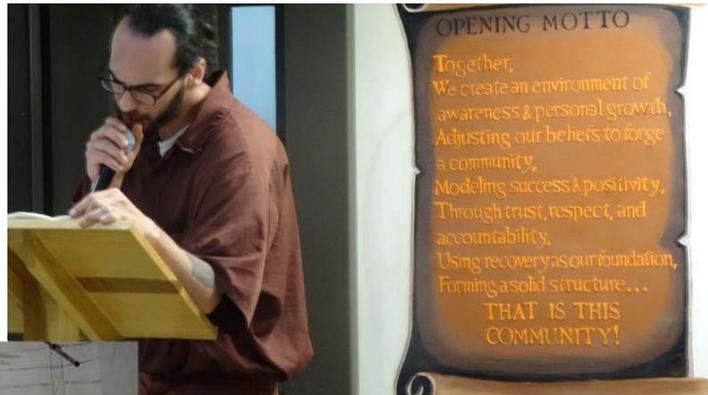
Skit entitled The end Result.

Song "Hard Times" – Death of Sister by Drunk Driver.

Poems about recovery.

A story read about his recovery.

A story presented about his drawing and his DUI.



Mercer's events were well received not only by the TC participants but by staff as well. We look forward to another excellent program for next year's National Recovery Month.

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Drug Interdiction Work Continues at the Wernersville CCC as Part of a 30-Day Pilot Project

This month, Wernersville Community Corrections Center (CCC) began a pilot program involving drug interdiction dogs. DOC officials placed a drug interdiction unit handler and K9 at the Wernersville CCC for a period of 30 consecutive days.

The dogs are currently being used to search common and resident areas, vehicles and residents for illegal drugs.

The DOC has used its K9s as needed at CCCs, but never for 30 straight days. Based upon the outcome, it is possible that the DOC may expand the use of dogs at other CCCs.

Handler Brian Henderson and K9 Kira are pictured.

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C.O.V.E.R. Presence at Mahanoy

As part of the annual State Employee Combined Appeal (SECA) – which is the period of time each fall that state employees are permitted to donate to state-approved charities from work – SCI Mahanoy gave a table to C.O.V.E.R.

Corrections Outreach for Veteran and Employee Restoration (C.O.V.E.R.) is a newly-formed, staff-driven organization devoted to supporting all Pennsylvania Department of Corrections staff in various ways, with a focus on issues that can affect their well-being, including substance abuse, self-care and suicide prevention. The group encourages employee personal and professional growth, physical and mental well-being, along with the mission of the department to promote a worksite culture that supports employees' desires to make healthy lifestyle choices.

Veterans, corrections staff, law enforcement and first responders are at increased risk of experiencing trauma, mental health issues and suicide. The goal of this event is to raise awareness of these health issues through C.O.V.E.R.

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SCI Rockview Holds Annual Summer Bash

On September 26, SCI Rockview held its Annual Summer Bash.

This event is hosted by the prison's Empowerment and Employees Association committees.

A barbeque consisting of burgers, hotdogs, potato salad, broccoli salad and homemade baked goods is available to all staff.

Administrative staff manned the grill while committee members served staff.



Retirees also were invited to attend this event, with approximately 20 in attendance.



Rockview retirees who attended the summer bash.

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Corrections In The News...

WHP-TV, CBS21 (09/26/2017)

<http://local21news.com/news/local/violent-crime-decreases-in-pennsylvania-going-against-national-trend>

Violent crime decreases in Pennsylvania, going against national trend

HARRISBURG, Pa — Violent crime, and other types of crime, went down in 2016 according to FBI statistics. The report found that across the nation there was an increase in violent crime (murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault).

The number of violent crimes in the state remained "essentially flat" last year, according to the report. The FBI says that murder decreased 0.6 percent and rape decreased 1 percent, whereas aggravated assault increased by 2.7 percent in Pa. Property crime also dropped, by 3.9 percent, in the state.

Please click on the link to read the entire article.

Allentown Morning Call (09/26/2017)

<http://www.mcall.com/news/breaking/mc-nws-lehigh-inmate-assignment-system20170922-story.html>

Lehigh University engineers create computer program that is saving the state prison system millions of dollars
By Christina Tatu

In a typical week, the state Department of Corrections receives a list of 1,000 inmates who need to be assigned to one of its 25 correctional facilities.

The process isn't straightforward. There are nearly 100 factors that determine where an inmate ends up — from the medical care they require and their age to their family's proximity to the prison and which programs they need to become eligible for parole.

It used to take seven corrections employees a week to figure out where they would go.

Now, with the push of a button, an algorithm designed by a group of Lehigh University engineering students and their professors assigns the same number of inmates in 10 minutes.

Please click on the link to read the entire article.

Altoona Mirror (09/27/2017)

<http://www.altoonamirror.com/uncategorized/2017/09/students-program-saves-prisons-millions/>

Students' program saves prisons millions

BETHLEHEM — In a typical week, the state Department of Corrections receives a list of 1,000 inmates who need to be assigned to one of its 25 correctional facilities.

The process isn't straightforward. There are nearly 100 factors that determine where an inmate ends up — from the medical care they require and their age to their family's proximity to the prison and which programs they need to become eligible for parole.

It used to take seven corrections employees a week to figure out where they would go.

Now, with the push of a button, an algorithm designed by a group of Lehigh University engineering students and their professors assigns the same number of inmates in 10 minutes.

The new system not only is expected to save the prison system nearly \$3 million a year but also has landed the Lehigh team in contention for the international Daniel H. Wagner Prize for Excellence in Operations Research.

Please click on the link to read the entire article.

Philly.com (09/27/2017)

<http://www.philly.com/philly/living/more-people-than-ever-are-dying-in-prison-their-caregivers-other-inmates-20170927.html>

More people than ever are dying in prison. Their caregivers? Other inmates
By Samantha Melamed

"The death squad." Or, "the executioners."

That's what many inmates used to call the inmate-volunteers who work the Graterford state prison hospice unit, a bleak row of isolation rooms — each one-part hospital room, one-part jail cell— where inmates with terminal illnesses are placed to die.

Then, they saw how the inmates cared for dying men in shifts, undertaking the intimate tasks of feeding, cleaning and comforting them. For many, it is a calling.

Over time, attitudes changed, said James, a 51-year-old inmate who volunteers to do this work. "There's a lot of progress in this place. There is more humanity here now."

It's needed, given that far more people are dying in prison than ever before.

In Pennsylvania, 483 state inmates have died since January 2015. That's about 180 deaths in prison each year. From 2005 to 2014, the average was 150 deaths per year.

That increase is a byproduct, officials say, of the extraordinarily fast-growing elderly population in prison. In 2001, there were 1,892 geriatric inmates in Pennsylvania (ages 55 or older). Today, that's more than tripled to 6,458. The leading causes of death in the state's prisons are heart disease, cancer and liver disease. Caring for this population is extraordinarily expensive: It's estimated that elderly inmates cost three to nine times more than young ones. Compassionate release, meanwhile, is granted to just a few inmates each year.

But since 2004, families of dying inmates at Graterford have had the small comfort of knowing they will not die alone. There is just one nurse on staff at the 23-bed infirmary, and visitors are allowed only an hour a day, but volunteers man the hospice on 24-hour vigils, sometimes caring for two or three inmates at once.

Please click on the link to read the entire article.

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Week of September 18...

Wetzel Says GOP Budget Plan Would Harm Efforts to Combat Crime and Reduce the Opioid Crisis in PA Communities

On September 18, Secretary of Corrections John Wetzel said the budget approved by the House would devastate efforts to reduce crime and address the rampant effects of the opioid epidemic on Pennsylvania communities.

The GOP budget plan relies heavily on moving special fund transfers to the general fund to cover budget shortfall. One of the sources of revenue targeted for redirection is the highly successful Justice Reinvestment Fund.

The Justice Reinvestment Initiative of 2012, spearheaded by then-Gov. Tom Corbett, was a data-driven approach that developed a policy framework to improve public safety, reduce recidivism and manage spending on corrections. JRI has had a monumental impact on the Department of Corrections and saved the Commonwealth hundreds of millions of dollars in cost avoidance.

"I have serious concerns over the revenue plan passed by the House," said Wetzel. "Now more than ever, money from the Justice Reinvestment Fund is vital to Pennsylvania communities that are in the fight of their lives against the opioid epidemic."



An integral part of JRI of 2012 was to take the actual savings from JRI and reinvest that money into critical programs and services that are paramount to the reduction of recidivism and improving public safety. Money was distributed to victim services, innovative policing, sentencing, community reentry programs and improving county probation and parole.

Wetzel said the Commonwealth needs to continue to supplement these programs in order to continue the population reductions which have also reduced crime.

This action will harm communities in counties that are underfunded and not able to address the growing demand for treatment and evidence-based programming.

"We face challenges today that have the potential to reverse the success we have had throughout this process," Wetzell said. "We need to continue to focus on treatment options, including Medication Assisted Treatment, rather than incarceration."

One example of the positive outcomes that can be attributed in part to JRI is a reduction in the inmate population. Prior to JRI, the inmate population projection for June 2017 was 56,440 inmates. The state's actual prison population in June was 48,510 - a reduction of almost 8,000 inmates, due in large part to the success of JRI. As a result, the Commonwealth was able to halt construction of one prison and close three others: SCI Cresson, SCI Greensburg and SCI Pittsburgh.

"If there is any good news to report it is that we are about to launch a new Justice Reinvestment Initiative – JRI 2, which will continue to provide more dollars to counties to combat the opioid epidemic, reduce crime and improve public safety," said Wetzell. "However, we cannot have a lapse in the investment to these essential services. We have a responsibility to use the JRI fund for its intent: to provide financial support to counties, victims, police and other critical programs."

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How the DOC Handles Water Emergencies

There are times when our prisons experience water leaks. Some are minor and can be repaired very quickly by our own maintenance staff, while others are not so easy due to the size and location of the leak or water line break.

Whenever a DOC facility has an incident – including the loss of water – the facility's Incident Command System (ICS) kicks in. The DOC uses ICS to manage incidents, and doing so provides consistency from incident to incident and from facility to facility. The ICS system also allows all responding agencies and organizations to communicate with each other efficiently and effectively.

But back to a water situation. Part of the ICS response to loss of water is the fact that we determine whether drinking water and non-drinking water needs to be provided. Longer water outages also could result in the prison setting up portable toilets for inmates and employees use, along with portable showers for inmates.

This recently happened at SCI Somerset, and we wanted to show you that we take these matters seriously... we always have. But it wasn't until this recent water break that we thought to take some pictures to show the public how we work to provide everyone with water and appropriate facilities. Here are those pictures.

The next time you hear of a water emergency at one of our state prisons, please know that our staff works to provide appropriate accommodations as quickly as



This is a water buffalo that holds non-drinking water – water that can be used to flush toilets or to bathe.

possible.

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Portable toilets line the East Yard at SCI Somerset during a recent water line break.



Portable shower units set up in SCI Somerset's East Yard.

From the DOC Leadership Meeting

DOC officials meet regularly to allow office and bureau directors to share with others and with superintendents information about the latest projects or status of ongoing projects. A meeting was held on September 20, and the following information was provided:

SCI Phoenix – committees continue to meet to finalize plans of action regarding all aspects of bringing the new prison on line.

Female Transition Unit – DOC officials have reached out to community reentry service providers and have set a date for a meeting at the unit where everyone will discuss the best ways to provide reentry services to the females that will be housed in this stand-alone unit that will operate on the grounds of SCI Phoenix.

Drug Interdiction Efforts – Just as the local communities are experiencing drug issues, so too is the DOC. As a result the DOC has established a Drug Interdiction Strategy Committee that is a multi-disciplinary team that will problem solve the drug interdiction issues – specifically dealing with the opioid epidemic that affects our prisons and centers. The committee came up with a lot of good ideas and will now develop plans of action. Some of the changes we will see is the reassignment of the mailrooms to the prison security offices rather than the business offices. The work performed by the mailroom staff plays a vital role in drug and contraband interdiction, and it is only fitting that it now be supervised by the security department, who also will train employees in drug identification and interdiction, etc.

Inmate Assignment Decision Tool – The Office of Population Management demonstrated for staff how the new inmate assignment decision tool works. The system is the result of a three-year agreement with Lehigh University, who designed a system that greatly reduces the amount of staff time used to manually review each inmate transfer request. The office receives about 50,000 transfer requests from DOC facilities. This new system reduces the amount of time needed to identify the best transfer location from days to minutes. The project is in the second of the three-year agreement with the university. OPM currently uses the system and then manually verifies the computer's results. It is estimated that the system will save the DOC \$2.9 million in increased efficiencies, improved security through the reduced need to move an inmate multiple times, etc. Eventually it will be the only tool used to identify transfer locations, with manual work only needed if there is a system failure. The project began shortly after John Wetzel was named secretary. He questioned how we would improve the process and tasked Planning, Research & Statistics Director Bret Bucklen with improving the process. Bucklen reached out to Lehigh University, and the project was begun. The DOC believes that this system's framework could be used for other problem-solving initiatives within the department.

Replacing Educational Computers – The DOC’s Bureau of Correction Education and Bureau of Information Technology (BIT), along with the PA Office of Administration, is in the process of replacing outdated and now unsupported hardware and software that is used in the prisons’ education labs. The new software will cover all levels of education from non-reader to GED prep. And the GED prep part mirrors the actual exam. The new education software is a Software as a Solution (SaaS) that will allow the inmates to directly connect to a URL for their educational purposes. Along with the new software, BIT will provide seamless integration from institution to institution through a Virtual Desktop Infrastructure (VDI). This virtual system will allow for a standardized educational experience regardless of location and the ability to support from a central location. Here all updates can be pushed to all 25 facilities at the same time, and it reduces the need for a traditional desktop. The prisons have been provided with the hardware, and now the vendor will work to train facility staff. The benefits of the new software include improved auditing, a teacher dashboard that allows them to monitor student information in a real time environment, and the Bureau of Correction Education can monitor all aspects of the systems use from a central location.

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Handlers Graduate Course

Sgt. John Wallace and Sgt. Russell Wilson graduated from US Customs and Border Protection K9 Instructor Course on September 15. They started class in July 26 and are now certified instructors for human detection and narcotic detection. The Course is the toughest K9 classes in the United States and requires each student instructor to take three written essay-style exams and pass with a 90 percent score. Some of these exams can take up to four hours to complete. The DIU/K9 Unit now has five certified instructors.



Russ Wilson



John Wallace

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Mercer Holds C.O.V.E.R. Regional Retreat

On September 19, SCI Mercer hosted the Department of Corrections' third regional Corrections Outreach for Veteran and Employee Restoration (C.O.V.E.R.) event, which is part of a statewide initiative to address mental and physical health issues within a high-stress work environment.

C.O.V.E.R. is a staff-driven, newly-formed organization devoted to supporting all agency staff in various ways, with a focus on issues that can affect their well-being, including substance abuse, self-care and suicide prevention.

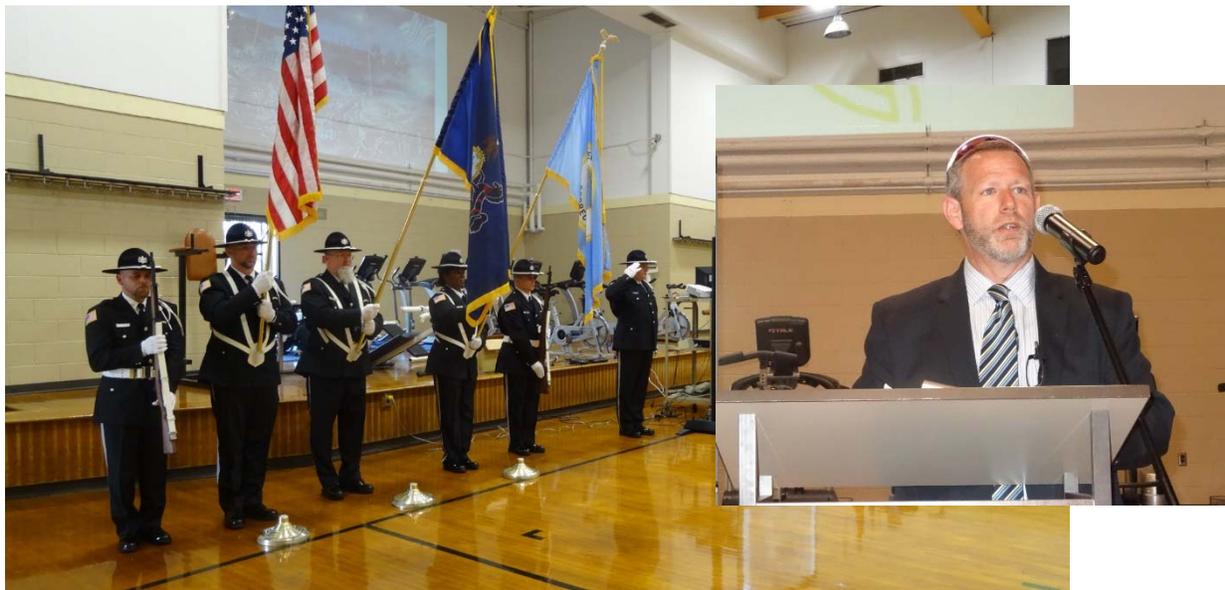
The idea for the program was initiated by SCI Dallas Corrections Counselor Natasha Amaral as part of the DOC's staff wellness initiative. C.O.V.E.R. was born out of Amaral's experience with the federal Bureau of Prisons' "Battle Buddy" program.

The goal of C.O.V.E.R. is to encourage employee personal and professional growth, physical and mental well-being, along with the mission of the Department of Corrections to promote a worksite culture that supports employees' desires to make healthy lifestyle choices.

In attendance at the event were 175 employees from the western region institutions, including SCIs Mercer, Albion, Cambridge Springs, Dallas, Fayette, Forest, Greene, Laurel Highlands, Pine Grove and Somerset, as well as staff from the DOC's Central Office and Bureau of Community Corrections Region 3.

The Erie Vet Center's mobile outreach vehicle also was on sight.

The event was kicked off with a welcome from SCI Mercer Deputy Superintendent William Woods, and SCI Mercer's Honor Guard presented and retired the Colors.



Keynote speakers included:

Kevin Bittenbender, founder of the federal Bureau of Prisons Battle Buddy Program.



Earl Granville, a National Guard veteran who spoke about his military experience and shared his story on the loss of his twin brother, SCI Waymart Corrections Officer 1 Joe Granville.



Dr. Christian Conte, a level V anger management specialist, television personality, co-host of Tackling Life podcast and creator of Yield Theory – a tremendously powerful approach to change rooted in compassion and conscious education.



Michele Kelly-Thompson, M.A., director of clinical services at the New Castle Human Services Center in Lawrence County, who spoke about her family's loss to suicide and about the Lawrence County Suicide Prevention Coalition.



Natasha Amaral, SCI Dallas Corrections Counselor and U.S. Marine Corps veteran, who founded the C.O.V.E.R. program, who spoke about the vision of the program and provided information about how employees could get involved.





As part of the process to educate DOC employees about C.O.V.E.R., each DOC region has held a retreat like this one. In addition, each state prison now has a committee devoted to this group's mission, and each developing their own local events. In fact, on October 13, SCI Muncy's C.O.V.E.R. will hold a run event at FCC Allenwood. This is the same day that the federal prison is hosting a Bureau Battle Buddy retreat. The retreat has been opened up to include SCI Muncy staff and local and county law enforcement and first responders. This shows how this issue is one that crosses all levels and types of law enforcement, criminal justice and first responder areas.

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Returning Home

Here is a picture of DOC employees who were deployed on September 11, 2017, as part of Pennsylvania Incident Management Team (PA-IMT) to provide support activities in Florida following Hurricane Irma. Their replacements arrived in Florida last night and are from Maryland. They will take a few days to orient and brief their replacements before hitting the road to come home. This team of dedicated individuals will return to Harrisburg on September 24, if all goes as planned with the convoy.



These individuals, along with others who serve on PA-IMT, staged in Lake City, Florida for one day. Then they were deployed to manage an operational base camp at the Lee County Mosquito Control base near Fort Meyers Florida.

Upon arrival, the Pennsylvania Incident Management Team joined together with Incident Commander Steve Miller and members of the State of Ohio, Butler County Incident Management. The IMT was briefed and brought up to speed by the team that was currently on the ground.

The new mission assignment was for the team to manage the creation and ongoing monitoring of a responder base camp. This base camp would be responsible for handling the personal needs of 1,000 responding individuals. These individuals would be arriving with fuel trucks, supply trucks and equipment. The state of Florida had contracted with a vendor to supply equipment, personnel and services, prior to the arrival of the IMT.

After the in-briefing was conducted, the team broke into sections and began completing the tasks necessary to successfully complete the mission. All section leaders immediately gained situational and geographical awareness that encompassed the parameters affecting the mission.

Because the PA DOC uses an Incident Command System management method for handling and responding to incidents, we believed that our staff would find the following officer reports very interesting. They follow:

Liaison Officer -- The goal of the Liaison Officer is to maintain positive relationships with the US Forest Service, community, Florida Forestry Department, Florida National Guard, First Responders, contractors and all other agencies in the operations area. Community Partners include FEMA, Florida EMA, Lee County Emergency Management Officials, local government officials, state highway patrol, utility companies, Florida Forest Service and local law officials. The liaison officer organized the distribution of the "Lee County Camp Base Operations Information Packets" to all responders that came on the footprint. POD (points of distribution) locations were visited and the team interacted with residents that were affected or displaced by Hurricane IRMA. Team members began a two-hour rotation to assist with the distribution efforts at these locations. The community is very supportive and cooperative of the recovery operations.

Public Information Officer -- The mission of the PIO was to maintain positive relationships with all parties involved through timely situational updates. These updates were given through social media updates, personal communication with community members, connecting with personal stakeholders, meeting with community officials regularly and providing media interviews and tours. Currently there have been three interviews conducted concerning the operations at the Buckingham Air Field and the PA-IMTs mission there.

Safety Officer -- Before traveling to Florida, safety briefings were conducted and communication checks were performed to ensure driver and team's safety while traveling. When the team arrived at the Lake City Air Tanker Base, the team initially was tasked to set up a base operation for 30 "two-person" saw teams with four-wheel drive pickup trucks. Shortly after establishing a base of operations, the team was re-assigned to the Buckingham Air Field in Lehigh Acres, FL. The team was able to take down operations and redeploy to a new location safely and efficiently. The team, to date, has been injury free. The team holds safety briefings and wellness checks on each other throughout the day. Safety messages are changed daily and tips are provided to ensure proper work habits and indicators of someone working unsafely. All team members are encouraged to confront unsafe acts and conditions and to take immediate actions to correct these situations.

Operations Section -- The Operations Section was tasked with both managing and monitoring the Base Camp for responders. This was done with an integrated operations team from the PA Incident Management Team and Butler County (Ohio) Incident Management Team. The Operations Section was split into Base/Camp Operations (Butler County) and Ramp Operations (PA IMT). The mission is able to support up to one thousand responders.

A portion of the tarmac is being run as a FEMA Logistics Staging Area (LSA) managed by the Florida Forest Service. The mission of the LSA is to provide supplies for the thirty-one Points of Distribution (PODS) that are located throughout eight Florida counties. A portion of the tarmac is also designated for staging the Army Corps of Engineer's generator instillation mission. The remainder of the tarmac is designated for staging of responders (medical services, utility crews, volunteer disaster services, etc.). Managing the tarmac is a coordinated effort between the PA IMT and Florida Forest Service. Both Operations Sections work in unison to operate a safe area supporting the public by providing a rest area for the various responders in and around Lee County.

Planning Section -- The planning section effectively managed the production of each Incident Action Plan (IAP), utilizing established processes and procedures. Each day a clear and functional IAP was presented to all team members and the coordinating agencies to clarify commander's intent and express operational objectives. Each day all situational maps were updated and added to meeting rooms, common areas and the IAP for all team members to have effective situational awareness.

Strategy

Base camp management strategy is to logistically assist responders during post hurricane IRMA support activities.

Leaders Intent

Responder and Public safety will be the highest priority of every incident management activity.

Maintain cooperative relationships with other agencies and teams assigned to the hurricane relief effort.

Ensure base camp operations meet the needs of the housed responders.

Incident Requirements

Establish and manage an operational base camp at Lee County Mosquito Control Base.

Logistics Section -- Upon arrival at the area of operations, Logistics immediately assessed and addressed the logistical needs of the PA Incident Management Team as well as the functioning incident management team (Butler County Ohio IMT) that had arrived at the Buckingham Air Field. These requests included offloading equipment needed to establish a fully equipped incident command post. The equipment was offloaded and the command post was functional in less than one hour.

The logistics section also facilitated water resupply at strategic locations in the operations area.

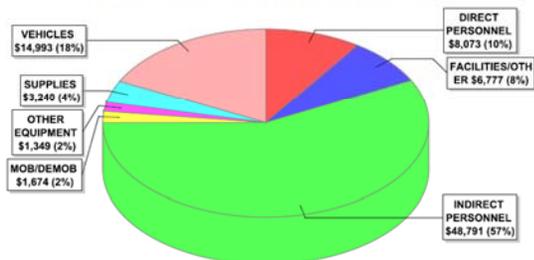
After the immediate operational needs were addressed, the logistics section established an effective work area that would function as a key distribution point for all IMT and overall mission needs.

Finance Section -- PA IMT staff utilize E-ISuite management software and initiated a tracking system to maintain financial records for both the Florida FEMA Hurricane IRMA support – PA IMT GA-FE4-170004 and the Florida FEMA Hurricane IRMA Support – So. Florida GA-FE4-170006. (US Forest Service Mission Assignments)

All resources are demobilized as soon as they are no longer required to support the operational plan. Cost containment is an ongoing concern throughout the assignment. The finance section facilitates this process through its documentation efforts.

Group Category Summary Report by Incident
Incident: FLORIDA FEMA HURRICANE IRMA SUPPORT - PA IMT (US-GA-FE4-170004)

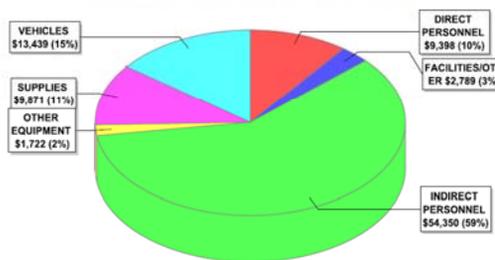
Group Category Summary Graph Report



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Group Category Summary Report by Incident
Incident: FLORIDA FEMA HURRICANE IRMA SUPPORT - SO. FLORIDA (US-GA-FE4-170006)

Group Category Summary Graph Report



2016 Team of the Year!

SCI Huntingdon's Hostage Negotiation Team (HNT) has proudly been awarded the 2016 Team of the Year Award by the Central Region Hostage Negotiation Team.

Huntingdon's team competed with the other HNTs in the Central Region.



HNT members, from left to right: CO1 Hancock, PSSC Butterbaugh, CO1 Lafferty, PSSC McMahon, CO1 Thompson, CO1 Clark, CO1 Lyter, CO1 Wertz. Team Leader Lt. House is receiving the award. Absent from photo are CO1 Todaro and CO1 Weakland.

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Houtzdale Inmate Work Crew Preps Area for Kids Day

Each year Houtzdale, Pa., holds a Kids Day, where kids are able to fish the local stream and enjoy festivities. But it takes some work to prepare the stream for the day's events.

SCI Houtzdale and its inmate Community Work Program crew helped by removing weeds from along the stream and by building the bridge so water would collect to provide an ultimate fishing area for participating kids.



In addition to the fishing related work, the crew also painted a number of super hero character cutouts.



Kudos to SCI Houtzdale's CWP and labor foreman for helping to make the Kids Day a huge success.

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Fresh, Sweet Corn

We all look forward to fresh, sweet corn at the end of the summer.

From two fields, SCI Mercer recently harvested and shared almost 50,000 ears of corn with local DOC facilities and community organizations.

Recipients included SCIs Albion (10,500 ears), Forest (5,500 ears), and Cambridge Springs (4,000 ears), as well as Mercer; Prince of Peace Foodbank in Farrell, Pa. (11,000 ears); and the Sharon Community Food Warehouse (1,000 ears).



Pictured is the inmate work crew under the supervision of Outside Grounds Labor Foreman Albert Gordon loading up the truck from SCI Albion on September 14th. The last of the corn was picked on the 15th.



Thanks to the outside grounds maintenance crew for their hard work in planting and harvesting the corn, which enables SCI Mercer to give back to the community each year.

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CIT Curriculum Receives Positive Feedback

The Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training program is an effective crisis response training for DOC employees who encounter inmates experiencing crisis. In addition to an overview of mental illness – medical and other risk factors in the inmate population – this training provides corrections staff with specific skills and strategies to recognize and de-escalate inmates in crisis.

The DOC's Training Academy recently offered the CIT curriculum to county corrections with 58 employees from 16 counties successfully completing one of two 32-hour trainings offered during 2017. In addition to being responsive to county needs, this provided the DOC with an excellent opportunity to pilot and implement new De-escalation Skills training, which has been incorporated into the CIT curriculum for DOC staff.

Participant feedback indicates that the program has been very well received. Current CIT Program Coordinator Rhonda Tomcavage shared the following excerpts from recent program evaluations:

"Learning about all of the mental illnesses and how they affect the inmate was impactful. The headphones with the voices makes you realize what it is like to hear voices. The training helps you to understand how to talk to people and how to relate to those that have mental illness."

"Instructors were exceptional. They all relate training material to what we as correctional officers do on the daily basis."

"The role playing scenarios were the best tool for me personally. I think everyone benefits from hands-on learning and application, and I wish there was more of that opportunity."

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Culinary Class Earns Kudos at Graduation Luncheon

Nine students graduated the culinary arts program during a ceremony held at the Training Academy on August 24. Nine inmates, who received their Culinary Fundamental certificates from Chef Todd Lewis, completed the nine-week course by preparing a luncheon for DOC staff and visitors.

"The buffet shows off what they learned and what they've done during the class," Lewis said, praising the students' desire to prepare foods which are not necessarily standard American cuisine. "It was important to them to do something different.

"They wanted to prepare an international meal," noted Lewis, pointing out the Jamaican, American and Italian flags that hung from the buffet table.

The menu consisted of Jamaican beef stew, pecan crusted salmon, chicken saltimbocca (which means "jump into the mouth" in Italian) with asparagus and rice pilaf. Desserts included cannoli, red velvet cake, pineapple upside-down cake and pecan pie.

The class began in late June with four academy employees sitting in during the first week to earn their ServSafe certificates along with the inmates. With that one-week course concluded, the inmates finished the remaining eight weeks with efficiency and teamwork.



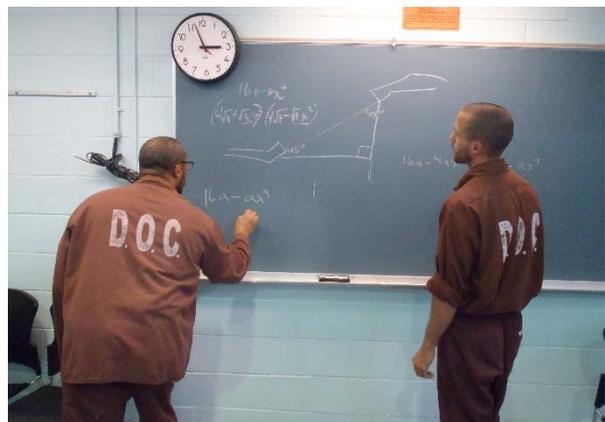
"This class worked very well as a team, Lewis said. "And they didn't stop until the work was done."

Associate Director for Facilities Management Pete Damiter also was on hand during the graduation ceremony and provided brief remarks, praising the class and pointing out that the course will give the inmates valuable know-how and credentials upon release from prison.

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Albion Forms Inmate Math Club

An inmate at SCI Albion, under the supervision and direction of Employment Vocational Coordinator Laura Giles formed a math club in order to help inmates interested in improving their math skills and also to prepare them for reentry. They meet once a month to learn new math skills and address any questions. Club members are given assignments and puzzles which they complete at their own pace and time. Inmates also are available to participate in cell if they can't attend the club meetings.



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Pine Grove Holds Full Scale Exercise

On September 19, SCI Pine Grove – led by Critical Incident Manager Lt. Daniel Martynuska – held the annual Emergency Support Annex meeting. In addition to a meeting, a full scale exercise was held. Outside agencies who participated in this meeting and exercise included Pennsylvania State Police, Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, PA Army National Guard, ICEMA and Citizen's Ambulance. The goals of such meetings and exercises are to include outside agencies so they can become familiar with a facility BEFORE an incident happens.



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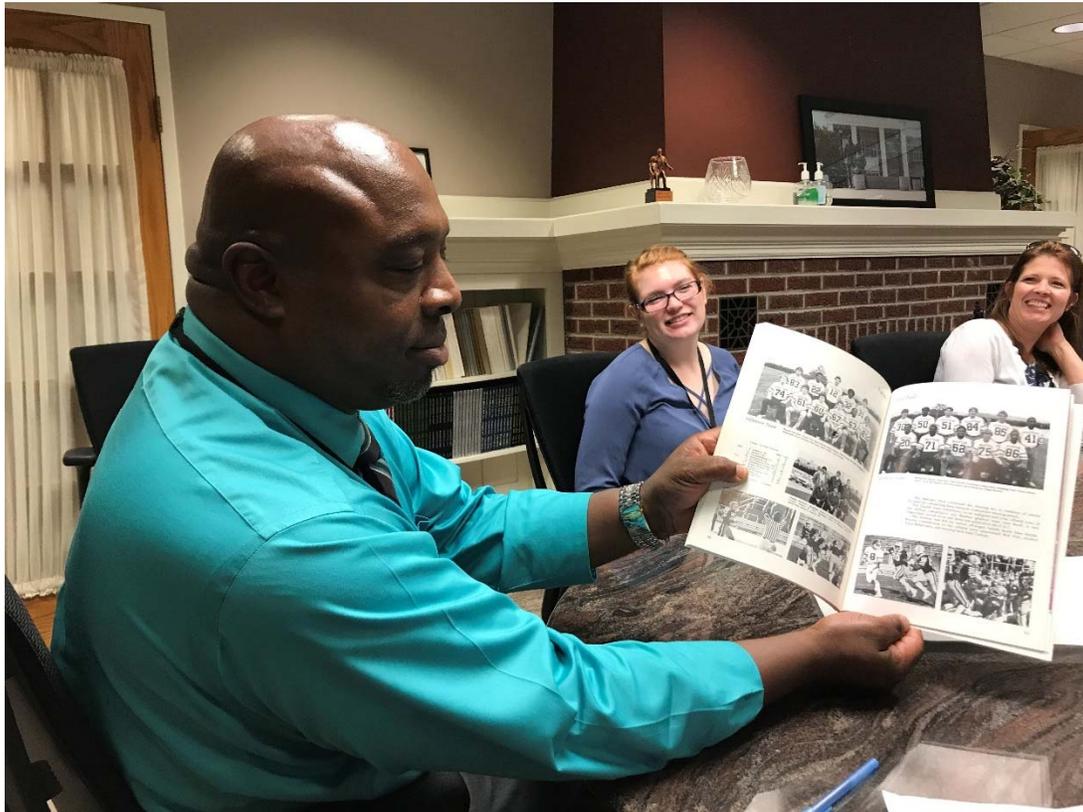
Visit to Milton Hershey School

DOC officials are always researching resources that may be valuable to individuals. One such resource could be Milton Hershey School (MHS).

On Sept. 19 several DOC officials - including a former substitute house parent (Lacosta Mussoline) and a 1983 graduate (SCI Chester Deputy Superintendent Kenneth Eason) -- toured the campus and one of the houses. There are many myths out there about exactly who is eligible for consideration by MHS.

In accordance with the Milton Hershey School's Equal Opportunity Policy, the school admits qualified students of any race, color, national or ethnic origin, ancestry, sex, religious creed, disability, or any other status protected under applicable federal or Pennsylvania law, to all the rights, privileges, programs and activities generally accorded or made available to students at the school.

Visit their website at www.mhskids.org to learn more about their minimum qualifications for admission.



SCI Chester Deputy Superintendent Kenneth Eason shows pictures of himself from his 1983 Milton Hershey School yearbook as Press Office Intern Allison Beck and Regional Reentry Administrator Lacosta Mussoline look on.

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Suicide Prevention Awareness Month

With September being Suicide Prevention Awareness month, SCI Fayette's Suicide Prevention Committee, Psychological Service Specialist Kristin Jeffries and Social Worker Tony Rivera coordinated an event called "Talk Saves Lives: Introduction to Suicide Prevention." The event was held on September 13 for both employees and inmates. Kenneth Etzel, from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention, was the guest speaker.

Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the United States, but it's a health crisis that can be prevented. Etzel talked about the latest research to help people understand suicide, who may be at greater risk and what protective factors help to reduce that risk. He also spoke about warning signs that can signal a need for intervention and some tips on how to reach out for help.

Attendees left the presentation with a better understanding of suicidal risk, as well as when and how to seek help before it's too late.



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Around the Centers...

Drug Interdiction Dogs Tackle Wernersville CCC

As a pilot program, DOC officials have placed a drug interdiction unit handler and K9 at the Wernersville Community Corrections Center for a period of 30 consecutive days. The use of the dog to search common and resident areas, vehicles and residents for illegal drugs for an extended period of time is new to the CCC system and is being tested at the center to determine whether dogs and the centers are a good mix where longer-term drug interdiction efforts are concerned. Based upon the outcome, it is possible that that the DOC may expand the use of the dogs at other CCCs. The DOC has used its K9s at centers as needed, but never for 30 straight days.



Sgt. Vannatta and her K9, Linda, work to keep Wernersville CCC drug free.

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Reentrants Volunteer at Local Center

Wernersville Community Corrections Center (CCC) Counselor David Acosta has been leading a group of volunteers each Tuesday – since mid-August – to help refurbish Berks Encore Center. Berks Encore Center is a day center for elderly individuals at the Wernersville State Hospital.



This project is ongoing until completed.

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In The News...

Altoona Mirror (09/20/2017)

<http://www.altoonamirror.com/news/local-news/2017/09/bill-could-benefit-children-of-inmates/>

Bill could benefit children of inmates

Proposed trust fund would be first of its kind in the nation

HARRISBURG — Pennsylvania may soon be the first in the nation to create a financial lifeline to higher learning and educational programs for the children of inmates.

On Tuesday, the Senate Judiciary Committee approved legislation, Senate Bill 790, to create the First Chance Trust Fund, a public charitable trust used to create scholarships and grants for educational programs for the children of incarcerated parents and other at risk-youth.

"If a child has a parent or both parents who commit a crime and go to jail, those folks are just left to fend for themselves or fall into the social network," said Sen. Richard Alloway, R-Franklin, during the committee meeting. "The purpose of this bill is to have a pot of money to help work with these kids."

"We know the high likelihood of those children following the same path that their parents followed," he added.

The trust fund, to be overseen by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, is projected to collect \$500,000 to \$1 million annually through private, tax-deductible donations and a 1 percent surcharge on vendors that have a contract with the Department of Corrections that exceeds \$5 million.

No taxpayer dollars would be used to fund the trust, and regions with high high-school dropout rates and risks of incarceration, as well as crime rates, will be prioritized.

The proposal, which was developed with support from the Corrections Secretary John Wetzel, is intended to address inmates' children's predisposition to prison life.

Please click on the link to read the entire article.

PHYS.ORG (09/19/2017)

<https://phys.org/news/2017-09-prison-reassignment-optimization-pa-million.amp>

Prison reassignment optimization model saves PA estimated \$2.9 million

A "first-of-its-kind" optimization model developed by engineers at Lehigh's P.C. Rossin College of Engineering and Applied Science is helping Pennsylvania's Department of Corrections (PADOC) streamline the assignment of inmates to the state's 25 correctional institutions.

PADOC officials say the Inmate Assignment Decision Support System (IADSS) has "transformed" the inmate assignment process in Pennsylvania and can do the same for state correctional agencies across the United States. In the long run, they say, the system could shorten prison stays and reduce recidivism—the rate at which released prisoners commit new crimes—by giving inmates more timely access to the treatment programs they need to earn parole.

There are currently 46,800 inmates in the state's correctional institutions. PADOC's annual expenditures total approximately \$2.5 billion, or about 8 percent of the state's total budget.

IADSS can make hundreds of inmate assignments in a few minutes, a task that requires hours when performed manually by humans. The system is the product of five years of work by graduate students and faculty members in the department of industrial and systems engineering. Its developers say IADSS represents the first application of operations research to the assignment of prison inmates.

PADOC officials have been using IADSS for 10 months to help assign inmates and they plan to switch over to it completely early next year. IADSS was also used to help reassign 2,000 inmates from the State Correctional Institution in Pittsburgh, which was recently closed, to other state prisons.

Please click on the link to read the entire article.

Washington Observer-Reporter (09/19/2017)

http://www.observer-reporter.com/20170919/inmates_at_sci-greene_train_pups_to_become_service_dogs

Inmates at SCI-Greene train pups to become service dogs

By Mike Schwarz

Twelve maximum-security inmates, seven community volunteers and five puppies make up the Canine Partners for Life training program at SCI-Greene in Waynesburg.

The nonprofit program enables inmates in Pennsylvania and Maryland to train prospective service dogs for 12 to 18 months inside prison before the pups move on to formal training at the CPL headquarters in Cochranville, Chester County.

After graduating from the two-year program, the service dogs will assist people with physical or mental disabilities. Over the course of its 26-year existence, the organization has placed more than 650 service dogs in 45 states across the United States.

The process begins in Cochranville, where the CPL team breeds, trains and cares for dozens of service dogs a year. At 8 weeks old, the pups are transferred to one of eight prisons in Pennsylvania and two in Maryland.

The group at SCI-Greene meets once every two weeks inside the visitors' room to train and evaluate the dogs. On a spring day earlier this year, a visitor was given the opportunity to observe training.

Please click on the link to read the entire article/listen to the segment.

WESA Radio 90.5 (09/18/2017)

<http://wesa.fm/post/pas-prison-population-finally-going-down-what-are-we-doing-people-still-inside#stream/0>

CRIMINAL INJUSTICE -- PA's Prison Population Is Finally Going Down, But What Are We Doing For The People Still Inside?

By Megan Harris

Pennsylvania Corrections Secretary John Wetzel began his criminal justice career in 1989, just as the commonwealth's prison population began to balloon.

It was the beginning of America's mass incarceration era -- one that Wetzel said his office is only now beginning to reverse.

On this week's episode of 90.5 WESA's Criminal Injustice podcast, host and University of Pittsburgh law professor David Harris talked to Wetzel about those changes and what his office has done to better treat the men and women still inside.

Please click on the link to read the entire article/listen to the segment.

Erie Times News (09/15/2017)

<http://www.goerie.com/news/20170915/after-prison-erie-man-offers-help-to-other-ex-offenders>

After prison, Erie man offers help to other ex-offenders
By Madeleine O'Neill

He spent more than a decade in prison.

He struggled to find employment and housing after his release.

But now, Tyshun Taylor has found his dream job: lending a hand to other ex-offenders as they go through the same transition.

The 43-year-old Erie native is working as a client advocate, a position created with grant funds provided to the Unified Erie anti-violence initiative in July 2016.

He knows how difficult the transition back into the community can be for his clients.

"When I came home it was such a complete struggle," he said. "That's one thing I knew, that I had to take this job because I had to release some of that stress and pressure when they come home, to give them my hand and to know they've got somebody."

Please click on the link to read the entire article.

Newsworks.org (09/14/2017)

<http://www.newsworks.org/index.php/local/pa-suburbs/107168-bareentry>

Lancaster knows how to keep people out of jail, but it's expensive

After nearly two decades in prison, Isaac Rivera was ready to remake himself.

The 41-year-old from Lancaster served time after a 1997 arrest on assault and rape charges, but he felt that his violent past was behind him — if only he could find a way to jump-start his reinvention.

But then came a sign.

When he was released back in January, he remembers sitting in the waiting room at the Lancaster's Probation and Parole Office.

"I saw a brochure, it said, 'Just got out?' And I pulled the brochure out, and, lo and behold, it talked about a support group for those who are returning citizens," said Rivera, using the phrase for former inmates popular with advocacy groups.

At first, the pitch generated some conflicting feelings.

Please click on the link to read the entire article.

PennState News (09/06/2017)

<http://news.psu.edu/story/480991/2017/09/06/academics/penn-state-fayette-nursing-program-partners-state-correctional>

Penn State Fayette Nursing program partners with state correctional institutions

LEMONT FURNACE, Pa. — Penn State Fayette, The Eberly Campus is among the first schools in the region to introduce students to prison nursing as a viable and rewarding career path.

Eighteen senior nursing students, divided into two groups, are set to attend a daylong tour of the Greene or Fayette State Correctional Institutions, respectively, during the month of October. Each student will shadow and observe a registered nurse.

Superseding the Associate Degree in Nursing program, the four-year Bachelor of Science in Nursing program will confer degrees to its first cohort in the spring. Community nursing, or public health nursing, is a new addition to the curricula. The students will observe additional community nursing applications, such as home visiting nursing, hospice care, dialysis, and family nurse partnership.

“Our senior nursing students will be spending a full day observing the primary, secondary and tertiary interventions of the RN for the prison population,” said Melissa Miner, the campus coordinator for nursing. “This is an opportunity for students to go beyond of the hospital setting.” Miner hopes the partnership will accommodate a larger cohort and longer rotations within the correctional institutions in the future.

Six professionals from SCI Greene and SCI Fayette visited the Fayette campus to deliver an orientation on security measures and the unique challenges of working within an alternative space.

Please click on the link to read the entire article.

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Week of Sept. 11...

Celebrity Visits Graterford/Phoenix Prisons

Actress Allison Williams, star of the hit HBO series "Girls," took a tour of Graterford and Phoenix last week led by Secretary Wetzel and Superintendent Cynthia Link.

Williams, who is interested in prison reform, has toured institutions all over the country. At Graterford she visited general population blocks and the capital case unit, spoke with inmates and sat in on a meditation class taught by Dr. Nancy Wolff of Rutgers University. Secretary Wetzel and Lt. Walter Grunder also provided Williams with a tour of the state-of-the-art facility at Phoenix.



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Improving Criminal Justice

On September 13, DOC Secretary John Wetzel spoke at the National Association of Pretrial Service Agencies conference in Pittsburgh about the state's justice reinvestment initiatives and many of the DOC's other initiatives toward improving criminal justice.



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Celebrating Longevity

At the regular meeting of the superintendent and her staff, SCI Graterford officials on September 14, recognized two employees for their MANY years of service.

Sergeant Randall Lacey was congratulated on his 40 years of service, while Captain Etta Williams was honored for her 30 years of service.



Sergeant Randall Lacey



Captain Etta Williams

Along with the honorees, pictured are Deputy Superintendent for Facility Management James Meintel; honoree; Superintendent Cynthia Link; and (acting) Major James Spagnoletti.

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National Prison Reform Conversation

DOC Secretary John Wetzel recently traveled to Washington D.C. to participate in Corrections Partnership Day, which is a gathering of state and federal corrections leaders where discussions about international prison reform and international security are held.

The event was coordinated by the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs – which advises the president, secretary of state and U.S. government officials about policies and programs to combat international narcotics and crime.

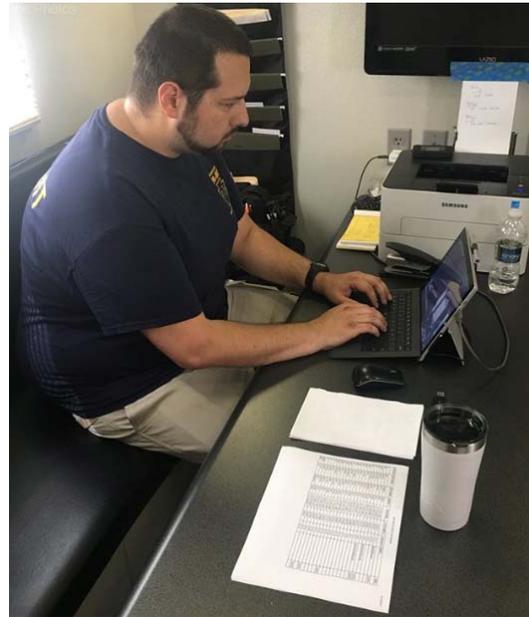
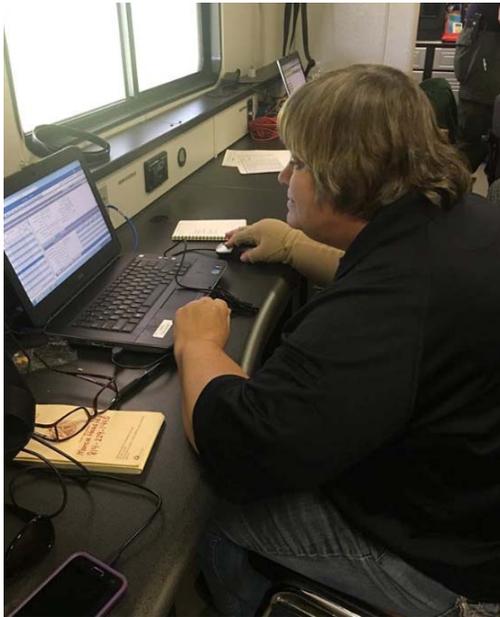


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Responding to Emergencies

Twenty-four members of the Pennsylvania Incident Response Management team arrived at the U.S. Forest Service's Lake City Air Tanker Base in Florida recently and began working with FEMA and state authorities responding to Hurricane Irma. The 11-truck convoy, included many vehicles pulling trailers loaded with generators and supplies and two self-sustaining mobile command posts outfitted with communications equipment.

Among the members pictured are:



Clerk Typist 3 Marcia Heasley and Lt. Matt Desimone at their computers.

**Lt. Aaron Litwhiler and Lt. John Oliver
in their truck.**





Lt. Scott Lander, logistics section chief, in one of the command trailers.



This is a tailgate meeting held September 13. Other PA state team members pictured in the group photo are Capt. Mark Hacherl (DOC), Greg Pijar (PEMA), Lt. Sam Harker, Charles Choplick (DCNR), Lt. Lander and Major Brian Boyer (DOC).

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Prison Opens RTU Yard

The Residential Treatment Unit (RTU) Yard at SCI Rockview officially opened on August 21, with several tournaments facilitated by the Activities Department.

RTU inmates participated in a hot shot basketball contest, a cornhole tournament and a casino card tournament, while many inmates enjoyed sitting in the sun watching the festivities. The RTU Yard consists of benches, four tables, a set of concrete cornhole boards, and a 20' x 20' basketball court with one hoop.



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Myers Celebrates 30 Years of Service

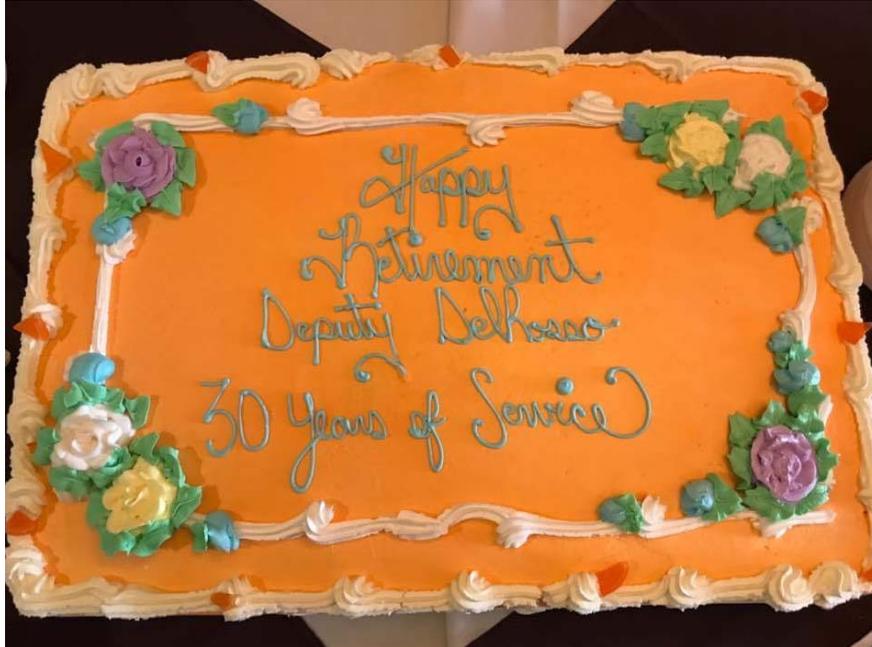
SCI Benner Township Superintendent Tammy Ferguson presented Deputy Superintendent Dan Myers with a Certificate of Service for 30 years. Deputy Myers began his career in corrections at SCI Graterford in September 1987 as a corrections officer trainee. He progressed through the ranks and currently serves as Benner Township's Deputy of Facility Management.



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Long-Time DOC/Waymart Employee Retires

After serving 30 years with the DOC, SCI Waymart Deputy Superintendent for Centralized Services Paul DelRosso recently retired.



Paul began his career at SCI Retreat as a corrections counselor in 1987. He said that he was interviewed in the garage of SCI Retreat prior to it being opened. In the spring of 1990, he transferred to the newly-opened SCI Waymart as a corrections counselor. In 1991, he was promoted to

drug and alcohol treatment specialist supervisor. He was promoted again in 1992 to unit manager. He became the classification and program manager in 1999 for the institution's Forensic Treatment Center.

Paul became deputy superintendent for centralized services in 2005, and served in this capacity until his retirement. Prior to his "official" departure, he often noted that he had been truly blessed over the course of his 30 year career with professionalism, friendship and comradery. Deputy DelRosso said that his career has been more rewarding than he had any right to expect over his 30 years.

Even in leaving, he urged everyone "to work together as a team every day, to focus on the tasks at hand, and help each other out. When you say to someone, 'I have your back,' mean it. Remember to keep the FTC/ICU strong and keep that positive 'we can do it' attitude."

Paul has been a true leader with a calm but strong demeanor. His experience, understanding and knowledge, particularly in the area of mental health treatment, has served to both mentor staff and improve the delivery of services across the Commonwealth.

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Assisting with Hurricane Relief Efforts

Following a recent inmate fundraiser, SCI Chester inmates sought information from the prison's administration about donating a portion of the money raised to assist hurricane relief efforts, specifically those assisting lost or displaced dogs.

When prison officials spoke to their dog-training partner WAGs about the inmates' desires, WAGs asked if the prison instead would be able to take in extra dogs due to their fosters being overloaded.

Prison staff agreed and are now using all of the inmates on the dog handler waiting list to assist in this endeavor.

"We received 13 dogs today," said program coordinator Madeline Quinn. "We now have a total of 26 dogs, and the puppies will be here for two weeks or until they are able to be adopted."



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Backpacks for Back-To-School

SCI Waymart employees distributed back packs filled with school supplies to needy children attending schools throughout Wayne County. At the beginning of each school year, employees collect school supplies in support of the efforts of the Wayne County Victims Intervention Office. Employees and their families also purchased mums and other fall flowers to raise more than \$400 for the organization.



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Highlighting SCI Community Works Programs (CWPs)

SCI Rockview's CWP has been busy in the Black Moshannon State Park felling dead trees within the park and cutting and splitting the trees for park visitors to use in cabin rentals and the campground.



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Rockview's CWP Continues Work

The inmate work crew at SCI Rockview also installed pews at St. Mary's Church.



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Motivational Speaker Gives Presentation to Quehanna Boot Camp Inmates

On July 14, Todd Parisi, a retired Marine Corps sergeant major, stood before a group of approximately 205 male and female Boot Camp teammates and 100 male SIP inmates in his Batman t-shirt and gave a very thought-provoking, high-energy presentation designed to motivate and inspire. He gave examples of true heroes and encouraged everyone to question, "What is your why?" He stressed the need for both mental and physical balance in life.

Some of the comments made by inmates following the presentation include:

- "Listening to Mr. Todd Parisi here at the Quehanna Boot Camp has really inspired me to change my life and also look at life from a whole new perspective. His words were very encouraging and opened my eyes to many different topics. His attitude towards life was awesome and his demeanor was out of this world. His speech is something that will stick with me for the rest of my life." – Damon
- "Mr. Todd Parisi is a true American hero and motivates me to be a better human being."
- "His story was amazing and motivated me to make the right choices in life."
- "After hearing Mr. Parisi's motivational speech, it encouraged me to put my all into the Quehanna Boot Camp program and since then I've felt 100% better about myself and life in general."
- "Never attended a motivational speech before. Mr. Parisi really moved me."





Sergeant Major Todd Parisi enlisted in the Marine Corps on October 26, 1985, at the age of 17 and entered recruit training on September 8, 1986, at 2d Battalion, Company F, Marine Corps Recruit Depot Parris Island, South Carolina. He has served in Operation DESERT SHIELD/DESERT STORM, Operation IRAQI FREEDOM 04-06.1, Operation IRAQI FREEDOM 06-08.1, and Operation IRAQI FREEDOM FY08.1. Sergeant Major Parisi retired from the Marine Corps in September 2014.

Sergeant Major Parisi's personal awards include the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star Medal, Meritorious Service Medal (with gold star in lieu of 2d award), Navy/Marine Corps Commendation Medal (with 3 gold stars in lieu of 4th award), Navy/Marine Corps Achievement Medal (with gold star in lieu of 2d award), the Military Outstanding Volunteer Service Medal, the Combat Action Ribbon, and he was the recipient of the Major General Clayton B. Vogel Award for leadership excellence in the 2d Marine Division.

Sergeant Major Parisi is a graduate of the Keystone Course at the National Defense University, has earned a Bachelor of Arts in Organizational Management from Ashford University, and is a state certified foster parent. He is currently pursuing leadership based/motivational speaking full time to include an outreach program for elementary, middle, and high school students.

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Quehanna Boot Camp Receives Award

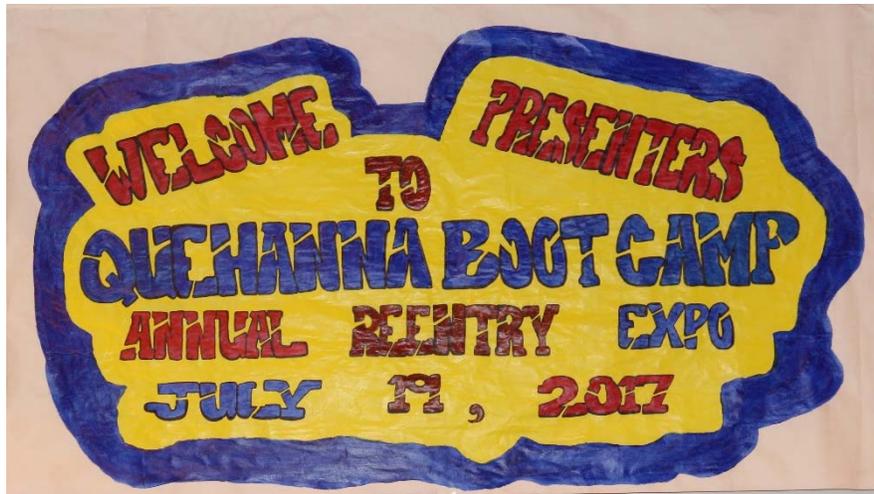
At an Internship Appreciation Luncheon on August 8, Quehanna Boot Camp was presented with a five-year appreciation award from the South Hills School of Business & Technology for providing internship experience for their students.

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Quehanna Boot Camp Holds Annual Reentry Expo 2017

The Quehanna Boot Camp held its Annual Reentry Expo on July 19, with 20 organizations represented.



The following is a list of the participating organizations: Triangle Tech, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Bureau of Community Corrections, PSU Cooperative Extension, Family Support Alliance, Mobile Veterans Outreach Van, PA Department of Banking, Children's Aid Society, AmeriHealth, Community Action, VA Social Worker, VA, SCI-Houtzdale Electrician Instructor, Vivitrol, Penn Highlands Community College, South Hills School of Business & Technology, Clarion University Small Business Development Center, WIC, OSHA, and Fiber Optics.



Each organization had their own station -- designated by a sign made by inmates -- where they displayed literature and met with the inmates to discuss what they offered. During the event, 205 male and female teammates in the boot camp program and 232 male and female State Intermediate Punishment program inmates were given information ranging from family services to educational opportunities to probation/parole.

This annual event is part of Quehanna Boot Camp's reentry initiative to assist reentrants with obtaining information that will be helpful upon their release.

It is the belief of the facility's administration that enlightened and fully-prepared individuals will be more successful staying out of the prison system and obtaining gainful employment.



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In the Centers...

Parking Assistance Provided

Employment Housing Coordinator Doreen White and Resident Advisor Lisa Baird, along with four TLC re-entrants, volunteered for Family Promise of Lycoming County assisting with parking at the Little League World Series on Friday, August 18th!



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In The News...

WHTM-TV, Harrisburg (09/06/2017)

<http://abc27.com/2017/09/07/prisoners-sentenced-to-life-without-parole-as-teens-are-now-being-freed/>

Prisoners sentenced to life without parole as teens are now being freed

By Dennis Owens

It is 8 a.m. Labor Day, just outside Graterford Prison in Montgomery County.

The sun is shining, the birds are chirping and LaTasha Williams is smiling.

"It's hard to believe this day is finally here," Williams said excitedly.

Then a car pulls up just off prison property, the back door opens and Giovanni Reid emerges. The 42-year old Philadelphia native is free for the first time in 26 years.

How does freedom feel?

Click on the link provided above to read the entire article.

Allentown Morning Call (09/07/2017)

<http://www.mcall.com/news/breaking/mc-nws-pa-state-sending-crew-to-hurricane-irma-20170907-story.html>

PA sending a Hurricane Irma response team to Alabama

By Matt Coughlin

Eight more state employees are headed south to help with Hurricane Irma relief efforts, according to Governor Tom Wolf.

The personnel from the departments of Conservation and Natural Resources, Corrections and the state Emergency Management Agency will eventually rendezvous in Mobile, Alabama with 76 other members of the PA Task Force One.

Click on the link provided above to read the entire article.

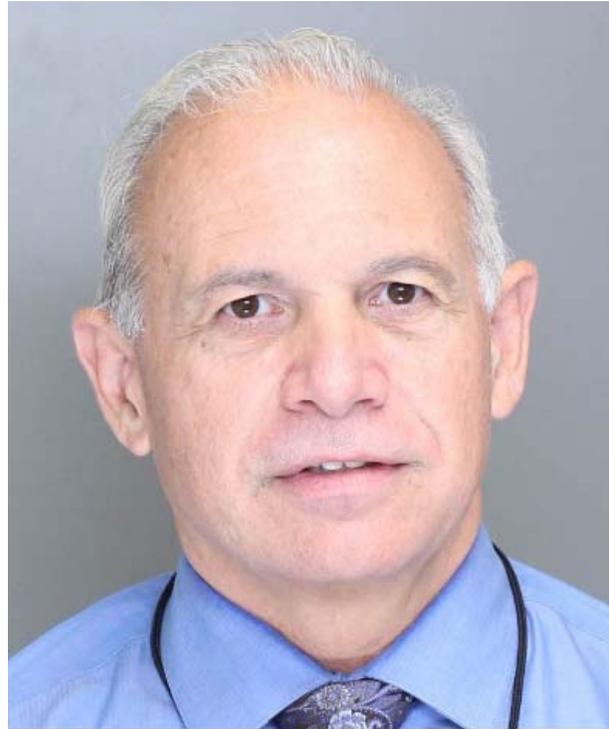
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Week of September 4...

Capozza named SCI Fayette Superintendent

Mark Capozza has been named superintendent of the State Correctional Institution (SCI) at Fayette. He replaces Jay Lane, who retired.

"Supt. Capozza's experience within the PA DOC, specifically having been a former deputy superintendent and superintendent, will complement his already established progressive leadership abilities as he assumes the reigns as superintendent of SCI Fayette," said Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal. "Capozza's ability to engage both staff and inmates and to be fiscally responsible while operating a complex facility will serve not only the facility and the department well, but also the citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania."



Superintendent Capozza began his corrections career in 1986 with the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation, where he started as a corrections officer and rose through the ranks, serving as counselor, senior counselor, and prior to leaving the department, a field parole agent.

Capozza relocated to Pennsylvania in 1998 and was initially brought on board as a unit manager for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections at SCI Greene. While at SCI Greene, he held the positions of unit manager for the special management unit, corrections classification and program manager, major for unit management and deputy superintendent for centralized services.

Following his 14 years at SCI Greene, Capozza was appointed superintendent of SCI Pittsburgh in October 2012. As a result of the closure of SCI Pittsburgh, he was appointed superintendent of SCI Fayette in July 2017. He has a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice- Corrections and a Master of Social Work, both of which he earned at California State University, Long Beach.

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SCI Fayette Holds Inmate Reentry Seminar

On August 31, employees from SCI Fayette held a reentry seminar for inmates titled "Overdose Awareness & Reentry."

"Ninety percent of inmates will return home following incarceration," said SCI Fayette Superintendent Mark Capozza. "While they are in our custody, it is our duty to provide inmates with information to help them change their behaviors so they can achieve a successful reentry and not commit future crimes. This workshop is one way we work to educate employees about the dangers and barriers they may face in the community upon release from prison."



Speakers included Carmen Capozzi, from Sage's Army, who spoke about losing his son and step-son to overdoses; and Jessica McAffery, from Westmoreland County Community Action, who spoke about how she was revived from an overdose and how she saved someone with Narcan.

Other speakers included Jodi Axe, the clinical director of Allied Addiction Recovery and a representative from the Greater Pittsburgh Chapter of "Not One More." In addition, a certified recovery specialist, who has survived multiple overdoses and has been in recovery for nine years, spoke about addiction and recovery.

The afternoon ended with a question-and-answer session about reentry resources involving representatives from inmates' respective counties.

They day was organized by SCI Fayette Drug and Alcohol Treatment Specialist 2 Barney Seaton and Corrections Counselor 2 Robert Rhodes.

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Greene Provides Tour for County Officials

On September 1, SCI Greene administrators met with Warden Harper and several other officials from the Allegheny County Jail.

In addition to a meeting, a tour of the Mental Health Units was arranged which allowed them to observe and gain an understanding of the programming practices that have been implemented throughout a number of PA Department of Corrections facilities.



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PREA Compliance Managers Training Held

On August 30 and August 31, the annual DOC Bureau of Community Corrections Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Compliance Managers meeting was held at the Training Academy.



Representatives from the Bureau of Community Corrections (BCC) and several contracted facilities had an opportunity to hear subject matter experts from different levels of government and network. After opening remarks were provided by Statewide PREA Coordinator Dave Radziewicz, BCC Deputy Director of Security Daniel McIntyre addressed the attendees thanking them for their commitment to sexual safety as evidenced in the successful audits conducted to date.

The meeting also featured a presentation by special guest, Scott Catey, Ph.D., of Impact Justice an administrator of the National PREA Resource Center. Dr. Catey spoke about the history of the PREA standards, oversight of the auditing process at the national level and the resources available via the PREA Resource Center's website.

Other presenters included Western Region Staff Assistant Angel Baez-Sprague, Captain Laura Hoffman, Deputy Chief Counsel Elizabeth Lawson, LGBTQ Resource Center of Central PA Youth Program Director Lindsey Lughes and Pennsylvania Coalition Against Rape Outreach Coordinator Kayla Houser for their informative and engaging presentations.

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Hoovler Retires

At the end of July, SCI Mercer staff gathered to bid Jeff Hoovler congratulations and farewell, sharing a cake and many great memories with Jeff as he retired from the department with more than 25 years of service.

Jeff initially worked with the Operation Outward Reach program, teaching construction skills to state prison inmates to assist them in finding jobs once released.

He then began his DOC career in 1992 in the facility's Maintenance Department. He was subsequently promoted to the fire safety manager position, served as the superintendent's assistant (CSA) for many years, became the wastewater treatment plant foreman, and retired as the facility's facility maintenance manager 1, overseeing the Wastewater Treatment Plant.

During Jeff's career he worked with many staff throughout the state, having served on many special teams. He was a member of Mercer's Fire Emergency Response Team, serving as the team leader providing fire response training to team members. He was also an adjunct FERT Instructor at the Department's Training Academy. Jeff was a member of the Hostage Negotiation Team and was trained in and assisted with Vulnerability and Security Analysis teams. In addition, Jeff served as a training instructor at Mercer for various staff training classes.

During three audit cycles as the ACA accreditation coordinator, Jeff was instrumental in ensuring the facility's compliance with operational standards as established by the American Correctional Association. He served as the regional accreditation coordinator, providing support to all Western Regional institutions and helped other facilities with their ACA mock audits. Jeff also assisted SCI Forest with certification of their Wastewater Treatment plant.

In the community, Jeff also served as a volunteer fireman for the Sheakleyville Fire Department for many years.

Congratulations Jeff!! We wish you many years of happiness in your retirement and know you will now enjoy your golfing career full-time.

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Corrections In The News...

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (09/05/2017)

<http://www.post-gazette.com/news/state/2017/09/04/pennsylvania-department-corrections-barbering-program-pa-sci-somerset-jalens-barber-shop-east-ohio-street/stories/201709030097>

Barbering after prison: For some it's a new start, for others it's a call to serve
By Anna Spoerre

In the Somerset barbershop, spray bottles are lined beneath large mirrors reflecting dozens of men sitting in chairs for a snip or a shave. A colorful mural depicting the history of barbering covers the upper wall, and tunes flowing out of a nearby radio blend with low conversation.

A bell rings and the freshly cut men change their barber uniforms and smocks for another matching outfit: maroon jumpsuits with D.O.C. lettered across the backs before exiting the guarded room.

The State Correctional Institution in Somerset, like all but one prison in the state, houses a barber school, which prison officials consider one of the Department of Correction's most successful vocational programs.

Please click on the link to read the entire article.

Shamokin News Item (09/04/2017)

http://www.newsitem.com/news/2017-09-04/Today%27s_Top_Stories/Inmates_bring_beauty_to_special_needs_unit_with_mu.html

Inmates bring beauty to special needs unit with mural
By Sarah DeSantis

COAL TOWNSHIP — The Special Needs Unit of SCI-Coal Township is awash in color.

Fish leap from a stream. A squirrel nibbles on a nut. Eagles circle overhead. A deer drinks from a lake. A fox eyes two pheasants leaping from brush.

At one end of the block an office has been converted into a cozy log cabin, complete with a blazing fireplace.

Please click on the link to read the entire article.

Williamsport Sun-Gazette (09/03/2017)

<http://www.sungazette.com/news/top-news/2017/09/sci-muncy-working-to-rehabilitate/>

SCI Muncy working to rehabilitate
By Seth Nolan

MUNCY — Encased in a perimeter fence topped with spirals of barbed wire and surrounded by the erratic cracks of distant target practice, many inmates out for work casually stopped to ask Nicole McKee a quick question recently or just to say hello during her walk from one end of the prison to the other.

She greeted each one with a personalized, "How are you doing today?"

As the State Correctional Institution at Muncy's correctional classification program manager, McKee knows many of the inmates because she is responsible for overseeing all of the programs provided to them. Issues such as religious services, inmate activities, employment, parenting needs, treatment programs and drug and alcohol counseling all fall under McKee's guidance.

Please click on the link to read the entire article.

WOLF-TV (08/26/2017)

<http://fox56.com/news/local/heroic-measures-save-prison-guard-in-distress>

Heroic measures save prison guard in distress
by Alex Belser

LEHIGH COUNTY (WOLF) -- A prison guard at SCI Coal Township in Northumberland County is lucky to be alive today after a life-altering experience.

He says on-site medical staff used a defibrillator five times and continuous CPR, and eventually got a pulse.

It's a cliché term in news stories: "lucky to be alive," but for Cory Hernandez, this phrase really holds true.

Please click on the link to read the entire article.

Week of August 28...

"I Ain't Sorry" *Beyoncé voice*

By Madeline "Maddie" McPherson



When SCI Albion reached out to me to shadow the superintendent, I was taken by surprise. I was aware that reporters and camera crews were often given the ability to experience what a day in the life might be like for the staff of a state correctional institution, but I never thought much about taking advantage of the opportunity for myself. To be honest, I didn't know I could.

I made the lengthy drive from Harrisburg to Erie the night before my visit and in the moments of frustration that stemmed from construction on I-80 (Western Pennsylvanians relate, I'm sure), I kept reflecting on how thankful I am for the leadership of PADO. I wasn't sure what my visit to Albion would bring, but I knew I had a ton of questions. I was excited to explore the realities of running an SCI as well as the possibilities of where my career can take me.

I arrived at the front door of SCI Albion the next morning and was brought in to wait for the administration to come get me. The officer at the front desk had asked me whether Sue McNaughton was coming today as well and I told them she wasn't. This officer didn't ask me about the reporter though...

Eventually, someone came out to the lobby and invited me into the superintendent's conference room where the Admin Meeting was taking place for the week. I suppose in hindsight there was a little bit of awkwardness in the air but anyone who knows me knows how naively optimistic I can be about anything, so I was smiling big and took a seat. Plus, walking into a room of 20 people who are already seated is always awkward at some level. Superintendent Michael Clark greeted me graciously and remembered me from a previous visit.

I settled in while the discussions went on and I listened intently. My first experience sitting in on a meeting of this kind, I was absorbed in the details and updates from each department head, the day to day of running a state prison presenting such unique challenges that I don't often get to hear.

When the meeting ended and everyone was engaged in that typical post-meeting chatter, a few looked around and said "Where is the reporter?? She was supposed to be here at 8:30. Did you see her anywhere?" I quite honestly replied that I had no knowledge of what they were talking about.

The superintendent then invited me into his office and promptly stated, "There's been a bit of a mix-up." It turned out that when I was in the planning phase of my trip, Albion had been under the impression that I was a different Maddie. Maddie The Reporter.

The entire time they had expected Maddie The Reporter to shadow Supt. Clark and probably write a brilliant piece about what it's like to administrate the State Correctional Institution at Albion. We laughed about it as I told them, "Don't expect anything that great from me....but I'm not sorry it worked out this way."

I've worked for the DOC for just over two years now in the Office of Policy, Grants & Legislative Affairs. While I have been afforded what feels like a once in a lifetime start to my corrections career, I have recognized for some time now the benefit to getting experience "inside." In my mind, what better way to better understand the experience of top corrections brass than to follow one around all day?

Regardless of the circumstances that got me there, I have to believe the opportunity was rather serendipitous. As I forge ahead in my career, I plan to transition to a position inside a facility sooner rather than later. The insight I gleaned from Supt. Clark that day I will carry with me for the rest of my days in corrections and beyond.

Anyone who knows Supt. Clark knows how amiable he is to begin with. That quality, I learned, combined with a compassionate heart and a hard knowledge of human behavior can make for some of the best leaders in corrections. Not to be confused with softness or conceding to inmates, Supt. Clark taught me that managing personalities, desires, interests, and of course, basic human needs is 95% of the job when overseeing an SCI with over 2,000 inmates. Also abundantly clear was how Supt. Clark's fairness and commitment to doing the right thing has earned him respect from both inmates and staff alike.

Once it was established that I was not, in fact, a dutiful reporter getting an inside look for the first time, we spent a good portion of our day meeting other staff where I was able to hear about their experiences and how they felt about their jobs. We met with corrections officers, counselors, unit managers and psych staff. As I prepare to eventually move on to my next step in corrections, I was able to hear testimonials that will help me weigh which path is the best fit for me.

As I prepared to leave and head back to Central PA, I could not impress upon Supt. Clark and his staff enough how thankful I was for the experience. Whatever mix-up got me there I believe happened for a reason.

There are some moments in life where it feels like time stops and I'm aware that what is happening will stay with me forever. I know the wisdom of others will continue to motivate me either in similar moments or in life in general. These flashbulb memories are ones I prefer to collect as I find that mentors are life's greatest teachers, their lessons beyond anything I could ever teach myself.

To Superintendent Clark and the staff at SCI Albion: I'm sorry I wasn't the wordly reporter you all expected but I'm not sorry I showed up at your doorstep. Thank you for everything.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Accreditation Audit Passed!

Congratulations to SCI Chester employees!

SCI Chester passed its ACA reaccreditation with a score of 100% of the mandatory standards and 99.76% of the non-mandatory standards!!!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Greene Also Passes Its Audit

Kudos, also, to SCI Greene. They also passed their ACA reaccreditation with a score of 100% of the mandatory standards and 99.8% of the non-mandatory standards!



SCI Greene Superintendent Robert Gilmore, left, poses with auditors.

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DOC Employees Graduate PSFEI Course

As part of their educational mission to their client agencies, the Pennsylvania Facilities Engineering Institute (PSFEI) sponsors a three-part course in Effective Facilities Management. Since 2009 many DOC Facility Maintenance Managers (FMMs) and other DOC personnel have attended the program and have earned an award plaque after completing the three tracks.

This year Norm Klinikowski, Ralph Herge (FMM 2 at SCI Chester), Peter Abhulimen (FMM1 at SCI Chester) and Carol Piontkowski (DOC Bureau of Operations Environmental Engineer Consultant) earned the award.

This particular course, which qualifies to support professional development for facility managers, trades and administrative staff, covers a variety of topics relevant to the execution of maintenance, construction and repair projects within DOC institutions.

To support this course, PSFEI has engaged specialists in their respective fields to provide instruction in topics such as project planning and administration, predictive maintenance technologies and management of utility services. The course combines technical and academic instruction combined with examples of real applications and experiences.

The intent of the course, which is very informative, is to supplement technical skills of our staff with current industry standards, processes and methods that are directly applicable to daily responsibilities and tasks.

Conducted over 2½ days for each of three years, the course provided a positive and beneficial experience and is one of number sponsored by PSFEI at no cost to DOC facility employees.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

PSFEI Graduates since 2011

Peter Abhulimen – SCI Chester (2017)
Gene DiClemente – Graterford (2014)
Tracy Drewen – Training Academy (2016)
Frank Frey – DOC Central Office (2013)
John Frisbie – Waymart (2013)
John Hayles – Rockview (2011)
Ralph Herge – Chester (2017)
Norm Klinikowski – DOC Central Office (2017)
Ivan Markley – Graterford (2014)
John Peters – Benner Township (2014)
Carol Piontkowski – DOC Central Office (2017)
George Ryniak – Somerset (2015)
Robert Selert – Dallas (2015)
Michael Stine – Houtzdale (2013)
Marcel Tassin – DOC Central Office (2015)
Samuel Varchetti – Somerset (2015)
Kent Witchey – Retreat (2014)

SCI Greene Holds “A Day of Responsibility”

On August 28, SCI Greene held “A Day of Responsibility.” Numerous staff and inmates attended, and various topics were presented during the event. Guest speakers included anger management specialist Dr. Christian Conte, who presented a powerful message to the inmates about the impact of anger management and how to align expectations with reality. Dr. Conte has visited several Pennsylvania facilities and is perhaps the country’s most accomplished mental health specialist in the field of anger management.



Dr. Christian Conte addresses SCI Greene inmates.

Debra Germany is a Licensed Minister in Pittsburgh who initiated Divine Intervention Ministries (DIM) after her only son was murdered. She spoke of how his death changed her life and how she turned to God to guide her. She believes that if you have God in your life, you can do the impossible, reach the unreachable and bear the unbearable. She is determined to reach back and help as many people as possible. DIM focuses on restoring the lives of incarcerated adults and at risk youth through comprehensive assistance needed for a successful transition back into society and productive lifestyles.

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Kid's Corner Held at SCI Dallas

On August 23rd, SCI Dallas held "Kid's Corner," which was a day-long event held at the prison that included presentations on the prison's child-related programs, such as "Sesame Street Incarceration," summer preparation for school and pediatric health and safety. Tammi Burke, counselor with the Victim Resource Center of NEPA, gave a presentation on long distance parenting. Registered Nurse Renee Waligun gave a presentation about pediatric health and safety. Each child received an activity bag with arts and crafts for the preschoolers and school supplies for the school age kids.

"The kids had a great time, and the parents got some great information and handouts," said SCI Dallas Major of Unit Management Lori White.

All parents received handouts with truly helpful information regarding talking about incarceration with your children and long distance parenting. The afternoon was set aside for incarcerated parents to spend time with their kids, ages 2 to 15. Twelve inmates, 20 children and their families participated, and feedback from both inmates and family members was very positive.



Kids attending the Dallas "Kid's Corner" in August also met the prison's pups that are training to be service dogs.

Overall, the day was a huge success, and the prison is planning the next "Kid's Corner" event for December. The program is held each month during the summer months, and a holiday party is held during the holiday school break.

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30th Inmate Graduation Ceremony

SCI Albion held its 30th graduation ceremony on August 15, 2017.



Superintendent Michael Clark, School Principal Cindy Clark and DOC Bureau of Correction Education Western Region Chief AnneMarie Swantek were the keynote speakers.

Forty-one individuals received their diplomas in several areas which included barber manager, business education, computer technology, custodial maintenance and warehouse operations.



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Tour Given for Fellowship Program

On August 25, SCI Camp Hill officials provided a tour for the Governor's William Penn Fellowship Program. Before the tour, Superintendent Laurel Harry provided an overview of the agency and discussed how we are implementing the Governor's policy goals of Schools That Teach, Jobs That Pay and Government That Works. She also discussed our agency culture and how our mission influences that culture.

The superintendent received an email from Laurie Baker, communications manager for this program, thanking her for making the tour with the fellows so enjoyable. She also stated how impressed they were with the superintendent and other staff, and that the tour changed the fellows perceptions of corrections, and they were pleased to see how progressive corrections has become.



Unit Manager Ian Tagger, Parole Agent Kristin Johnson and Counselor Theo Nugin provide the group with reentry information as they visit R Block.

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Audit Completed

On August 30, SCI Mercer officials held a picnic for employees to congratulate them for successfully completing the July American Correctional Association (ACA) reaccreditation audit. Food was provided by the employee association, and staff provided pot luck dishes.



Pictured with Supt. Brian Thompson is Clerk Typist 2 Crystal Hoffman, who hand-made a gigantic KitKat bar to congratulate staff on their job well done.

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Thanks for Contribution

St. Gabriel Church

233 Mohawk Ave.

Norwood, PA 19074

RECEIVED
AUG 22 2017

August 14, 2017

Ms. Marirosa Lamas
Superintendent
SCI Chester
500 E. Fourth St.
Chester, PA 19013

Dear Ms. Lamas,

I am a Catholic priest, and for the past six years I have volunteered at the prison. Recently, the Inmate Improvement Organization made a contribution of over \$1,400 to Catholic Social Service.

I celebrate Mass every third Sunday, and I meet with a faith sharing group on Saturday. While doing this, I have talked by the Coffee Club which provides food and fellowship for the poor in Chester. The Lord has blessed our efforts and we have been able to have day trips, show movies, play bingo, and have religious services followed by a meal at my parish.

As a priest, I have seen countless acts of charity, but I have never been more impressed than by this beautiful act of kindness. I tell everyone I know what the Inmate Improvement Organization did. In a sermon, I said the Kingdom of God is like men in prison helping the homeless.

In my limited experience, I see how challenging it is to run a correctional facility. The problems can be endless. That is why I wanted to share this act of charity with you.

The men share with me that in the time you have been in Chester, you have done a number of positive things. May the God bless you and your staff as you do what I consider the Lord's work. I'll keep you in my prayers.

Sincerely yours,

Rev. Anthony Orth

Pastor

Blooming Barrels

Each year SCI Mercer holds a Blooming Barrel Contest to beautify the main entrance walkway. Congratulations to this year's winners:

First place went to the Education Department for their entry "A Salute to Ron Woods."



2nd place went to the Mercer Minions for their entry "No One Fights Alone."



3rd place went to the Deputies complex staff for their entry "The Gangs All Here" (notice the little monkeys on the barrel).



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Dog Recipient Meets Inmate Handler

Recently, Robert Greenwood, a military veteran and recipient of a SCI Pine Grove service dog, visited SCI Pine Grove along with United Disability Services (UDS) official. The purpose of the visit was so Greenwood could meet the inmate handler who trained his dog, Lewes, and to thank the inmate for his work. Greenwood also was able to share with the inmate how the dog has positively impacted his life.

"This was a wonderful thing for the handlers to see and know that what they are doing is making a difference in someone's life," said Superintendent Eric Bush.



Pictured, from left to right, are: UDS officials Marlise Melinger and Kristina Smigh; Robert Greenwood; Inmate Keith; and Lewes.

The inmate also loved seeing Lewes again, and they had a great visit.

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Week of August 21...

New Disciplinary Program for Drug Offenders Shows Significant Decline in Rearrest Rates

A preliminary study shows a pilot disciplinary program aimed at non-violent drug offenders is lowering the probability that an inmate will be rearrested upon release.

Working with researchers at Drexel University, the Department of Corrections last year developed and implemented a new program, known as SIP-HOPE, within the State Intermediate Punishment (SIP) program at two community corrections centers (CCCs).

"The results of this study show an impressive 13 percent reduction in rearrests among SIP-HOPE participants," said Bret Bucklen, director of research and planning for DOC. "Further, SIP-HOPE participants spent fewer days in prison or jail, demonstrating the ability of this approach to not only reduce crime but also to reduce the use of costly prison beds."

Bucklen said the results are in line with much of the accumulated evidence from more than a dozen other states showing the effectiveness of the swift, certain, and fair (SCF) supervision approach.

"It is becoming increasingly clear that the SCF supervision model is a leading evidence-based model for improving public safety within community-based corrections," he said.

"We are working aggressively and strategically to reduce future criminality of individuals in our charge," said Corrections Secretary John Wetzel. "These results point to the fact that this new approach is showing positive outcomes."

SIP is a 24-month structured sentence for non-violent drug offenders incorporating inpatient and outpatient drug treatment. Participants reside in the CCCs, for the latter portion of the sentence.

Using guidelines established by Project HOPE (Hawaii Opportunity Probation Experiment), the inmates were given clear rules, including a ban on alcohol and illicit drugs that were prominently displayed on posters in the CCCs. The SIP-HOPE participants were given breathalyzers each time they entered the CCCs and were subject to random drug testing.

When an individual was found to have violated the SIP-HOPE protocol the response was immediate. First time violators received 24 hours in prison. Those committing

subsequent offenses saw increased time in prison or potentially expulsion from the SIP program.

Once sanctions were completed, inmates were permitted to resume all programming as if no violation had occurred and at all times participants were informed that addiction treatment was available.

The SIP-HOPE pilot was implemented at the Scranton CCC (Lackawanna County) and Riverside CCC (Allegheny County) between September 2015 and September 2016, with follow up to chart recidivism.

The DOC is planning to expand SIP-HOPE to additional community corrections centers.

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Oliver Named CBS Superintendent

Lonnie Oliver, a 28-year corrections veteran, has been appointed superintendent at the State Correctional Institution (SCI) at Cambridge Springs effective June 26, 2017.



“Lonnie Oliver has demonstrated that she has the profound ability to be an exemplary leader for SCI Cambridge Springs,” said DOC Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal. “Her professional experience, personal tenacity and commitment to being an effective leader provides the assurance needed to lead the facility into the next phase of excellence.”

Oliver began her career with the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections as a corrections officer trainee at SCI Smithfield in 1989. She promoted through the security ranks while at SCI Smithfield to the position of captain from 2000 to 2010.

She took on a new assignment in early 2010 where she served as a regional staff assistant at the Department of Corrections Central Office, then promoted to major of the guard at SCI Houtzdale later that year. In 2012, Oliver transferred back to SCI Smithfield, again promoting through the ranks and was named deputy superintendent. She went on to hold the title of deputy superintendent at SCI Huntingdon from 2014 through 2017 until her recent appointment to superintendent.

As superintendent of SCI Cambridge Springs, an institution for female inmates, Oliver is responsible for more than 350 employees and approximately 1,150 inmates.

Oliver is a graduate of Huntingdon Area High School and served in the United States Air Force as a personnel specialist from 1985 to 1988.

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Pine Grove Holds Inmate Graduation

SCI Pine Grove held a graduation ceremony on Thursday, August 17, 2017.

Inmates received diplomas or certificates: GED, Commonwealth Secondary Diploma, Computer Aided Drafting and Design, Building and Custodial Maintenance and HVAC.

Family members and prison staff attended the ceremony.



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Protection from a Solar Eclipse

On August 21, 2017, a partial solar eclipse took place that was visible across the United States. In Pennsylvania, it was expected that 80% of the sun would be blocked by the moon. The next time this is expected to happen, with great visibility in the U.S., will be in 2024.



As a result of the eclipse, and in an attempt to ensure the safety and health of staff and inmates, all DOC state prisons were directed to lock down for their normal after-lunch count and then remained locked down until the evening meal was served -- through the eclipse. Some facilities decided to use the lockdown to their advantage and also held staff accountability drills.

In addition to the lockdowns, facilities posted signs on inmate housing units that warned inmates about the dangers of looking directly at the sun during the eclipse

The last solar eclipse with this level of visibility was in 1979. No one can remember if the state prison system – which was the Bureau of Correction back then – locked down. At that time there were only these state prison facilities in operation: SCI Pittsburgh/Western Penitentiary; SCI Huntingdon, SCI Rockview, SCI Muncy, SCI Graterford, SCI Camp Hill, then-SRCF Greensburg, SCI Dallas and then-SRCF Mercer.

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Staff Join Forces to Save One of their Own

The following is from John R. Snyder, food service manager and eastern regional contract liaison at SCI Coal Township:

"I wanted to take a moment and tell you about the most amazing thing that I have seen in my 24 years in corrections.

An SCI Coal Township employee is alive today because of the unrelenting dedication and commitment your staff put into saving his life Friday afternoon, August 18, in the Officer Dining Room. It is that simple and honest of a truth.

I have worked with good employees and bad employees over the years. Some gave 110% and some did '8 and the gate,' but I have never seen a DOC employee as committed to doing anything as your staff were to saving this man's life.

I sat and watched helpless for 20-30 minutes as this young man's life appeared to slowly slip away. But that was not an acceptable outcome to your staff, and they were not going to stop until they brought him back. One after another they swapped out, exhausted from CPR, and the next person took over. We watched as they shocked him, screamed his name, slapped his face and continued CPR over and over again.

We stood with tears in our eyes, thinking about his family, thinking about our families, and just how fragile life is. It was after this 20-30 minutes that the miracle we had all hoped for happened, they detected a pulse. Just that quick they loaded him on a stretcher and took him to the hospital.

I would only hope if my time ever comes too early, that I have someone around me that cares about saving me as much as your staff cared about that employee. They are truly heroes in every sense of the word."



Words cannot express our gratitude for the heroic actions performed by these employees. Thank you simply does not seem to be enough. And to the employee, whose identity we are not providing due to confidentiality, we are thankful you are still with us.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

DOC Health Care Professionals Now Certified

DOC Bureau of Health Care Services Director Joseph Silva, along with his bureau's Project Manager Jodie S. White and 24 physicians from CCS – the DOC's health care services provider – recently were notified that they successfully passed the Certified Correctional Health Professional examination, which was administered by the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC). The certification is valid through September 30, 2018. These individuals join approximately 4,000 of your colleagues across the country who have worked hard to achieve this important distinction.



According to the NCCHC website (www.ncchc.org):

With support from the major national organizations representing the fields of health, law and corrections, the National Commission on Correctional Health Care is committed to improving the quality of health care in jails, prisons and juvenile confinement facilities.

NCCHC's leadership in setting standards for health services in correctional facilities is widely recognized. Established by the health, legal and corrections professions, NCCHC's standards present recommendations for the management of a correctional health services system. Written in separate volumes for prisons, jails and juvenile confinement facilities, plus a manual for mental health services and another for opioid treatment programs, the standards cover the areas of care and treatment, health records, administration, personnel and medical-legal issues. These essential resources have helped correctional and detention facilities improve the health of their inmates and the communities to which they return, increase the efficiency of health services delivery, strengthen organizational effectiveness and reduce the risk of adverse legal judgments.

Building on that foundation, NCCHC offers a broad array of services and resources to help correctional health care systems provide efficient, high-quality care.

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PA DOC Represented at CIT International Conference

Rhonda Tomcavage, unit manager at SCI Frackville, recently represented the PA DOC at the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) International conference in Ft. Lauderdale, Florida. The conference offered more than 100 workshops specifically designed to enhance CIT programs and expand upon curriculums for current coordinators.

Tomcavage is the CIT Program Manager for the PA DOC and is currently making revisions and updates to the CIT curriculum, which was originally introduced in 2012.

Additionally, Tomcavage was one of only 80 applicants accepted for the CIT Coordinators Certification Course offered by the Leadership Institute and Learning Academy.

The conference and certification provided Tomcavage the skills to not only improve upon the CIT program currently in place, but also to assist in moving the program forward and facilitating the message at a national level as to the commitment the PA DOC has with respect to the treatment of mentally ill inmates confined to our care.

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Sam Cochran, founder of the CIT program, poses with Rhonda Tomcavage, the DOC's CIT program manager.

Week of August 14...

Lt. Gov. Visits SCI Benner Township



Email from Board of Pardons Secretary Steven R. Burk:

Good Afternoon, Superintendent Ferguson:

Please accept our sincere appreciation for welcoming Lt. Governor Stack to SCI Benner Township yesterday and facilitating the tour of the institution.

The brief introduction conducted with the Lt. Governor and the SCI Benner Township department heads provided the Lt. Governor with the opportunity to thank your dedicated staff for their exemplary work.

The tour provided Lt. Governor Stack and guests with an opportunity to see the Transportation Hub, Medical Department, H Unit (SNU/RTU), Program Services and Correctional Industries laundry, plus walk the institution grounds while meeting with both staff and inmates.

During the tour when the Lt. Governor spoke with staff regarding working conditions, he received very complimentary remarks regarding your administration and the professionalism at SCI Benner Township.

The Lt. Governor spoke with many inmates during the tour and received positive comments regarding institutional conditions and treatment.

Thanks again for your support, and please thank the staff at SCI Benner Township for welcoming Lt. Governor Stack.

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Partnering to Assist PA Fire Academy

Several SCI Benner Township Maintenance Department employees worked in conjunction with individuals from a multitude of PA DOC facilities -- including the DOC's Bureau of Operations -- and staff from PennDOT and the PA Fire Academy to build a pavilion at the PA State Fire Academy in Lewistown, Pa.



Pictured, from left to right, are: D. Pittman, S. Tuskovich, R. McSurdy, PA Fire Commissioner Solobay and J. Peters. Absent from the photo were J. Coppersmith and D. Smead.

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DOC Holds Reentry Conference

Earlier this week, officials from the DOC's Reentry & Transitional Services Office held a multi-day statewide reentry conference for approximately 200 DOC employees.

With a conference theme of "R.I.S.E. – Resolve. Inspire. Support. Educate," the goal of the conference was to educate attendees – made up mostly of facility reentry staff – about the DOC's vision of reentry in a setting that allowed them to network and collaborate.

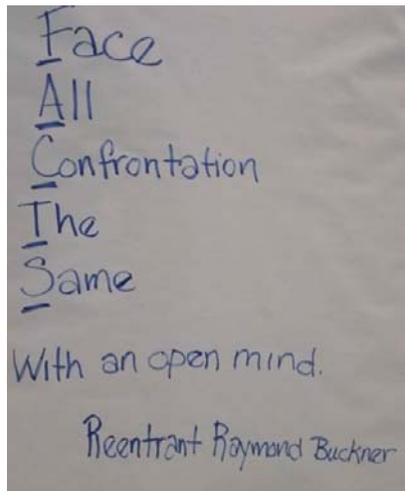
Held at the DOC's Elizabethtown, Pa., Training Academy, the conference included messages from Gov. Tom Wolf's Chief of Staff Marcus Brown, Secretary John Wetzel, Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal, Regional Deputy Secretary Tabb Bickell and PBPP Chairman Leo Dunn. Presentations included those by Dr. Christian Conte, Executive Deputy Attorney General and head of the PA Reentry Council Robert Reed, DOC Statewide Veterans Coordinator Ryan Yoder, PCCD Reentry Coordinator Charla Plaines, PBPP's Director of Probation and Parole Services Christian Stephens and their Offender Reentry Coordination Division Director Jason Stauffer.

Additional time was allowed for attendees to participate in a number of workshops highlighting the barriers reentrants face upon release from prison; workshops highlighting some of the new programs being provided to individuals – such as those dealing with workforce development and financial responsibility/planning.





Several reentrants also participated in a panel discussion about the successes and issues experienced upon their return home after incarceration.



Part of the conference also involved contractors discussing the various reentry services they provide. This information is provided from our live Facebook posts during the event:

Housing Assistance Program - This one provider is a former inmate, who said housing was an issue for her to know what is available and when it is available. She also said it was difficult for her - due to restrictions. She found this to be most challenging. In their program, they look at the fact that they need to find the person housing, but they also serve the whole person. Some need more than just housing, they have to learn about responsibilities for living in a community, for paying rent and utilities on time, etc.. They also talk with reentrants about how to manage their money. They also have a structured case management process. They also connect people to resources.

Day Reporting -- looking to change reentrant behavior. Increase self-sufficiency, increase competency and build accountability. Reentrants go to the site to get services that match their risk. They work with Office of Vocational Rehabilitation and CareerLinks. They support reentrants for long term community sustainability. It is for moderate to high risk individuals, parole violators, unemployed or under-employed individuals. They have three different types of programming. Drug testing is included. They have job skills training and all sorts of placements and engage families into the services when appropriate; finance planning; anger management type programs; aftercare, etc. Needs and program placement depends upon the risk level.

Cognitive Behavioral Intervention - group sessions using CBI programming. Focuses on attitudes, values and beliefs. Goal is recidivism reduction targeting criminogenic risks/needs and track outcomes and measures results. Reentrants should be in the program for at least four months, but no longer than one year.

Sex Offender Lot - it can take a while for these individuals to find housing and to receive treatment programs. This lot makes sure they are assessed ASAP and get into treatment ASAP upon release from prison. It's high intensity in the beginning and they receive high-impact group and individual therapy.

Mental Health Lot - there are barriers for those that are chronically mentally ill. This provides funding for them to get into mental health services and has broken barriers with help from DOC, PBPP, etc. to get these individuals into treatment ASAP. Licensed by DHS and can do tele-psych to all locations.

Workforce Development - they help reentrants with everything that prevents them from obtaining/maintaining work/jobs. First starts with an assessment, then orientation, layout expectations, determine goals. Then place them into classes - interviewing skills, verbal/non-verbal communications, how to talk about their criminal background, how to retain a job, etc. Once jobs are attained, they work with reentrants about managing finances and credit scores. After classes, they work one-to-one with reentrants and focus on proper identification, work equipment, bus passes/transportation issues - anything that they would need to be able to retain the job. They also do CBI relevant to employment through workshops - feelings, thoughts about work/working and how those impact their behavior and retainability. They work with employers and educate the employers about the reentrants and their skills to make sure both sides are getting what they want, etc., and the support the contractor can also provide employers. A grant allows them to do paid on-the-job training with reentrants - OSHA safety certification, etc. Learned skills while getting paid.

Another grant will provide 8 week training on basic construction skills and then partner with Habitat for Humanity and perform the things they've learned in the training.

Mentoring -- This contractor is from Phila/Hbg offices. They begin the process while the person is still in prison/prior to release, because once released, it's tough. So they started prior to release and help with the overall transition. They talk with them by phone about the people in their lives and who will be their support once released. Once they are out, they meet face-to-face and help connect them with services, set goals, etc.

Family Reunification - they use evidence-based, cognitive-behavioral parent management skills training program created for incarcerated parents. They offer gender-specific programs to provide parents with alternatives to criminal activity by helping them identify and mobilize personal and community resources. The contractor and volunteers help reentrants build

relationships with their children's caregiver/s during incarceration and rebuild the strained bonds that happen due to incarceration. They also provide age-appropriate activities for the reentrants to do with their children. Develop and strengthen family bonds.

Batterer's Intervention -- it's a 26 week program where treatment is based on the principals of the Deluth Model (power and control wheel, anger identification and behavioral management, conflict resolution) and incorporate conceptual elements from the ACE study (trauma informed care) with a heavy influence of CBI. Participants learn behaviors associated with the power and control wheel, as well as trace the history of the issues in order for them to gain a more rounded understanding of their actions.

Outpatient Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) – they do drug and alcohol assessment and then recommend services. Reentrants then can go outpatient group sessions or intensive treatment, which is longer programming. Also provide life skills. If they don't stay clean/sober they return to prison. But they are seeking a lot of successes. Random drug tests are part of the program and do accept MAT reentrants. There is an active involvement with Parole as well.

Learn more about these service lots, as well as the DOC's reentry efforts at its website at www.cor.pa.gov.

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Houtzdale Holds 1st "Day of Responsibility"

On August 9, 2017, approximately 75 inmates and employees came together in SCI Houtzdale's chapel to participate in the facility's first "Day of Responsibility" – a daylong event that included guest speakers from the community and the Office of Victim Advocate. Inmates from the inmate organization, Journey for Change, led three discussion breakout sessions throughout the day. The smaller group setting allowed time for the inmates to discuss the meaning of mercy, forgiveness and empathy.

Guest speakers for the day included Jeff Webster, Karen Ferguson and Pam McCloskey. Webster spoke of the devastating loss of his daughter, Julie Ann Webster, in a drunk driving accident, and how the lives of her family and friends were forever changed. In response they created the Justice for Julie organization whose mission is to increase drunk driving awareness and enforcement in remembrance of Julie Ann Webster. They do this by speaking at local high schools, community events and at state correctional institutions throughout the state.

Ferguson gave an emotional presentation regarding the tragic loss of her daughter, Patience. In 2001 Patience was killed by a stray bullet while out with friends. Ferguson spoke of her daily struggles to continue on without her daughter. She

has recently started sharing her experience within the SCIs and hopes that her story will help change the lives of the inmates and staff that she is able to meet with.

McCloskey is a child psychologist in Centre County. Her powerful presentation focused on the effects of incarceration on children.



Three employees from the Office of Victim Advocate -- Nicole Evans, Tara Gross and Lisa Martire -- led a panel discussion about the programs that are offered through the Victim Advocate's office. They discussed the inmate apology bank and the Impact of Crime Class that is offered at all of the SCIs.

The response from the inmates who participated in the Day of Responsibility has been nothing but positive. They are already looking forward to next year's event.

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State Senator Speaks at Inmate Graduation

Pennsylvania State Senator John H. Eichelberger Jr. addressed SCI Houtzdale inmates at a recent graduation ceremony.

Twenty-three inmates graduated the Leading In Faith and Education (LIFE) program, which is 20-week bible study program conducted by volunteers of the LIFE organization. The course consists of 10 weeks of studying and 10 weeks of going over the homework assignment.



The senator spoke about how his faith has affected his life and how faith has been a key component in his whole life. He told the story of running for senator against an incumbent and how he didn't stray from his faith even with negative advertising by his opponent. He talked about how

important his religion is to his life. He also conducted a general question and answer session at the end for the inmates.

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WCCC Beautifies its Walls

Wernersville Community Corrections Center (WCCC) reentrants recently putting their idle time to good use by utilizing and showing off their art skills. The reentrants voluntarily painted colorful pictures and positive quotes to help stimulate a peaceful environment and atmosphere at the center. The center staff and reentrants are planning to pay homage to Reading and Wernersville with murals of the Reading stadium and train station.



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SCI Retreat Donates to Food Pantry

By Chaplain Tyler Parry

Many have asked where the produce from SCI Retreat's Therapeutic Garden will be sent, and the answer is that it is going to very worthy charities.

In July, the institution was able to make a donation to the Al Beech West Side Food Pantry in Kingston, Pa., which is run by Clancy Harrison, a known speaker, author and food justice advocate. The West Side Food Pantry provides organic vegetables to individuals and organizations in need, focusing especially on mothers of young children and infants. The food pantry also supports a local halfway house, so the hard work of our gardeners is benefiting those who are just reentering our communities.



Chaplain Tyler Parry and Clancy Harrison pose with some of the garden's bounty.

The second donation went to Ruth's Place, a shelter for abused women. Crystal Williams, the director of Ruth's Place, gladly received more than 850 tomatoes, 50 zucchinis, two dozen spaghetti squashes and much more.



Crystal Williams, (left) the director of Ruth's Place, poses with more of the garden's donated items.

Not only are we providing nutritious and delicious food for those women in need, but we are benefiting the shelter's bottom line, allowing them to designate funds to other areas of need and expanding their ability to serve the most vulnerable in our society.

It is a great encouragement to all who are involved with the therapeutic garden to know that the produce is going to worthy causes and that their hard work is directly benefiting those in need.

Universally, among staff and inmates, the knowledge that the SCI Retreat community is blessing our community is met with pleasure and pride. The garden team looks forward to continuing to do that and finding even more charities to support in the future.

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Recognizing a Clean and Safe Work Environment

The SCI Camp Hill Safety Office has implemented a new program for fire safety and sanitation. The program is designed to recognize an individual department or personnel who go above and beyond the call of duty in fire safety and sanitation.

The program selects one person or department quarterly who has shown outstanding performance in maintaining a clean and safe working environment for staff and inmates who work and live at SCI Camp Hill.

The program was implemented in January 2017 with the intent to show appreciation for their hard work and true concern for the environment that we all live and work in on a daily basis.



SCI Camp Hill's Safety Office

The 1st quarter certificate of excellence for fire safety and sanitation was awarded to the SCI Camp Hill Maintenance Department, and the 2nd quarter certificate of excellence was awarded to Officer Shellenberger (Zone 1 Hallway Officer).



Officer Shellenberger

Prison officials would like to thank the Maintenance Department and Officer Shellenberger for a job well done. Their hard work, dedication and commitment are greatly appreciated.

Thank you for being a positive role model at SCI Camp Hill and for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections!

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Scranton CCC Donations Continue

The Scranton Community Corrections Center (CCC) collected school supplies during the month of July 2017. All donations benefited the local United Neighborhood Center. The reentrants donated more than \$1,300 worth of tablet, pens, pencils, glue, trapper keepers, binders, crayons, lunchboxes and book bags.

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Berks Connections/Pretrial Services Receives Federal Grant for Training

Berks Connections /Pretrial Services (BCPS) is one of 14 recipients nationwide to be recently awarded a U.S. Department of Labor Reentry Projects grant. BCPS will use the \$1,237,737 grant to fund a comprehensive training program in the construction trades for returning citizens involved in their workforce development programs.

Partnering with the Reading Muhlenberg Career and Technology Center (RMCTC), Habitat for Humanity Berks County (HFHBC), PA CareerLink Berks County and the Berks County Workforce Development Board (WDB), BCPS will provide the three part training, "Rebuilding Reentrants and Reading (R3)."

The training, which will serve more than 150 individuals over the course of 24 months beginning in October 2017, includes evening classroom instruction at RMCTC, hands-on learning on site at HFHBC properties and an employment focused cognitive curriculum delivered by BCPS staff.

This combination of best practices - classroom learning, hands-on experience and cognitive interventions - is expected to improve employment outcomes for participants as well as reduce recidivism.

"The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections applauds BCPS for its initiative and grant award," said Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel.

"The vast majority of all incarcerated individuals will return to their communities one day, and successful reentry is paramount. This program will go a long way toward achieving that goal."

The project outcomes of increasing employability, improving employment rates and reducing recidivism will be further supported by case management and comprehensive job search and placement assistance.

The Berks County Workforce Development Board and PA CareerLink Berks County will assist BCPS in the development of relationships with potential employers in the construction trades.

Dan Fogarty, chief operating officer of the WDB said, "While assisting Berks County residents who have been incarcerated to better reintegrate into our communities is the right thing to do, we at the Berks County WDB also understand that many of our local construction employers need talented workers now and into the future. In fact, the WDB has identified our local construction industry as a priority area of focus due to current and ongoing projected shortages of skilled workers. This project fits with our efforts to support the construction industry's progress toward sustainable growth in employment and output."

Peggy Kershner, co-executive director of BCPS, is excited about the opportunity this grant will provide to many individuals with barriers to gainful employment.

"This training is not only an investment in the success of participants, but is also an investment in our community," Kershner said. "It will allow returning citizens to give back to the community while obtaining marketable skills. BCPS and our partners in this initiative are committed to not only rebuilding lives but also rebuilding some of Reading's most blighted neighborhoods."

BCPS is a non-profit social service agency that has served individuals in the criminal justice system and their families since 1975. They are the leading provider of reentry services in Berks County. BCPS workforce development programs are funded through the United Way of Berks County, the County of Berks and the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections.

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Reentry Success Story – Moving Ahead at a “Sweet” Pace



After serving time in a state prison, Hector was released to the Wernersville Community Corrections Center (CCC) while he awaited a home plan. He was referred to Berks Connections /Pretrial Services (BCPS) for workforce development programming in August 2016.

From the beginning, Hector was committed to improving his life and wanted to be able to help support his mother and son. He successfully completed all sessions on employment readiness, resume writing, personal finance and tenant education.

After attending a BCPS Returning Citizen Career Fair, Hector was hired by Sweet Street Desserts, where he has worked full time for close to a year. In his role as a production worker he has had excellent reviews and has received four pay raises. Hector has been a model employee and sets an example for other returning citizens.

His supervisor at Sweet Street told us that, "Hector has a will-do attitude."

The phrase that Hector uses every day at work is "I choose to overcome adversity today."

Hector continues to receive case management and, once employed, he began attending individualized coaching sessions with BCPS' financial program coordinator. Hector created a budget, opened a checking and savings account for the first time and has begun to save money! Hector was approved for housing assistance through BCPS, and last April, he was able to move out of

the CCC into an apartment. Hector has a new outlook on life as he works towards financial independence and continues to strive to meet his personal and financial goals.

He is grateful for the support and assistance he received from BCPS and wanted to share what it has meant to him.

"BCPS has been such a positive influence in my life. They have provided hope, guidance and encouraged me to stay on the right path. You can't always do things by yourself and I've learned to ask for help. I've learned to change the way I think and no matter what, I keep a positive attitude. There's always going to be trials in life and opportunities to make a choice. BCPS was there for me and has pointed me in the right direction. I'd like to encourage other returning citizens to take advantage of the opportunities BCPS provides and learn from them. You have to put in the hard work, be patient and take responsibility. Change is difficult, but not impossible. If I can help change another person's life, I'll consider that a reward!"



BCPS officials are so proud of Hector's hard work and achievements and wish him continued success.

BCPS also thanks Sweet Street Desserts for providing a second chance and opportunity for Hector to improve his life and make a difference in our community. Obtaining employment is vital to the success of returning citizens who are working to become productive members of society. BCPS is grateful to have employers, such as Sweet Street Desserts, to partner with to help improve lives and strengthen our community.

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Retreat Announces EOQ for 2017's 3rd Quarter

SCI Retreat Psychological Services Specialist Brenda VanDine recently was named at the prison's employee of the quarter for the 3rd quarter of 2017.

VanDine was nominated for this recognition due to her dedication to the field of mental health. She is recognized as the contact person for responding to complex decisions and mental health commitments.

"You communicate with outside agencies and advocates for the placement of inmates with mental illness. You also chair the suicide prevention meetings and, through your motivation, you have increased the number of attendees at those meetings," said SCI Retreat Superintendent Vincent Mooney.

Congratulations, Brenda!

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Milestones Reached by Retreat Employees



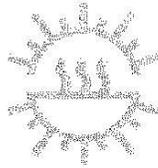
Superintendent Vince Mooney, at a recent staff meeting, recognized three SCI Retreat employees for their years of dedication to the Department of Corrections.

Superintendent Mooney presented service certificates and pins to Tradesman Donald Hardy – 25 Years; Tradesman John Petros – 20 Years; and Field Human Resources Officer Carl Kmiec – 15 Years.

Pictured, left to right, are: Donald Hardy, Superintendent Vince Mooney, Carl Kmiec and Joe Petros.

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Harrisburg CCC Receives THANKS



D O W N T O W N
D a i l y B r e a d
3 1 0 N . T h i r d S t r e e t
H a r r i s b u r g , P A 1 7 1 0 1

June 23, 2017

Harrisburg Community Corrections Center
27 N. Cameron Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101

Dear Friends:

We want to thank Harrisburg Community Corrections Center for the generous donation of 524 washcloths to Downtown Daily Bread. This donation is especially appreciated as the needs of our clients continue to increase.

As you know, Downtown Daily Bread provides nourishing, hot meals to the poor and homeless in the Boyd Memorial Building of Pine Street Presbyterian Church every day of the year. The program also provides counseling, lockers, showers, mail and phone services, haircuts, legal advice, health checks, and mental health referrals.

Your contribution will help Downtown Daily Bread continue its mission of feeding the hungry and providing services for the homeless. Thank you again.

Sincerely,

Downtown Daily Bread

*Downtown Daily Bread is a mission of Pine Street Presbyterian Church
in partnership with our community.*

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From Facebook: Middle Susquehanna Riverkeeper Association, Inc. (August 2017)

Eyes on the Watershed

We took a bird's eye view during our third day of work with the inmates at SCI Quehanna, focusing on the bigger picture of a watershed (equating it to a bathtub with a "river drain") and capturing physical data to map a small section of the West Branch Susquehanna River.



We continue to be impressed by the team's curiosity, passion, purpose, and desire to make a difference, not only here in the Susquehanna River watershed but also in their home communities outside this watershed once they are released.

Our favorite word for the day: accountability. (And we did not suggest it – they did! They are quickly understanding that the river belongs to the people and all of us are responsible for her care.)

And our focus has also broadened. We are now exploring opportunities to take this program to other community work programs within the state correctional system.

It was a "big leap" day for everyone! We send heartfelt thanks to all who have been involved. The river thanks you.



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Connecting Land to Water

As we continue our work with the inmates at SCI Quehanna, our work on Tuesday turned to the impact of land use on water quality.

We compared two different water sources – a flowing stream and an impounded pond, both yielding very different results, albeit relatively close to each other geographically. Our water quality testing focused on pH, conductivity, nitrates, and phosphates.



The SCI Quehanna Team continued its training too with “Little Keeper” Susquehanna (Suss), working on obedience commands and nose work search techniques. This fall, Suss will continue his formal training to learn to detect sewage leaks in the watershed.



Kudos to the Team! Outstanding work!

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Where in the Watershed?

This week, Middle Susquehanna RIVERKEEPER® is "keeping it wild" in the western section of the watershed.

We are in residency at SCI Quehanna, where we are partnering with the inmates to develop observation and reporting skills to assist with the work of the Middle Susquehanna RIVERKEEPER® on land and water.

One of the goals of the week-long program is to develop a sense of connection between self and nature.



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Week of August 7...

Dallas CERT at Camp Cadet

On July 19, 18 SCI Dallas' Corrections Emergency Response Team (CERT) members were at Penn State Hazleton Troop N, Camp Cadet Program to provide demonstrations about vehicle assaults, hostage rescue, building clearing and basic formations. During these demonstrations, the cadets also had some weapons familiarization with the pepper ball gun and the Remington 870 with the Super Sock round.



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Trauma Informed Care Training

According to Mental Health Advocate Lynn Patrone, the DOC's Office of Mental Health Advocate and Bureau of Treatment services are working together to facilitate Trauma Informed Care training for designated treatment staff in each facility. The purpose of such training is so that staff can recognize and address concerns related to trauma.

"We will train staff regionally and, subsequently, a separate training team from the Certified Peer Support Specialist program will be training all inmate certified peer support (CPS) specialists in Trauma Informed Approach so that the CPS' are trained

to recognize signs of trauma and when the trauma may be impacting a person," Patrone said.

The CPS' will learn how to recognize the signs, provide support and appropriate a referral process to ensure continuity of care. This will offer the individual immediate support and also bridge the gap with treatment staff as we become a trauma informed system.

Patrone said that the DOC also will be rolling out the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP©).

"We have four CPS instructors certified as Advanced Level Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP©) facilitators," Patrone added. "This is something that our CPS' are trained in but that is also very applicable for ourselves."

As advanced facilitators, the DOC will be able to certify eligible and interested staff to be facilitators. One of the requirements is to participate in WRAP Seminar I, which is a two-day course. It can be facilitated in a variety of ways, including an eight-week week session, rather than two consecutive days. Seminar I offers an opportunity to learn about WRAP and also develop a WRAP.

WRAP is evidenced based and an excellent personal tool.

"One of our advanced level facilitators, who is a sergeant, talked about how WRAP has changed her life," Patron said. "This is a common statement we hear. We are offering this opportunity as many staff have requested to become facilitators."

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Shining Light Ministries Visits Benner Township

Shining Light Ministries (www.shining-light.com) just completed a two-week workshop at SCI Benner Township culminating with two shows on Saturday July 29, 2017. There were 20 inmates that were given dance, spoken word, drama and musical parts for the shows. Although the Shining Light Team came with a general idea and flow of thought, the inmates wrote the majority of material presented at the shows. These inmates participated in the workshops for the two weeks for rehearsals in the parts they were playing. Included in the workshops was development in confidence, resilience, empathy, and faith to prepare them for successful re-entry and for life. The two shows were well attended and received by the inmate population.



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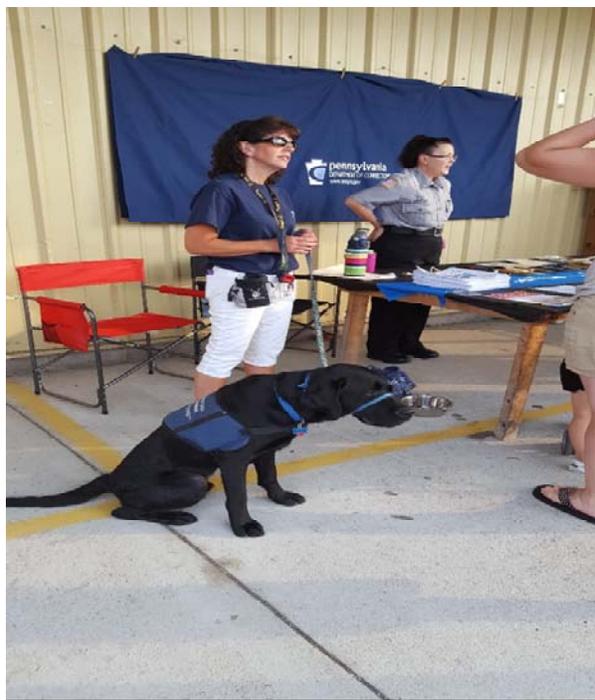
Huntingdon Participates in “Night Out Against Crime”

SCI Huntingdon staff participated in the 33rd Annual Blair County Night Out Against Crime in Duncansville on August 1.

Sergeant Boal, Corrections Officer 1 Oldham and Records Specialist Beth Linn represented the institution with a contraband display, recruiting display and service dog program display.

There were more than 40 organizations distributing information to the community. Approximately 1,900 people attended the event.

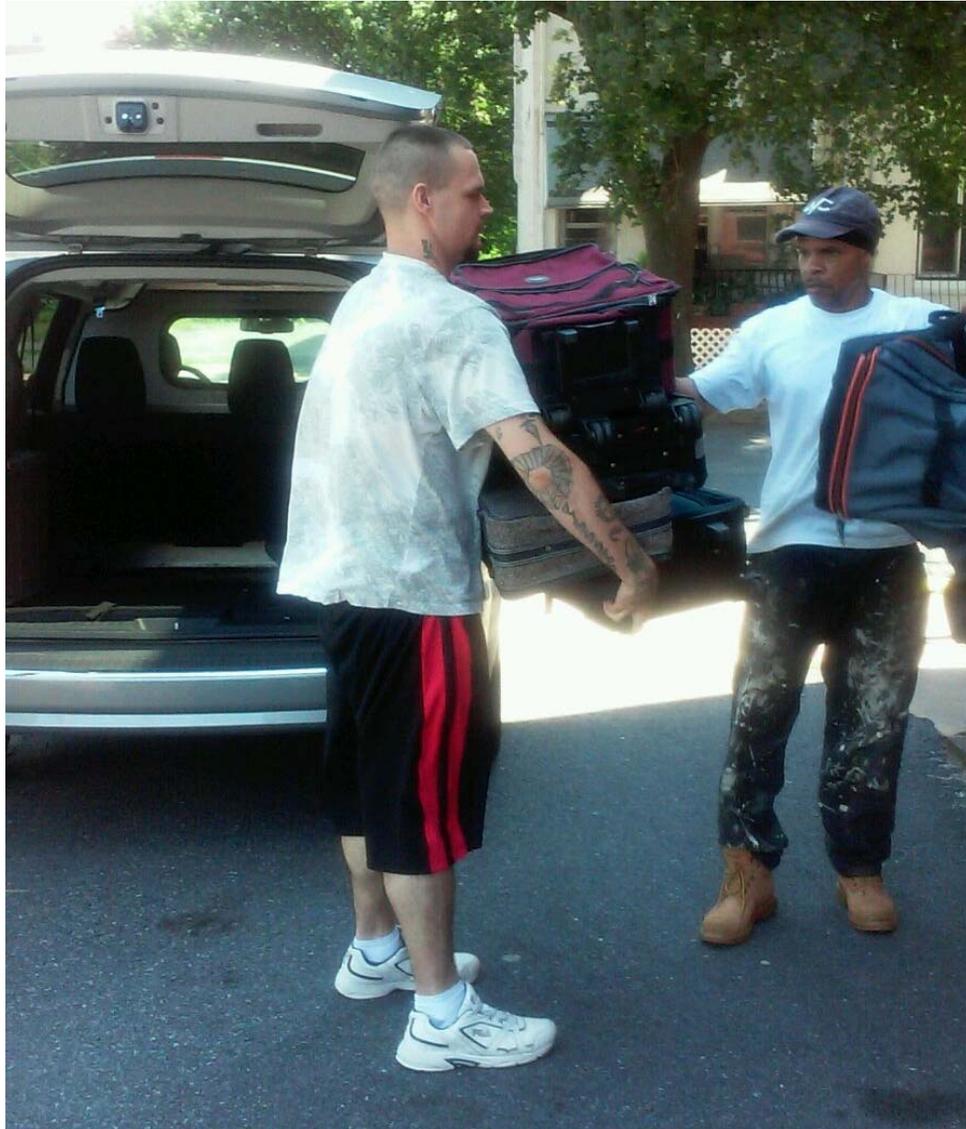
Huntingdon employees had the opportunity to personally interact with around 600 people explaining various aspects about the Department of Corrections.



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Donations to Opportunity House

Wernersville Community Corrections Center reentrants donated lightly-used tote bags and suitcases to Opportunity House. These items will be used to help the homeless and low income community residents of the Reading, Pa. area.



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Juvenile Lifer Peer Support Group Held

On July 24, 17 “juvenile” lifers released into the Philadelphia area gathered together for the second Juvenile Lifer Support Group at Philadelphia Community Corrections Center (CCC) #2. The group included reentrants both within Philadelphia CCCs as well as those that paroled to approved home plans.

In attendance were a number of the juvenile lifers along with commuted lifer Thurmond Berry.

In addition to the Philadelphia support group, the group was held via video conference with Harrisburg CCC, where additional reentrants attended.



State employees in attendance included Staff Assistant Robert Hammond; Parole agents A. Jones, P. Sutton, M. Williams and J. Brown; Administrative Officers M. Quinn and J. Fishel; Counselors D. Bey and V. Summers; Center Directors D J. Rupert and M. Stanley.

Community representatives in attendance included Dwight Miller from family reunification service, It Takes a Village and Jesse Quinn from T-Mobile to assist the reentrants with learning the use of their cellular devices.

The reentrants are pleased to see others with whom they've spent many years in prison having been released, and they enjoy the opportunity to catch up with each other and share experiences.

Some of the things discussed at this recent support group meeting were employment issues, including that the approach should not be one dimensional and that networking with each other coupled with in person inquiries could prove beneficial. They also discussed the challenges with ever-changing technologies, progress that has been made since release and services provided including family reunification and mentors.

The support groups will be continued on the fourth Monday of every month and, for August, reentrants will be permitted to bring two family members or friends with them.

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DOC Employees' Children Receive Scholarships

SCI Greene Superintendent Robert Gilmore presented Hunter Scott with his 2017 Susan M. Hunter Scholarship Award Certificate.

Hunter is the son of Corrections Officer Natalie Zebley-Gordon and will be attending Clemson University and majoring in Political Science.

Congratulations, Hunter!



Also receiving a Susan M. Hunter scholarship is Kara Pisczek.

She is the daughter of SCI Somerset Corrections Counselor 2 David Pisczek.

Kara starts college this fall.

Congratulations, Kara!

The Susan M. Hunter Correctional Scholarship is named in honor of Susan Hunter, former chief of the Prisons Division at the National Institute of Corrections, as a lasting tribute to her commitment to the field of corrections. Susan was 58 when she passed away March 14, 2004.

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Week of July 24...

Administrative Segregation/Violence Reduction

On July 31, DOC employees from all classifications and from across the system gathered at the DOC's Training Academy to continue their work in the area of reducing violence while also reducing the use of administrative segregation. This work was initially begun in late 2015 and has continued since through many committee meetings and pilot projects testing a variety of concepts.



This most recent gathering included a motivating presentation by Kevin Kempf, former Idaho DOC director who recently took on the role of executive director of the Association of State Correctional Administrators.

PA DOC officials regularly gather the entire group to refuel everyone and to keep the project moving forward.

Also included and present that this day-long gathering were officials from BetaGov, who help take employee concepts and turn them into measurable pilot projects that are then tested and determined whether the concepts can be used in parts or the entire system and even in other DOCs.

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Dental Mission of Mercy

For two days in late July 2017, several DOC dentists participated in the Dental Mission of Mercy in Pittsburgh, Pa. The event was hosted by Face2Face Healing, a charitable organization.

According to their website (www.mompgh.org), Mission of Mercy Pittsburgh is a free, two-day dental clinic for under-served and under-insured people living in Pittsburgh and the surrounding area. Dentistry is provided to hundreds of patients in the greater Pittsburgh area with the help of a team of dedicated volunteers.

Dino R. Angelici, DMD, chief of dental services for the DOC and two retired PA DOC dentists – Dr. Jay R. Wells and Dr. Jeffrey Carberry – reported to the A.J. Palumbo Center, which is located on the campus of Duquesne University. There, beginning at 5:30 a.m. each day, free clinics were held.



Doctors Jeff Carberry and Dino Angelici.

At the Mission of Mercy, there were areas set up for the various disciplines of dentistry, such as: medical history, triage, radiology/diagnosis, hygiene (cleanings), restorative (fillings), oral surgery (extractions), endodontics (root canals), prosthetics (acrylic partial dentures) and pedodontics (children).

Dr. Angelici believes that during peak times, there were two to three dozen dentists along with several hygienists and dental assistants present. He said he also believed that 600 patients were provided with services.



"It was a wonderful event that I enjoyed a lot more than I expected, and I am looking forward to the next one," Dr. Angelici said.



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3rd Annual RTU Community Celebration Day Held

SCI Albion held a Residential Treatment Unit (RTU) 3rd Annual Community Celebration Day on July 26, 2017. The theme of the day was "Resilience." Inmate band "The Corvettes" played during the course of the day.



This celebration included guest speakers, games, snacks, prizes and a talent show where the residents could showcase their special talents. There was also an art show with prizes for "best of show" and 1st, 2nd and 3rd place. Several inmates presented their personal stories regarding childhood trauma and recovery.

The goal was for residents of the unit to recognize their strengths and encourage empathy and understanding for each other. Inmates honored several staff members with certificates of appreciation. RTU staff was very thankful for the support of the prison's administration, who attended the event. Guest speakers included Krista Stearns from Stairways Dual Diagnosis Clinic, Superintendent Clark, and Unit Manager Kevin Lantz. Awards were presented by Psychological Services Specialists Christine Herman and Wendell Patz.

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PA Physician General Speaks to Committee

On July 28, Acting Secretary of Health and Physician General Rachel Levine was a guest speaker at a special meeting of the DOC's Transgender Administrative Gender Review Committee. Held at the DOC's central office, Dr. Levine provided guidance on LGBTQ related information. Dr. Levine also discussed terminology, resources and the evolution of transgender medicine.

The committee is tasked with evaluating transgender inmates who request to be transferred to a facility consistent with gender identification.

There are approximately 160 self-identified transgender inmates in the DOC system.

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections is among those correctional agencies that provide treatment for the amelioration of gender dysphoria symptoms, which includes hormone therapy and other health services as needed.



Dr. Levine commended the DOC for being ahead of the curve nationally in responding to the needs of LGBTQ inmates, particularly with the establishment of the transgender inmate support group, which enables inmates to video conference into a group setting which occurs monthly. Facilitators include TransCentral PA and Alder Health Services.

Dr. Levine was pleased to provide additional background and information to help ensure the committee makes informed decisions about possible placement of transgender inmates in opposite gender facilities.

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Continuing Advancement in the Delivery of Mental Health Services

Recently four DOC employees, three of whom also are certified peer support specialist instructors, were certified as advanced level Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) facilitators. As such, these facilitators are now able to certify eligible and interested staff to also become facilitators.

One of the requirements was for the individuals to participate in a two-day WRAP course which offers individuals an opportunity to learn about WRAP and also how to develop WRAP.

“WRAP is evidenced based and an excellent personal tool,” said PA DOC Mental Health Advocate Lynn Patrone. “One of our advanced level facilitators, who is a

sergeant, talked about how WRAP has changed her life. This is a common statement we hear.”

Patrone said the DOC is offering this opportunity to as many staff as are interested in becoming facilitators.

The four recently-certified WRAP facilitators are Lynn Patrone, Troy Edwards (Muncy), Susan Shoff (Laurel Highlands) and Rachael Shoeman (Muncy).

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Career Pathways Update!

As readers of this newsletter may recall, earlier this year DOC officials gathered educators from a number of state prisons to participate in “Career Pathways: Laying the Groundwork” meetings. At these meetings officials shared with participants the Career Pathways framework and let them brainstorm on how to implement it at their facilities.



On July 25th and July 27th, approximately 70 staff from the six pilot SCIs and Central Office came together to review the Career Pathways framework. At this meeting, each SCI discussed what they are currently doing within the framework and created action plans for how to implement the remaining items.

Similar meetings with the remaining 19 SCIs will be conducted in spring 2018.

Next steps for the grant include full implementation at the six pilot SCIs and continuing to work with the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole and the Pennsylvania CareerLink system to ensure the Career Pathways framework doesn't end at release.



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PA Jail Breakers Take on Blue Mountain

Many people have been talking about the television show Spartan Team Challenge or the Spartan Race Championship Series on NBC Sports. What many people do not know is that these television series have stemmed from the Spartan Races that have been around since 2010, when the inaugural race took place in Vermont. Since then the races have become very popular all over the world and now there are races on six continents and can be found in many states, including four Spartan races that are held in Pennsylvania.

The recent event that was held in Palmerton, Pa. at Blue Mountain Ski Resort on July 9, 2017, had representation from SCI Forest. The PA Jail Breakers team was comprised of Derek Oberlander, Ernest Mongelluzzo, Dan Meck, Justin Davis, Tom Murin, Jerimy Cochran and Khristen Kunig.

The team stepped past the start line at 9:30 a.m. that Sunday morning in true Spartan fashion, beginning a grueling five mile mountain course with more than 22 obstacles. The team was nicely rounded out with four racers that were new to the sport, as well as three veterans of it.

"This was my first race that I ran with a large group of friends, it's a great feeling to know that we are all sharing in pain as well as the rewards that Blue Mountain puts you through, I was so proud to run with such a great group of guys that never gave up," said Khristen Kunig, who was able to count this as her 44th Spartan Race.

Jerimy Cochran, who last year received a double trifecta in the race series stated, "This is definitely a challenging course for someone running their first race or their 100th, our team showed heart and strength and I couldn't have asked for a better group to be out on that course with."

"You'll learn things about yourself and your capabilities (strengths and weaknesses). You will realize that you are more capable than you thought possible if you challenge yourself," said Tom Murin, another veteran of the sport.

The team completed obstacles such as sandbag carries, where each individual carried 60 pound sandbags up and down the ski slope, climbed over 6, 7, and 8 foot tall walls, swam 200 yards through water so cold that it shrunk your soul, 40 foot cargo nets and many, many more. Not all obstacles were completed, when an obstacle is not completed on a Spartan Race, you are penalized 30 burpees. However in true team fashion, when all team members except Derek Oberlander and Jerimy Cochran failed the rope climb, both men got down and completed burpees with their team mates in a grand show of comradery.

Dan Meck stated of the race and his accomplishments, "I STILL had the inner determination to push myself no matter what. This is a key mind set in Spartan racing, when facing obstacles, finding it within yourself to drive on."

Derek Oberlander said that his favorite part of the race was “starting and finishing together as a team.”

He also encouraged others to “sign up and get some friends and family to join you!

“By signing up you will set a goal and with a little desire, dedication and commitment, anyone can use that as a bridge to achieve the goal of completing one of the races. At the end you will feel that you have accomplished something,” Oberlander said.

Ernest Mongelluzzo echoed his teammates’ words, “Being able to finish the race strong with my teammates” was his favorite part of the race and “That if you set your mind to something and train accordingly you can accomplish anything.”

Dan Meck added, “When we crossed the finish line as a TEAM, I was almost sorry it was over and was excited to do it again! Personally, there was and is a desire to push harder and go after it again!”



At the end of the race all team members crossed the fire jump together, they started as a team and finished as one as well.

The entire team encourages others at SCI Forest to join them in another Spartan Race.

Next year the team is hoping to do more races representing SCI Forest and would love to have more co-workers join them on this exciting adventure!

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Huntingdon Names EOQ

Please extend congratulations to SCI Huntingdon Corrections Officer S. Weyant for being named Employee of the 2nd Quarter.

Officer Weyant is the prime example of a corrections officer. CO Weyant holds himself to a high standard. He always has his uniformed pressed and wears it with Pride. CO Weyant is always looking for ways to help improve SCI Huntingdon. He is currently a member of the CERT and CRST teams. CO Weyant is an officer who goes above and beyond, and does his job well. CO Weyant's professionalism and integrity is never comprised and he always does the hard right over the easy wrong.



Earlier this year, CO Weyant's observation skills and attention to detail helped in saving the life of an inmate who was attempting to self-harm. Without hesitation he responded and entered the cell to render aid to this inmate. His selfless service and duty to the DOC reflects the pride he has in himself, his institution and the DOC.

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Lashinsky Named EOQ

Please extend congratulations to Corrections Officer W. Lashinsky for being SCI Huntingdon's Employee of the 3rd Quarter 2017.

In June, Officer Lashinsky began his 31st year of service at SCI Huntingdon. He has always been helpful in answering trainee questions or questions regarding policy now or policy from yester-year, as he has seen many changes through his DOC career. Whenever the call for overtime shifts is put out, Officer Lashinsky has answered the call doing double shifts and working whatever shift extra staff is called for. While some may say it's only to benefit himself, others have said his willingness to work all shifts is an asset because he brings experience and knowledge that is a benefit to everyone on any shift.



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25 Years of Service!

SCI Huntingdon Corrections Officer 1 Keith Kyle received his certificate for 25 years of service to the Department of Corrections.



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Albion Holds "Family Day"

On July 28, SCI Albion's Empowerment Committee hosted a Family Day that included special teams demonstrations. The event was held at the training facility and range at SCI Albion. Activities included Corrections Emergency Response Team (CERT) and Hostage Rescue Team (HRT) demonstrations, the Canine Partners For Life dog training program and static displays by the SCI Albion honor guard, Fire Emergency Response Team (FERT) and Hostage Negotiation Team (HNT). Employees and their families were given the opportunity to tour the DOC Bus and try out the CERT obstacle course, among a variety of other activities that were offered.



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Criminal Justice Advisory Board Meets at SCI Fayette

On July 27, 18 members of the Fayette County Criminal Justice Advisory Board (CJAB), Chaired by Fayette County President Judge Wagner, met in the superintendent's conference room at SCI Fayette. In addition to these 18 CJAB members -- which includes SCI Fayette's Major of the Guard Joseph Trempus, Superintendent Mark Capozza -- several SCI Fayette employees and two unexpected guess attended.



Members of CJAB include but is not limited to a judge, court administrator, district attorney, county prison staff, probation officers, county behavior health representatives, representatives from Fayette County Drug and Alcohol, the county sheriff and state representatives (State Representative Pam Snyder attended).

After being introduced to Jack and Kuma, the first two dogs to go through SCI Fayette's D.A.W.G. program, the committee discussed numerous criminal justice issues aimed at crime reduction and the promotion of public safety.

After the meeting several of CJAB members toured the institution.

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SCI Forest PAWS Graduation

SCI Forest PAWS (Pups Are Worth Saving) graduation was held on July 18, 2017. Superintendent Michael Overmyer, Unit Manager Perrin, representatives from Pups Providing Hope and Paul Anthony spoke about the program. Mr. Anthony helps the inmates train the dogs.

There were five dogs that received Good Canine Citizenship Certificates. A poodle, Cooper; a Labrador retriever, Archie; two beagles, Joan and Tucker; a mixed breed, Wonder.

Cooper and Wonder will be going to Pups Providing Hope as courtroom dogs to help abused children. Tucker will be an emotional support dog for a little boy. Joan has been adopted. Archie will be fostered by Mr. Anthony.



An inmate works with Tucker, who will become an emotional support dog for a little boy.

SCI Forest has a new partnership with Beaver County Humane Society and PUPS to make the whole program possible. With each group we have increased the number of dogs going to specialized purposes.

The inmates and dogs are given a second chance in making a difference.

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Graterford Devotes Room to C.O.V.E.R.

On July 27, SCI Graterford opened its Corrections Outreach for Veterans and Employee Restoration (C.O.V.E.R.) room. The room is an initiative to promote staff wellness.

Located in the Lower Deputies' Complex at the prison, the C.O.V.E.R. room provides a place for all employees to take a few minutes to escape stress, unwind and reset. The goal of the room is to have space within Graterford focused on decompression and wellbeing.



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Celebrating 30 Years of Service

SCI Forest Business Manager Kathy Zeigler recently celebrated 30 years of service with the DOC. Congratulations!

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SCI Coal Township's Triumph Organization Holds Banquet

SCI Coal Township's Triumph Inmate Organization held its 21st Annual Banquet on July 19, 2017.

The organization conducts various fund raisers throughout the year for the betterment of the Coal Township inmate community, and they also provide the local community of Coal Township and surrounding communities with donations.

Marley's Mission, PA Prison Society, Animal Rescue Center and The Salvation Army all received donations from the Triumph Organization.



PA Prison Society received \$500



Animal Rescue Center received \$500



Salvation Army received \$500



Marley's Mission received \$1,000

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1st Annual Reentry Summit Held

With reentry being a primary focus in this day of Corrections, SCI Laurel Highlands held its first Reentry Summit on July 24th. The theme for this event was "The Transition Zone." The day focused entirely on reentry, including speakers sharing their experiences of successful reentry, community agencies coming together to share advice, and current resources being provided to inmates who seek to improve their success upon reentry while still incarcerated.

In addition to the inmate population attending the event, various DOC and PBPP staff also traveled to the prison to participate. Representatives included individuals from Laurel Highlands, Smithfield, Fayette, Somerset, Huntingdon, Pittsburgh CCC, Renewal Inc. and Progress CCC, as well as DOC Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal and Regional Deputy Secretary Steve Glunt.

Overviews of the DOC's Bureau of Community Corrections' contracted services, such as Family Reunification and Mentoring, as well as other agencies that aim to assist this population with housing and after care services such as Fair Housing Law Center and BI Inc. Day Reporting Services, were provided.

The keynote speaker was Timothy White who delivered an impactful, personal story and his current purpose of assisting others who are invested in their reentry through the organization he and his mother, Marsha Banks, established, AMiracle4Sure, located in Dauphin County.



Timothy White addresses the audience.



Reentry Specialist Rebecca Witt, Regional Deputy Secretary Steve Glunt with SCI Laurel Highlands Superintendent Jamey Luther.

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Houtzdale Welcomes New Puppies

In May, SCI Houtzdale's R.U.F.F. program welcomed four new puppies to the prison – two black labs named Nico and Gideon, and two yellow labs named Dante and Samson.

The pups are 16 weeks old and are showing a lot of intelligence while making many friends among the inmate and staff population at the prison. Many employees have volunteered to take the puppies home with



them to aid in the socialization process. They have gone to the YMCA, stores, family reunions, picnics, school, veterinary and dental offices and farms. They have interacted with other animals and children and have done extremely well during their adventures. Currently, the pups know approximately 35 commands and practice them daily.

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Three Cheers for 20 Years!

SCI Retreat Superintendent Vincent Mooney recently presented Activities Manager Todd Kolbicka with his 20 year certificate. Congratulations!

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Benner Township Names EOQs

SCI Benner Township Superintendent Tammy Ferguson is pleased to announce that Corrections Officer 1 C. Husted and Corrections Counselor 2 Abbey Nelson have been selected as the SCI Benner Township Employees of the Quarter for the 3rd quarter 2017. These employees were nominated by their co-workers and selected by the prison's Employee of the Quarter Committee. Their nominations and selection were based on their outstanding service to the mission of the facility and DOC and for their commitment to excellence.

Addressing Inmates with Mental Illness

Earlier this month, the DOC took reporters inside SCI Waymart to learn about the Certified Peer Support Specialist program and how the agency addresses inmates with mental illness. As a result of that visit, the Scranton Times-Tribune wrote an article: [Living inside a prison, inmates deal with mental illness.](#)

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Artwork Donated

On July 20, SCI Cambridge Springs donated patriotic inmate artwork to the Liberty House of Erie, Pa. The Liberty House is a transitional housing program in Erie County for homeless veterans. The house is a safe haven for the men who protected our freedom and are now in need of a new beginning.



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Volunteers Honored

SCI Cambridge Springs held its Annual Volunteer Banquet on June 11, 2017. In attendance were 70 volunteers/guests and 40 inmates.

Imam Stanley Sparks was named the 2017 SCI Cambridge Springs Volunteer of the Year.



Pictured, left to right, are: Deputy Superintendent Debra Rich, Superintendent Lonnie Oliver, Imam Stanley Sparks, Deputy Superintendent Paul Ennis, Facility Chaplaincy Program Director Rev. Darlene Johnson and Corrections Classification Program Manager Rene Adams-Kinzel.

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Silver Anniversary Celebrated

This year marks a milestone for SCI Cambridge Springs as prison employees celebrate the 25th Anniversary since the arrival of the first inmates in March 1992. A planning committee has hosted several events throughout the year with the most recent being a 25th Anniversary staff appreciation picnic that was held on Tuesday, July 18, 2017. All employees were invited and encouraged to attend.



Grill volunteers, pictured left to right: D. Wescott, D. Swift, H. Taylor, A. Skunda, V. Gambill-Harden, K. Morgan, B. Brocklehurst and J. Oliver.

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SPOTLIGHT – Benner Township’s Reentry Service Office

SCI Benner Township began serving inmates in its Reentry Service Office (RSO) on February 22, 2017. The office is staffed by Reentry Specialist Richard Hamor and Social Worker Nicole Lydic.

The RSO houses all of the participating inmates on AA Block. Group room/offices are located in the Program Services building which is central to both sides of the institution. At this time the RSO has served 39 inmates and employs six inmates.

The RSO offers the following workshops: Orientation, Who is a Criminal, Colors, Living under Supervision, Employment/Resume Writing, Healthy Living, Housing Education Learners Program (HELP), Health Relationships, Budgeting, Coping Skills, Anger/Violence, and several other one day reentry workshops.



On May 22, 2017, the program graduated its first two inmates.

Here is a message from Hanif, who successfully completed the RSO and released back into the community:

My name is Hanif and in the RSO Program I learned a lot about myself and about healthy living. Now I understand and respect the life I was not living, because of the RSO Program. I know how to apply for a job and sell myself so that I can get the job. The RSO program also helped me understand what type of person I want to be and what I want to do in life. I want to thank the RSO program, Ms. Lydic and Mr. Hamor for everything.

RSO staff has participated in several different trainings as well as doing outreach services to local agencies, such as CareerLink, to bring the services inside the prison for the inmates to begin making connections with community members.

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Camp Cadet

In July, SCI Somerset CERT team representatives addressed participants of the Camp Cadet of Somerset County. In addition, they also demonstrated a number of tools of the trade including firearms, shields and OC spray.

Readers can follow along with the cadets on Facebook by liking "Camp Cadet of Somerset County."



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Inmate Dedication

Inmates in the Prison Puppy Raising Program at SCI Smithfield wanted to add play equipment to their puppies' play yard. The prison wasn't able to purchase the equipment, so two of the inmate handlers, who work in the maintenance department, spoke to their supervisors and were granted permission to build something using materials they already had on hand. The inmates worked hard and the finished product is amazing!



They have four very happy puppies – Meko, Blaise, Bela and Zern -- who love to play on their new play set. This project shows how truly dedicated the inmates are to their puppies and the Canine Partners for Life program.



Awesome job SCI Smithfield!

Readers can learn more about Canine Partners for Life at <http://k94life.org>

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LETTER OF THANKS

A former inmate who worked for Pennsylvania Correctional Industries' Optical Lab at SCI Cambridge Springs recently wrote a letter of thanks to those at the prison who helped her learn valuable skills in this particular area. In addition to providing great detail on the current employer's operations, she writes:

"I would like to thank you again for the knowledge and experience I received at Cambridge Springs. I love my job. It is a great company and I would never have gotten the job without the experience and the ABO.

...

I just wanted to give you some insight of the lab I am working at and how the knowledge I was given helped not just me but also the company. I am able to work all the areas of the lab.

Thank you again.

Sincerely, Jackie M."

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IN THE NEWS...

Centre Daily Times (07/27/2017)

<http://www.centredaily.com/news/local/education/article164070322.html>

PSU initiative brings more education programs to Centre County inmates

UNIVERSITY PARK -- A Penn State instructor is doing his part to help bring more education programs to inmates in Centre County.

About two years ago, Efrain Marimon established the Restorative Justice Initiative to implement education programs at local correctional facilities.

With support from Penn State's College of Education and Rock Ethics Institute, these programs were developed at Centre County Correctional Facility and Benner state prison to help inmates enhance their education and have a smoother transition back into society.

"To my knowledge, at least in Centre County, there's no formal relationship or established program between the university and correctional facilities," Marimon said. "The idea was to really establish that relationship between Penn State to provide experiential opportunities for students, but also really provide much needed services at correctional facilities."

Marimon said an important step in creating the programs was gathering information on what the existing education programs were like, both locally and at the state level.

Some programs aimed at helping inmates transition into society

"I wanted to be very careful before we walked in and said, 'This is what needs to happen,' " Marimon said. "I don't know that."

Programs offered through RJI are entrepreneurship, legal literacy and creative writing classes, which Marimon said help support the already developed correctional program PRIDE — Personal Responsibility, Intensive Drug/Alcohol Education.

PRIDE is an in-house, community-based substance abuse program for inmates that provides a structural environment for those willing to take responsibility for their actions, according to information from the Centre County Correctional Facility.

We approach the program differently because their stay is a lot less than in prison, but it's meeting the needs of the jail to support the reentry into society component

Efrain Marimon, education instructor at Penn State's College of Education

"We approach the program differently because their stay is a lot less than in prison, but it's meeting the needs of the jail to support the re-entry into society component," Marimon said.

Time served in a county facility generally doesn't exceed a year to 18 months.

Classes through RJJ are facilitated by Penn State faculty and graduate students weekly during sessions in the fall and spring.

Marimon said it's run similarly to the programs at Benner state prison that were piloted in the spring, and include classes on ethics and philosophy and art education.

Prison Superintendent Tammy Ferguson said the state Department of Corrections, which oversees Benner state prison, is focused on creating opportunity for inmates.

Benner state prison offers programs for inmates to help with education, community transitioning

Programs include treatment programming; helping to insure inmates have valid forms of identification upon release; academic and vocational opportunities to learn trades or skills; and more.

Each correctional facility in the commonwealth, Ferguson said, also has a transitional housing unit or re-entry service office to assist inmates in the transition back to their communities.

Programs such as these are in high demand and generate considerable requests for participation

Tammy Ferguson, Benner State Prison superintendent

"Programs such as these are in high demand and generate considerable requests for participation," Ferguson said in a statement. "It is our hope that we can continue to offer these types of services to our inmate population. With continued commitment from organizations like Penn State University, Centre Peace and the Pennsylvania Prison Society, and the ongoing cooperation of our staff and inmate community, we are just beginning to

explore the opportunities that can be provided with collective partnerships like those we are forging.”

Marimon said there are about 10 to 15 incarcerated students in the art class, and about 20 in the ethics and philosophy class. There are similar size enrollment numbers in the programs at Centre County Correctional Facility, he added.

“Our intent is to provide a program that provides services and works with the correctional facilities on identifying those,” Marimon said. “Once we’ve identified the programming aspect, I think then we can talk about what a proper research agenda could be with the institutes we work with.”

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US News (07/31/2017)

<https://www.usnews.com/news/best-states/pennsylvania/articles/2017-07-31/pennsylvania-grapples-with-new-sentences-for-juvenile-lifers>

Pennsylvania Grapples With New Sentences for Juvenile Lifers

Pennsylvania, which long argued a Supreme Court ban on mandatory life without parole for juveniles did not apply to those already in prison, begins resentencing and releasing some of the longest-serving inmates.

By ADAM GELLER, AP National Writer

PHILADELPHIA (AP) — On a long-ago summer night, 16-year-old Giovanni Reid accepted a neighbor's invitation to an International House of Pancakes restaurant as thanks for watching the man's infant son.

By sunrise, the outing in south Philadelphia had veered to robbery, then murder.

"I had never seen somebody get shot like that right in front of me," Reid, now 42, said in a telephone interview from prison. "It was a very scary thing to be a part of."

Nearly 26 years later, Reid — who has long denied a direct role in the crime, but faults himself for hanging out with an older, fast-running crowd — will soon get the chance to start over. He is one of 517 Pennsylvania offenders sentenced to life without parole for crimes committed as juveniles whose cases are being revisited because of a pair of Supreme Court rulings.

Pennsylvania leads the nation in those serving mandatory no-release sentences for crimes committed as minors, the result of laws that long

treated teens charged with the most serious crimes like adults. After the Supreme Court barred such sentences for juveniles in 2012, Pennsylvania officials argued that did not apply to those already in prison. [READ MORE HERE](#)

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Week of July 17...

Albion Holds “Day of Responsibility”

SCI Albion held “A Day of Responsibility” on July 11, 2017, in which approximately 107 inmates participated.

Superintendent Michael Clark began the day with a welcome speech which was followed by guest speaker and former inmate Michael Outlaw who spoke about atonement, which was this year’s theme. Albion’s Maintenance Foreman Marc Blount also spoke to the participants.

Several workshops were then held throughout the day. Alena Martin, a victim speaker, shared “a Victim’s Perspective;” Mike Danch, corrections building trades instructor, held a workshop about “Success;” Sheila Silman, from GECAC, presented on “Mental Health/Effects of Incarceration;” Drug and Alcohol Treatment Specialist Shawn Crosby presented on “Mental Health/AOD issues;” and Michael Outlaw held a workshop on his own personal story.



Everyone in attendance seemed to enjoy these presentations and overall the day was a great success!

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Coal Township Recognizes CO Spohn

Corrections Officer Steven Spohn was recognized as SCI Coal Township's Employee of the Quarter for the Second Quarter of 2017.

CO Spohn's supervisors noted that he was vital to the successful implementation of the pilot program Swift, Certain and Fair. Officer Spohn demonstrates an acute level of knowledge of the DOC policies. He possesses the ability to oversee the operation of the housing unit and willingness to direct inmate workers and he continuously assists others in the proper operation and appropriate accountability procedures associated with operating a housing unit. Officer Spohn presents a very professional appearance and an overall level of professionalism on a daily basis.



Superintendent Thomas McGinley commended Officer Spohn as he was presented with his award prior to shift.

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Benner Township Employees Graduate from Mentoring Program

Deputy Superintendent Daniel Myers and Corrections Classification and Program Manager Jennifer Rossman graduated from the Commonwealth Mentoring Program on June 13, 2017. The eight-month program is sponsored by the Office of Administration and provides a forum for establishing and nurturing formal mentoring relationships and then leveraging those relationships to provide intentional learning directly linked to specific workforce and succession planning.



Pictured, from left to right, are: Deputy Superintendent Daniel Myers, CCPM Jennifer Rossman, and Kory D. Auch, OA Deputy Secretary for Human Resources and Management.

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Updating Educational Labs

On July 6, the DOC equipped SCI Camp Hill, the first of many inmate educational classrooms -- with new zero client desktops. These systems will improve the educational tools inmates have access to and will standardize the experience across all locations. The DOC plans to expand this system rapidly to more than 1,200 work stations across the state prison system.

Ensuring access to consistent educational systems will result in improved processes and reduced downtime for users. It also will allow for enhancements, such as software updates, to occur simultaneously and in a shorter timeframe than the current process.

The next installation is scheduled for July 20 at SCI Muncy.

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Boot Camp – 25th Anniversary Senatorial Citation

Senator Wayne Langerholc, Jr., visited the Quehanna Motivational Boot Camp on May 15, 2017, for a tour, to learn more about the facility and to attend a boot camp graduation. He was so impressed with the success of the boot camp program that the following week he appeared on the senate floor to praise the accomplishments of the facility.

In recognition of the 25th anniversary of the first graduating platoon on June 22, 1992, Senator Langerholc sponsored a Senatorial Citation on June 12, 2017.

Reading from the citation, "...Quehanna Boot Camp has developed a strong reputation for the highest quality of service throughout its history. By steady adherence to the principles of fairness, reliability and integrity, it has become a leader in the community and a model that is worthy of emulation."



Kelley Peters, district scheduler/constituent relations for the senator, delivered the citation to Superintendent/Commander Mary Natoli and Major Frazer Blake on Tuesday, July 11.

The Quehanna Motivation Boot Camp administration and staff appreciate the recognition and support from Senator Langerholc.

[Here's a previous article we provided on the senator's visit to the boot camp:](#)

Senator Langerholc Visits Quehanna Boot Camp

On May 15, 2017, Senator Wayne Langerholc, Jr. visited the Quehanna Boot Camp for a tour and to attend Boot Camp graduation.

During the tour, Senator Langerholc had an opportunity to address the graduating male and female teammates. He expressed how impressed

he was with how they carried themselves and reminded them that they should be proud of their achievements. He also visited with the next graduating male platoon and a male State Intermediate Punishment (SIP) program housing unit to ask about their experiences both in life and at Quehanna Boot Camp.



When one SIP inmate was asked if he had a job lined up upon his release, the inmate responded that he was a graduate of Temple University and planned to go back to further his education.

After visiting a few housing units, Senator Langerholc met with some key staff to discuss reentry initiatives, educational classes, such as GED and Adult Commonwealth Secondary Diploma, and vocational classes which include Fiber Optics and OSHA. He learned that Quehanna Boot Camp has the highest rate of passing GEDs in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections. Also, he learned that the facility, since August 2016, has been successfully administering Vivitrol -- a medication assisted treatment program to combat Opioid dependence -- to inmates prior to their release.

Following the tour, Senator Langerholc attended the Boot Camp graduation ceremony. The graduating platoons were comprised of 43 males and three females. Approximately 200 inmates and 75 family and friends of the graduating inmates attended.



**Senator Wayne Langerholc, Jr. and Quehanna Boot Camp
Commander Mary Natoli**

Since the beginning of the Boot Camp program in June 1992, approximately 8,600 inmates have successfully completed the program. Nearly 4,200 inmates completed Phase 2 of the SIP program at Quehanna Boot Camp since 2005.

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Accreditation Audit Conducted at Mercer

SCI Mercer underwent its American Correctional Association (ACA) accreditation audit July 17-19, 2017. The facility passed with a compliance tally of 100% on the mandatory standards and 98.6% on the non-mandatory. The 98.6% was based upon six standards regarding the physical plant and design that were non-compliant based on construction. The actual accreditation certification will be defended and issued at an upcoming ACA conference. Congratulations, everyone, on a job well done!!



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SCI Forest Graduation

SCI Forest's inmate graduation ceremony was held on July 12, 2017. The featured speaker was John Charles Thomas, who serves as deputy Superintendent of centralized services at SCI Huntingdon.

There were 110 inmates that participated and received the following:

Academic recipients: 25

GED: 1

Vocational:

Auto Technology: 8

Building Trades: 12

Custodial Maintenance and Repair: 21

Electricity: 16

Fiber Optics: 7

Masonry: 20



SCI Huntingdon's Deputy Superintendent for Centralized Services, John Thomas, addresses inmate graduates at SCI Forest's graduation ceremony.

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Coal Township Employee Participates in "100 Nights of Taps"

From Facebook:

100 Nights of Taps, Gettysburg, 2017

July 18, 2017

Tonight's bugler Damon Morris began sounding Taps for the Gratz, Pennsylvania VFW "Diamond Jubilee" Post in 1984 and remained post bugler until the early 2000s. As a member of the Valley Forge Military Academy Regimental Band and Herald Trumpets he served as a regimental bugler sounding all regimental bugle calls associated with cadet life including the sounding of Taps during chapel services. His professional musical career includes: The Die Froehlich Wanderer German Band, Pine Grove Community Band, Principal positions with The Pottsville 3rd Brigade Band, and Lebanon Community Concert Band; Charter Principal Trumpet Central Pennsylvania Symphony Orchestra, and Associate Principal Trumpet Hershey Symphony Orchestra.

In 1991 he enlisted in the Pennsylvania Air National Guard 553rd Air Force Band of the Mid-Atlantic until 1997. Upon graduation of Basic Military Training School, Lackland Air Force Base, San Antonio, TX, he was assigned to the United States Air Force Band Ceremonial Brass, Bolling Air Force Base, Washington, DC for initial active duty.

Currently he is a Corrections Officer at the State Correctional Institution Coal Township, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections since 1999 where he serves as the bugler for the institution's Honor Guard. He currently resides in Kulpmont, Pennsylvania with his wife Jennifer and daughter Emily.

Tonight Taps is sounded in remembrance of all past veterans of law enforcement and Major General Samuel Kosciuszko Zook. Major General Samuel Kosciuszko Zook (a distant relative) was wounded during the battle of Gettysburg July 2, 1863 and died July 3, 1863.



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Week of July 3...

Training Academy employees add spice to inmates' culinary arts program

The first week of a program designed to train inmates in the culinary arts grew in size during the final week of June as four Training Academy employees joined nine inmates to earn their ServSafe food handling and safety certification.

The addition of the staff provided a twist to the normal recipe for the class.



"We had the space, and they had a need to get their certification," Chef Todd Lewis said. "We were happy to accommodate them."

Inmates are selected after passing a test and writing an essay to enter the program which gives them valuable life skills as they're nearing their release dates. The course lasts nine weeks and not only includes the ServSafe diploma, but also the American Culinary Federation's "Culinary Fundamentals" training.

"Graduates not only have the piece of paper that says they are credentialed to get a job as a prep or a line cook, they also have the skills," Lewis said.

The first week of the course is devoted to the ServSafe certification, which is administered and issued by the National Restaurant Association. The program is accredited by the American National Standards Institute (ANSI) and the Conference

for Food Protection. Restaurants and other venues where food is prepared or handled – like the Training Academy – require certification. David Baringer, Mike LaMattina, Kevin Dietz and Don Gelnett were the Training Academy employees who were added to the class of inmates.

“The staff participated well,” Lewis said. “Everyone worked well with each group.”

Now that the four staff members received their ServSafe certification, the class is back down to the nine inmates. They will continue with the Culinary Fundamentals portion of the course throughout the summer, which will include knife usage and safety, sauces, soups, sautés, frying and a host of other food and preparation types. Students will also learn how to present the food – which will be put to the test during the “final exam” when students will be required to prepare a delicious meal for interested Department of Corrections staff.

The culinary arts program is good for both the stomach and the brain.

“Like I’ve said before, nothing comes out of a box,” Lewis said, noting that his students aren’t just warming up processed food and calling it a fine meal. “We don’t use mayonnaise out of a jar. Everything we make is from scratch.”

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National Expert Visits Houtzdale’s VSU

On June 27, an official from the National Institute of Corrections (NIC) -- Nicholas Stefanovic -- visited SCI Houtzdale to tour the Veterans Service Unit (VSU).



Corrections Officer 1 T. Hagen (left) and Corrections Officer 1 R. Rafter speak with Nicholas Stefanovic about their duties in the Veterans Service Unit.

The DOC incarcerates more than 3,200 inmate veterans. Recognizing the specialized needs this group of inmates requires, the DOC several years ago opened Veterans Service Units. While a majority of the veterans are housed throughout the entire prison system, VSUs are located regionally at SCIs Dallas (eastern region), Houtzdale (central region) and Mercer (western region). Mercer recently opened its VSU to replace the one that had operated at SCI Pittsburgh. The Pittsburgh facility was closed on June 30, 2017.

The purpose of the Veterans Service Unit is to prepare veterans for successful reentry into society. The VSU helps inmate veterans to improve life skills, address Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), traumatic brain injury, anxiety disorders, depression, substance abuse issues and homelessness. In addition, the following needs also are addressed: vocational, financial, family-related, medical, educational, veteran's services, peer support/mentoring and connecting to community resources. Treatment programming for moderate- to high-risk inmates also is offered.



While touring the prison's VSU, Stefanovic also observed how individuals from other agencies meet with inmates who reside in the unit.

Inmate veterans working on the unit's newsletter speak with Houtzdale's Veterans Coordinator Chris Reed and representatives from the Department of Military and Veterans Affairs Deputy Adjutant General/Major General (Retired) Eric Weller and Nicholas "Chip" Gilliland.

Of the visit, Mr. Stefanovic said:

"Your program is the gold standard for what we should expect both in our treatment of veterans and in our criminal justice system. ... I am sure that jurisdictions all over the country will learn from what you have done. From the dogs to all the rest of the services. What most impressed me is that I met with men who had life sentences yet were hopeful and had found meaning in serving their fellow Veterans. That is something very special. I

truly hope that this type of work becomes more commonplace in our criminal justice system."

Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal said that such visits help to share with other corrections experts the knowledge and expertise of DOC employees and the outstanding work they do.

"While we don't hear it enough, visits like this prove that what we are doing in our agency is groundbreaking, not only in our own state but throughout the country," Moore Smeal said. "I am extremely proud of our employees and will take advantage of every opportunity that allows us to show off their work."

Moore Smeal expressed her thanks to Statewide Veterans Coordinator Ryan Yoder, Superintendent Barry Smith and his staff who helped make the tour possible.

"Thanks to everyone who continues to make things happen and works to positively change lives," Moore Smeal said.

This isn't the first time another agency has visited a Pennsylvania DOC Veteran Service Units. In April 2015, Connecticut DOC officials visited the VSU at SCI Dallas to observe its operation and to acquire information and exchange ideas for implementing the first VSU in the CT DOC.

Houtzdale officials couldn't let this visit happen without sharing other successes with Mr. Stefanovic, such as the dog training program and showing the variety of wall murals throughout the prison that have been painted by inmates.



From right to left are: Corrections Officer 1 T. Hagen, Psychological Services Specialist Celine Keith, Superintendent Barry Smith with Samson, Unit Manager Craig Petulla with Dante, NIC Representative Nicholas Stefanovic with Nico, Statewide Veterans Coordinator Ryan Yoder with Gideon, Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal, Corrections Counselor 2 Brook Kelly, Corrections Officer 1 R. Rafter and Reentry Parole Agent Mary Ritsick.

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Visit by U.S. Department of State

In early April SCI Somerset was one of four institutions visited by the U.S. Department of State. The Department of State has been looking at a corrections agency to partner with for the purposes of assisting other countries with their corrections systems. Currently the Department of State has similar partnerships with policing and court systems around the country.

Over a few days, representatives from Department of Justice's Criminal Justice Division visited SCIs Muncy, Pine Grove, Laurel Highlands and Somerset. During their tour of SCI Somerset they explained how they are looking for progressive corrections departments that can be their partner and together work with other countries who may be struggling with their prison systems. This may include corrections officials from other countries visiting Pennsylvania and staff from Pennsylvania traveling to other counties, primarily in Central America.

After spending several hours at SCI Somerset and seeing many areas, the Department of State staff said they were extremely impressed with the facility. They commented on staff and inmate interaction, the appearance of the institution and many of the programs currently in operation, day-to-day.

"We believe we are very fortunate to have had these folks visit the facility," said SCI Somerset Superintendent Trevor Wingard. "It is satisfying to know that senior DOC leadership sent them in our direction. As future partnerships or projects evolve from these meetings, we will keep everyone informed of developments and possibly be asking for some staff to obtain or update their passports!"

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Preparing for a PREA Audit

By Melanie Pyle

Although it seemed like we had just completed our initial Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) audit, we recently had our second audit. We welcomed two auditors from Wisconsin to SCI Somerset on May 15th and 16th, to complete our audit process. We were fortunate that the auditors selected to come to SCI Somerset are both lieutenants in state prisons in Wisconsin. Because of this they were very familiar with many of the challenges of implementing the PREA standards in the correctional setting.

Prior to their arrival at the institution, there was a great deal of preparation, including a massive amount of digital files that were uploaded and made available to the auditors via a computer program a couple of weeks prior to their arrival. They were able to review these files prior to their visit to begin to determine if we met compliance with many of the standards and to become familiar with the processes used in our facility.

Upon their arrival on the 15th, the auditors received an extensive tour of the institution, including our out buildings. During this tour they were able to talk to many employees throughout the facility, as well as inmates in many of the areas. When that was completed they finished out the first day of the audit with many

staff interviews, including interviews with administrative staff, therapeutic staff and security staff who work on all three shifts.

The second day of the audit focused on completing interviews with many inmates from throughout the institution and obtaining any additional documentation that the auditors felt that they needed. They completed this early in the afternoon, and we were able to hold our exit interview with the auditors ahead of schedule. We were glad to hear a very positive report at the exit interview. Although we have not received the official report back on the audit to date, we anticipate that it will be a rather short report, with few issues to address.

As always, the staff at SCI Somerset exceeded all expectations in accomplishing the task at hand. We would like to thank everyone who assisted in the preparation for this audit in any way.

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SCI Somerset Surgical Program

For many years SCI Somerset has been the hub for the elective surgical program for inmates all across the state. SCI Somerset, the DOC and Correct Care Solutions (CCS) the current medical contract vendor, work in partnership with Somerset Hospital to provide elective, non-emergent utilization for specialties that include urology, general surgery and orthopedics.

When an inmate is referred to one of these specialists the referral is sent to the CCS staff here at SCI Somerset. It is then coordinated with the doctors' schedules and the hospital to have an evaluation scheduled via telemedicine. CCS staff from SCI Somerset go to the hospital and assist the specialist during these evaluations. The inmate is brought to their home facility's medical department at their scheduled date and time and is examined using telemedicine. Once seen by the specialist the recommendation is sent back to the inmate's home facility to have this procedure carried out. If the recommendation to have surgery or to have an evaluation in the office by the specialist is approved it is again sent to the CCS staff at SCI Somerset. The appointment for surgery or office evaluation is scheduled, and the home institution is informed of the upcoming appointment. Any necessary testing needed prior to the arrival of the inmate at SCI Somerset also is completed. Every week a list is sent from the CCS staff to the DOC medical staff to coordinate with the DOC's office responsible for inmate transportation to have the inmates transferred in for their upcoming appointment. Upon arrival, they are housed in the infirmary where



the nursing staff prepares them for their surgery that they will be having in the next few days. They will go out to the hospital or office for their appointment and then return to the infirmary to recover and await return to their home facility. Upon return to their home facility, follow-up is done via telemedicine again.

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Somerset also has a Radiation Program

In April 2015, SCI Somerset was approached to initiate the DOC's state wide Radiation Program. A meeting then took place with Allegheny General Hospital, CCS, and the DOC to look at the possibilities. Based on the positive feedback from the members involved, the program began.

Since inception, SCI Somerset has continually received inmates from various state prisons. The program's goal is to save on transportation costs for the state and to help procure a new machine for the community to utilize as well. Thus far, the program has received very positive feedback and we hope to continue on in the future.

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Fire Emergency Response Team Training

SCI Somerset's Fire Emergency Response Team (FERT) does a variety of training at both the Somerset Fire School and at the institution. Team members train in a smoke environment to become comfortable with the equipment they wear. They also tour the institution to stay familiar with the sprinkler systems in each building and how to work the hydrants.

Somerset Fire Department has equipment that is used to train the team on larger apparatus and to make sure that it will work within the corrections setting. In fact, the team recently worked with the tower truck from the Somerset Fire Department, learning how to set it up and use the controls. Another large test was to bring the truck into the institution and make sure it would go through the sally port and be able to reach a majority of the institution in case of a problem.



Team work, even that which involves outside entities, is vital when it comes to fire emergencies.

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Another Friends & Family Day for “Juvenile” Lifers



On June 29, SCI Camp Hill became the latest prison to hold a “Juvenile” Lifers Friends & Family Day. Organized by SCI Camp Hill employees, presenters included individuals from the DOC’s Central Office, such as the juvenile lifers project manager Executive Staff Assistant Robert Hammond Jr. and Eastern

Region Reentry Administrator Lacosta Mussoline. In addition Brook McCarthy from the Juvenile Law Center spoke to the group, as did others from within the prison and outsiders. The discussions centered around the work the inmates must do in order to prepare for possible return home due to a court decision changing the sentence lengths that can be given to individuals who committed crimes when they were under 18 years of age.

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Meeting with Peer Support Specialists



SCI Camp Hill officials met with inmate certified peer support specialists on May 5, for approximately two hours. This is the third such meeting where officials and the inmates meet in May during Mental Health Awareness Month to discuss the program’s progress, concerns and upcoming changes and to share new ideas.

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