

Correctional Newsfront

The official newsletter of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections



2017 News ~ October to December

Week of December 25...

Snowy Owl Visits SCI Smithfield

SCI Smithfield was graced with an unusual pre-Christmas visitor when a snowy owl showed up on December 22, wowing the staff and sending Superintendent Eric Tice's assistant Lisa Hollibaugh scrambling to take its picture.

But the visit took a scary turn on Christmas when the owl got caught in the prison's perimeter razor wire fence.

With the help of quick-responding officers with the Pennsylvania Game Commission, the owl was captured and taken to a rehabilitation facility - but not before staff took some dynamite close ups!

Conservation officers say the owl, one of just a handful spotted in Pennsylvania this winter, is expected to make a full recovery and be released back to the wild.



Thanks to all who documented the rare wildlife sighting and helped give Smithfield a Christmas miracle!

UPDATE: The Snowy Owl is doing well and is recovering at Centre Wildlife Care. Updates are available on their website page:

www.facebook.com/CentreWildlifeCare

Pictured with the owl is SCI Smithfield Lt. Randall Grove and PA Game Commission Officer Amanda Isett.

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Record Snowfall Hits Northwestern PA

Over the Christmas holiday, Northwestern Pennsylvania received an historic amount of snow – 60 inches fell between Christmas Eve and late afternoon on December 26. This makes December 2017 the snowiest month in the Erie area, according to National Weather Service records that date back to the 1800s. According to records from the Erie International Airport, Erie’s snowfall total for December 2017 was 97 inches!

The DOC has several facilities in the northwestern part of the state – SCIs Albion, Cambridge Springs, Forest, Mercer and Sharon and Erie CCCs.

In addition, Parole’s district office is located in Erie. Due to the snow, that office was closed on December 27.

SCI Cambridge Springs Superintendent Lonnie Oliver shares an employee’s photos. “He had to shovel out to make it to work,” Superintendent Oliver said.



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“Beyond the Fence” Donates to Charities

SCI Pine Grove’s Beyond the Fence inmate organization presented two checks to United Disability Services (UDS) and No Thanks Needed. Each check was for \$3,500. The money was raised by the inmates during the past year by various fund raisers, such as ice cream, candy and soda sales, a track meet and t-shirt sale.

The recipients of the checks were selected by the inmate organization after researching each of their missions. UDS is the TAILS organization that provides training to dogs to assist disabled individuals. The second recipient was No Thanks Needed which is an organization based in Boston and provides services to children and their families suffering from progeria. No Thanks Needed events get scheduled across the country, but specifically in Pittsburgh and Philadelphia areas.



Representatives from both organizations were on site to receive the checks and were very appreciative of the work the inmates did to provide them with these funds.

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Team Alexis

If you recall, earlier this year we reported that SCI Frackville’s Empowerment Committee presented two checks totaling \$1,915 to the prison’s food service instructor Jones. The money was raised during a bake sale that was held November 2 & 3 and through a “Team Alexis” t-shirt sale. In addition to Frackville employees, employees from SCs Dallas, Mahanoy and Waymart supported the “Team Alexis” t-shirt sale.

Here is a picture of Alexis visiting the prison recently.



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Parole Agent Saves Parolee's Life

On December 22, while conducting a routine home visit on one of his parolees, Agent Adam Kusnerick (Williamsport District Office) and the parolee's father discovered the parolee unconscious. Agent Kusnerick called 911 immediately and while on the phone with 911, he noticed glassine baggies lying next to the parolee.

Agent Kusnerick immediately administered one dose of Narcan and began CPR because the parolee did not have a pulse and he was not breathing. Agent Kusnerick performed chest compressions and instructed the parolee's brother to administer rescue breathing. After approximately 10 minutes of CPR, the parolee became responsive.

EMS responded, and the parolee was taken to the hospital for observation. The parolee was medically cleared by the hospital and released to the custody of his parents that evening. He reported to the parole office on December 26 and was placed on GPS and he was given written instructions to obtain an AOD evaluation. Agent Kusnerick told the parolee that Gaudenzia had been notified and that they were planning to expedite his evaluation.

It should be noted that the parolee is being charged by local police with possession with intent to deliver for 15 packets of suspected heroin that were found next to him in his bedroom. According to Agent Kusnerick, the parolee relapsed after being clean for an extended length of time, and the substance he snorted was more than likely fentanyl, thus causing him to overdose.

Agent Kusnerick undoubtedly saved the parolee's life. Ironically, Agent Kusnerick is typically in the office on Fridays; however, he covered the office earlier in the week for others who were attending EPICS so, as fate would have it, he was able to be in the field on Friday to provide life-saving assistance to the parolee.

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Glassine baggies

Follow-Up on Two Reentrant Speakers

Earlier in 2017, DOC officials held a reentry conference for DOC employees who provide reentry services to inmates who are preparing to go home after incarceration. Ninety percent of state prison inmates will one day return home.

At the conference, attendees heard from several reentrants. Here is follow-up information about two of those individuals, written by Central Region Parole Manager 1 Matthew Sheaffer:

Andrew Signore

When Andrew Signore was arrested in 2010, he felt that his life had hit rock bottom and recounts that he was relieved that it was over. Signore, like many others, was addicted to opioid pain medications and lost everything he had built to his addiction. Signore is a veteran of the U.S. Air Force and worked as a police captain in the Montgomery Police Department in Alabama. He was with the police department when he had surgery on his shoulder and began his lengthy battle with opioids.



He is currently on parole after serving six years of a 6-to-12-year sentence for robbery and possession of a controlled substance, as well as, several other related charges. He will remain on parole until 2022.

I have met with Mr. Signore several times before and after the R.I.S.E. Conference, and we have had many conversations about his time in prison and his reentry process. He told me the story of when he first went to prison.

"The first person that I remember was my first counselor, Ms. Clark (now Major Clark), he said."

He recalls that she was professional and showed an interest in him.

"She told me that I needed to be productive and stay busy. She helped me get a job and helped me stay busy, which helped me survive. She was always great at handling problems, and truly cared about her jobs and her inmates," Signore said.

He also speaks at length about his experience in the therapeutic community (TC). He remembers the TC was a chance to learn, but also states that it was difficult because most of the people in the TC were drug dealers and not there to work on addiction issues. What he remembers the most about his experience in the TC were the staff members. He recounts that Mr. Howard would always challenge him.

He recalls, "Mr. Howard would give me homework and encourage me to do better. Even after I got out of the TC, he would always check-in on me and

make sure I was on the right track. He would even challenge me after I completed the program.”

The other person he believes aided in his success while in prison was Sergeant Kulp. Signore recalls that the days Sgt. Kulp worked on the block he knew that there was “nothing going to go on.”

“Sgt. Kulp was fair and firm, and she ran the block,” Signore said.

He knew that when she was working there would be no issues, nothing happening that shouldn’t happen, and things would be calm.

In 2016, Signore was paroled to the Harrisburg District and was entered into the Dauphin County Reentry Program. He said that his first parole agent, Agent Latsha, was very helpful.

“Agent Latsha gave me a few months to get a job, and when I couldn’t get a job, she referred me to GEO,” Signore said.

Signore says that his encounters at GEO were frustrating and rewarding at the same time. He remembers that the first time he went to GEO, they told him that he could not leave and that he would have to be there every day.

“I made the best of it, but the GEO program was not helpful for me because I already have all of the skills they were trying to teach me. It would have also been helpful if the program was explained to me prior to going there.” He said.

Signore said he went as he was required and made the best of it.

“At the end, they did not help get me a job, but they were always kind to me and I enjoyed speaking with them,” he said.

In 2017, Agent Godfrey took over as Signore’s parole agent. Signore said that Godfrey is a by-the-book type of agent.

Signore recounts the first time he met Agent Godfrey and remembers telling Agent Godfrey that he would not be a problem for him... to which Agent Godfrey responded, “I have heard that before.”

Signore likes Agent Godfrey’s structure.

“Having been in the military and police department, I thrive in structure, and the way he operates is the way I function the best,” he said.

Signore states that Agent Godfrey shows a genuine interest in everyone’s development and wellbeing.

Signore has been working for several months now, and reports that it is not his dream job, but he is grateful for the job. He works for a construction company as a flagger. He says that he always tries to have a great time

while at work. Though he is grateful for the job, his passion is recovery and is seeking employment as a certified recovery specialist.

He has also been busy advocating for others dealing with addiction. Signore has been doing some public speaking, has written a proposal for state legislators to create meaningful employment for reentrants and writes in a monthly newsletter. He states that his passion is for helping others in recovery, and employment is the largest barrier that he has faced in the reentry process.

Signore also credits his family with his success. He states that his family has always been there for him and helped him along the way. He also wanted me to know that "being on parole is not difficult if you are serious about changing your life."

Douglas Hollis

When I spoke with Douglas Hollis recently he was excited to let me know that he got his driver's license since I last saw him at the R.I.S.E. conference. He also stated that he has been staying busy and that things have been going well. He also joked that his wife keeps him busy, and that he has been going to violence prevention booster classes at the Harrisburg District Parole Office which keeps him very busy.



"I am grateful for the simple area that I live in and glad that I am far from the drama," Hollis said. "Every time I go to the parole office for group it reminds me of how simple my life is."

Hollis is currently on parole for second degree murder committed in 1975. He had been sentenced to life in prison at the age of 16, and was one of the "juvenile" lifers that have been released since the 2012 Supreme Court decision. Hollis maintained hope that this day would come and vows to make the most out of his second chance.

In December 2016, Hollis was resentenced to 30 years to life, and subsequently was released on parole in March 2017. When released he was able to find employment as a maintenance technician close to his home in northern Dauphin County.

He enjoys volunteering at his church and writing. He stated that he tries to write in his free time, and that he has written countless short stories, poems and even has two books in the Library of Congress. Hollis also has a passion for public speaking and speaking with kids in an effort to steer them down a better path than the one that he went down.

Hollis also spoke to me about the health scare that he had in November that resulted in his being hospitalized over Thanksgiving. He states that he is blessed to be alive and free. He wants to live a life that is simple and help as many at risk youths as he can."

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Quehanna Staffer Receives DOC Basic Training Award

On December 15, the DOC graduated Basic Training Class #744 at its Elizabethtown Training Academy.

The Quehanna Boot Camp would like to recognize Corrections Officer Trainee Robert Green who was awarded the Professional Image Award for Class #744.



Pictured above is Quehanna Boot Camp Security Lieutenant David Johnson, Corrections Officer Trainee Robert Green and Quehanna's Captain of the Guard Scott Carter.

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Addition to DOC Basic Training Announced

DOC Training Academy Director Mike Dooley recently announced that Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training will be offered – beginning January 2018 -- all 4- and 5-week participants during the DOC's Basic Training.

In a memo to DOC leadership, human resource officers and training coordinators, Dooley said, "In addition to providing all corrections officers with the requisite skills that will benefit them in the performance of their duties immediately upon return to their facilities, it is also intended to reduce the demands on the field to track and schedule each of these employees to receive this course within 90 days of completing basic training."

Employees who attend only 1 or 2 weeks of basic training based upon their job classifications will not receive MHFA during basic training. They will still be required to attend MHFA within 90 days of completing basic training. Of course, those individuals also may take MHFA training prior to attending basic training, if scheduling permits.

The DOC is proud that all of its employees are trained in the area of MHFA and that now only new hires require training.

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Cambridge Springs Holds Blood Drive

SCI Cambridge Springs employees participated in a blood drive on December 20. The American Red Cross arrived on grounds in a mobile unit, where staff could conveniently go and donate blood. A total of 17 units of blood was collected. Kim Michael of the American Red Cross stated that the collections across the country have been low over the holidays, so the facility was happy to host the blood drive to positively impact the nation's blood supply.



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Retreat Recognizes Long-Time Employee

On December 19, at the weekly superintendent's meeting, Corrections Officer S. Kaminski was presented with a 25-Year Service Certificate and Pin.



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Third Annual Holiday Card Project

SCI Mercer inmates made handmade holiday cards for residents of the Avalon Springs Nursing Center. The inmates made approximately 60 cards, which were delivered to the residents at Avalon on December 21 by employees Stephanie Cubberley and April Harvey. Each resident in the skilled care area received a holiday card.



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Visiting Room Crafts for the Smallest of Visitors

In November we reported that inmates in SCI Laurel Highlands' Transitional Housing Unit had been working to make craft items for kids to use during their visits at the prison over the holiday season.

Here you can see the craft items in use.



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DOC Announces SECA Campaign Success

Each year, through the State Employee Combined Appeal (SECA), state employees choose from approved charitable organizations to donate to during the annual drive which takes place over several weeks during the fall.

This year, 3,485 DOC employees contributed more than \$536,494 to the SECA campaign. While this amount was only 98.3 percent of the DOC's goal of \$545,735, every bit collected counts and benefits so many.

DOC SECA coordinator Ron Morrison thanks everyone who donated.

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Inmate's Family Thanks Prison Staff

After attending an SCI Huntingdon Inmate Graduation Ceremony, Debbie Sycalik wrote a letter to the prison's principal, Diana Beatty, and entire facility staff:

"It was such a moment to see all of the inmates in their caps and gowns and to see my nephew, Matt, standing there with his puppy and looking so tall and proud. It was a moment so long in coming, and that is so very much due to all of you."

In her letter, Sycalik talks about the death of the inmate's mother and his downward spiral afterward and how prison staff played a role in carving his future.

"It has been amazing to watch Matt's transformation," she said.

She also mentioned that the transformation was not easy and that she and Matt had talked for quite a while about an issue he was having where he blamed everything on the teacher.

She told him to look at the teacher in a different way... as a person rather than as a teacher. She explained to him how their day does not end when they leave the prison and how they must drive home, fix dinner, do laundry, pay bills, clean the house and take care of relationships. She told him that they all have lives, feelings, fears and concerns, yet they are in a classroom trying to get the best out of the inmates.

After that discussion, Matt began to experience a shift in his attitude.

"My words were one thing, but your time and dedication and at times what must feel like blood, sweat and tears are what made and make the real difference because you are all not just nurturing their education, you are nurturing their hearts as well...chipping away at walls that so many have and bringing about a self-esteem that many would not find otherwise."

She ended her letter with, "There are not enough words to say thank you...but please remember this: You all make a difference. You all have a purpose every day doing what you do and for that we thank you from the bottom of our hearts."

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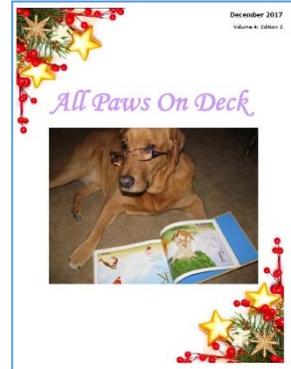
Week of December 18...

All Paws On Deck!

Twice a year the DOC (thanks to Graterford's Deanna Stager) provides us with a great newsletter highlighting each facility's dog-training program.

This newsletter can be viewed on our website – www.cor.pa.gov – by clicking on the "ABOUT US" drop down menu and then select "Newsroom & Reporter Info". From there you click on "Newsletters."

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Regional Deputy Participates in Panel

Recently, Regional Deputy Secretary Michael Wenerowicz participated in a panel discussion – held at Eastern State Pen, and hosted by Uber – about issues reentrants face as they return home as citizens following incarceration.

The event also included a screening of a film, THE RETURN.



Tom Innes, president of the board of the PA Prison Society, moderated the panel. RDS Wenerowicz is immediately to the left of Innes.

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Resetting Work with BetaGov

On December 19, about 80 corrections and parole employees of all levels gathered at the Training Academy in Elizabethtown to kick off the latest work with BetaGov.



We are resetting work with this organization to focus on the operation of community corrections and parole supervision.

DOC secretary John Wetzel called it the “big reset.”



Previously we focused on reducing the use of administrative segregation while reducing prison violence. That work will continue even as we move forward with this additional focus.

Simply put, BetaGov takes employee ideas and formats them into randomized control trials and then evaluates the outcome data to see if the concept works. And their work is free!

Employees have been encouraged to submit ideas, and a follow-up meeting of with this group is planned for the western part of the state in the next few months.

Stay tuned for great outcomes.

You can learn more about BetaGov at betagov.org

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New Parole Agents Begin Basic Training

Members of the largest-ever class of new parole agents began their Basic Training Academy (BTA) on December 18. Sixty-five men and women have been hired to fill agent positions that have been created through attrition and internal promotions. Savings from the consolidation of the DOC and the Board of Probation and Parole have made the new hires possible.



Roughly 20 of the new recruits will be placed inside state correctional institutions, while the rest will serve as field agents.

When BTA began in 1978 it was basic skills course that lasted one week. Now, the training has evolved into a multi-faceted, eight-week program reflecting the unique nature of agents as part law enforcement officer, part counselor, part social worker and part job counselor.

We welcome the class of new agents and wish them the best of luck!

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Guess Who's Making His Musical Rounds

Country music star Ben Gallaher is scheduled to perform at several PA DOC facilities. In fact, he's already performed at SCI Camp Hill, where his management team also arranged to have some filming of his performance. On December 19, he performed for inmates at SCI Chester. Gallaher, originally from a suburb of Harrisburg, Pa., has been performing at our prisons for the past eight years.



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How are DOC Policies Updated?

Each department policy is reviewed at least once each calendar year by its "business owner." In some cases, no changes are necessary, but in others, significant changes are needed. Through a form provided by Diane Kashmere, who is the statewide policy coordinator for the DOC, the business owner indicates whether changes are needed, and if so, provides a deadline for the planned revision. Kashmere then works to keep the business owners on track with their proposed revision schedule.

In addition to this annual policy review, anyone can make policy change suggestions by contacting the business owner of a policy at any time.

Business owners make changes to the policy document and send the updated document to Kashmere to format. But revising a policy isn't that easy and doesn't end at this point. If there are significant changes, Kashmere sends the document to an already-existing email distribution list of corrections employees for their review. Individuals on this distribution list include regional deputy secretaries, superintendents, facility policy managers and individuals who have a role in that specific policy. In her email, Kashmere also asks that the draft policy be shared with anyone that recipients believe should have a say in its review. Anyone can make comments back to the policy's business owner.

In addition to sending the draft policy revisions to the field via this email distribution list, Kashmere also maintains a draft policy folder in the DOC policy SharePoint system. The policy draft will remain there for one week from the date of the email. During this one-week period, ANYONE who has access to DOCnet can view the draft policy document and is welcome to submit comments to the policy's business owner.

Following the review period, which is typically one week, the business owner of the policy then incorporates the changes into the Word document and then sends the final DRAFT back to Kashmere.

At this point Kashmere makes sure that proper language, formatting, etc., is put into the policy, and then the draft is routed through the formal policy review at Central Office where it is sent to the chief counsel's office; the Bureau of Standards, Audits and Accreditation; regional deputy secretary/secretaries (if applicable); executive deputy secretary; and then finally to the secretary for review and consideration for finalization.

Once everyone has signed off on it, the updated/reviewed policy is issued.

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WRAP Trainers Certified

During the week of December 4, the DOC completed the first course of WRAP facilitators certification for 15 employees from across various disciplines certified as WRAP facilitators.

The four advanced level facilitators -- Susie Shoff (Unit Manager), Rachael Shoeman (Sergeant), Troy Edwards (Counselor) and Lynn Patrone (MH Advocate) - facilitated the class.



The four facilitators.

"This is a cutting-edge staff wellness tool that is taking off," Mental Health Advocate Lynn Patrone said. "Participants in both WRAP Seminar I & II courses have provided empowering statements that this is a tool that could promote staff wellness and provide support to our peers as well as in our personal lives."

The 15 facilitators will now be able to provide WRAP to staff and inmates. The feedback the advanced level team received is that this seminar is life changing.

"It's very exciting that we can now provide this opportunity to staff across the DOC," Patrone added.

There will be another seminar to certify additional facilitators in January. Additionally, there will be a Seminar I & II for selected staff in the therapeutic communities (TCs) so that this invaluable tool may be offered in every TC.



The class and facilitators.

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The Flat Stanley Project

By Amy Boylan, Superintendent's Assistant

The Flat Stanley Project is an educational project that was started in 1995 by Dale Hubert, a third grade schoolteacher in London, Ontario, Canada. The project features paper cut-outs based on the title character of the 1964 children's book Flat Stanley. The project was designed to facilitate the improvement of the reading and writing skills of elementary school students, while also promoting an interest in learning about different people and places.

A third grader from the local Cambridge Springs Elementary School wrote a letter to SCI Cambridge Springs asking us to participate in the Flat Stanley Project and to take pictures and write a story about his adventure. We chose to participate in this unique project and decided that Flat Stanley should visit the Correctional Industries Optical Lab. Below is the story that was written about Flat Stanley's experience and some photos to accompany the story...

"Flat Stanley visited the Optical Lab at SCI Cambridge Springs on Monday, December 18, 2017. In the Optical Lab, Flat Stanley was able to see and help make a pair of eyeglasses. This was not just any pair of glasses, but his very own pair of glasses. He visited each work station of the process and got to see first-hand how a pair of glasses was made. He was excited and couldn't wait to try on his new pair of glasses for the first time. He was amazed about how much clearer he could see with these new glasses and couldn't wait to get back to school and tell everyone about his adventure and to show them off. He



Flat Stanley helps an inmate worker on the Optical Edging equipment.



Flat Stanley learns about how to run an Optical Generator with C.I. Optical Lab Supervisor and an inmate worker.

also wanted to get a positive message to kids with glasses that they are really cool and a helpful tool to those who wear them.

Flat Stanley got to meet the women inmates at the facility and talked to them about how they are learning such a valuable trade to help others, which will in turn help them when they can get out of prison to do good things in the community.

SCI Cambridge Springs would like to thank everyone in Ms. Wallace's 3rd grade class for allowing us to participate in your Flat Stanley adventure."

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Employees Ring the Bell for Salvation Army

Members of the SCI Cambridge Springs administrative staff and department heads participated in the Salvation Army Bell Ringing within the local Cambridge Springs Community on December 8. This community project is something that staff enjoy participating in each year, providing benefit to the Salvation Army and the good works that they do.



Deputy Superintendent Paul Ennis and Classification Program Manager Dr. Richard Learn ring the bell for Salvation Army.



Unit Manager Kim Sittig and Activities Manager Tami Caruso ring the bell for the Salvation Army.

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More Smeal Addresses Huntingdon County Chamber of Commerce

On December 9, DOC Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal – who also is a Mount Union native, addressed the Huntingdon County Chamber of Commerce to discuss how the two local state prisons – SCIs Huntingdon and Smithfield – play an important role in the local community, specifically their economic impacts.

As part of the chamber’s “Coffee Connection,” which is sponsored by the J.C. Blair health System Inc. and John R. Wald Co., Moore Smeal discussed inmate rehabilitation and recidivism.

Also present at the “Coffee Connection,” were Sen. John Eichelberger Jr., Rep. Rich Irvin, county commissioners and superintendents from both SCIs – Kevin Kauffman and Eric Tice.

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Pathway to Success – New Curriculum Training

By Dorenda Hamarlund, Career Pathways Program Manager

In September 2015, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) was awarded a three-year, \$1 million *Improved Reentry Education* grant from the U.S. Department of Education. The goal is to build sustainable, industry-driven career pathways that prepare inmates with in-demand skills while incarcerated and connect those individuals to jobs, support services and ongoing education upon release.

The grant includes revisions to the DOC’s Bureau of Correction Education’s (BCE) pre-vocational curriculum. The new course, “Pathway to Success,” is 11 modules that uses an interest assessment to determine career pathway options for the inmates enrolled.

While enrolled in “Pathway to Success,” inmates will learn about careers available to those with a criminal record, wage information and demand for those careers in the community where they are likely to be released, create a personal budget, write a resume, and complete mock interviews.

In June 2017, approximately 20 State Correctional Institutions (SCI) education staff from six pilot institutions were trained in the “Pathway to Success.” The new curriculum was offered for the semester starting June/July 2017. After two semesters, there have been 359 inmates enrolled in “Pathway to Success.”

In November and December 2017, the remaining 19 SCIs were trained in the new “Pathway to Success” course for a January 2018 semester start date. Among the 66 SCI staff trained, 60 are teachers, three are education counselors and three are principals. In order for a teacher to teach “Pathway to Success” they must attend a mandatory nine-hour curriculum training. As of now, BCE has more than 80 teachers trained on the new “Pathway to Success” curriculum statewide.



The Improved Reentry Education grant was originally set to end September 2018; however, the DOC was granted a one-year, no additional funding, extension. Once the grant ends, the DOC will continue to implement and improve the Career Pathways framework to ensure reentrants have the best chance at success, which starts with the “Pathway to Success” curriculum.

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SCI Muncy to Unveil New Medical Wing

The Department of Corrections is set to unveil a 10,000-square-foot addition to its medical facility at SCI Muncy, one of the state’s two prisons for female inmates.

SCI Muncy recently received final permitting approval for the opening of the new addition to the Wilson Infirmary that will provide expanded health and dental care services for female inmates.



“The completion of this project signals an important development in the effort to modernize the health care facilities for Pennsylvania’s female inmates,” said Corrections Secretary John Wetzel. “The current physical plant dates to the 1960s and since then the increase in the female population and in the aging, long-term inmate population, along with stricter medical standards have all stretched the capacity and capabilities of the medical department. We very much look forward to the expanded facility going online in the next month.”

The \$5.9 million addition is designed to hold 19 long-term medical beds, including 11 single-bed rooms and two dormitory areas that can accommodate four beds each. There is a common room for recreation, along with stations for corrections officers and nurses.

The addition includes a four-chair dialysis center, as well as two exam rooms, an office area, laundry area, multi-purpose room, and outdoor recreation space.

The infirmary also will have a five-chair dental clinic, with x-ray, lab and work stations.

The new medical equipment and additional beds will allow SCI Muncy to provide a comparable level of care to that which male inmates needing health care receive at SCI Laurel Highlands, and to provide direct observation for non-ambulatory patients.

“This addition will give SCI Muncy the ability to better care for its aging and chronically ill inmates in a cost-effective manner,” said SCI Muncy Superintendent Robert Smith. “A significant cost driver in prison health care is transportation and staff time needed to provide adequate security when an inmate is taken to a public hospital.”

The expansion will give SCI Muncy the ability to provide a higher level of service for end-of-life palliative care and hospice.

The larger space also will make it possible to treat female inmates from SCI Cambridge Springs with chronic care issues.

The addition is slated to open in January 2018.

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Suicide Prevention Summit Included Two Benner Twp. Officers

Corrections Officers J. Myers and K. Oswalt were two of many Department of Corrections personnel who had the opportunity to attend the first ever, Cambria County Suicide Prevention Summit held at the Frank J. Pasquerilla Conference Center.

The summit included Kevin Hines as the keynote speaker who shared an inspiring message of hope and some of the clips from his suicide documentary titled “The Ripple



Effect." Also included was "Ignite" Presentations from Cambria County suicide prevention programs, Community Conversations were held discussing the enhancement of suicide prevention and a Resource Fair advocating the opportunity to share information related to suicide programs and services.

"It was nice to see the extent of support that is available to the community for suicide prevention," Myers said. "The number of individuals -- from healthcare providers and first responders to Department of Corrections, government and community members -- all coming together, to share resources and experiences, was a remarkable experience."

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CIT Training Continues!

A recent DOC quarterly report on Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) training shows that the DOC has now trained more than 1,600 employees in CIT. Employees trained range from corrections officer trainees to unit managers and psychological services specialists.

In September 2017, we reported the following about CIT in the DOC:

CIT training focuses on the challenges we face in corrections when dealing with inmates experiencing mental health crisis that goes well beyond what the untrained non-professional could be expected to know or understand. Behavior associated with mental illness can vary dramatically from one individual to the next, and the CIT training program helps staff better understand the challenges many inmates face and how to effectively resolve tense, dynamic and evolving crisis situations.

The CIT training program is part of a system-wide initiative to place inmates' mental health at the forefront of treatment during incarceration. Moreover, CIT is about maximizing safety for both staff and inmates. By providing this education to our staff, we reduce the likelihood of use of force situations.

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

During the five-day CIT training course, participants develop an understanding of mental illness through presentations by DOC staff, consumers and community members having expertise and experience with mental illness. Since April 2017, two days of the CIT training course are focused specifically on verbal de-escalation strategies where staff are trained to use strategies and concrete steps to bring inmates down from the crisis state. Participants then apply the training

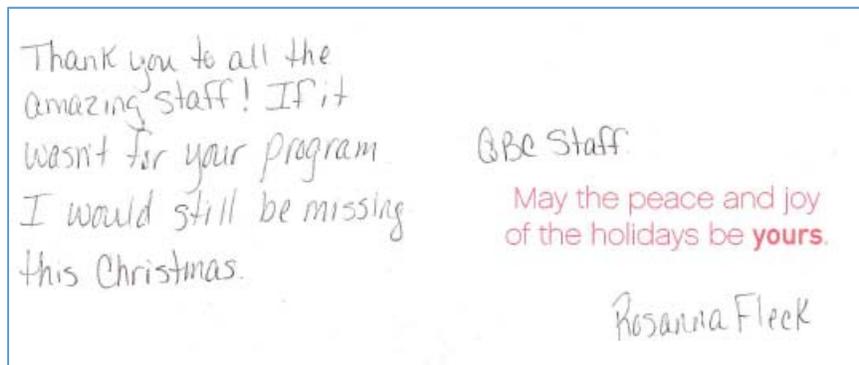
during role-play scenarios facilitated by the instructors that help to solidify and enhance the skills presented.

Recent changes to the CIT training program include the expansion of the class from four days to five; updated modules on trauma, suicide prevention, staff wellness and C.O.V.E.R., and introduction of the verbal de-escalation techniques in which current CIT Program Manager Rhonda Tomcavage and Lt. Vigil Meyer received training from the CIT founder, Sam Cochran, and have currently trained more 20 DOC staff to facilitate the new curriculum.

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Graduate Sends "Thanks"

A recent graduate of the Quehanna Boot Camp sent this card to the facility staff.

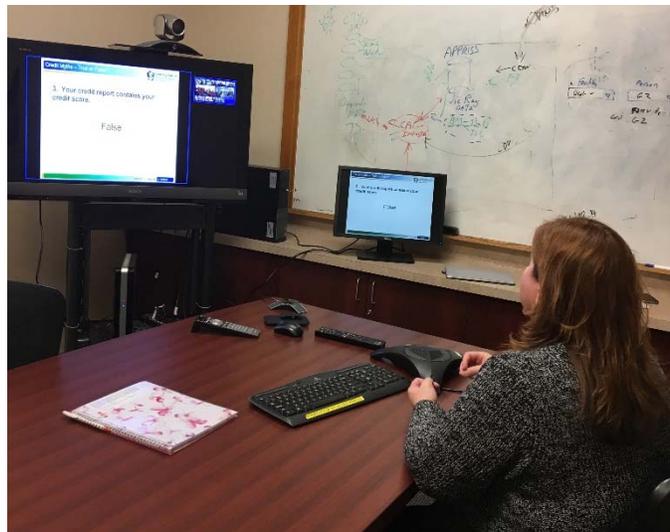


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Teaching "Juvenile" Lifers Financial Basics

Becky MacDicken, a staff member of the Department of Banking and Securities who is working with DOC on inmate financial education, presented a webinar today for juvenile lifers on "Credit and Banking Basics."

The 90-minute webinar covered the importance of having a checking account, establishing credit and monitoring one's credit scores. MacDicken also offered advice about how to prevent fraud, what to do if you are a victim of identity theft and basic money management tools.



The webinar is part of the overall reentry education program aimed at helping juvenile lifers, most of whom have been in prison for decades, succeed in the community upon resentencing.

One interesting factoid Becky presented: 73 percent of successful reentrants have checking accounts.

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Hoops for a Cure – SCI Coal Township

After many months of planning, the Hoops for a Cure basketball tournament was held during the summer months. The entry fee for the inmate participants was \$2 per player. This year, the first 100 inmates signed up were able to play. Ten teams were assembled for a double-elimination tournament. Also, a donut sale was held to add to the money collected.



All proceeds are donated to a non-profit organization. The Hoops for a Cure event was organized by an inmate and Corrections Counselor Danielle Picarelli and Activities Manager 2 Michael Corbacio.

SCI Coal Township’s inmate organization, Triumph, also contributed to this project. A total of \$2,100 was presented to Marley’s Mission.

Marley’s Mission’s April Kemp presented a brief overview of her mission during the Hoops for a Cure ceremony. Kemp initially came in to the institution to present at an “Impact of Crime” class in April 2017. Her story really impacted the inmates who were present, that’s why they chose to donate to this mission.



“Many of these inmates also have children, so they can definitely relate,” Picarelli said.

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SCI Cambridge Springs Inmate Community Project

SCI Cambridge Springs inmates donated their time and talents to provide blankets to local children in need. A total of 78 handmade blankets were donated to the Cambridge Springs Elementary School. School officials will disperse the blankets to children in need to lift their spirits this holiday season. The inmates made the blankets colorful and fun for the children including images of Minions, Hello Kitty, the American Flag, and the popular Cambridge Springs mascot – The Blue Devil.



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Secret Santa

In the spirit of Christmas and staff wellness, SCI Camp Hill administrators and department heads held their 3rd annual Secret Santa gift exchange. This year staff filled out a Secret Santa survey to provide information to assist their Secret Santas with likes and dislikes, and there was a Secret Santa Coordinator who kept staff entertained with weekly motivational emails and more importantly, kept everyone on track. This has proven to be a great stress reliever as staff sent inspirational messages, poems and clues and really had fun getting to know each other better. On December 15, Secret Santa ended with a luncheon and gift exchange. All staff had a great time and enjoyed providing support and fun over the holidays!



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Holiday Meals



Many people don't often think about what goes into preparing several hundred to thousands of meals three times a day in a prison. But we found two media organizations that are interested in learning specifically about holiday meal preparation. On December 22, SCI Greene will welcome two local reporters inside the prison to write stories about the holiday meals the kitchen staff and inmates will make and serve. SCI Benner Township also will allow a Centre Daily Times reporter inside their kitchen on December 22. Stay tuned for those articles!

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Ugliness Inside State Prison

SCI Cambridge Springs held an Ugly Christmas Sweater contest for employees this year to celebrate the festivities of the season. Alicia Groover, clerk typist 2, won the contest with her homemade creation.

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2017 Angel Tree Project at SCI Cambridge Springs

By Amy Boylan, Superintendent's Assistant

SCI Cambridge Springs teamed up with the Cambridge Springs Helping Hands Organization again this year to provide Christmas gifts for children in the local community. Helping Hands works with the local elementary school, receiving names of families that are in need of assistance. The children's wish lists are passed on to our facility and numerous staff from all job classification generously purchase Christmas gifts. The staff looks forward to this project every year and enjoys the opportunity to make a child smile on Christmas morning. Our facility was fortunate enough to assist 12 local families with a grand total of 25 kids this 2017 Christmas season.



Pictured, from left to right, are: Amy Boylan, Robyn Sye, Valerie Dies, Deputy Superintendent Paul Ennis, Alicia Groover and Tammy Mott.

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Reentrant Makes a Positive Impact

Earlier this month, PSP Corporal Mark Cumberland was searching the Youngsville, Pa., area for a 14-year-old girl who was reported as being a safety concern. While searching for the girl, PSP had received a call from a citizen who reported seeing a female lying on a creek bank outside of his apartment. When police arrived at the scene, the citizen immediately met them and showed them where the girl was. It was the girl they had been searching for and she had attempted suicide. The citizen was very concerned for the girl and, according to PSP, was a "huge help" to them on the scene by providing them with a towel to cover the girl with until EMS arrived.

Corporal Cumberland said that when all was said and done, the citizen informed him that he needed to inform him that he was on state parole, and he then provided the corporal with his parole officer's name.

Corporal Cumberland reached out to the parole officer and provided him with this account.

It should be noted that this citizen was released from prison in February 2016. Upon release from prison he obtained employment, completed therapeutic requirements of his board action without issues and secured his own apartment in the Youngsville, Pa. area, where he lives with his girlfriend.

His parole agent reported that this reentrant "has remained violation free and by all accounts he has reintegrated into the community nicely. The report from Corporal Cumberland of Warren PSP is another example of this individual's commitment to being a productive and responsible member of his community."

Reentrants do make positive contributions to society, and this is proof of that!

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SCI Cambridge Springs Adopts a Family for Christmas

SCI Cambridge Springs employees adopted a couple from the Crawford County area this holiday season and provided them with Christmas presents galore. The Center for Family Services passed on information about an elderly couple (William & Diana) who were in need of some basic items this year. Their Christmas wish list consisted of socks, pantyhose, winter hats, winter coats, clothing, toiletries, blankets, sheets and pillows. Facility staff came through, providing a carload of all the items requested plus some gift certificates to assist them in the coming year. The Center for Family Services will deliver these gifts to the family and prison staff was happy to be a part of blessing this family during the holidays.

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SCI Rockview Employees Participate in Angel Tree Project

SCI Rockview employees participated in the Annual Angel Tree Project. Names of families in need are provided from county Children and Youth Services.

Even service dogs Luke and Jessie got involved in such a great cause.

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Benner Township Employees Participate in Angel Tree

SCI Benner Township employees (Rockview's Neighbors) recently participated in the Angel Tree Project. This project provided 75 children from Cambria and Mifflin County Children and Youth Services with items that were identified on their wish lists. The Angel Tree Project is organized by staff at Benner Township.



Pictured, right to left, are: J. Clinemyer, B. Vaughn, J. Burd and N. Sayers.

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Sergeant Coordinates Donation for SPCA

SCI Mahanoy Sergeant Donald Malick coordinated a collection and donation for the Hillside SPCA in Minersville, Pa. The sergeant donated the following items on December 14:

- 137 cans of dog food
- 71 cans of cat food
- 11.4 pounds of dry cat food
- 16.8 pounds of dry dog food
- 10 pounds of dog biscuits
- 12 packs of treats
- 21 rolls of paper towels
- Miscellaneous cleaners, laundry detergent, blankets, toys, leashes, a dog coat and dog bed and monetary donations.



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Local Nursing Home Benefits from Collection

Jackie Yanchulis and Janet Gronski, both clerk typists at SCI Mahanoy, took up a collection of items for the Shenandoah Senior Living Nursing Home. The items were delivered on December 15.



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SCI Chester Holds First Annual "Turkey Trot"

On Thanksgiving Day, SCI Chester held its first "Turkey Trot." Sixty inmates ran a 5K race (3.1 miles) on the institution's track to raise money for Toys for Tots. Two hundred dollars was donated by the participating inmates.

SCI Chester administrative staff attended the event and cheered on all participants.

The race was won by Eduardo in a speedy time of 21 minutes, 36 seconds. All participants enjoyed the event and kicked off the holiday in a very positive fashion.

The next race is tentatively scheduled for St. Patrick's Day 2018.



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New Eastern Region Chief Named

Bureau of Correction Education Director Terri Fazio reports that Michele McMullen has been appointed Eastern Region Chief. Coming to Central Office from SCI Houtzdale, McMullen previously served as school principal at SCI Houtzdale, and prior to that she was the education guidance counselor at SCI Pine Grove.

In her new capacity, McMullen will be responsible for Title 1 and Perkins Grants oversight, vocational programs and certification, budget monitoring, compliment coordinator, vocational advisory committees, Educational Record (DC47C) and CEA Accreditation.

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OVA Lunch & Learn

The Office of Victim Advocate holds regular "Lunch & Learn" sessions for its employees covering a variety of topics.

"I wanted to share this TEDx talk that my staff," Victim Advocate Jennifer Storm said. "The work that each and every one of us does on a daily basis can be incredibly traumatizing, especially for those of you having direct contact with offenders and victims. The work we do is so important but it is not without its impact. Oftentimes this work can take us to the brink of our emotional capacity and sometimes, beyond."

Storm shared this talk with Corrections Secretary John Wetzel, Parole Board members and Pardons Board officials.

During the December 19 Lunch & Learn, employees watched a specific TEDx Talk:

Beyond the Cliff

Laura van Dernoot Lipsky

TEDxWashingtonCorrectionsCenterforWomen

"I was told early on in my career that I had an ethical responsibility to take care of myself while doing this work, otherwise, I will do more harm," Storm said. "I love this speaker and writer because she really breaks down the impact of this work, how to recognize it and with a lot of humor-how we can address it. I share it with you all in the hopes that you can take a few moments out of your day for some self-care and to watch it."

Published in April 2015, in this talk, van Dernoot offers a window into the cumulative toll that can occur when we are exposed to the suffering, hardship, crisis or trauma of humans, other living beings, or the planet itself. Held within a larger context of systematic oppression and liberation theory, we'll dive into what gets hard and how to work toward reconciling it both individually and collectively.

Laura van Dernoot Lipsky is the founder and director of the Trauma Stewardship Institute and author of Trauma Stewardship: An Everyday Guide to Caring for Self While Caring for Others. She has worked directly with trauma survivors for 28 years, including survivors of child abuse, domestic violence, sexual assault, acute trauma of all kinds, and natural disasters. Laura has been active in community organizing and movements for social and environmental justice and has taught on issues surrounding systematic oppression and liberation theory.

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SCI Dallas Employees Donate to Luzerne County Children and Youth

Every year SCI Dallas' Employee Welfare Association chairs a collection of unwrapped gifts for children in Luzerne County.



Pictured, from left to right, are: Alyson McCoy, Justin Krommes, Sarah Newell, Superintendent Lawrence Mahally, Roxanne Florek and Tammy Danna from Luzerne County Children and Youth.

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Laurel Highlands Employees Participate in Angel Tree Project

SCI Laurel Highlands corrections and parole employees participated in their annual Children's Aid Home Angel Tree Project during the month of November.



Pictured, from left to right, are: Acting Major Ben Grove, Clerk Typist 2 Joyce Shaulis, Deputy Superintendent Michelle Houser, Lt. Scott Lander, Facility Maintenance Manager 3 Dave Ponczek, Clerk Typist 2 Karen Hillegass, Deputy Superintendent Mike Tsikalas and Corrections Officer 1 L. Yost.

SCI Laurel Highlands' staff purchased gifts for the children from a "wish list" that was compiled by Children's Aid Home staff. Maintenance staff made a monetary donation for the children. All monetary donations collected from staff will be used for special occasion parties or to take the children to the movies, skiing, snow tubing, etc. The gifts and donations were distributed to the Children's Aid Home staff on December 11, 2017.

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Around The Centers...

Wernersville CCC Donates to Food Bank

In preparation for the winter months, reentrants from the Wernersville Community Corrections Center donated nonperishable food items to a local food bank in Berks County, Conrad Weiser Food Pantry. This was a good opportunity for reentrants to give back to the community in which they currently reside. We look forward to finding more ways in which we can strengthen our ties within the local community.

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Week of December 11...

My “Ride Along” with a State Parole Agent

By Susan McNaughton
DOC Communications Director

For nearly 33 years, I have experienced corrections from behind a desk and computer at the Department of Corrections Central Office. But today – thanks to a recently-signed memorandum of understanding that allows parole and corrections employees to work together in the area of field supervision – I was able to experience corrections from the parole side through a ride along with a parole agent.

As spokesperson for the Department of Corrections, my areas of responsibility prior to the MOU focused only on the corrections/prison side of things. If I was asked a parole-related question, I referred reporters to the Parole Board’s Press Office. Now, with parole supervision now under a combined DOC/PBPP, I need to educate myself about all aspects of parole.

I sought this ride-along so that I could learn about the parole side of operations firsthand, because I’m a visual learner. You can put all sorts of policies and procedure manuals in front of me, but I prefer a hands-on learning approach. And learning about what a parole agent does helps me to be able to speak confidently when responding to reporters.

What is the “MOU?”

On October 19, 2017, Governor Tom Wolf announced a Memorandum of Understanding between the DOC and PBPP. This results in the combination of the agencies’ similar, shared and overlapping resources and functions. Both agencies will remain separate from each other; however, the community supervision of parolees and all other reentry services will be combined under a new, centralized chain of command that everyone in those areas will report to and follow. The consolidation is a part of Governor Wolf’s plan to eliminate bureaucratic redundancies while still allowing the agencies to serve their individual missions.

My ride along began in the parking lot of a Cracker Barrel restaurant. I wanted to meet the parole agent somewhere in his supervision area so I wouldn't be too much of a disruption to his daily schedule. I'm sure he was hesitant about taking someone from the DOC's Central Office on a ride along all day. I know I would be.

I have to admit that I was nervous leading up to the ride along. Why? Because I wasn't sure what to expect. No, I wasn't afraid of the agent. I was afraid of the parolees and what the interaction with them would be like.

I was assigned to Parole Agent Matthew Johns.

For about 30 minutes, Johns and I sat in his car and talked. We talked about our backgrounds and found some common things related to work. He worked as a parole agent for 19 years, and before that had served as an officer at SCI Camp Hill in the 1990s. He commented that he believed before becoming a parole agent, it should be mandatory for them to spend at least a year or two working as an officer inside a prison.

As we were about to begin his day, Johns explained to me what was on schedule for the day, and then he talked to me about how he approaches homes and where I should position myself near him as we approach doors, etc.

As Johns drove, we talked briefly about the MOU and the consolidation of DOC and PBPP. We talked about the listening sessions the DOC was holding with parole employees and about the various committees that were being formed to implement the MOU.

And before I knew it, we had arrived at the first parolee's house. Johns is responsible for a mostly rural area of the state that encompasses southern Cumberland County. He spends a lot of time in his car, which is his office. His state-issued car was a non-descript Chevy Impala, with a police partition between the front and back seat areas. He had a police radio that was programmed to scan a number of police, parole, coroner and fire department frequencies. As we talked, voices would come over the radio. To me they were somewhat distracting, but to him, I could tell he was able to focus on both things – our conversation and the information coming over the radio.

Back to the first parolee. Parolee #1 lived in a small town at his mother's house, which was literally feet away from a "Drug Free Zone" sign posted at the edge of the property and across the street from a school. I found it ironic. As we approached the front door, I recalled Johns' instructions about where to stand in order to be safe. He had told me that, depending upon which way the door swung – right or left – he stood accordingly so that when the door opened he had a clear view to the inside the house.

As we stood on the door step, he rang the doorbell. There was no answer. He opened the screen door and knocked with authority saying, "Maybe the doorbell doesn't work." Again, there was no answer. We stood there for a few seconds waiting. Then Parolee #1's mother opened the door.

She greeted Johns like they were long-time friends. Johns asked how she was doing. She explained that people were sick in the house and that she just told Parolee #1 to come up from the basement where his room was. As she called for Parolee #1 again, Johns quickly glanced around the living room. What was he looking for, I wondered. Weapons? Alcohol? He later confirmed that that was in fact the case.

"I do this at every house I visit," Johns said. "I look for anything out of the ordinary that may be a sign of violations."

As Parolee #1, who is in his mid-20s and of thin build, joined us in the living room, his mother went on with her day and left us alone. While the mother invited us to sit, Johns said he was fine standing. So, there we all stood, just inside the door in the living room. They greeted each other and made some small talk. This individual was having some drug issues and needed to get into a drug program. But when he called one, he was told they weren't taking anyone at that time. The two talked about paperwork Johns would submit to the DOC's Bureau of Community Corrections (BCC) so the parolee could be referred to a program. Johns knew that Parolee #1 had been out late the night before attending a concert and that he didn't get home until around 3:30 a.m. So, Johns asked Parolee #1 if he drank or did drugs. Parolee #1 said no.

Throughout this entire interaction, Parolee #1 couldn't keep eye contact and he was fidgeting. They discussed employment options and the fact that Parolee #1 is now expected to reach out to another local drug treatment program while Johns works with the BCC on a referral to the first place. And just like that, probably a matter of 20 minutes max, the contact was over.

We now were sitting in Johns' car while he handwrote some notes about the visit. Johns asked me if I thought Parolee #1 was high. I did. But he said Parolee #1 did just wake up and was out the night before until 3:30 a.m.

I wondered why he didn't insist on a urine test, but then realized that Parolee #1 is trying to get into a drug program and can't at no fault of his own. How can you ding someone when you haven't yet been able to get them the help they need? Johns said he'll stop by next week and get a urine test from Parolee #1.

And then we were on the move again. Down rural roads and through small towns. What's interesting is that it seems parole officials, when setting rules, look at the offense and the person and then set parole rules based on those two things. But they also need to take into consideration where the parolee will live. In a rural setting there may be no transportation system to get them to/from work or to/from ordered drug programs. How are parolees supposed to get to places that are many

miles away? It's very different from parolees who live in big cities, where they can walk blocks to get places or have easy access to mass transit. Parolees in rural settings may miss appointments, work or treatment simply because they have no way to get there.

Parolee #2 lives with his father on a nice property with a garage and sheds. It's a very nice country setting. Johns enters through an open garage door and knocks on the interior door. Parolee #2 comes out, smoking a cigarette. His father had a guest in the kitchen, so Johns visited Parolee #2 in the garage. There they talked about the various automotive projects Parolee #2 has worked on. I'm told he's very bright and can take any engine and get it working. He's repaired many vehicles. He seems to be doing well, except for the fact that information he needs to send to PennDOT due to his crime being a DUI hasn't been received by PennDOT. This is delaying his ability to get his license and then travel to his various parole-ordered appointments, etc. Johns said he'd get right on it when he returned to his actual office, which is located in Chambersburg.

Johns cares about his job and his parolees. He admits that there are some he doesn't like, but liking them isn't really part of the job. His job is to make sure parolees follow the rules and that they aren't a problem for public safety. Johns says that he takes time to get to know the parolee and their families or people they reside with. His interaction with everyone is polite and even friendly at times, but it's clear to everyone that he can be friendly and still be a parole agent. And make no mistake, Johns can and has brought the hammer down on individuals who can't or won't follow rules.

I left Parolee #2's house feeling good about him, but also feeling angry about his license issue. He's on the right track, but this one issue is holding him up. I liked Parolee #2 because he was personable. He made eye contact, shook our hands and held a full conversation, unlike Parolee #1.

Johns has 54 active cases on his workload that range in the type of supervision they require. Some he has to see more often, while others he only has to see every two months. He said he doesn't like to visit parolees at their places of employment for a couple of reasons – maybe their coworkers don't know he's on parole and taking them away from their work - even for a short period of time - is disruptive. He arranges his schedule so he can visit the parolees at home or on their lunch hours. Again, if he has to visit them at work he would, he just prefers not to.

We're on the road again. We stopped by two other parolee's houses, but neither were there so he moved on to the next. He knew the one parolee drove a specific car and that the car wasn't there. He said he'll stop back later. The same was the case for a female parolee. He seems to know his parolees rather well.

Johns stops in a parking lot to make some notes.

After finishing with his notes, Johns puts up with my questions about the parole process. He walks me through everything. He's got a nice way about him that makes him easy to talk to. I like him. While we're stopped, he's preparing for and educating me about the home plan investigation, because that's what's next.

His navigation system guides him to a very nice housing development and two-story corner house in the Boiling Springs area. The lady greets us at the door. Her son is in prison for a number of robberies that he committed to support his heroin addiction. He's 28 years old, and while he did a stint with county, this is his first state prison incarceration. His minimum is in March 2018.

Parole agents receive packets from their counterparts that work inside our state prisons. It provides the agent with a complete picture/history of the inmate. The DOC and parole work to have home plan investigations done well in advance of an inmate's minimum sentence expiration date so that the inmate, if approved for parole, can be released on parole as close to his/her minimum date as possible. So this investigation is taking place four months prior to the inmate's potential release on parole.

We are greeted by his 48-year-old mother. In the basement is her significant other, her daughter and her grandson, the inmate's child. Her "mother-in-law" is in her room. We sit at a high-top table immediately to the side of her kitchen. Her house is very nice and nicely decorated for the Christmas holiday season.

Johns introduces himself and they begin the conversation. He provides her with a document that consists of a checklist of general parole rules every parolee is expected to follow. He has memorized this list over the years and provides the information to her as she reads along. He goes down the list of things the parolee won't be able to do or be around, such as alcohol and weapons. And he asks her, "Do you have any weapons in this house." She's nervous and says no. He lightens the mood by rattling off all sorts of things that could be weapons. She recalls there are arrows in the garage. Johns told her to just get rid of them for his safety.

He continues down the list and explains about the parolee not being allowed to go to establishments that sell alcohol. Johns explains the difference between a restaurant that sells alcohol versus a bar. It's the bar scene they don't want parolees to enter.

Johns talks to the mother about the fact that he can search the property at any time for her son or for any item that he shouldn't have or be around; and that he doesn't need a warrant to do so.

Introduction Yes No
 Conditions/Special Conditions Yes No
 Current/Prior Record Yes No
 Business Card Given Yes No
 Moving Policy Yes No
 Weapon Policy Yes No
 Rights to Search Yes No
 Domestic Violence Checklist Yes No
 Home Provider Agreement Yes No

Section 8 Public Housing Yes No
 Landlord and telephone number _____
 Contacted: Yes No

OFFICE PROCEDURES
 Location/Hours Yes No
 Office/Field Contacts Yes No
 Electronic Monitoring Yes No

Home provider received a signed copy Yes No

Home				
Name	Age	Relationship to offender	Sources of Income	Criminal Record

Sources of conflict: drug/alcohol users marital infidelity conditions still existing that led to initial arrest
 Other: _____

Responsibilities of offender: Rent Room Board Rules
 Other: _____

Number of exits _____ Sleeping arrangements _____

Directions to housing _____

Proximity to employment _____ Transportation available Yes No

Employment
 Is employer aware of current offense/criminal record? Yes No
 Job Information: Days worked _____ Hours _____
 Wage _____
 Will offender need to travel outside district for job? Yes No
 Will employer allow Agent to see offender on job site? Yes No
 Directions to employment (if applicable) _____

So many more rules are shared, and he also obtains information on every person living in the house. She becomes upset several times during the investigation, and actually breaks down crying. She appears to be a good woman and admitted that she never imagined that her son would be in this position or that she would be in this position. She had a lot of great questions.

Her questions made me think that perhaps the DOC needs to do a better job helping families of inmates, especially those where it's the first time their loved one is in prison. They have so many questions, but oftentimes they are treated as though they are the offender. And I also thought that she needed some sort of inmate family support group.

Her son's incarceration had her questioning how she raised her son and

had her revisiting what seemed like a traumatic childhood. Her son's criminal activity greatly affected her in this way, and she missed her son. She was suffering and felt alone.

Johns let her talk. He listened to her, and he answered her questions. And he kept the investigation moving. Now it was time for the tour of the house. He said, "I'm not checking for cleanliness. I just need to see how the house is laid out."

She took us on a tour of her house and again it hit her... how is it possible that she is even in this position? Johns talked to her about heroin addiction. They talked about how people need to be accountable for and take ownership of their action. He also told her that together they are a team. For the next 10 years that this individual is on parole and for however long he lives with his mother, she and Johns will work together to put the inmate on the right path. After a great deal of time, we left.

When he was finished, Johns obtained her signature on a form that is the "home provider agreement letter," which essentially puts into writing everything he just spoke with her about.

pennsylvania
BOARD OF PROBATION AND PAROLE
HOME PROVIDER AGREEMENT LETTER

NAME: _____ Parole Number: _____

I have been advised of the conditions of supervision of the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole.

I understand this offender will be required to live at this residence, if approved, for a minimum period of six months unless written permission is given by parole supervision staff.

I understand that the offender must have access to the residence at all times and must be provided with a key.

I understand that parole supervision staff conduct scheduled and unannounced home visits at any time.

I hereby authorize and give consent to parole supervision staff to search the subject residence for the offender or for violations of the conditions of supervision and I agree that I will not deny them access to this residence. I understand that if I deny access to parole supervision staff or refuse my consent to search this residence, the laws of Pennsylvania give parole supervision staff the authority and responsibility to force entry into my residence to search for the offender or for violations of the conditions of supervision without the need for a warrant if any time when reasonable suspicion exists that conditions of supervision have been violated.

I understand the offender may be subjected to a mandatory curfew. If so, compliance with this curfew may be verified by electronic means and/or personal visits by parole supervision staff. I understand that this may require the receipt of random telephone calls. If electronic monitoring equipment is attached to my telephone, I understand that special telephone services such as CALLER ID, CALL WAITING and THREE WAY CALLING will have to be removed. I will grant access to parole supervision staff to remove monitored equipment.

I understand the offender is not permitted to live in a residence where firearms or other weapons are kept including look-alike firearms such as air rifles, starter pistols and toy guns. I hereby certify that no firearms, look-alike firearms or such other weapons are in this residence nor will they be brought into this residence as long as the offender is residing here.

I understand the offender will not be permitted to associate with anyone using or selling drugs and I certify that no one who resides in this residence refers use or sells illegal drugs.

I understand that if the offender stops reporting there will be a search of the residence. Parole supervision staff may return to re-search until the offender is located.

I understand that anyone interfering in the lawful arrest of an offender is subject to arrest and prosecution for Obstructing Administration of Law or Other Governmental Function (18 Pa. C.S. § 5101) and if convicted can be sentenced to one to two years imprisonment.

I may be subpoenaed to appear at hearings to give testimony regarding any violations of supervision.

I certify that I am the principal owner or lessee of this property and that in granting the offender permission to reside here, I agree to all of the above conditions. If this is a rental property, I also understand that the landlord must agree to allow the offender to reside at the proposed residence.

NAME OF HOME PROVIDER: _____

HOME PROVIDER'S ADDRESS: _____

SIGNATURE AND DATE: _____

I have read and understood all of the terms and conditions of this agreement.

PAROLE AGENT SIGNATURE: _____

PBPP-30H
(Rev. 02/2013)

Are you qualified to be a state parole agent?

Minimum education and experience required:

- Four years of paraprofessional experience which includes two years of paraprofessional social services, human services, corrections, or law enforcement experience; OR
- Two years of paraprofessional social services, human services, corrections, or law enforcement experience, and an associate's degree; OR
- A bachelor's degree in criminal justice, law enforcement, legal studies, political science, behavioral science, or a related field; OR
- An equivalent combination of experience and training.

Learn more by visiting the Probation and Parole website at www.pbpp.pa.gov

I felt drained and told Johns that I couldn't handle a whole day filled with investigations like that. We went to lunch.

During lunch we talked about prisons and parole. And then we were off to check on another parolee. Parolee #3 only needed minimal supervision, but he wasn't home. His 83-year-old mother answered the door and greeted Johns like they were family. They joked and laughed, and Johns said he'd check back.

This was our last visit for the day. He drove me back to the Cracker Barrel. We talked a bit more and he offered for me to join him again.

I totally enjoyed this opportunity, and I think I

lucked out where parole agents are concerned. Johns has many years of experience. He seems to care about the role he plays in an individual's return to society after incarceration. I'm sure a majority of parole agents are just like him.

What stuck with me the most was the home plan investigation and how one inmate's incarceration and addiction can devastate so many and how those people are sometimes forgotten and suffer in silence.

I also was amazed with Johns. Yes, he has to keep track of his parolees and make sure they behave and follow rules, but he's also a reentry expert. He has to know about job opportunities and helps parolees to find jobs. He has to know about treatment facilities and programs and refers his parolees to them. He takes time to get to know everyone involved, which benefits him as a parole agent and also helps them to feel human.

I thoroughly enjoyed this opportunity and thank Matthew Johns for letting me spend the day with him.

Next, I plan to spend a day in a state prison parole office to see how the inmate parole process begins and how the compile the home plan investigation packet that is then sent to the agent in the field. Stay tuned...

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Parole Employees Participate in Turkey Trot

By Thomas Tarrant, Supervisor
Philadelphia Northwest Division Unit 2

Our office raised \$396 for the 25th Annual Turkey Trot benefiting the Face to Face Organization which serves the same community that we do here in Germantown. Myself, Supervisor O'Rourke and Agent Bachman ran in the race. Out of 1,100 runners Agent Bachman finished 35th, O'Rourke 264th, and Tarrant 336th. Next year we hope to raise even more for the community engagement and have more runners or walkers from our office. Thank you to everyone for donating.

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Angels at the Academy

By Susan Bryan, Food Service Supervisor
DOC Training Academy

One of the best gifts you could give to someone during the holiday season is hope!

The 10th Annual Training Academy Angel Tree Project was a huge success!

On December 12, Bear Creek Elementary School in Elizabethtown received our presents for the children. The counseling office every year identifies several families with children that legitimately need help during the Christmas season.

Thank you to our staff and Basic Training Group 774 for your cash donations and those of you that bought presents. West Shore Friends was able to provide an outfit and a coat/shoes and several toys for the 20 little girls and boys we sponsored. Academy staff also collected \$500 in gift cards at our employee holiday party and gave them to West Shore friends who helps us with our Angel Tree Project every year.

We are confident these children will be very happy when they open their presents Christmas morning! Look below, and you will understand the magnitude of generosity that will reach these children this year!



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SCI Albion Delivers Gifts to Food Pantry

On December 12, SCI Albion staff delivered gifts to the Northwestern Food Pantry. Each year staff partake in the "Gifts for Kids" program to assist in providing a Christmas to underprivileged children in the community. This year staff were very generous and provided numerous gifts for 71 children in 36 local families.



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Shoot to Swish for Make-A-Wish

SCI Coal Township's Activities Department has concluded its **"Shoot to Swish for Make-A-Wish"** foul shot fundraising competition.

Each participant was given 90 seconds to shoot baskets from the foul line area and raised money through donations. All proceeds will be donated to the Make-A-Wish Foundation of Greater Pennsylvania, Pottsville Regional Office. The Make-A-Wish Foundation is a non-profit organization that grants wishes to children under the age of 18 with life-threatening medical conditions. This year, a total of \$1,184 will be donated to Make-A-Wish.

Activities Department staff noted that this year's Make-A-Wish fundraiser brings a 12-year donation total to \$8,122.15. Special thanks were extended to all SCI Coal Township staff and to Triumph Inmate Organization for donations.



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SCI Houtzdale Employees Participate in Christmas Program for Less Fortunate Children

The Philipsburg YMCA Christmas program had over 500 less fortunate children this year. Several area businesses and organizations volunteer to play Santa for these children to get the requested items on their Christmas lists. The Christmas program covers Clearfield and Centre Counties, including Philipsburg, Osceola, West Branch and Moshannon Valley School Districts. A week prior to Christmas, the families get to stop by and pick up their gifts for their children, so they can be under the tree in time for Christmas.

SCI Houtzdale employees graciously took 50 children's names to provide them with a special Christmas. They planned a wrapping/pizza party to ensure all gifts were accounted for and wrapped nicely for them. As in years past, the staff were generous in the number of gifts they purchased for these children.



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Frackville Employees Collect, Donate Toys

SCI Frackville's Salvation Army Annual Angel Tree Toy Collection supervised by Feye and Sam.



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Holiday Greetings from SCI Frackville

Sam, Feye and Tucker wish everyone a happy holiday season.



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SCI Mercer Donates to the Salvation Army Treasures for Children Toy Drive

The toys for Treasures for Children have been delivered again this Holiday Season!

Annually, SCI Mercer staff participate in the Treasures for Children toy drive sponsored by the Sharon Salvation Army. The Salvation Army provides gift tags for young child from the local communities that staff choose from to purchase gifts. Each tag indicates the first name, age and gender of the child, sizes for clothing items and several toy items the child would like.

Staff donated many gifts for the children to have a treasure to remember for the holiday. Thanks to all who participated in this annual event to brighten the lives of many from the local communities.

Happy Holidays to all from SCI Mercer.



Pictured, left to right, are: Superintendent's Assistant Andrea Shiock, Officer Sandra Sweet, Officer Andrew Roof and Superintendent's Secretary Amanda Bistransin.

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Magnani Named BCE Chief

The DOC's Bureau of Correction Education announces that Jeffrey Magnani has been appointed as the new Specialized Facilities/Programs Bureau Chief.

Chief Magnani, is most recently from the Pennsylvania Department of Education, but also formerly held the school principal positions at SCIs Somerset, Laurel Highlands and Benner Township.

In his new capacity, Magnani will oversee Special Education Programs & Compliance, Teacher Certification, Victims Awareness Education (VAE), Library/Law Library, Commonwealth Secondary



Program & Compliance, etc., as well as the following SCI: Camp Hill, Coal Township, Forest, Houtzdale, Muncy, Pine Grove, Quehanna Boot Camp, Retreat and Somerset.

Please join the Bureau in welcoming Jeffrey Magnani to our Central Office team.

Wishing you all a safe and Happy Holiday Season.

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SCI Waymart to be Institutional Partner with St. Tikhon's Seminary's CPE Program

St. Tikhon's Seminary has enjoyed a decades-long relationship with SCI Waymart as a Field Education Placement Site for seminarians preparing for ministry in the Orthodox Church. Archpriest John Kowalczyk, an SCI Waymart facility chaplain and director of field education at the seminary, has worked closely with SCI Waymart staff and the inmate population for nearly 30 years so that seminarians gain valuable insights in the midst of ministry with incarcerated persons.



Joseph Grillo, corrections classification and program manager, had just entered his new position while St. Tikhon's was preparing for an accreditation review with the Association for Theological Schools. They required a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining this relationship. Archpriest Steven Voytovich, seminary dean, worked closely with Joseph and Department of Corrections staff on

the MOU. One very positive outcome of this effort was the elevation of seminarians from volunteers to interns at SCI Waymart.

In its most recent move, St. Tikhon's is developing a Clinical Pastoral Education (CPE) program based at the seminary. The MOU currently in place was reshaped over the summer to now reflect seminarians completing a unit of CPE that is nationally recognized training for ministry in a variety of settings. This document has just been returned with the signature of DOC Secretary John Wetzel.

Fr. Steven, in receiving this completed MOU said, "Over the past two years this already strong relationship between St. Tikhon's and SCI Waymart has been strengthened further, with an even brighter future ahead!"

He added that, "very few CPE programs across the country presently involve ministry to incarcerated persons."

Once the initial accreditation is received from the Association for Clinical Pastoral Education (ACPE), facility staff will be able to participate in this program alongside St. Tikhon's Seminarians under the supervision of Father John Kowalczyk. Mr. Grillo has been selected as the vice chairman of the Professional Advisory Committee for this new program. Fr. Steven is a certified educator with ACPE and will be conducting the program, of which he said, "We are excited about the opportunities ahead in developing ministry with incarcerated persons and developing a first-class training program together with SCI Waymart!"

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Rowe Named Greene's EOM

Registered Nurse Supervisor and former SCI Pittsburgh employee, Gail Rowe, was selected as SCI Greene's Employee of the Month for December. Rowe began her career with the Department of Veterans Affairs on January 22, 2013, as a nurse manager 1. In May 2014, she transferred to SCI Pittsburgh as a registered nurse supervisor. Then, in April 2017, she transferred to SCI Greene.

Rowe has embraced her role as a registered nurse supervisor at SCI Greene. She utilizes her vast knowledge and experience from previous employment, provides guidance, direction and advice to those she supervises and possess outstanding leadership skills. In addition, she volunteered to assist off-site for community and Department of Corrections activities such as routine testing for state employees, adjunct training at the DOC Training Academy and TB testing for the parole/probation staff at Pittsburgh CCC.

Rowe is respected by her supervisors, co-workers, subordinates and the inmates of SCI Greene for being approachable, knowledgeable and fair.

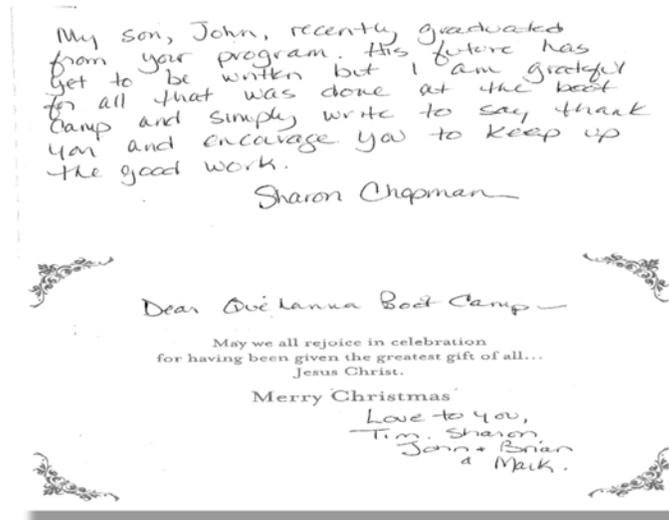
"Her positive attitude and consistent job performance are indicative of her prospects for a productive and successful career in Corrections," said SCI Greene Superintendent Robert Gilmore. "She is truly an outstanding employee and an asset to this institution and the Department of Corrections. She is very deserving of being named as Employee of the Month."



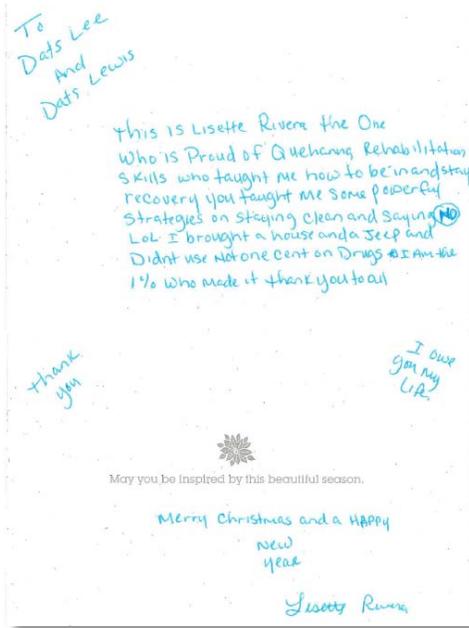
Superintendent Robert Gilmore and Gail Rowe.

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A Mother's Thanks



Thanks from a Boot Camp Graduate



Recent Quehanna Boot Camp graduate Lisette Rivera sent this note to several boot camp employees:

"This is Lisette Rivera the One who is proud of Quehanna Rehabilitation skills who taught me how to be in and stay in recovery.

You taught me some powerful strategies on staying clean and saying NO.

I bought a house and a Jeep and didn't use one cent on drugs. I am the 1% who made it. Thanks to you all."

Waymart Conducts Tour

Members of the University of Scranton's Criminal Justice Club toured SCI Waymart on December 1. Corrections Superintendent's Assistant Joseph Vinansky and Corrections Vocational Employment Coordinator Joseph Chiumento led the tour. Students visited the restricted housing unit (RHU) and were briefed on the procedures for processing RHU inmates in administrative and disciplinary custody status. RHU Lt. James Hendrick provided an explanation on how inmates are screened and evaluated before being placed in cells. Lt. Hendrick also demonstrated the tools that are used by cell entry teams to remove disruptive inmates from their cells. This included the use of batons, hand-held immobilization devices and shields and the use of chemical agents. Students also toured the infirmary, personal care unit, therapeutic community and forensic treatment center. Students had the opportunity to speak with several graduates of the University of Scranton who are currently employed at SCI Waymart. They included Joseph Vinansky, Joseph Chiumento, Sgt. John Kranick and Forensic Psychological Services Associate Eric Reakes.



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K-9 Recipient Visits SCI Greene

On November 28, canine recipient Lindsay Jones and Amber visited SCI Greene for a second time before heading back to their home in Colorado. Amber was in one of the first groups of canines trained at SCI Greene that graduated from the program and has become a full service dog. Lindsay explained how having Amber made it possible for her to move from Colorado and attend the University of Pennsylvania to study environmental biology. Amber is a cardiac alert dog, and can sense changes in Lindsay's heart rate and blood pressure. Lindsay described how Amber lies on her chest when her heart rate is low and lies on her legs when her heart rate becomes high. Lindsay is a long-distance runner and during a training session Amber was able to sense a drop in her heart rate from 200 meters away. Lindsay admitted having a full-time service dog has been challenging, but she is forever grateful to the inmates who trained her and the way she has changed her life.



Pictured, left to right, are: Superintendent Robert Gilmore, Lindsay Jones, Erica Seaver-Engel and Amber.

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Around the Centers...

Cleaning Up Trash

On December 8, ADAPPT employees and reentrants assisted the City of Reading and the Reading Northern Railroad Line in cleaning up around a bridge on Schuylkill Avenue where the train travels.



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Week of December 4...

Shop with a Hero

By Nicole Baker, Parole Supervisor
Franklin General Supervision Unit 7303

Four parole agents from the Franklin Sub Office participated in a program called Shop with a Hero. Underprivileged children from Venango County were given a \$100 Walmart card and got to shop with a "Hero" from the law enforcement community. They were allowed to spend the money on themselves or they could choose to use the money to buy gifts for their family members. After they were done shopping, the hero and their child were provided a meal at Subway. Approximately 30 children participated in the event and were paired up with a member of the law enforcement community. Some children were lucky enough to shop with two.



LEFT, left to right, are Agents Sarah Lind, Karen See, Laurie Spence, and Jim Breth.

BELOW, Agent Sarah Lind and her shopper.





LEFT:
Trooper
O'Toole of
Franklin PSP
with his
shopper, and
Agent Jim
Breth and his
shopper.



RIGHT:
Agent Laurie
Spence with
her shopper,
Agent Karen
See and her
shopper, and
Paramedic
Whitehill.

BELOW: A group photo of all law enforcement officers who participated in Shop with a Hero.



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Frackville Holds “Day of Responsibility”

On November 1, SCI Frackville held its first Annual Day of Responsibility. The goal of this daylong seminar was to raise awareness among incarcerated individuals and community members of the personal value in assuming accountability for one’s actions and living responsible lives. We wish to challenge men and outside guests to consider the impact of crime on victims, families and community while at the same time inspiring them to assume responsibility in their everyday lives.



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DOC Staff Tours Rikers Island

Some DOC staff members had the opportunity to tour Rikers Island, New York City’s main jail complex, this week, specifically to learn more about their opioid treatment program. Staff shared best practices in hopes of taking new information back home to Pennsylvania.



Senior Policy Analyst Madeline McPherson (pictured) was one of the PA DOC employees who visited Rikers. Of the visit she said, “It was an eye-opening experience.”

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Secretary Wetzel Discusses Early Childhood Education

On November 28, a documentary film crew from Siskel/Jacobs Productions interviewed Secretary Wetzel at SCI Phoenix.

The topic of discussion was the importance of early childhood education. Deb Sahd, special assistant to the secretary, was also in attendance.



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SCI Frackville Celebrates Mascots' Birthdays

On November 29, SCI Frackville celebrated mascots Feye and Sam's 2nd Birthday. Staff who adopted from the DAWGS Prison Program were permitted to bring in their puppies for a birthday party with Feye and Sam. They also were able to visit with the dog handlers.

Handler Thomas writes on behalf of all of the dog handlers:

"The program started in April 2016 and what we teach in this program is basic obedience training and socialization so the dogs can get adopted to good families. We thought the program would be easy, then when we each got our first dog on April 12, 2016, we realized this would be much more than just a job. The program does so much more than just get dogs adopted. It eases some of the tensions and stress that comes with being incarcerated. I have personally witnessed some of the hardest criminals who project the toughest attitudes turn into a kid who just got what he wanted for Christmas



when they get a chance to interact with the dogs. Since the beginning of the program I have cared for 18 dogs that were adopted, and we have had around 100 dogs go through the program so far. Each one loved and cared for by inmates, and I believe the dogs have helped us as much as we have helped them, and this was proven to me when we had Feye and Sam's Birthday party. All the dogs remembered us and were so happy see us handlers."

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Muncy Unveils New Kitchen

SCI Muncy's Maintenance Department recently completed construction of a new Culinary Arts Kitchen addition which included a total renovation of the existing home economics area, modifying walls and installation of commercial kitchen equipment.



This was an especially challenging maintenance project because it required a total upgrade of the electrical distribution system to the entire Education Building.

A special "Thanks" goes out to all the tradesman and their details for the pride and dedication to a job well done. The hands-on experience and training that our details are provided in completing challenging projects such as these promotes and fosters a good work ethic as well as skills that remain with them long after they leave Muncy.



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Forest Names EOM

SCI Forest Superintendent Michael Overmyer has named Corrections Officer 1 D. Rook as the prison's employee of the month for December 2017.



Rook was nominated by his peers due to his professionalism and the fact that he is a cornerstone of the A Unit team.

"Your exemplary work ethic is inspiration to your fellow co-workers," Overmyer said.

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Director Little Testifies Before SJC

On December 5, DOC Chief Deputy Secretary for Community Corrections and Reentry George Little provided testimony before a Senate Judiciary Committee hearing held in Pittsburgh. SJC Chairman Senator Stewart Greenleaf and Senator Sharif Street held such hearings across the state. In the Philadelphia area, Regional Deputy Secretary Mike Wenerowicz provided comments. The traveling SJC hearings discuss the issue of prison reform among other criminal justice issues, such as mass incarceration, mandatory minimums and the opioid epidemic.

In Pittsburgh Deputy Little said:

"Effective reentry, based on evidence-based practices promotes public safety and we conduct this work in partnership with the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole.

We believe that reentry begins upon an individual's arrival at the DOC, where an assessment of needs is conducted and where we begin working to address the needs of these individuals while they are in DOC. Then we work to transition the more than 90% of individuals home through services provided in partnership with the PBPP, community corrections center and community services providers.

Data shows that if we can keep an individual from going too far into the criminal justice/prison system and if we can minimize the interruption to families, individuals will have better outcomes in the long run."



Little talked about the population reduction the DOC has experienced even in the face of challenges. He talked about the DOC/PBPP's work to increase resources for parole officers and work to expand the use of Medication Assisted Treatment in both the SCIs and in the community.

He ended his testimony with, "Our mission goes beyond just incarceration. We play a part in the overall healing process."

Following his comments, the SJC heard from a number of criminal justice stakeholders.

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Reentry Success Story

John C., who was released from prison in March 2016, recently shared information with SCI Laurel Highlands officials:

"I have had some great times and some scary times since my release. But all of the experiences have sharpened who I am today and who I want to be.



So, I was released in March of 2016. I immediately got a job with a friend who had a window cleaning company. On May 14th I fell 30 feet and got seriously hurt. I lost that job and had a long recovery period. I tried CareerLink for two weeks, not getting any results, I started to seek jobs at job site in town.

I finally got one with a contracting company as a laborer. I then moved into painting for 8 months. I am now an assistant superintendent. I have an office, and people rely on me and report to me. Most don't know my

history, and those that do are surprised that I don't carry an attitude that I'm owed something. I quickly made a good reputation with showing up on time and doing my job. Not stealing, not being an idiot. I know how hard it is to find work, and I am grateful for the chance.

Personally, I am busy as I can be. I have goals and I am making sacrifices to achieve them. I want to buy a house next year, so I work two jobs plus I am working my own small handyman jobs.

I have a great girlfriend who sees who I am today not where I came from. About 6 months ago I adopted a beautiful dog from the Humane Society -- her name is Marilyn Monroe, I know the name, right, but she came with it and I couldn't change it. But turns out she is a real diva. She's my buddy. I even get to take her to my office for work.



*Life is good, life is what you make of it. No one owes you anything and you have to earn it. Hard work and as much support that you can have are the keys that I've used. There are times that I don't want to hear it, but I listen and work on myself. My two mottos in life are 'onward and upward - never go back.' And the second is 'everyone steps in sh*t, it's how you clean your shoes that matters.'*

I hope that something written here reaches you and that you also choose to take the hard road and to do the right thing."

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SCI Laurel Highlands Inmates Create Craft Items for Kids

On November 30, numerous Transitional Housing Unit (THU) participants at SCI Laurel Highlands gathered voluntarily to assist in a light-hearted, good deed.

On that day, if you passed by the THU group room, it was not the typical scene. Instead it was a time spent enjoying one another's company. Participants of all ages, races, etc. sat together, laughing and shared jokes while they painted popsicle sticks in preparation for children who come to the visiting room over the holidays in order to make holiday crafts.

Children visit their parents in prison, and SCI Laurel Highlands provides items during the holiday season to help make those visits more enjoyable for everyone. THU inmates help to make the craft items – making holiday times in prison a little less prison-like for the smallest of visitors.



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Mercer's VSU Toured by Officials

SCI Mercer staff welcomed members of the Allegheny County Veterans Court team to tour the Veterans Service Unit (VSU) on December 1. Unit Manager Lisa Graves explained the VSU program to the group, after which, the members spoke one-on-one with inmates housed on the VSU.



Superintendent Brian Thompson (left) with Chief Deputy Warden David Zetwo, former major of the guard at SCI Mercer, who coordinated the visit with Deputy Superintendent Lee Estock.



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Coal Township Employees Participate in “Secret Santa” Program

SCI Coal Township employees have participated in Northumberland County Children and Youth Services’ “Secret Santa” Christmas program for the past 21 years. The county’s program provides services to more than 1,200 children each year. This program is organized by many volunteers who dedicate their time and energy to collecting and distributing Christmas gifts to needy children.

Grace Piaseczny, human resource assistant at the prison, coordinated this event for the prison every year. This year, Grace’s sister, Cathy Dapra, helped organize the event.

“I enjoyed helping this year. It was fun to see all of the gifts roll in,” Dapra said.

Staff from all departments, including administration, food service, non-uniformed, support staff, maintenance and corrections officers purchase and wrap gifts which are then delivered by Children & Youth staff to the families thorough out Northumberland County.



SCI Coal Township HR Assistant Grace Piaseczny and Clerk Typist Cathy Dapra are pictured with gifts collected for the Northumberland County Children and Youth Christmas Gift Program.

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Muncy Education Highlights



SCI – Muncy Education Department Staff, 2017

Fiber Optics

By Melvin Alexander

The prison's Fiber Optic training class has had great success. All students passed the final test, with two of the 10 inmates attaining 100% on the test!

Inside Out

By Cathy Pickett

The current Inside Out class is wrapping up in the Education Department. Students from Bucknell University have been coming to SCI Muncy each and every Wednesday evening to participate in a college level psychology class. The class focuses on how one can create a more positive and happy life, despite their circumstances. The outside Bucknell students are in class with 12 of our very own inside students. Inside students are selected based on their reading ability, interest and their compliance with programming and misconduct record.

The Inside Out Program is a program started nearly 30 years ago through Temple University. Colleges all over country participate in this program and all students, inside and outside, have found the program to be a very beneficial and rewarding experience. On a side note, we have had at least two individuals from outside colleges apply for jobs with the DOC, largely as a result of their experience with the Inside Out Program. One currently works as a COT at SCI Muncy. We hope to continue our relationship with Bucknell to ensure that this program is available for many years to come. Bloomsburg University has also been involved in providing Inside Out classes at our institution.

Pell Grant Program

By Cathy Pickett

Bloomsburg University current hosts a 24-credit Second Chance Pell Grant program to our inmate students. Students who successfully meet the requirements of the program and who pass the classes will be awarded a Certificate in Rehabilitative Justice from Bloomsburg University, at the completion of their studies. Classes are held each Monday and Tuesday evenings in the Education Department. Students must qualify for Federal Pell Grant money to participate in this program. They may not have certain crimes and they must have a high school or GED diploma. Positive housing unit report and successful completion of DOC programming is also reviewed prior to placement in this program.

Students are currently taking classes in Critical Thinking and Interpersonal Communications. New classes will begin in January with those students who remain at SCI Muncy. At this time, no new additional students can be added to the classes. The success of this program is dependent on our second shift security staff who ensure that students are in class and that the teacher has the needed materials to effectively instruct the students.

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Prison Rape Elimination Act: A 5-Year Update

By Allison Beck

The Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) PREA was passed in 2003 with unanimous support from both parties in congress. This federal policy was put into effect within the Department of Corrections (DOC) in August 2012 when the Department of Justice made the law effective. A great deal of data collection and research was done between 2003 and 2012 to establish effective PREA standards. Since its implication in 2012, PREA has led to the improvement of inmate safety within the State Correctional Institutions (SCIs), as well as the Bureau of Community Corrections (BCC).

The conclusion of the first PREA audit cycle was August 19, 2016, and all facilities were found to be compliant with PREA standards. Auditing is done every three years. The second round of auditing began in October 2016, and is still in progress. So far, 15 facilities are PREA-compliant in this second round of auditing. Auditing is one way to monitor the progress made in each facility and confirm that they are operating by PREA standards.

“Our motive is doing the right thing because it’s the right thing to do. If at least one person is helped by the program, that makes the enhanced security all worthwhile.”

Shirley Moore Smeal
Executive Deputy Secretary

"The fact that all facilities met PREA compliance for the first auditing cycle is a phenomenal feat," said David Radziewicz, PREA Coordinator. "PREA standards require sound, thorough correctional practices day in and day out." David was selected as one of eight peer reviewers to further guarantee PREA compliance across many states.

For the first audit cycle, the PA DOC contracted out for audits. In 2016, the department entered into a multi-state circular auditing consortium involving three other states – Maryland, Michigan and Wisconsin – for the purpose of conducting and receiving PREA audits. Overall, this consortium leads to more consistency, and ultimately improves the auditing process in a variety of ways. It is cost-saving for the DOC, strengthens the department's audit preparation efforts, and allows for PREA auditors to share best practices with facility leaders.

No area of the DOC is untouched by PREA. Keeping all facilities in full PREA compliance is a joint effort. Secretary John Wetzel and Executive Deputy Secretary (EDS) Shirley Moore Smeal oversee all PREA-related efforts. Carole Ann Mattis, Director of Standards, Audits and Accreditation and David Radziewicz, PREA Coordinator, are very hands-on. David receives a massive amount of support from Jessica Delaney and David Fisher. Having knowledgeable staff within all facilities is also vital to PREA's success.

"We are always looking to enhance our process to ensure the safety of our inmates," said Shirley Moore Smeal, DOC Executive Deputy Secretary. "Our motive is doing the right thing because it's the right thing to do. If at least one person is helped by the program, that makes the enhanced security all worthwhile."

The ultimate goal of PREA is for the DOC to guarantee zero tolerance toward all forms of sexual abuse and sexual harassment. Enforcing PREA standards results in a safer environment by ensuring that all aspects of operations work toward preventing, detecting and responding to such conduct. One aspect of this is reporting sexual crimes. PREA also focuses on preventing retaliation of those who report incidents.

The National PREA Resource Center helps with the interpretation of PREA and provides guidance for inmates. Another resource, the PREA Risk Assessment Tool (PRAT), helps by determining the likeliness that an inmate will be either a victim or a predator. PRAT results affect housing assignments, jobs, etc. Inmate interviews have been vital in ensuring the effectiveness of PREA.

Policy implications have not remained stagnant within the past five years. In 2016, the policy was formally revised to further enhance its existing prevention. These revisions were made to improve the detection and response of procedures, formalize the procedures to ensure appropriate housing and placement decisions for transgender and intersex inmates, and improve directives for data collection and retention.

These policy decisions were made as a result of a series of in-person meetings between PREA Compliance Managers (PCMs), SCIs and the BCC. The specific goals of these meetings were to find ways to improve the PCM's knowledge of the PREA standards and the DOC's PREA policy, increase awareness of the needs of LGBTQ

inmates/reentrants, and sensitize individuals to the needs of employing trauma-informed approaches to survivors of sexual abuse and harassment.

Approximately 180 inmates in the Pennsylvania DOC identify as transgender/intersex, and half of them have been diagnosed with gender dysphoria. With a growing population of transgender/intersex inmates and reentrants, keeping that population safe has recently been a major focus area. Transgender inmates are 13 times more likely to be sexually assaulted than any other inmate.



Officials hold monthly videoconferences for transgender inmates to discuss issues. Individuals with TransCentral PA are included in these meetings.

The PA DOC has been a leader in transgender issues, with their Transgender Support Group presentation being featured at the ACA Winter Conference. Dr. Rachel Levine, Acting Secretary and Physician General, is a major advocate for the LGBTQ population, and has been an important resource during this process.

Safe and secure facilities are the goal; it is part of the "Care" component in "Care, Custody and Control." EDS Shirley Moore Smeal would like to give recognition to the PREA Compliance Division Bureau for getting all facilities PREA compliant within five years, and for having excellent reports from reviewers. Facilities being so knowledgeable on the issue is a major component of the policy's successful implication.

While there are occasionally unfounded allegations, PREA has proved to be a positive force in the DOC. It has made facilities safer for inmates, allowing them to focus on rehabilitation and reentry.

Allison Beck was an intern in the DOC's Press Office until December 5 when her internship ended. On December 16, she will graduate from Shippensburg University with a degree in communication/journalism with a focus in public relations. She also minored in psychology. This was her final project.

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Does Anyone Want "Coal" for Christmas?



On November 25, SCI Benner Township's Billie Rupert, who is the dog training coordinator, and Coal, one of the prison's resident greyhounds, participated in a local fundraising event that was held to generate funds for the prison's program.

Coal, who is waiting for his forever home, and Rupert attended the event which was coordinated by Mandy Weaver of Mandy's Dog Day Care Center and Pam Graci, Benner Township's dog trainer extraordinaire and owner of Wags and Woof Dog Training. Both businesses are located in Port Matilda, Pa.

At the event, people were invited to bring their pets to have pictures taken with Santa, and several pet themed baskets were raffled off to help raise funds. There were several tables of local vendors also participating in the event, including Nittany Greyhound Rescue who provides the greyhounds that participate in Benner Township's program.

Folks were interested in how the prison's dog-training program works and what the dogs are taught. Graci and Rupert were more than willing to share the stories and accomplishments of both the dogs and inmates who participate in the program.

During the event, it was quite apparent that the time and hard work Coal's inmate handlers spent on him was working -- he was the perfect gentleman!

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Magical Memories

Magical Memories is a non-profit organization that serves children in the SCI Muncy area who have life-threatening and terminal illnesses. Each year they hold a party for those children, with this year's party theme being "A Charlie Brown Christmas."



SCI Muncy's Honor Guard was in attendance to present the colors at the beginning of the party while accompanied by vocals from Aaron Kelly from American Idol.

The day included food and games and visits from super heroes, Stormtroopers, Charlie Brown, Snoopy, Kozmo and Piper from Knoebel's, and of course Santa Claus.

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Mussoline Receives PAPPC Award

Recently, Lacosta Mussoline received the Adult Corrections Professional of the Year Award from the Pennsylvania Association on Probation, Parole and Corrections (PAPPC).



Mussoline, right, received the award from PAPPC President Eileen Hager.

Mussoline, who serves a special assistant to DOC Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal and as the DOC's Eastern Region Reentry administrator, received the award due to her work in a number of important areas such as serving as EDS Moore Smeal's assistant, as business process expert for a major DOC inmate computer system, for her work in reentry.

In the reentry field, Mussoline uses her skills to collaborate with prison and parole staff, community corrections employees and community stakeholders. She said her goal is to ensure effective reentry planning and services for all reentrants. She is described as being outgoing, positive and willing to share her knowledge and experience with others.

Congratulations, Lacosta!

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Recognition for Community Work

Bret Satzler, from Westminster Presbyterian Church, presented a recognition plaque to SCI Benner Township's Community Work Program and administrative staff in appreciation for their generous commitment to the Westminster Presbyterian Cemetery.

Inmate Workers from the Community Work Program proudly maintained the upkeep of the approximately 10 acres that made up the Westminster Presbyterian Cemetery.



Front row, left to right: S. Hanlon and Bret Satzler. Back row, left to right: G. Stewart, D. Myers, D. Smead and B. Booher.

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Offender Accountability Forum Held

On December 4, 10 parole staff ranging from agents to district directors attended the Offender Accountability Forum sponsored by the Pennsylvania Coalition Against Domestic Violence (PCADV) and the Office of The Victim Advocate (OVA). The forum examined nationally recognized best practices in several coordinated community responses to intimate partner violence that focuses on victim safety and offender accountability.

Experts in the field from North Carolina, Colorado and Maine presented on various collaborative programs, such as: a differential treatment model with the use of a risk assessment (DVRNA) from the Colorado of Domestic Violence Offender Management Board; a focused deterrence program from Highpoint North Carolina Police Department; a presentation on the Ontario Domestic Abuse Risk Assessment (ODARA) that has been implemented in Maine; the use of the ODARA, a tightening of coordinated community responses has occurred with domestic violence especially with high risk cases.

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Educating Employees about C.O.V.E.R.

On December 4, committee members at SCI Mercer set up a C.O.V.E.R. welcome table for employees in an effort to "put a face" to the name. Committee members manning the table during each shift change spoke to employees about the meaning of C.O.V.E.R., the benefits to all staff, and to let them know that committee members are available at any time to help staff.

Employees were encouraged to be a part of the C.O.V.E.R initiative, and employees from each shift were eligible to win one of three C.O.V.E.R t-shirts. The winners were announced December 6 and were: Sgt. F. Morales, CO1 D. Middleton, and CO1 S. Williams.

During this outreach, the committee was able to raise awareness and provide information to many employees from each shift.

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.

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In The News...

Altoona Mirror (12/06/2017)

<http://www.altoonamirror.com/news/local-news/2017/12/prison-guard-faces-charges/>

Prison guard faces charges

Kirkpatrick allegedly helped smuggle drugs into SCI Somerset

By Sean Sauro

A Somerset County prison guard, who resides in Carrolltown, faces numerous felony charges for allegedly conspiring with a well-known Altoona drug dealer to smuggle narcotics into the State Correctional Institution at Somerset.

Shawn Kirkpatrick, 39, of 120 W. Campbell St., is accused of having a part in an alleged drug selling scheme led by Akil Johnson, who was convicted on 35 drug-related offenses in June 2005.

Johnson was known as “the leader of a major crack cocaine-selling operation in the Altoona area and ended up receiving one of the longest sentences ever imposed on a local dealer — 49 to 98 years,” according to a previous Mirror report.

Charging documents filed against Kirkpatrick by the state police Organized Crime Task Force note a number of recorded phone calls made from early to mid-September, in which Johnson allegedly made requests to have Suboxone, synthetic marijuana and Xanax smuggled into the prison.

Please click on the URL to read the entire article.

PCCD News Release, 12/04/2017

Pennsylvania Counties Gather at Statewide Summit to Address Mental Illness Crisis in Local Jails

State College, PA—Dec. 4, 2017—A two-day summit bringing together counties from across the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania kicked off Monday as part of Stepping Up, a national initiative to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in jails.

The Pennsylvania Stepping Up Summit will host elected county leaders, state officials, representatives from state and national organizations, and others to discuss challenges, best practices, and advance their plans for measuring and reducing the prevalence of mental illnesses in local jails.

“Despite the best efforts of communities to make an impact, there are more people with mental illnesses in local jails than ever before, the majority of which don’t pose a public safety risk,” said John Wetzel, secretary of Pennsylvania’s Department of Corrections and board member of The Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center. “I applaud the counties and leaders who are coming together to evaluate what their jails are doing and defining concrete steps so that they can take action and measure progress once they return home.”

Pennsylvania has already advanced a number of innovative strategies to fund treatment, supervision, and community support for people with mental illnesses in the criminal justice system, including establishing Criminal Justice Advisory Boards in nearly every

county in the state, providing innovation grants that focus on diversion programs, establishing funding for housing supports, and improving information sharing processes as well as mapping existing services in local communities.

In addition, Dauphin County, PA, launched a data-driven project, guided in part by technical assistance from the CSG Justice Center, to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses their jail. The findings from the project will be used to develop a plan to address the issue through policy and programming recommendations by April 2018.

“The Commonwealth of Pennsylvania has already taken major steps to address this issue and now it’s time to build upon those past successes and chart a path forward to ensure that people with mental illnesses are getting the care and treatment that they need while also easing the strain on local budgets and strengthening public safety,” said Charles Ramsey, Chairman of the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

At the summit, county teams attended working sessions framed by [six questions related to the commitment of their local leadership, their use of screening and assessments, the existing level of baseline data in their county, the degree to which they track progress, and other considerations](#). As participants, Stepping Up counties receive access to an online toolkit containing archived webinars, planning tools, resources, and information on technical assistance and distance-learning opportunities to assist with their efforts.

“Connecting people with mental illnesses and substance abuse disorders to the right interventions so that they can start down the path to recovery is key to reducing the number of people with mental illnesses in jails,” said Teresa Miller, acting secretary of the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services. “This begins by ensuring that people are correctly assessed for mental illnesses when they are booked into jail and that we are collecting baseline data at the county level so we accurately know the size of this problem, how long these people are staying in jail, what their recidivism rates are, and how many of them are being connected to services after they leave jail.”

Stepping Up [launched in May 2015](#) as a partnership between [the CSG Justice Center](#), [The National Association of Counties](#), and [The American Psychiatric Association Foundation](#). The initiative has rallied more than 400 counties, representing 40 percent of the U.S. population, to commit to actions that will help reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in jails. Those counties include 17 Pennsylvania counties, many of which were represented at the summit. The Pennsylvania Stepping Up Initiative was launched at the statewide PCCD conference in April 2016.

“County leaders across the Commonwealth, from jurisdictions of all sizes, are united around one central truth: Jails should no longer be de facto mental health treatment facilities,” said Doug Hill, executive director of the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania. “Each county no matter how different in size or population faces its own challenges. This summit will better position them to address this crisis and implement successful policies and infrastructure to improve responses to people with mental illnesses in jails.”

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, Pennsylvania Department of Human Services, the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency, and the County Commissioners Association of Pennsylvania were the co-sponsors of the statewide summit, along with the partners of the national Stepping Up Initiative.

ABOUT THE STEPPING UP INITIATIVE

Stepping Up is a national initiative to reduce the number of people with mental illnesses in jails. The initiative—a collaboration between the Council of State Governments Justice Center, the National Association of Counties and the American Psychiatric Association Foundation—asks communities to come together to develop an action plan that can be used to achieve measurable impact in local criminal justice systems of all sizes across the country. For more information visit <https://stepuptogether.org>.

Please click on the URL to read the entire article.

Reading Eagle, 12/03/2017

<http://www.readingeagle.com/news/article/editorial-promising-effort-offers-second-chance-to-ex-convicts>

EDITORIAL: Promising effort offers second chance

The Issue: A new program involving several Berks County organizations prepares former prison inmates for construction jobs.

Our Opinion: We expect this admirable, multifaceted project to be a good example for other areas to follow.

We've noted many times that it is imperative our society finds a way to help incarcerated individuals become productive members of the community.

It's a common and understandable impulse to wish continued punishment on those convicted of crimes, but it's inhumane and ultimately self-defeating. As a matter of basic decency, all but the most heinous criminals should be given an opportunity to turn their lives around. And if that's not convincing enough, it's in everyone's interest to help ex-convicts find a way to thrive in society and give up committing crimes. The alternative is the painfully familiar cycle of reoffending and winding up back in prison.

Please click on the URL to read the entire article.

Reading Eagle, 11/26/2017

<http://www.readingeagle.com/news/article/ex-offenders-look-to-rebuild-lives-homes-and-reading/1>

Ex-offenders look to rebuild lives, homes and Reading

By Stephanie Weaver

READING, PA -- Bradley Jones spent the past decade in and out of prison as he struggled with a heroin addiction.

With each new offense or parole violation, the now 40-year-old man lost even more hope in ever escaping the cycle.

So when he was handed a bunch of pamphlets from Berks Connections/Pretrial Services soon after being released to the Wernersville Community Corrections Center in May, Jones didn't think much of it.

Despite having 20 years of experience in masonry and roofing, Jones was struggling to get a job with a criminal record of theft and forgery convictions in Luzerne County. So when he read that BCPS' new construction training program came with a stipend, he thought it could at least help him get some much-needed cash.

"At first it started as just a paycheck because I wanted some money, but now, you know, I got the mind right," Jones said. "I've been in and out of jail a long time but this is the first time I've had any real resources."

Jones is one of 12 former inmates in the initial group for BCPS' new R3 training program: Rebuilding Reentrants and Reading.

Please click on the URL to read the entire article.

WHYY (11/30)

<https://whyy.org/articles/pa-lawmakers-make-bipartisan-push-criminal-justice-reform/>

Pa. lawmakers make bipartisan push for criminal justice reform

By Annette John-Hall, WHYY

State Senator Stewart Greenleaf (R-Montgomery) sat before a packed crowd at Deliverance Evangelistic Church in North Philadelphia this week and confessed that he supported tough-on-crime laws in the mid-1990's.

"I'm the worst offender. Most of these bills that we're trying to repeal, I introduced and passed, the mandatory minimum and a lot of others," said Greenleaf, majority chair of the Senate Judiciary Committee.

Greenleaf said he came to the realization that those kinds of punishment laws do little to reduce crime or recidivism. Between 1980 and 2009, although Pennsylvania's overall population grew by only six percent, the state's prison population increased 523 percent. And once inmates were released, more than half re-offended.

Punishment without rehabilitation, Greenleaf said, amounts to a failed system.

"We have no training. We have no jobs for them. Society has done that. Pennsylvania has done that. And what happens when they get out of prison? We keep punishing them," he said.

Greenleaf convened the judiciary hearing — the second of three scheduled across the commonwealth — along with Sharif Street (D-Philadelphia). The two senators have launched a bipartisan effort to garner support for legislation that they say would better recognize the societal effects of mass incarceration.

Please click on the URL to read the entire article.

Carlisle Sentinel, 12/03/2017

http://cumberlink.com/news/local/closer_look/understanding-overdose-drug-delivery-resulting-in-death/article_004d8226-474e-56bb-bae9-36cc7be680ad.html#tracking-source=home-featured

Understanding Overdose: Drug delivery resulting in death

By Joshua Vaughn

Despite talk of a public health approach to dealing with substance use and addiction, the criminal justice system continues to carry the brunt of the response to the overdose crisis.

Despite efforts to not repeat the incarcerative response of the crack epidemic of the 1980s and '90s, the number of people charged with possession of illicit drugs in Cumberland County has nearly doubled since 2013, according to court records.

Despite calls to end the decades-old war on drugs, the fight wages on.

Please click on the URL to read the entire article.

Fox56, 12/02/2017

<http://fox56.com/story/sci-dallas-hosts-deer-hunt-for-combat-wounded-veterans>

SCI Dallas hosts deer hunt for combat-wounded veterans

by Jade Jarvis

DALLAS, LUZERNE COUNTY (WOLF) -- It's nearly the second week of rifle deer hunting season, and hunters are still heading out to the woods in droves, trying to take one for themselves.

One of those hunters is Bob Cyphers of Center Moreland.

He's a Vietnam War veteran and due to medical issues and PTSD, he hasn't hunted in nine years.

But that all changed today.

"It's been great, we got out here at 4:30 this morning. Great guys, put us on good spots. I got lucky," Cyphers said.

He wouldn't have been able to take this six-pointed buck without the help of the SCI Dallas Combat-Wounded Veteran Hunt.

Spearheaded by the prison's superintendent Larry Mahally, it's a program that helps disabled veterans get back out into the woods around the prison during hunting season.

Current and retired employees from the prison lend a helping hand as volunteers, bringing hunters out to their stands in the morning. Some stay, and some come back to camp until hunters need help bringing in their buck or doe.

Please click on the URL to read the entire article.

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Week of November 27...

Waynesburg University Students Tour SCI Greene

On November 27, Tim Douglass and students from Waynesburg University toured SCI Greene. Douglass, a hearing officer for Probation and Parole, is currently instructing a corrections class at the university. He enjoys bringing the students to tour and gain an understanding of the prison system. Some students say they may be interested in working for corrections.



Several staff met with the group and provided an overview of the facility's programs and services. Inmates participating in the Canine Partner's for Life program also met the students to discuss their responsibilities as a program volunteer and how the dogs have affected their lives.



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Secretary Wetzel Speaks at PA Press Club Luncheon

At the PA Press Club's Luncheon on November 20, Corrections Secretary John Wetzel spoke on the Wolf Administration's data-driven efforts to cut costs, reduce prison population and improve outcomes.



Wetzel said one way to lessen crime is to make smart investments in the “front end” of the system. This includes early childhood education, nurse family partnerships, reducing lead exposure and boosting high school graduation rates.

“Why does the secretary of Corrections care about that?” asked Wetzel. “Because 39 percent of inmates don’t have a high school degree and a young black male who drops out of school has a 70 percent lifetime chance of being incarcerated.”

Wetzel argued that this data-driven approach is already paying dividends through the 2012 Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI), which is aimed at using data to reduce prison costs, lower crime rates and reinvest savings in programs that reduce crime.

Wetzel cited the latest FBI crime report that showed Pennsylvania’s crime rate, especially violent crimes, dipped at a time when other states saw increases. Nevertheless, he said, the report showed increased crime in rural areas of Pennsylvania that may be related to the opioid epidemic and demands attention.

“Our criminal justice system got bloated and ineffective because a fragmented decision making system passed policies that we believed were good decisions, but we didn’t use the data,” he said. “We had a series of seemingly unrelated decisions that lead to unintended consequences, which is the increased use of incarceration. What we know is that a prison sentence can increase the likelihood of future crimes.”

Wetzel said Pennsylvania needs to combine the treatment and enforcement approach to the drug problem. He also praised Governor Wolf's Centers for Excellence, which aim to direct those who have suffered overdoses into immediate treatment, as a good start, but recognized that the infrastructure has to be in place to help those who need it. He said the most effective policies need to provide tools for local jurisdictions to combat the opioid epidemic and further enhance victim services.

Wetzel said he wants to focus on ways to help make the criminal justice system more fair, better aid victims and decrease recidivism.

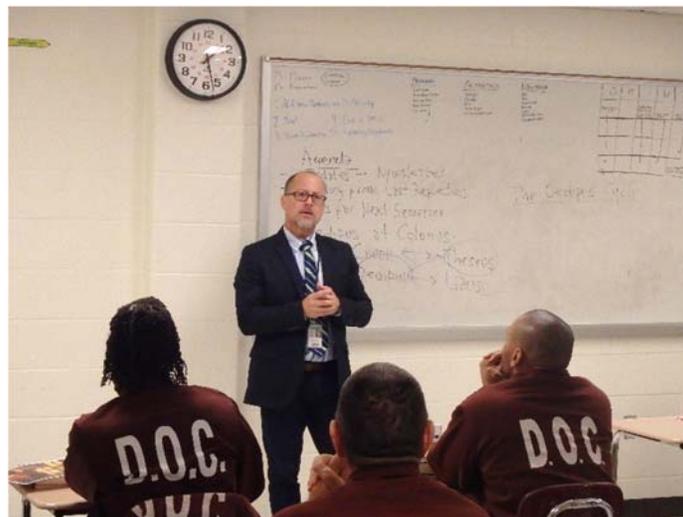
The topic areas that he said need to be addressed as part of the next phase of Justice Reinvestment Initiative include pre-trial decision making, county probation, and victims' compensation.

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The Quest of the Hero

The Quest of the Hero is a seminar/course at SCI Benner Township is provided to inmates so they can explore the quest for a sense of self through reading and writing about some classic texts that focus on the "adventure of the hero." Ancient, medieval and contemporary mythology, gospels, hagiography, travel memoirs and contemporary literature are replete with narratives about the trials and tribulations of specific individual, in most cases, who happen to be males, but not always. The hero's quest can be analyzed in three stages: departure, initiation and return. The hero's path can be characterized in other ways such as: assignation/refusal, challenge/quest and enlightenment/home coming.

It is hoped that all participants will learn about ethical agency, sense of self and self-regard. The seminar is taught by Eduardo Mendieta, professor of philosophy and associate director of Rock Ethics Institute Department of Philosophy, Penn State University.



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Local Businessman Donates Car to SCI Mercer

On November 21, SCI Mercer accepted a vehicle donation to the Education Department's Automotive Mechanics Technology class. The donation was a 2014 Chevrolet Sonic made by local businessman, Mel Grata. Mel's son, Michael Grata, visited the facility to present the vehicle to Corrections School Principal James Oppman and Automotive Mechanics Instructor William Bush.



Mel Grata has owned and operated a car dealership in the Shenango Valley, Mercer County area since 1985. Prior to becoming a dealer, he worked at the dealership as sales manager since 1977. His son Michael has also worked at this same dealership for 31 years.

Bush's inmate tutors expressed their gratitude to Grata for giving them the opportunity to learn on a newer vehicle. Inmates had previously using a 1990 Beretta and a 1993 Ford Thunderbird for educational purposes.

"I have been incarcerated for 18 years and I have not seen a new vehicle like the Sonic," said an inmate who anticipates taking the inspector's test in January. "This vehicle will help me and other inmates with the hands-on portion of the test and will give us the ability to learn about the car's computer and emissions equipment."

Another inmate who will be released from prison soon said that he already has his state inspection license and has plans to work as an inspector in the automotive trade. He, too, expressed his appreciation for having the ability to learn on a newer vehicle.

SCI Mercer's Education Department and administrative staff, as well as the students, expressed their thanks to Mel and Michael Grata for their generous donation to the facility. Their generosity will assist the students to be better prepared in the automotive trade when they re-enter society, which will help them to better support themselves and their families.

To receive a certificate in the Automotive Mechanics Technology program, students must complete 300 hours of class time. This class prepares them to take the test to obtain their state inspection license. Upon successful completion of the 300 hours, students then may take the two-week state inspection class as long as they have a valid driver's license. During this class, students take the PA State Inspection licensure test, which is proctored by Bush. Bush grades the tests and sends the completed tests to PennDOT who, if the student passes the test, issues him a state vehicle inspection license.



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Employees Collect Food, Money to Feed Hungry Children in Neighboring County

By Cambria County Backpack Project

There are no geographical boundaries when it comes to childhood hunger and the need to feed hungry children. Employees at the Laurel Highlands State Correctional Institution in Somerset County demonstrated just that in its support of the Cambria County Backpack Project (CCBP).

Staff from SCI Laurel Highlands held “food raisers” during the fall months to collect four car loads of single-serve food items for backpack recipients—more than 640 items in all! On Monday, November 20, employees then visited the CCBP food pantry to pack 243 bags of food for children in need. Sandra Boring, the lead staff member for the prison outreach



Donations from SCI Laurel Highlands

project, also presented a check for a \$100 donation from the AFSCME AFL-CIO Union of Pennsylvania Public Employees.

“Working with the CCBP has been one of the easiest and most rewarding groups I have ever worked with,” said Boring. “The food is going to kids in need and once you help people realize how many hungry children there are in our community, everyone is willing to pick up a few extra items at the store. I hope to make this a yearly back to school tradition at SCI Laurel Highlands!”



Volunteers from Laurel Highlands State Correctional Institution in Somerset packed weekend meals for 243 children at CCBP's food pantry in November.

Participation in the food raiser extended beyond staff, touching the heart of an inmate as well. When the man found out about the CCBP and the employees' efforts to support the project, he was inspired to send a check from his personal financial fund to help. The check for \$4.59 will supply six meals to a hungry child for a weekend. The man included a personal note that stated that Cambria

County is a place that is very familiar to him, and he thanked the CCBP for its work.

“I was so moved by this young man's generosity and the initiative he took to do his part,” said CCBP Coordinator Natalie Kauffman.

“Without the support of individuals and community members such as Sandra Boring and her colleagues, CCBP would not be able to feed the hundreds of children who will benefit from this program during the 2017-18 school year.”

The Cambria County Backpack Project is a community-driven initiative that survives on donations, grants and volunteers to complete its mission of reducing childhood hunger one backpack at a time. The Project serves children from five school districts and two preschool programs throughout south-central Cambria County.

For more information, visit

<https://www.facebook.com/CambriaCountyBackpackProject/>

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Mental Health Advocate Testifies Before Committee

Recently, Lynn Patrone, Mental Health Advocate for the DOC, presented a testimony to Representative Davidson and members of the House Democratic Policy Committee. She discussed challenges and opportunities surrounding successful reentry of individuals with serious mental illness.

Patrone testified that the severely mentally ill population often becomes lost in the criminal justice system. If such individuals had been provided with appropriate treatment and support within the community, criminal justice intervention might have been prevented in the first place. Additionally, finding placement options for reentrants with serious mental illness is a huge challenge.

In Pennsylvania, only six counties provide Forensic Assertive Community Treatment (FACT) services. FACT is an evidence-based program that provides comprehensive prevention, intervention and treatment. These services prevent a seriously mentally ill person from entering into institutionalized systems, such as the criminal justice system.

As we advance in mental health treatment and services, mental health professionals recognize the invaluable opportunity to support recovery for individuals through modern-day treatment options, such as FACT.

"It is imperative that modern treatments for the mentally ill include evidenced-based treatments," stated Patrone. "It is even more imperative that, as advocates, we challenge our government leaders to advocate for and support mental health services that include the holistic needs of the person, to include the essential basics that each of us enjoys, such as housing, vocational training, pro-social skills and natural supports."

The DOC houses about 4,500 individuals (9% of its population) who live with serious mental illness, many of whom will be returning to our communities as our neighbors. There are limited resources for these reentrants. Patrone suggests an increase in Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to local responders and law enforcement, mental health courts and specialized crisis emergency services.

Patrone says it is critical to implement and increase the use of the early interventions and diversionary programs. This can reduce the likelihood of recidivism and aid in the journey of success for an individual being released.

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Corrections Officer Receives CPOF Assistance Check

Corrections Officer Brandon James of SCI Laurel Highlands received a Correctional Peace Officers Foundation (CPOF) assistance check when his 10-month-old son had brain surgery to remove tumors. The hospital is nearly a two-hour drive from Officer James' home, meaning he incurred extensive travel-related expenses.



Captain Grove (left) and Major Tsikalas (right) with Officer James.

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COT Gregory Receives Academic Achievement Award

During the PA DOC Basic Training Class #743, Corrections Officer Trainee Jennifer Gregory was selected by her peers and staff to receive the award for academic achievement. This award indicates exemplary performance and leadership. The DOC and SCI Forest offered their appreciation for a job well done.



Sgt. Bell and Superintendent Overmyer with COT Gregory

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SCI Mahanoy Hosts 6th Annual Reentry Fair

The sixth annual Reentry Fair was held at SCI Mahanoy on November 15. Principal Chester Beggs chaired the event, which was well supported by the entire institution.

Thirty-five representatives attended from 22 organizations representing Dauphin, Lebanon, Luzerne and Schuylkill counties. Participants from the organizations were given a tour of the facility and enjoyed lunch at the Officers' Dining Hall.



Two hundred twenty-five inmates had the opportunity to view displays and speak with the representatives from employment, health care, mental health, education and ministry services.

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

The Department's mission is to help educate and prepare reentrants for transition back to their families and reentry to the diverse and ever-changing world. SCI Mahanoy's Reentry Fair is just one way to help increase public safety, improve the health of communities, sustain families, improve the welfare of children and lower costly criminal justice expenses.



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

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Pine Grove Employees are Experts at Giving Tours!

On Tuesday, November 28, IUP nursing students toured SCI Pine Grove. The tour consisted of D Unit (YAOP), where an inmate explained his daily routine, Program Services and B Unit (TAILS unit). The tour focused mainly on the Medical Department where contract nurses from the facility explained a day inside the fence as a nurse. The tour group was escorted by Lt. Summerville and Judy Smith.



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SCI Albion Honor Guard Pays Respects to Fallen Police Officer

On November 22, members of SCI Albion's Honor Guard paid their respects at the funeral mass and procession of slain New Kensington police officer, Brian Shaw.



(Left) SCI Albion Officers Joseph Heliker, Marc Barnes, David Belmondo and Lt. Mark McLaurin



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Cambridge Springs C.O.V.E.R. Helps Homeless Veterans

The SCI Cambridge Springs C.O.V.E.R. Committee worked together to prepare and donate Thanksgiving dinner to those living at the Liberty House for Veterans in Erie, PA. Some members even volunteered their time to help serve food.



Special thanks go out to Tami Caruso, Laura Chikar, Mike Feick, Rob Graves, Jodi Kenny, Jamie Schneider, and Brea Simmons for volunteering. The C.O.V.E.R. Committee donated all the food for the event, and Superintendent Oliver donated gift bags for each resident at the shelter.

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Senator Mensch Tours SCI Phoenix



State Senator Robert Mensch of the Pennsylvania 24th District, and his Chief of Staff Lisa Walter toured SCI Phoenix on November 21st.

Lt. Walter Grunder and RDS Steve Glunt of the Phoenix Transition Team with Senator Mensch and Lisa Walter.

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Stopping to 'Smell the Roses'

David Fisher, PREA Compliance Administrative Officer 2, has a two-hour commute to and from work daily. On his commute home this week, he captured a photograph of the sunset.

"When I get to look at something as beautiful as this sunset, it makes the drive all the more while," said Fisher.



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Bake Sale Raises Money for Local Charity



Pictured, left to right, are: Santa, Molly Lamp, Food Bank Representative Candace Tustin and Superintendent Robert Gilmore.

On November 17, SCI Greene employees held a bake sale to benefit the Greene County Catholic Charities - Loving Hearts Holiday Tree Program and the Corner Cupboard Food Bank. A total of \$1,000 was raised.

The Loving Hearts Holiday Tree Program helps to bring joy this holiday season to children ages 18 and under living in Greene County. An application, including the child's first name, age, clothing size and 3 wish list items, is accepted and given to participating businesses and organizations for purchase by the employees, customers, etc. The gifts are collected and returned to the Catholic Charities where they are picked up by the parents or guardians. This year more than 400 children are signed up to receive gifts.

The Corner Cupboard Food Bank is the only food bank in Greene County that provides regular monthly food boxes to individuals facing food insecurity in our county. They utilize a network of pantries throughout the townships of Greene County and rely on the generosity and support of community donations to continue to achieve their goals.

Both organizations were presented a check for \$500.

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Gannon University Students Tour SCI Cambridge Springs

SCI Cambridge Springs' Public Information Officer Amy Boylan and Safety Manager Dave Wescott guided a group of Gannon University students on a tour of SCI Cambridge Springs on November 14. The students, who are currently taking an Introduction to Corrections class, toured the Parenting Department, Correctional Industries Optical Lab, Housing Units, Dietary Department and T.C. Program.



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Former Inmate Writes Letter to DOC

Michael Reese was an inmate at SCI Mercer for four years. He recently wrote a letter of appreciation to the Department. In the letter, Reese indicated that he was involved in the therapeutic community program, the violence prevention program and the sex offender program at SCI Mercer. He went to NA and AA meetings weekly, and began going to church.

Reese feels that the programs and services at SCI Mercer helped him to clear his head and make a better life for himself in the future. He also gives credit to the Workforce Program and Renewal Housing Program at Progress CCC in Waynesburg, Pa., and to a halfway house located in North Braddock, Pa.

"I am very pleased in the direction my life is going today and I want to thank all the people that are running these programs," wrote Reese. "They truly help me to be able to turn my life around."

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SCI Graterford Chief Psychologist Earns Specialty Certification

Wayne Popowski, chief psychologist at SCI Graterford, earned specialty certification in the field of correctional mental health. To become a Certified Correctional Health Professional-Mental Health (CCHP-MH), Popowski demonstrated the ability to deliver specialized mental health care in corrections. He is among one of the elite, first groups of qualified mental and correctional health professionals nationwide who have earned this distinction.

Wayne Popowski has been with the Commonwealth for 43 years. He previously achieved the general Certified Correctional Health Care Professional certification. CCHP is highly regarded as a symbol of accomplishment and self-improvement.

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Chief Counsel's Office Tours SCI Phoenix

On November 17, staff from the DOC's Chief Counsel's Office had an opportunity to tour SCI Phoenix. The tour, which included housing units, program service building, medical and food service department, was given by Phoenix Transition Team members Lt. Walter Grunder and Regional Deputy Secretary Steve Glunt.



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MenzFit – Who Wore It Best?

On November 28, DOC Secretary John Wetzel and Philadelphia Eagle Malcolm Jenkins, along with other Eagles players and individuals attended an event recently held in Philadelphia to benefit MenzFit. The “Who Wore It Best” fashion show helped to raise funds for and awareness of the organization. State and local officials, such as Rep. Donna Bullock, participated in the fashion show, while other dignitaries – such as Secretary Wetzel – served as judges.



Menzfit (@MenzFit) is an organization that changes lives, families and communities by providing low-income men with interview clothing, career development, and financial literacy services. Learn more at menzfit.org

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Inmates Repair Central Cambria High School Auditorium

Pennsylvania Correctional Industries (PCI) Sales and Marketing Representative Jeremiah Kim and the Central Cambria High School in Ebensburg, Pa., collaborated to redo Central Cambria High School's auditorium.

The conversation between Kim and the high school began with the need to fix a ripped auditorium curtain. This was followed by a needs assessment that led to PCI Wood Products Factory at SCI Rockview displaying their ability to reupholster and install wood paneling.

The project began in June and ended in November. Through the generosity of the school district, PCI employed an inmate work crew of six for three days, in addition to the workers at the PCI Shop.

Repairing seats was a major part of the project. Kim worked diligently with school administrators to arrive at the selection of colors, materials and design of the work. The wood paneling for the walls involved measurements, precise cuts and fitting of wood pieces in predetermined spaces.

School administrators are very pleased with the workmanship. They have requested additional items to compliment a job well done, including a rolling door to secure the AV room.

The workmanship of this job has garnered the attention of school board members and department executives. They appreciate the participation and support of Dr. Tricia Murin and her staff to help fulfill PCI's mission of "teaching inmates to work in Pennsylvania." Patrons like Central Cambria High School perpetuate a positive experience for inmate work staff and successful reentry with a purpose.

Photos of the newly-remodeled auditorium:



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Another Inmate Graduation Held

An inmate graduation ceremony was held at SCI Cambridge Springs on November 16. The ceremony consisted of an opening prayer, special music, special speakers, presentation of diplomas/certificates and closing comments.

Director Khelleh Konteh of Pennsylvania Correctional Industries served as the keynote speaker, sharing information about his life journey and offering inspirational words to the students and their family members.

A total of 60 inmates were recognized in the areas of GED, Secondary Diploma, Cosmetology, Optical, Business Education, Custodial Maintenance and CORE.



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Corrections/Parole In The News...

Allentown Morning Call, 11/29/2017

<http://www.mcall.com/news/police/mc-nws-wilson-rapist-must-register-as-sex-offender-20171127-story.html>

Despite legal questions, Wilson rapist must register as a sex offender, judge rules
By Riley Yates

Despite legal questions surrounding Megan's Law in Pennsylvania, a convicted Wilson rapist must register as a sex offender, a judge ruled Monday.

Offenders such as Jason A. Davies "are the reason registration requirements exist," Northampton County Judge Samuel Murray wrote. "If there was ever a sexual offender case warranting registration requirements, it is this one."

In July, the Pennsylvania Supreme Court threw Megan's Law into disarray, finding that the state's latest version of the registry was so harsh that, unlike its predecessors, it had become a form of punishment and not merely a tool to educate and inform the public.

As a result, the 2012 Sex Offender Registration and Notification Act (SORNA) can't be applied looking backward, to cases that predated its enactment, the court said. Doing otherwise violates the U.S. and Pennsylvania constitutions, which ban after-the-fact punishments, the decision said.

Please visit the URL to read the entire article

Harrisburg Patriot-News/Pennlive, 11/28/2017

http://www.pennlive.com/news/2017/11/corrections_department_isnt_st.html

Corrections Department isn't stealing inmates' cash, Pa. court rules
By Matt Miller

A Commonwealth Court panel has rejected a convicted killer's claim that the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections is stealing inmates' money.

The judges reached that conclusion Monday in an opinion issued by Senior Judge James Gardner Colins that deep-sixes a lawsuit by James A. Paluch Jr., who is serving a life sentence for a 1990 murder in Philadelphia.

Paluch, 46, claimed prison officials are misusing and squandering money from the Inmate General Welfare Fund. That fund contains money inmates earn at jobs, along with income from sales at the prison commissaries and donations from individuals and groups interested in promoting the welfare of prisoners.

Paluch contended that prison officials, specifically those at the prison at Albion, where he is housed, were violating his and other inmates' rights by using interest earned by investing the fund's money without adequate input from the prisoners.

He argued, unsuccessfully, that prisoners should have a vote regarding how the interest earnings are used. At Albion, that income went to buy a scoreboard for the gym, stainless steel security furniture and seeds for the prison's greenhouse.

Colins found the corrections department is immune from Paluch's suit.

Please visit the URL to read the entire article

Altoona Mirror, 11/29/2017

<http://www.altoonamirror.com/news/local-news/2017/11/inmate-loses-bid-for-kidney-transplant/>

Inmate loses bid for kidney transplant
Phil Ray

An inmate at the State Correctional Institution at Laurel Highlands has lost his bid to force the Department of Corrections to give him a kidney transplant.

The inmate, Tony R. Harper, 63, has been fighting a three-year battle to address his health issues.

In 2014, he filed a lawsuit with the Cambria County Court of Common Pleas, contending that medical care provided to him by several doctors at Conemaugh Memorial Medical Center in Johnstown was not sufficient.

He requested a kidney transplant as well as monetary damages due to inadequate medical care.

In his Cambria County complaint, he pointed out that a catheter had been placed in his chest, but stated it was not effective in cleaning his blood.

He said he received dialysis three times a week but said "my body is not being cleaned in the proper way."

That lawsuit was eventually dismissed by Cambria County Judge Patrick Kiniry for failing to state a legal claim.

Harper then filed a similar lawsuit with the U.S. District Court in Johnstown.

U.S. Magistrate Keith Pesto in 2016 prepared a recommendation upholding Kiniry's assessment that Harper had not stated how his rights had been violated.

Expressing unhappiness with his medical condition does not provide a legal basis for a lawsuit, Pesto related.

Please visit the URL to read the entire article

Philadelphia Inquirer, 11/28/2017

<http://www.philly.com/philly/news/pennsylvania/philadelphia/meek-mill-emergency-bail-request-parole-violation-20171128.html>

Meek Mill lawyers file emergency bail motion in state Superior Court
by Joseph A. Slobodzian

Twenty-four days after Philadelphia-born rapper Meek Mill began his two- to four-year prison term for probation violation, his legal team has filed an emergency motion to get him freed on bail.

Tuesday's motion, filed with the state Superior Court, asks for the 30-year-old Mill to be immediately released on bail, contending that Philadelphia Common Pleas Court Genece E. Brinkley has not responded to any of their post-sentencing appeals.

Please visit the URL to read the entire article

The Merciad, 11/28/2017

<https://merciad.mercyhurst.edu/21259/news/garase-joins-parole-board/>

Garase joins parole board
Rebecca Dunphy

Maria L. Garase, Ph.D., associate professor and chair of the department of Criminology & Criminal Justice, was recently selected to serve on the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole's Citizen Advisory Committee.

The committee is comprised of seven to 15 community members, ranging including criminal justice and law enforcement professionals and retirees. There is one committee in each of the Board of Probation and Parole's 10 districts across the state.

The committee is responsible for assisting the board with developing good public relations and assisting offenders by finding employment opportunities and needed community resources.

Please visit the URL to read the entire article

REUTERS, 11/28/2017

<http://theconversation.com/parole-violations-are-driving-prisons-revolving-door-87057>

Parole violations are driving prison's revolving door
Heather Somerville

Rapper Meek Mill is back in prison in Pennsylvania for violating the terms of his probation.

According to officials, Mill left the state without permission, did not meet with his probation officer, tested positive for Percocet, failed to complete community service and got into a fight at an airport.

Mill's case has drawn new attention to how probation and parole violations contribute to extremely high rates of incarceration in the United States. These high rates of incarceration are in part driven by reimprisonment of formerly incarcerated individuals, known as recidivism. More than half of people who are released from prison in a given year in the United States will return within five years, a phenomenon that has come to be known as prison's "revolving door."

Please visit the URL to read the entire article

Sen. Sharif Street: Sens. Sharif Street and Greenleaf to host discussion on criminal justice reform. (Secretary Wetzel mentioned).
Text of Nov. 27 media advisory.

PHILADELPHIA — State Sens. Sharif Street (D-Philadelphia) and Stewart J. Greenleaf (R-Montgomery/Bucks) will host a roundtable discussion on Nov. 28 in Philadelphia on criminal justice reform efforts in Pennsylvania, the second of its kind recently held.

"We spend staggering amounts of money to incarcerate our fellow Pennsylvanians; it is both inefficient and unsustainable," Sen. Street said. "Pennsylvania has the second highest number of people serving life without parole while featuring a broken cash for bail system. Too many view our criminal justice system primarily as an economic engine when redemption and rehabilitation should be the focal points. Investing in people and divesting from prisons is the most progressive criminal justice reform."

Philadelphia Inquirer, 11/27/2017

http://www.philly.com/philly/business/labor_and_unions/lessons-learned-hiring-ex-offenders-supermarket-brown-reentry-20171127.html

Lessons learned: Hiring ex-offenders pays off, but the workers need help
by Jane M. Von Bergen

One in an occasional series, part of a collaborative news project about the challenges and solutions of prison reentry in Philadelphia.

In despair, sitting at her kitchen table in Chester, Dayna Chandler, 33, began this calculation: Maybe her three children would be better off if she were dead. A former bank teller, she had a criminal conviction for theft, had been in prison, and hadn't been able to keep a job for four years, not with that record, even though it was only a misdemeanor.

She couldn't support her children — maybe someone else could. Her physical health was failing, but her heart was also broken, if that counts.

Please visit the URL to read the entire article

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (11/27/2017)

<http://www.post-gazette.com/news/state/2017/11/24/John-Wetzel-DOC-PBPP-Pennsylvania-probation-parole-prison/stories/201711230052>

New parole officers coming as DOC, parole merge

By Liz Navratil

HARRISBURG — A new class of 70 parole officers will start in January, and half of them are being hired with money saved by the merger of the state Department of Corrections and Board of Probation and Parole.

The merger will mean other changes, said John Wetzel, secretary for the Department of Corrections.

"I think that's just the start," he said.

The Department of Corrections oversees the state's prisons and halfway houses. The Board of Probation and Parole decides whether to grant people early release from prison and supervises them when they return to the community.

Please visit the URL to read the entire article

Burlington Free Press (11/22/2017)

<http://www.burlingtonfreepress.com/story/news/2017/11/21/diary-inmate-got-over-the-counter-drugs-before-cancer-death/887486001/>

Diary: Inmate got over-the-counter drugs before cancer death

By LISA RATHKE, Associated Press

MONTPELIER - A Vermont inmate who died of cancer at a Pennsylvania prison wrote in a diary that he repeatedly asked for medical care but was denied and given ibuprofen and Tylenol for his pain.

Roger Brown didn't know he had lung cancer, a lawyer for his widow said. The 68-year-old died Oct. 15 at the state prison in Camp Hill, Pennsylvania.

Please visit the URL to read the entire article

York Daily Record (11/22)

<http://www.ydr.com/story/news/2017/11/22/sentence-less-than-life/890140001/>

A sentence less than life

By Rick Lee

Wilfredo Cabarello was 14 when, taking offense at what he perceived as a homosexual advance, beat a man to death with a tree branch.

The fact that he and his friends already had concluded they may have to kill the man to get the keys to his residence and, therefore, access to his stashes of cash and

drugs, was not something in his favor when he was charged as an adult with first-degree murder in 1988.

On Nov. 21, Cabarello, now 43, was re-sentenced in accordance with a 2012 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that held automatic life without parole sentences for juveniles were unconstitutional.

Please visit the URL to read the entire article

Butler Eagle, 11/20/2017

<http://www.thecranberryeagle.com/article/20171119/NEWS20/171119904/0/11650>

Therapy dogs help inmates handle stress
Paula Grubbs

SLIPPERY ROCK — A university professor and a prison psychology manager are taking a four-legged approach to managing inmate anxiety.

Yvonne Eaton-Stull, assistant professor of social work at Slippery Rock University, teamed up with Cynthia Wright, the licensed psychology manager at the State Correctional Institute in Mercer, to create a canine anxiety- and stress-reduction program among inmates at the prison.

The women, along with two SRU students and an alumna, take two trained therapy dogs to a special area of the prison where 10 male inmates meet in a group setting once per week to discuss their anxiety and stress.

The students, Middlesex Township resident Cassandra Spirnock and Maura Vulakovich, facilitate the group meetings each week.

Please visit the URL to read the entire article

Harrisburg Patriot-News/PennLive (11/20/2017)

http://www.pennlive.com/news/2017/11/tabatha_buck_teen_killer_resen.html#inca_river_home

'This whole thing just reopens the wounds:' DA discusses Tabatha Buck's reduced sentence

By Steve Marroni

LANCASTER - Tabatha Buck was 17 years old when she held down Laurie Show. Show was just a teenager herself as she struggled and a third girl, 19-year-old Lisa Michelle Lambert, repeatedly stabbed her and slit her throat and left her bound on the bedroom floor, gasping for air.

That was in 1991. Both Buck and Lambert were sentenced to life in prison for Show's killing, but in Lancaster County Court today, Buck, now 43, was granted a chance at freedom. She was resentenced to 28 years to life, which means she may be eligible for parole in three years.

The resentencing comes after a 2012 U.S. Supreme Court ruling that determined mandatory life sentences for juvenile offenders are unconstitutional. The 500-plus juveniles who had been locked up for life are now eligible to have their life sentences reviewed and potentially reduced.

Lancaster County District Attorney Craig Stedman said after today's hearing that these are among the toughest cases he has had to handle during his career.

Please visit the URL to read the entire article

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Week of November 20...

Staff Fingerprints Students

On November 8, SCI Waymart's Records Supervisor Alice Emmett and Sergeant Christopher Coolican joined the Wayne County Sheriff's Office to fingerprint pre-kindergarten, kindergarten and new students at the Robert D. Wilson School in Waymart, Pa. The Parent-Teacher Association sponsors the annual event which places the students' fingerprints into a computer database used to track the identities of lost/missing children.



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Wolf Administration Provides Mental Health First Aid Training for Harrisburg Police Bureau

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) recently completed a training program for all members of the Harrisburg Bureau of Police to help identify mental illness and appropriately respond to individuals in crisis.

Meeting in six small-group sessions last month, all 136 members of the Harrisburg Bureau of Police completed the day-long program in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA). Similar to traditional First Aid and CPR, Mental Health First Aid is temporary assistance provided to a person developing a mental health problem or experiencing a crisis until professional treatment is obtained or the crisis is resolved.



By 2015 all roughly 15,000 DOC employees had been trained in MHFA and now the course is a requirement for all incoming employees. The Harrisburg police officer training marked the first time the DOC has conducted training for an outside law enforcement agency.

"The DOC and Harrisburg City Police Department MHFA training is an example of the importance of ensuring that we take steps in recognizing the mental health signs and symptoms of individuals in our community," said Lynn Patrone, the DOC's mental health advocate, who conducted the training sessions with Lucas Malishchak, the DOC's acting director of psychology "The partnership between the agencies defines the commitment to addressing the mental health needs of individuals who may come into contact with law enforcement."

Patrone said the goal of MHFA is to ensure that a person living with mental health challenges who comes into contact with law enforcement is diverted from the criminal justice system to a treatment-oriented system of care in order to adequately address their illness.

"It's nice to have a refresher on the topic, considering an increasing number of our population suffers from some form of mental illness," said Sgt. Kenneth Young, the Harrisburg Police Bureau's director of training.

In a prison, MHFA training is designed to help corrections staff address inmates in crisis and to de-escalate potentially dangerous situations.

"By working with our law enforcement partners we can collectively assist in recognizing the signs of mental illness and appropriately refer an individual to quality care," said Patrone. "This proactive partnership and approach would benefit all municipalities and ensure we are taking the most humane steps to address the illness and divert the individual into a system of care."

Of the more than 47,000 inmates currently incarcerated in Pennsylvania state prisons, 31 percent have a mental health diagnosis, more than twice the number from twenty years ago. Of those, 19.3 percent have a co-occurring disorder diagnosis, meaning they also have been diagnosed with a substance use disorder.

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Chaplains Training held at SCI Retreat

On November 14-15, 16 full-time and contracted correctional chaplains converged at SCI Retreat for two full days of training for correctional chaplains. This was the last of seven regional two-day courses which took place in the past year to orient all chaplains to the expectations of them by both the Commonwealth and the DOC. Beginning in 2018, all chaplains new to the department will receive this training.

The course was designed by the DOC's Bureau of Treatment Services (BTS) with assistance from several facility chaplaincy program directors. It addressed more than 20 topics including: death notifications, relating to inmates with mental illness, games criminals play, religious diversity and accommodations, building rapport with

correctional staff, and relating to persons who identify as transgender. A newly-designed Correctional Chaplaincy Handbook was given to each chaplain.

Instructors for the training at SCI Retreat included: Rev. O. Larry Mills (CAM), Rev. David Boyles (MAH), Rev. Tami Hooker (BTS/GRN) and Rev. Ulli Klemm (BTS). Seasoned chaplains characterized the training as one of the best they have ever experienced in the department. Others voiced that they had wished they had experienced similar training when they first became a chaplain.

Instructors who assisted with the development of the handbook and other regional trainings this year included: Rev. David Klink (LAU), Rev. Phil Maust (SMR), Deacon Tom Boldin (ROC), Deacon Ralph DeCecco (ALB), and Rev. Debra Reitz (MUN).



Seated (L to R): Stanley Dorrance (DAL), Ricardo Jackson (DAL), Larry Mills (CAM), David Boyles (MAH), Abdel-Hamid Hnesh (MAH)

Middle Row (L to R): Tami Hooker (BTS/GRN), John Kowalczyk (WAM), Guy Giordano (RET), Ulli Klemm (BTS), Akinleke Akinbode (COA), Matthew Lorent (WAM), Yasin Kucak (RET), Barsi Dursun (BEN)

Back Row (L to R): Ramazan Aygun (WAM), Adam Jones (WAM), Kevin McGee (COA, GRA, GRN), Barry Bishop (MUN), Mark Cassells (GRA, MAH), Carlton Houck (DAL), Tyler Parry (RET), Stephen Potuschnig (RET)

Not Pictured: Zvi Perlman (DAL, RET)

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Wetzel Participates in Opioid Epidemic Panel Discussion

On November 16, Secretary Wetzel participated in a panel discussion with others on the front lines of the drug crisis as part of the Sharon Johnson Workshop, "Covering Pennsylvania's Opioid Epidemic," hosted by the Pennsylvania Newsmedia Association. Wetzel told journalists the lack of infrastructure to address the needs of those with substance use disorder, means DOC and county jails become the de facto treatment facilities. He said reporters can help by de-stigmatizing the disease of addiction and reinforcing the fact that everyone has "proximity" to those in crisis.



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Laurel Highlands Employee Highlighted in Trade Magazine

Rebecca Witt, THU reentry specialist at SCI Laurel Highlands was recently recognized for her work in the prisons Transitional Housing Unit (THU) by the ABA Journal. The ABA Journal is a monthly legal trade magazine and the flagship publication of the American Bar Association which is read by half of the nation's 1 million lawyers every month.

The article "Attorney hopes to import the best practices of European prisons to the United States," was written by Rebecca Beyer and talks about Attorney Donald Specter and his visit to prisons in Germany, Denmark and the Netherlands. He uses funds from his lawsuits to sponsor weeklong trips to European prisons. In fact, PA DOC Secretary John Wetzel participated in one of the trips a few years ago. Wetzel brought back to the PA DOC the concept of transitional housing units.

This ABA article highlights Specter's work in this area and also Pennsylvania's THU, which was designed and implemented by Witt. You can read the entire article by clicking on this URL:

http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/prison_law_office_innovation_specter

We also have included the section on Rebecca Witt:

In Pennsylvania, Wetzel, who is vice president of the ASCA, created transitional housing units that have expanded re-entry and counseling services for inmates nearing release. Changes of varying degrees are being made across each state's system, including reducing the use of solitary confinement or administrative segregation.

Rebecca Witt, a re-entry specialist and corrections counselor who helped design the transitional housing unit at Pennsylvania's State Correctional Institution at Laurel Highlands, says re-entry used to be simply about helping inmates obtain Social Security cards or other identification.



Rebecca Witt addresses inmates in the prison's Transitional Housing Unit.

Now, Witt's voluntary unit provides a range of services. Her 90 inmates (150 are on a waiting list) have their own library and computers with limited internet access. There are parenting classes, mentoring opportunities and extended family visits.

Witt also tries to tailor services to specific needs. When one inmate approached her with concerns about how he communicated, Witt launched a public speaking competition. Most programming used to be done in-house. Today, outside agencies come in, a practice known in Norway as the "import model."

"Before, the focus was on keeping the community out and keeping the prisoners in," Witt says. "Now, it's bring the community in, so we can get [the prisoners] out. It's a complete paradigm shift."

Witt's transitional housing unit has a recidivism rate of 10 percent since 2016, compared to the state's average of 60 percent.

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Muncy Hosts Legislative Tour/Panel

On November 16, members of the PA Legislative Black Caucus and the house Democratic Policy Committee traveled to SCI Muncy to tour the facility and then to hold one of its regular meetings. The panel of legislators heard from several "juvenile" lifers and other female lifers along with individuals from various advocacy and inmate support groups.



SCI Muncy Superintendent Robert Smith leads legislators and committee members on a tour of his prison.

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Correction Education Names New Regional Chief

The DOC's Bureau of Correction Education recently announced that Michele McMullen has been named the new Eastern Region Bureau Chief.

Chief McMullen, formerly held the school principal position at SCI Houtzdale. She will oversee vocational programming, CEA accreditation, Title 1 Grant, Perkins Grant, as well as the following SCIs: Benner Township, Chester, Dallas, Frackville, Graterford, Mahanoy, Rockview and Waymart.



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Career Fair Held

On November 15, SCI Benner Township held its annual Vocational Advisory Committee Meeting and Vocational Craft Fair.

All inmates currently enrolled in vocational programming were present.

Personnel from the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, the Re-Entry Service Office, the library and vocational instructors prepared presentations and conducted questions and answer sessions.

All inmates were provided hand-outs and information to assist with career choices and re-entry options upon release into society.

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Fayette Holds Inmate Graduation

On November 14, SCI Fayette held its inmate graduation. The Education Department recognized 128 students who made significant and vocational achievements this past year. Under the academic heading 31 students either earned a GED, CSD, ACSD or a college degree. Under the vocational heading 97 students completed one of the following vocational programs: business education, carpentry, custodial maintenance & repair, HVAC or welding. Speakers and presenters from SCI Fayette included Chaplain Frank Lewis, Principal Ed Bohna, Superintendent Mark Capozza, DSCS Eric Armel and both academic and vocational teaching staff. Dr. Chris Bonneau from the University of Pittsburgh was the keynote speaker. Family and friends of the inmates were invited and treated to light refreshments afterwards.



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College Class Tours SCI Mercer

On November 15, eight students from Community College of Allegheny County's (CCAC) Introduction to Corrections class, along with Adjunct Professor Shannon Sarsfield, toured SCI Mercer. Corrections Superintendent Assistant Andrea Shiock led the tour and fielded questions from the group. Ms. Sarsfield requested to tour the facility so the students could learn more about the environment and the services available to the inmate population. Additionally, she felt that having the students see firsthand the environment of a prison would help guide them in their future career choices.

The group had the opportunity to tour the reception unit and the therapeutic community unit, as well as Mercer's unique chapel, the education department, and the library. Staff who work in these areas gave the students an overview of what they do on a daily basis.



Pictured fourth from the left is Adjunct Professor Shannon Sarsfield, along with her eight students in the atrium as they get ready to start their tour.

In addition, a group of 19 students, along with Assistant Professor Sarah Kuehn, Ph.D., from Slippery Rock University's Criminology & Security Studies, toured SCI Mercer on October 24. Along with Ms. Shiock, Unit Manager Wendy Rouda and Superintendent's Secretary Amanda Bistransin assisted with escorting the students on the tour and answered many questions from the students about the facility.

Schools/colleges interested in touring SCI Mercer as part of their curriculum may contact Ms. Shiock to make arrangements.

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Retreat Names EOQ for 4th Quarter

SCI Retreat Superintendent Vincent Mooney in November named Welding Trades Instructor David Barartta as the prison's Employee of the Quarter for the 4th quarter of 2017. He was nominated due to his skill set and outstanding work ethic. He recently was tasked with fabricating several items to enhance the prison's security. He created a lock box, key boxes and other elements to enhance security.

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Employees “Dress Down for a Cause”

SCI Cambridge Springs began participating in “Dress Down for a Cause” during the second half of 2017, where staff can make a charitable donation in exchange for a chance to wear jeans on Fridays. A new charitable organization is named each quarter, in an effort to assist various groups in need. SCI Cambridge Springs has made donations locally with providing food items to the local Cambridge Springs food pantry, nationally with a monetary donation to the Texas Department of Criminal Justice staff as they recover from the devastation of Hurricane Harvey, and across the globe with the most recent donations being collected to benefit the Latvia Orphanage in Northeastern Europe.



Left (from left to right): Vanuza Urbanick, Ira Doubet, Amy Boylan and Misty Knaus.

Below (from left to right): Front Row – Deb Wakefield, Lynette Kosar, Pam Williamson, LaTisha Schell, Valerie Dies and Alicia Groover.

Back Row – Nadine Harper, Linda Dunn, Veronica Gambill-Harden, Heather Taylor, Barb Healy, Robyn Sye and Deputy Paul Ennis.



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Supporting a Co-Worker

In October and November, SCI Frackville employees coordinated several events to raise funds for a co-worker, Food Service Instructor (FSI) Jones, whose 11-year-old daughter battles ovarian cancer.

On October 18, the prison's Employee Recreation Association and the prison's Empowerment Committee held a basket raffle during their Staff Appreciation Days. A check in the amount of \$1260 was presented to FSI Jones.



Pictured are: Jill Marhelko (from the Employees Association), Food Service Manager RJ Johnson, FSI Janet Jones, Superintendent Kathy Brittain and Kelly O'Kane (from the Empowerment Committee).

On November 14, the prison's Empowerment Committee presented two checks to FSI Jones totaling \$1,915. A bake sale was held on November 2 & 3 with a collection of \$1,000, and a "Team Alexis" t-shirt sale was held with a profit of \$915 in sales and donations. Prison staff send thanks to employees at SCs Dallas, Mahanoy and Waymart for supporting the "Team Alexis" t-shirt sale.



Pictured are Superintendent Kathy Brittain, FSI Jones, Beth Lazusky, Jen Mateyak, Missy Miller, Angela Barret and FSM Johnson.

On November 14, Corrections Officer Wall, who is the facility's CPOF representative, presented FSI Jones with a check to help defray medical expenses as her 11-year-old daughter battles ovarian cancer.



Pictured are Superintendent Kathy Brittain, FSI Jones and COI Wall.

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Thanks from the Northwestern Food Pantry

If you recall, last week's newsletter highlighted donations made by Albion's inmate organization to the local food bank. Here is a letter from the food pantry:



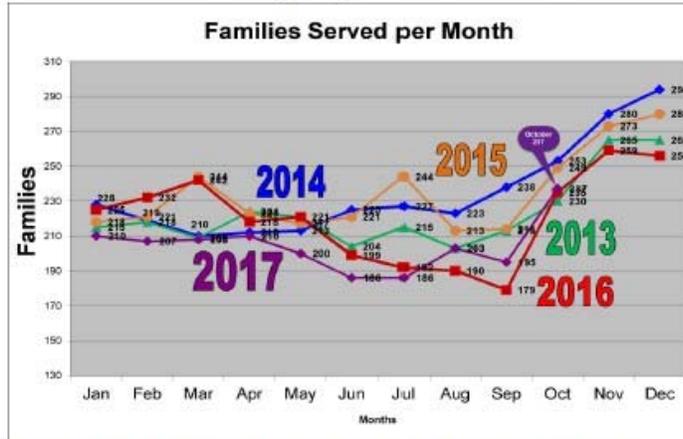
Northwestern Food Pantry

1 Robb & Powell Ave
Albion, PA 16401-1501

November 9, 2017

ANIVO Board Members
Attn: David Jackson
10745 Route 18
Albion, PA 16475-0002

I was honored and humbled by the very generous donation of \$5,068.74 from your organization and the inmates of SCI-Albion. This is the largest single donation our pantry has ever received. I was also honored to be asked to personally meet with your group for the check presentation, but even more impressed by the excellent questions you asked. Your sincere interest in our pantry and the children of the families we are currently serving shows the compassion and selfless giving that you strive to represent. This donation will be distributed to the pantry families with children through a voucher system at our local Dollar General store.



Management at this store has agreed to monitor the use of the voucher so it is used only for child items or nutritional products to provide a better Christmas for the family. You are a true blessing for your support of our pantry and the ministry in our local community. Our pantry serves an area that is 122 square miles. At our recent October distribution we served 237 families representing 659 individuals so you can see the need in our community. See the chart to the right comparing the attendance for the past five years.

The scripture from Proverbs 19:17 best reflects your donation; "He who is kind to the poor lends to the Lord and he will repay them for their deed."

Thank you again for your very generous donation,

Steve Smith

Steve Smith,
Pantry Director

The Northwestern Food Pantry is a 501C3 non-profit organization

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SCI Retreat Officers Receive Recognition

On November 14, at the Weekly Superintendent's Meeting, SCI Retreat Superintendent Vincent Mooney presented Corrections Officers Arthur Butler and William McGeever with DOC 20-year service certificates and pins.

Superintendent Vince Mooney always likes to point out that, "Although giving 20-years to a particular profession is excellent, giving 20-years to the corrections profession is both commendable and admirable."



Pictured, from left to right, are: Arthur Butler, Superintendent Vince Mooney, William McGeever.

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Juniata College Orchestra Visits Smithfield

On November 18, the Juniata College Orchestra performed for inmates at SCI Smithfield.



Of the experience, Dr. Daniel M. Welliver, associate professor of sociology wrote:

"The music performance at SCI-Smithfield went very well. All of the outside participants had a wonderful experience, and I believe that the audience appreciated the music tremendously.

I wanted to write to thank you for this opportunity to partner with SCI-Smithfield and to commend you and your staff. Communications and planning with Travis Hunsinger were excellent. Travis was very responsive to all of the inquiries we made concerning the details for the day. Our interactions with security personnel at the gate, with Mr. Cabell of the Activities Department and with the COs who accompanied us and remained with us in the gymnasium were pleasant and professional. The inmates helping with the sound system were very courteous and helpful.

I spoke with Orchestra Conductor O'Brien today and she expressed a desire to do this again sometime in the future. We hope you are open to that possibility.

It is quite amazing to me that so many opportunities for partnership have emerged over the past year or so.

I would like to ask the two of you to consider any ways in which the college could bring something of value to your staff. Perhaps music for some future staff social event; a workshop of some kind that meets some need or interest that the staff has; or anything else you can suggest.

Again, thank you for your continuing partnership with Juniata College."

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Did you know?

Did you know that since October 2017, all parole field agents have been required to carry Naloxone in the event of a parolee/reentrant overdose?

It's true!

In July 2017 -- and due to an increase in overdose deaths -- Parole officials issued a memo **requiring** all field agents to carry naloxone after they completed training. By October 13, 2017, all field agents had been trained and began carrying the drug. Also, all district offices and sub offices also have a naloxone kit on site.

Prior to this time, all agents had the **option** to carry naloxone, all district offices had a kit on site, and parole agents in the Street Crime Units and Fugitive Apprehension Search Team (FAST) Units were required to carry naloxone kits.

This specific July 2017 direction was prompted by the increase in overdose deaths due to the opioid crisis and warnings from the DEA to law enforcement regarding exposure to fentanyl and carfentanyl.

In addition to being given the tools necessary to provide emergency care to the parolees/reentrants they supervise, parole agents also were given the ability to self-administer naloxone should they themselves begin to overdose due to contact with Fentanyl. Follow-up care instructions also were provided to agents, as was web-based training regarding the administration of naloxone.

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Prison Cookout Honors Employee Veterans

Beginning with the 10-6 shift on November 10 and on November 11, for daylight and afternoon shifts, SCI Mercer held a Veteran's Day staff luncheon/cookout to honor and to thank all veterans for their service and dedication to their country. This is the 9th annual cookout held for veterans at SCI Mercer.



A table was decorated and set up, containing information about C.O.V.E.R. and veterans resources.

Management staff as well as staff members from the "Support the Troops" committee cooked and served the meals both days. The menu included: hamburgers, fried chicken, pasta salad, chips, ice cream, pies and cookies.

Management staff and the "Support The Troops" committee would like to thank AVI and the Employees' Association for their donations that helped make this a great day for all. Thanks also goes out to Deputy Superintendent William Woods for making and donating the delicious cookies.



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Pine Grove Celebrates Veterans Day

SCI Pine Grove held an inmate veteran ceremony on November 9 in the prison's chapel. It was attended by 25 veteran inmates.

The ceremony introduction was provided by Corrections Counselor 2 Charles "Chuck" Leseman:

Ladies and gentlemen,

I am Chuck Leseman and I am a Treatment Specialist for the Young Adult Offender Program here at Pine Grove. I am also an eight-year veteran of the U.S. Army and Pennsylvania National Guard. I am very pleased to be with you today and to have the chance to introduce our guest speaker, Mr. Rocco Scalzi, who is with us today to share in the honoring of our veterans and recognition of your service to the nation.

Mr. Scalzi is the founder and president of the Beating the Odds Foundation and is a motivational speaker through the foundations "Quarterbacks of Life" student success and leadership program. He has been one of the main proponents of this program for over 27 years, and is a true stand out in this field. After a tragic incident that occurred in 1980 during his rookie year as an Altoona, Pa., police officer Mr. Scalzi turned his life around and decided to take his message of hope to students around the country. He has a great understanding of the obstacles that can become barriers in life and a great appreciation of what it takes to truly rise to the top in the face of adversity despite those setbacks and problems faced. As designers of our own destinies, Mr. Scalzi points to a path of progress with a remarkable message that we are responsible for our own thoughts and actions and ultimately, for our own successes and failures.

Besides that, he has accomplished this with the help of such "Quarterbacks of Life" role models as former Pittsburgh Steeler great and Vietnam War veteran Rocky Bleier and Vietnam War veteran Bob Wieland. In 2013, he teamed up with NASA to offer an annual event for students and teachers allowing students to participate in a research challenge that focuses on personal, academic and career success. Mr. Scalzi has produced several motivational films for both law enforcement officials and young people, encouraging them to never give up in spite of the obstacles of life. He has also appeared around the country as a guest speaker for schools, corporations, police academies and on radio and television programs.

Finally, he is also just a fascinating person and we're all in for a treat today. Without further ado, please join me in welcoming Mr. Rocco Scalzi.



Unit Manager Don Bachota and Rocco Scalzi

Guest speaker was Rocco Scalzi said:

When Francis Scott Key wrote the "Star Spangled Banner" almost 200 years ago, he called America "the land of the free and the home of the brave." Those words are as true today as they were then.

Throughout this nation's history, America's soldiers, sailors, airmen, Marines and coastguardsmen have bravely answered the call to defend our freedom, to aid our friends and allies, and to turn back aggressors.

We can never fully repay our debt of gratitude to the more than 1,189,000+ American service members who died in battle and while in the service of our nation or the 1.4 million who were wounded. We can, however, recognize and thank the 25 million veterans still living today.

These words are inscribed on the Korean War Memorial in Washington, D.C.:

“Our nation honors her sons and daughters who answered the call to defend a country they never knew and a people they never met.”

Those words apply equally to many of our World War I, World War II, Vietnam War and Gulf War veterans as well. They apply to today’s active duty service members — tomorrow’s veterans — who are helping to maintain peace throughout the world.

Today, it is our privilege to say “thank you” to all of America’s veterans, to let them know that we appreciate them for their service and honor them for their sacrifices.

The price of freedom is high. We cannot afford to forget those willing to pay it.

Today, we celebrate America’s veterans for keeping this nation “the land of the free and the home of the brave.”

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Another Tour

SCI Pine Grove officials provided additional tours of the prison on November 14. Touring the facility, as escorted by Lt. Martynuska and Public Information Officer Judy Smith, were students from the Boyce Campus of the Community College of Allegheny County, who toured the Young Adult Offender program, the dog training program and the Program Services building. They also were allowed to view weapons that inmates have made over the last few years.



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SCI Retreat Holds Inmate Graduation

The Education Department at SCI Retreat is pleased to announce that 115 inmates, through their hard work and dedication, received diplomas/certificates for their educational accomplishments at a recent graduation ceremony held at the prison.

The guest speaker was Dr. Joann Hudak, who is an educational consultant currently working with the Pennsylvania Department of Education and other entities. Dr. Hudak is deeply involved in regional workforce and economic development serving as the chairperson of the Wayne/Pike Workforce Alliance. In addition, she is a member of the Wayne Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees, coordinator for Senator John Blake's E2 Education and Economy Summits and numerous other regional boards and committees.



Inmates were permitted to have their family/friends attend the ceremony to show their support. After the ceremony, everyone was invited to enjoy a small reception in the back of the gym.

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SCI Forest Hosts Employee Symposium

On September 21, SCI Forest held its local symposium and anniversary picnic under the big top. The morning began with Investigator Hobart from the Office of Special Investigations and Intelligence presenting a look at real world examples of fraternization that have happened in the Pennsylvania corrections system and the lessons we can all learn from them.

SCI Forest Security Lieutenant Dicky gave us a look at how the underground inmate economy works at SCI Forest, how it ties to violence in the institution and how we all have a piece in helping security.



The day ended with a team building exercise on complacency and team work, where staff took a tour of different areas of the institution and had to answer questions to test their observation skills. Retired staff identification puzzle and other teamwork games rounded out the day.

The prisons Employees Association provided a picnic lunch for all and in honor of the prison's anniversary.

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Fayette Hosts Inside-Out Program

On November 15, the Education Department partnered with the University of Pittsburgh to host the Inside-Out Program, which is a nationally recognized program that gives college students the opportunity to collaborate with inmates and address issues of crime, justice and other social concerns. SCI Fayette currently hosts two Inside-Out college courses in partnership with professors and students from the University of Pittsburgh. Actor and writer Daniel Beaty's live performance will supplement reading material that has been covered during regular coursework. There are 32 inmates enrolled in these classes.



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Inside-Out Program Celebrates 20th Anniversary

From October 19 through 21, Temple University's Inside-Out program celebrated its 20th anniversary.

The first two days of the event were held at Temple University and Swarthmore College, respectively. However, the highlight of the event was the day-long conference/celebration held inside SCI Graterford. This was very special because the first Inside-Out Think Tank was formed in Graterford and the mass majority of the more than 55 instructors training with trainees from around the world occurred at Graterford. More than 175 Inside-Out supporters showed up for the event, and more than 65 Inside-Out alumni from within the institution took part in the event.



The day began with Inside-Out Founder Lori Pompa opening up the conference and inviting Graterford's Superintendent Cynthia Link to say a few words.

After the opening, there was a panel discussion with several inside and outside



guests. Lunch followed the discussions, at which time everyone had an opportunity to mingle and do some community building. The afternoon featured workshops facilitated by the Graterford Think Tankers.

The event also featured a recognition ceremony, where Superintendent Link was honored for her support of Inside-Out. Tyrone Werts and Paul Perry were among those honored at the event.

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Former Juvenile Lifers Meet Eric Holder

On November 13, three former “juvenile” lifers -- John Pace, Vincent Boyd and Charles Brown – after obtaining travel passes from their parole agent – traveled to Washington, D.C. to attend a conference on the juvenile justice. The trip was made possible thanks to Inside-Out, an agency for whom Pace works. While at the conference, they met Eric Holder, who just happened to be attending the conference, and the photo opportunity presented itself.



From left to right: Charles Brown, John Pace, Eric Holder and Vincent Boyd.

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Corrections In The News...

Philadelphia Inquirer (11/19/2017)

<http://www.philly.com/philly/education/temple-gets-its-first-rhodes-scholar-a-north-philly-kid-20171119.html>

Temple gets its first Rhodes Scholar: A North Philly kid

Read about Temple's first Rhodes Scholar and why he has an interest in prison reform:

Hardeman wants to be a professor and a researcher. He has an interest in prison reform.

"One of the desires I have is to teach in prisons," he said.

That desire developed after taking a class in Temple "Inside-Out" exchange program, through which undergraduates learn alongside prison inmates.

"It really changed what I think justice should look like," he said. "It moved from who did what and how can we punish them to who was hurt and can you restore the humanity of each person involved."

Click on the URL above to access the entire article.

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Slippery Rock University (11/08/2017)

<https://www.sru.edu/news/110917a>

SRU research group conducting animal-assisted intervention at Mercer prison

A group from Slippery Rock University is taking a four-legged approach to intervention and research regarding anxiety and stress-related disorders in the inmate population.

As part of an animal-assisted stress/anxiety group, two SRU students and a professor are helping inmates at the State Correctional Institute in Mercer by including dogs in their therapy sessions with as many as 30 incarcerated males.

Yvonne Eaton-Stull, assistant professor of social work, conducted her doctoral research in animal-assisted intervention and teaches a class

on the subject. Along with Cynthia Wright, SCI-Mercer's psychology manager, Eaton-Stull helped launch the project, the first of its kind at the prison, and invited two of her students who have had specialized training to facilitate the group.

"The dogs give the inmates something to put their focus on," said Maura Vulakovich, a junior social work major from Imperial who is one of the student facilitators. "If they are talking about a hard topic, it's easier for them to be sitting there petting the collie and looking at the collie instead of us, who just asked them this intense question."

Click on the URL above to access the entire article.

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Generocity (11/14/2017)

<http://generocity.org/philly/2017/11/14/americans-fewer-prisoners-arts-songs-key-free-graterford-pennsylvania-music/>

Americans want fewer prisoners. What's art have to do with it?
A unique year-old pilot music program inside Pennsylvania's largest prison needs funding to keep going. Its early success and relationship with the state offers a look inside our appetite for — and the limits of — a new kind of criminal justice reform.

By Julie Zeglen

It's a dreary spring day outside of SCI Graterford, but the dingy auditorium in Pennsylvania's largest prison is brought to life with the sounds of percussion, strings, beats and jubilant voices.

The group of 25 men has gathered for their regular Monday afternoon music workshop, run by Songs in the Key of Free, a year-old music nonprofit. Every week, volunteer cofounders August Tarrier and Miles Butler bring music instruction and songwriting to Graterford, a state prison located in Montgomery County about an hour outside Philadelphia.

Whatever you think of a prison, Graterford probably meets the expectation. Built in the 1920s to replace the now-tourist attraction Eastern State Penitentiary, the sprawling industrial footprint on former farmland was built in a different era of criminal justice. Some of its 3,300 inmates are on death row. The grounds include a prison farm and guarded watchtowers. There's an underwear plant, a barber

school, outdoor workout yards between cell blocks. The entire campus will be replaced in Summer 2018 by the high-tech, \$400 million SCI Phoenix immediately to its east.

But for now, these inmates play music in the old auditorium reminiscent of a neglected high school's. The 25 participants — many of whom are lifetime musicians, and many of whom are in Graterford for life — write lyrics, make beats and play instruments individually and in small bands. They also perform inside the prison and “outside” to the public via professional musicians playing the songs the inmates have written at places like Philly's Painted Bride art center and Eastern State. When the pilot workshop launched last year, it reached its small max capacity almost immediately and hasn't emptied since.

Click on the URL above to access the entire article.

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Week of November 13...

Huntingdon's Inside-Out College Program

SCI Huntingdon, along with several other SCIs, participates in a national program called "Inside-Out." It allows college students to meet regularly with inmates for a course that allows the two groups to discuss current news topics/issues. The program originally began 30 years ago inside SCI Graterford and has since gone national. SCI Huntingdon's program has involved partnering with Juniata College. Twelve college students enrolled in the course and 12 inmates were chosen to audit the class to experience what it is like to be in a college program. Juniata College administration decided to fund the students and pay for them to earn college credits if they attended the class and completed the work.

At Huntingdon while the course was wrapping up recently, the professor handed a questionnaire to each inmate. The intention is for the inmates' comments to be used in the college newspaper. This Inside-Out course focused on the opioid addiction and drug addiction in general and society.

Here's what the inmate participants said:

Mikey said, "It's reminded me that I'm not just an inmate. I actually have a brain, and I can't wait for each weekly class so I can test myself. It's also showed me that college could actually be possible for me when I get out."

"I expected this to be the typically intrusive DOC. style of operating, but it couldn't be further from the truth. The outside students, as well as the professor, treat us as equals. I couldn't be happier to be a part of this opportunity."

Anthony said that he thought it would be an eye-opening experience, and it was.

Jeff said, "It's given me a different perspective on drugs/drug use, and also prepared me for possibly furthering my education." He also said that he didn't expect the course to be as challenging as it was, which was a good thing.

Scott said that the class gave him something to look forward to each week. "It has really opened my eyes ... this is a great chance for anyone in my situation. I'll be sad when this class is over."

Keeshawn said that this class offered him a chance to heal. He also said that learning with the students from the outside was a rich experience for people cut off from the world.

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Forest Names Employee of the Month

SCI Forest Masonry Vocational Teacher Eric O'Rourke was selected as the prison's Employee of the Month for November 2017.

He was nominated by his peers due to his being a model of professionalism in corrections.

For several years, O'Rourke has gone above and beyond his day-to-day duties by planning and implementing activities for staff at SCI Forest.

He organized activities for the annual picnic, employee week and the symposium. He is always willing to step in and help where needed. O'Rourke also publishes the monthly newsletter for staff and spends time gathering information and interesting facts to keep it interesting.



Congratulations, Eric!

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Forest Celebrates Veterans Day

On November 9, SCI Forest held a special event in its chapel in honor of Veterans Day. The special event included a guest speaker – former Navy Seal Thad Turner.

Check back, because we're sure Forest will provide more details and even pictures!

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Mercer hosts motivation guest speaker

As part of Mercer's Veteran's Day activities on November 9, inmates and staff were inspired by motivational speaker Eric McElvenny.

McElvenny graduated from the United States Naval Academy with a mechanical engineering degree. He is a retired Marine Corps Captain, an Ironman and an amputee endurance athlete.



After three deployments as a Marine, on his final tour, McElvenny was wounded after stepping on an IED. As a result, his right leg below the knee was amputated. This life-changing event began his next journey in life. As he was faced with a physical challenge and an uncertain future, McElvenny made a promise to himself to run an Ironman Triathlon.

During his presentation, McElvenny spoke about his journey from his hospital bed in southern California after his injury to the Ironman finish line in Kona, Hawaii. He spoke about how, as he went through this experience, he realized that the challenges and adversity he faced and the techniques he used to reach his goals along the way to the finish line could be used against the challenges we all face every day. His inspirational presentation gave those in attendance insight into how to overcome challenges to create their "new normal." With his witty sense of humor, McElvenny motivated all to look at challenges through a totally different lens, to make the best out of every situation, and to discover practical tricks for setting and reaching goals.



McElvenny also took time during his presentation to recognize and honor the veterans who attended and to thank them for their service.

Everyone in attendance enjoyed his presentation, which was coordinated by the prison's Activities Department staff.

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Honoring Veterans

SCI Albion's Empowerment Committee purchased cake to honor the prison's staff for the Veteran's Day Holiday. Cake was available to all shifts beginning on November 10 and throughout the weekend.



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Benner Township Holds Veterans Ceremony

On November 8, a Veterans Ceremony was held for the staff of SCI Benner Township. The ceremony was an expression of gratitude and appreciation for all veterans of the United States Armed Forces. Staff also recognized the service of those service members on active duty. The keynote speaker for this ceremony was SCI Benner Township's Psychology Service Associate J. Thurston, who also serves as the veteran coordinator at the prison. Thurston is a 20-year veteran of the United States Marine Corps. Veterans Day is yet another reminder that the freedoms extended to us as citizens of the greatest country in the free world, do not come free.



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Somerset's CWP Clearing the Way

SCI Somerset's inmate community work program (CWP) crew has been working at the Mt. Davis Trail on a project with the Forestry Department. Here's some pictures of their work:



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Record Argus Reporter Visits Mercer VSU

Earlier this month Greenville Record Argus reporter Holly Patterson visited SCI Mercer's Veteran Services Unit, which began in April 2017 and is a voluntary program for inmates who had served in the military.

If you have a subscription, you can view the article here:

http://www.recordargusnews.com/news/2017-11-11/Front_Page/Seeing_them_as_PEOPLE.html

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Memorial Dedication Held

On November 9, SCI Fayette employees, along with union representatives, gathered to dedicate a memorial that was built to honor those individuals who worked at the facility, but have since passed on.

During his welcoming remarks, SCI Fayette Superintendent Mark Capozza said, "Today, colleagues, friends and family members take a few moments to remember and memorialize those that served at this proud facility. Their names and job classifications are embossed in this memorial, which serves not only a reminder of their service, but also reminds us how frail life can be. So we take a moment to recognize and commemorate our fallen colleagues, let us also be reminded to take care of ourselves and more importantly to take care of each other."

He also expressed his appreciation for the generosity of the funding organizations: PSCOA main office, local PSCOA, Empowerment Committee, Employees Association and AFSCME. Capozza also noted the craftsmanship of the prison's Maintenance Department for their work on the monument. They are Paul Ciccone, Donald Fetter, Bryan Petrosky and Charles Stewart.



"I thank all that were in attendance and give a special thanks to Rev. Crable for the fitting Benediction and our impressive Honor Guard," Superintendent Capozza said.

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Blanket Program

In support of "Morgan's Army," SCI Fayette is currently participating in a blanket drive to help Morgan Yoney "smash" last year's total of 2,000 blankets. These blankets will be sent to all of the local hospitals, animal shelters, nursing homes and homeless shelters in Greene County and Pittsburgh. Morgan Yoney, is the daughter of K-9 Officer Sgt. Yoney.



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Veterans Day Celebrated at SCI Fayette

In an effort to bring a better understanding of Veteran's Day, on November 9 SCI Fayette held a program for inmates and staff members alike.



Corrections Counselor 2 Mary Suchevids, who also is a veteran, planned the program. Guest Speaker Roland Maust spoke of the history of Prisoners of War. An explanation of all of the items on the POW/MIA table was provided.

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Parole Board Chairman Addresses Reentrants



On November 6, PBPP Chairman Leo Dunn, Director Christian Stephens and Board Member Mark Koch addressed nearly 300 SCI Waymart inmates about the parole process.

Areas that were discussed included preparing for the parole interview, securing a home plan and succeeding while under parole supervision. A question-and-answer

session followed the presentation. The workshop was well-received by all who attended.

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Rockview Recognizes Domestic Violence Awareness Month



On October 26, SCI Rockview staff and inmates attended a presentation given by Alli Warren-Rothrock, who spoke about her experiences with domestic violence, her recovery and struggles that she still faces today. The presentation ended with a question-and-answer session.

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Even DOC Dogs Honor Veterans

Say hello to Dani, who on November 9 was spotted honoring our military veterans!



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Advanced Skills Training

The Bureau of Community Corrections (BCC) recently provided for its staff – especially new center monitors – Advanced Skills Training. At the training, participants learned about drug recognition and effects, cultural diversity, Mental Health First Aid and numerous other topics that focus specifically on community corrections.

Also, for the first time, virtual reality was utilized to immerse staff into scenarios surrounding an overdose situation in a center and the proper way to conduct a room search.



In this picture, Dauphin County Chief Investigator John Goshert presents information about drugs to participants, who included employees from the Bureau of Treatment Services, state prison and parole employees and employees within the Bureau of Community Corrections.

The training was coordinated by BCC Contract Facility Coordinator Brian Elliott, who worked closely with BCC's Training Lt. Robert Motto and Administrative Officer Jen Henry.

"This training went very, very well and was a testament to what can be accomplished when all areas work together to achieve a specific goal," said BCC Deputy Director for Security and Training Daniel McIntyre.

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Dallas Holds Graduation Ceremony

The SCI Dallas Education Department held its 36th annual graduation ceremony on November 8. There were a total of 41 graduates acknowledged for their accomplishments with 20 of these students attending the program.

Students received GEDs (4), Adult Commonwealth Secondary Diplomas (4) and Commonwealth Secondary Diploma (1). Students were also given certificates for horticulture (6), ServSafe (17), carpentry (5), electrical (1) and welding (1). Five inmates were awarded certificates through various correspondence courses, with one earning a bachelor's degree.

Congratulating the graduates were speakers Major Lori White and Deputy Superintendent for Centralized Services George Miller along with Christine M. Jensen, director of Luzerne County CareerLink. Three graduates gave speeches describing their own journeys through the educational system.



Family and friends were in attendance to help celebrate the achievements, and a social hour followed the program.

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Week of November 6...

Recognizing Life Savers

On November 6, DOC officials visited SCI Coal Township to present letters from Gov. Tom Wolf to individuals who all played a part in saving the life of one of their coworkers.

As a reminder of what happened, here's the article we posted in the July to September 2017 issue of this newsletter:

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.

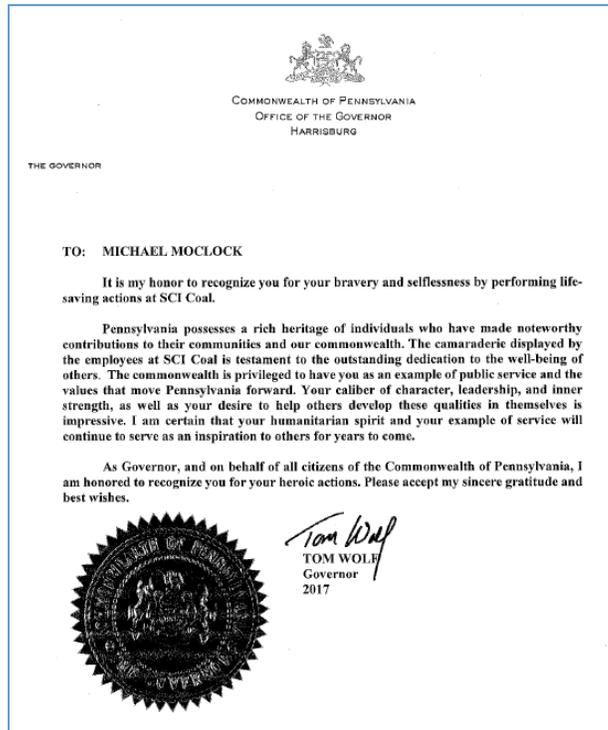
I would only hope if my time ever comes too early, that I have someone around me that cares about saving me as much as your staff cared about that employee. They are truly heroes in every sense of the word."



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.



From left to right, are: RN Kevin Meitzler, RN Kelli Mirolli, RN Jaclyn Gaugler, Doctor Michael Moclock, PA Nicholle Boguslaw, Corrections Officer Hernandez, LPN Patty Kulenguskey, LPN Janine Garancosky and RN Betty Snyder.



Lawmakers Applaud Measure Creating Trust Fund for Youth Impacted by Prison System

On October 31, a bipartisan group of state lawmakers and Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel applauded the passage of legislation to establish a public charitable trust to aid children impacted by the prison system and reverse the direction of youth who may be on a path leading to incarceration in Pennsylvania.

The measure, authored by state Sens. Vincent Hughes (D-Philadelphia/Montgomery), Pat Browne (R-Lehigh), Jay Costa (D-Allegheny) and Richard Alloway (R-Adams/Cumberland/ Franklin/York) creates the "First Chance Trust Fund." The fund will be used to create scholarships and provide grants to programs that benefit children who live in areas with high dropout rates, high incarceration rates and high crime rates.

"Providing program funding to keep children engaged and in the classroom is essential to ensuring they do not become justice-involved later in life," said Secretary Wetzel. "This first-of-its-kind fund will invest significant dollars into programming with the potential to make a life-changing difference for at-risk young people."

**John Wetzel, Secretary
Pennsylvania Department of Corrections**

Initially introduced as Senate Bill 790, the language from the bill was inserted into the Fiscal Code of the 2017-18 state budget, which passed in both chambers of the General Assembly and was signed into law by the governor.

"The fund, which would be the first of its kind in the country, will enable youth who are facing challenges to access important programs and educational opportunities that will give them a sense of stability and belonging," Sen. Hughes said. "This is a solid investment in our children, our community and our justice system and I'm thrilled that it has received bipartisan support."

The fund will be administered by the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency and will be paid for by private, tax-deductible donations and a 1 percent surcharge on vendors that have a contract with the Department of Corrections exceeding \$5 million. Other Pennsylvania agencies also will have the

option to include a similar provision in their contracts. It does not require the use of taxpayer dollars.

"It is imperative that we look for ways to provide an alternative path for our children who are at a higher risk of dropping out of school or being incarcerated," Sen. Browne said. "The First Chance Trust Fund provides exactly that avenue to enable Pennsylvania's most at-risk young people access to programs, services and scholarships that help ensure they succeed both in school and later in life."

"Providing program funding to keep children engaged and in the classroom is essential to ensuring they do not become justice-involved later in life," said Secretary Wetzel. "This first-of-its-kind fund will invest significant dollars into programming with the potential to make a life-changing difference for at-risk young people."

Children continue to enter the justice system at alarming rates. Approximately 65 percent of Pennsylvania state inmates have at least one child, according to the Department of Corrections.

The absence -- which some psychologists have compared to the death of a parent -- through the formative years can have deleterious effects on a child. Dealing with the emotional, social and economic consequences of that loss can trigger behavioral problems, lead to trouble in school and the possibility of dropping out and continuing the cycle of crime.

"The First Chance Trust Fund was one of the top priorities of mine and the Senate Democratic Caucus in this entire budget process, and we are so pleased to have taken it across the finish line," said Sen. Costa, the Senate Democratic Leader. "There are 81,000 children in Pennsylvania with at least one parent currently incarcerated; we cannot allow them to fall through the cracks. They already face an uphill battle, growing up without their parents, and the First Chance Trust Fund is something very simple, very common-sense that we can do."

Initially, the trust fund is anticipated to generate \$500,000 to \$1 million on an annual basis. The fund would be targeted to regions that have statistically higher high school dropout rates, high risks of incarceration and high crime rates.

"The First Chance Trust Fund will help protect Pennsylvania's most vulnerable youth from becoming innocent casualties of mass incarceration. We know that dealing with the emotional, social and economic consequences of incarceration can trigger behavioral problems, lead to trouble in school and the possibility of dropping out and continue the cycle of crime," said state Rep. Chris Rabb (D-Philadelphia). "I'm thrilled and grateful for the support this legislation received from both chambers across party lines. This is not just a wise investment in our most marginalized

communities, it is an innovative way to build community wealth while constricting the school-to-prison pipeline.”

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Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training Milestone Reached

By Rhonda Tomcavage, CIT Program Manager

On September 29, 2017, the Department of Corrections achieved a milestone in the implementation of Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training.

With the graduation of CIT Class #1754, the department now has more than 1,500 CIT trained staff, including 1,002 corrections officers.

The broadening influence of the CIT training has had a profound impact on the organization, resulting in one of the largest culture changes this department has ever experienced.

CIT training focuses on the challenges we face in corrections when dealing with inmates experiencing mental health crisis that goes well beyond what the untrained non-professional could be expected to know or understand. Behavior associated with mental illness can vary dramatically from one individual to the next, and the CIT training program helps staff better understand the challenges many inmates face and how to effectively resolve tense, dynamic and evolving crisis situations.

The CIT training program is part of a system-wide initiative to place inmates' mental health at the forefront of treatment during incarceration. Moreover, CIT is about maximizing safety for both staff and inmates. By providing this education to our staff, we reduce the likelihood of use of force situations.

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

During the five-day CIT training course, participants develop an understanding of mental illness through presentations by DOC staff, consumers and community



members having expertise and experience with mental illness. Since April 2017, two days of the CIT training course are focused specifically on verbal de-escalation strategies where staff are trained to use strategies and concrete steps to bring inmates down from the crisis state. Participants then apply the training during role-play scenarios facilitated by the instructors that help to solidify and enhance the skills presented.

Recent changes to the CIT training program include the expansion of the class from four days to five; updated modules on trauma, suicide prevention, staff wellness and C.O.V.E.R., and introduction of the verbal de-escalation techniques in which current CIT Program Manager Rhonda Tomcavage and Lt. Vigil Meyer received training from the CIT founder, Sam Cochran, and have currently trained more 20 DOC staff to facilitate the new curriculum.

Things on the horizon for CIT ... During the October CIT training class, Daniel Gruner, a clinical psychology doctoral student at Duquesne University, was present throughout the week to collect data from the CIT training participants to utilize for his research on what happens in CIT Trainings. Daniels theory is that it is an important time in American society when we are taking a close look at mental health in corrections settings like jails and prisons and wondering what we are doing well and what we can do better. He interviewed participants as the experts in mental health crises in corrections with their on-the-ground experience and listened closely to their knowledge and experience to aid his research project.

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DOC-PBPP are Recipient of Federal Grant for CIT Training

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC), in partnership with the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole, has been awarded a federal grant totaling almost \$280,000 to implement crisis intervention training (CIT) for staff members in community corrections centers, mental health contracted providers and parole supervision.

The funding, provided by the U.S. Department of Justice through the Justice and Mental Health Collaboration Program, will allow more than 180 DOC and parole staff to work with county first-responders and mental health providers already trained in CIT.

"The Department of Corrections and Parole professionals currently serve more than 1,200 people living in community corrections facilities, including an estimated 300 individuals with mental health diagnoses," Governor Tom Wolf said. "This grant will help these professionals learn how to best handle a crisis to ensure the safety of those living in facilities, as well as the residents and communities in these areas."

What's Next?

Bureau of Community Corrections, Parole and Training Academy staff begin to develop a stock curriculum and engage with community partners in the involved counties in order to develop the CIT training.

Of the more than 47,000 inmates currently in Pennsylvania state prisons, 31 percent have a mental health diagnosis, a figure that has increased significantly in the past decade.

“The DOC has been actively developing new policies and treatment programs to address the growing population of those with mental illness with the understanding that more than 95 percent of them will return to the community one day,” said Wetzel. “This grant will allow us to build upon the work already being done and provide potentially life-saving training to staff helping individuals prepare to reenter the community.”

“This intervention training grant will provide our parole officers a better understanding of the various types of mental health distresses a person might have and when someone may be experiencing a mental crisis,” said PBPP Chairman Leo Dunn. “We are proud that these grants will offer the assistance, skills and resources to our agents to identify those in need of mental health care and to seek out appropriate treatment services.”

The training will be piloted in Allegheny, Berks and Mercer counties and focus on centers located in Pittsburgh, Reading and Sharon.

In addition to CIT training in the three identified counties, DOC will conduct an evaluation on the impact of CIT in community corrections settings. If the evaluation is positive, CIT could be instituted for community corrections staff across Pennsylvania.

The DOC has so far provided Crisis Intervention Training to 1,508 employees, of whom 1,002 are corrections officers.

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Constantly Training

DOC employees always have mandatory and non-mandatory training that they must complete as part of their employment. This is no different for those employees who are considered to be executive managers – superintendents, deputy superintendents, bureau/office directors, etc. These individuals are attending a three-day training at the DOC’s Training Academy called “New DOC Executive Managers Orientation Training.”

While similar training had been presented in the past, that training essentially was every Central office bureau/office director providing a detailed overview of his/her area. The training has since been revamped to include exercises and take-aways.

This three-day training is covering things such as:

- Using data to manage your day-to-day operation – what does the information tell us about corrections and where we go from here?
- How to build, defend and maintain a budget
- Managing the external environment
- Managing the politics of corrections and criminal justice
- Internal programs and services

- Commonwealth shared services initiative
- Winning workplace relationships
- Superintendents: Holy Cow! What do I do now?
- How does our world advance the DOC mission?

The three days will be wrapped up with a question and answer session where attendees can ask DOC deputy secretaries any questions they may have.



Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal addresses participants of the DOC’s “New DOC Executive Managers Orientation Training.”

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SCI Albion Inmates Donate to Local Food Pantry

On November 8, a representative from the Albion Northwestern Food Pantry accepted a donation of \$5,068 from SCI Albion Superintendent Mike Clark, Deputy Superintendent for Centralized Services Melinda Adams and the inmate organization call Albion New Inmate Visionary Organization (ANIVO).



Money was raised through the inmate organization’s fundraising efforts and will go to feed and meet the needs of local area families throughout the holidays and winter season.

Since 2003, ANIVO has raised and donated more than \$50,000 to charities throughout Pennsylvania!

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A Sunrise, A Rainbow

Sometimes pretty things happen near prisons, such as this rainbow over SCI Phoenix...



And this sunrise over SCI Muncy...



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“Building Your Financial House”



Holly Chase, from the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency, conducted her “Building Your Financial House” workshop for 16 SCI Houtzdale Veterans Service Unit inmates on November 3.

Building Your Financial House guides participants through eight modules that focus on areas of personal financial management. One workshop is held each month and covers one of the eight modules. These areas include cash management, credit and debt management, building financial security, understanding the tax system, building long-term wealth and estate planning. The course is a comprehensive finance workshop that is designed to assist reentrants in taking the necessary steps towards achieving personal financial success in their future.

The current module being provided to VSU inmates is “Spending Sensibly,” which focuses on identifying income, financial accountability and money management decision making. Participants are provided a “money map” which helps participants objectively identify their current financial position. From here, participants learn to set goals and make adjustments to meet their financial needs.

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Raising Funds for a Memorial Wall

SCI Houtzdale and Pennsylvania State Police employees teamed up recently for a softball game to raise funds for the Staff Memorial Wall that is planned for the prison. PSP won the game but ultimately the Memorial Wall fund won by earning \$225.

The Memorial Wall is planned for SCI Houtzdale employees' to honor those who have worked at the prison and who have passed on.

The Memorial Wall committee has been working on the layout and area for the memorial on the grounds.



The Morale Committee as well as the Empowerment Committee in the first month raised more than \$1,000.

Soon the prison will kick off its first major fundraiser for the Wall, with a set date for completion to be within the next two years.

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Tribute to Brittney

On February 27, 2017, SCI Laurel Highlands lost one of its own – Certified Nursing Assistant Brittney Kyle -- to an act of domestic violence. From that tragedy, SCI Laurel Highlands staff pulled together to conduct several fund raisers for domestic violence awareness to bring awareness to this tragedy and bring domestic violence awareness to the forefront.

With October 2017 being Domestic Violence Awareness Month, employees came

together and purchased a memorial plaque and commissioned a mural to honor Brittney. Staff wanted to remember her and her plight as well as the plight of the other thousands of victims who endure domestic violence and the vicious cycle of abuse.



Every nine seconds in the U.S. a woman is assaulted or beaten. Domestic violence is the leading cause of injury to women -- more than car accidents, muggings and rapes combined. Every day in the U.S., more than three women are murdered by their husbands or boyfriends. Men who as children witnessed their parents' domestic violence were twice as likely to abuse their own wives than sons of nonviolent parents

Brittney's story, like so many, is one of years of abuse at the hands of her significant other, for which she did seek help for through our State Employee Assistance Program (SEAP). SCI Laurel Highlands staff wanted to shed more light on this terrible tragedy and to let victims know that there is help, you just have to be brave enough to grasp it and follow through, because failing to do so leaves much hurt and broken lives in the wake of your loss.

Brittney started with DOC as a nurse's aide in December 2010. She started as a float aide working all three shifts and this past spring moved to straight 2-10 shift. She was an employee who excelled in professionalism and doing the "right thing." She was respectful, assistive to others and always willing to go the extra mile. She was an outgoing, warm, compassionate and funny person that made people feel "better" and laugh in hectic stressful times. She has many, many friends here at LAU in all departments. She leaves behind a brother and her parents. She is sadly missed every day.

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Week of October 30...

A Tug at Your Heartstrings

By Rachel Mills, Corrections Counselor, SCI Smithfield



On October 22nd Joseph Frisina walked out SCI Smithfield a free man, after serving 40 years as a "juvenile lifer." He didn't leave alone. Harper, a black Labrador retriever raised at Smithfield as part of the Canine Partners for Life Prison Pup service dog program, went with him.

Harper was released from the service dog program after being diagnosed with degenerative joint disease. The tough news came after Harper had been paired with a recipient and was living elsewhere. Knowing Joe was leaving prison soon after being re-sentenced, Kammy Laird, staff coordinator for the prison pup program asked if he would like to adopt Harper.

Joe did not hesitate. After talking with his family in Erie with whom he would be living and also consulting with parole, an application was made for adoption. Canine Partners for Life was thrilled! They accepted his application and things started to move forward. The big question was how to get Harper to Joe. That's when Laird came up with an idea. What if Harper could be brought back to Smithfield and leave with Joe? She got approval from the administrative staff for this to happen.

Joe was prepared to pay the \$300 adoption fee, but Canine Partners for Life told him they waive the fee for those who raise dogs who become eligible for adoption.

Harper returned to Smithfield with the trainers from Canine Partners for Life and was reunited with Joe (see picture below) Harper was then approved to be released as part of Joe's "property." Everyone who knows Joe Frisina is very excited for him

- the Smithfield staff and inmates. Joe gave his all to the Prison Pup Program for many years, long before he ever knew he might get to leave prison one day. As sad as it is that Harper was unable to become a service dog, he will spend his life with the person that raised him to be one.

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Retreat Holds Local Employee Symposium

On October 27, SCI Retreat held a symposium for its employees in the gymnasium. The day consisted of guest speakers from Clarion Psychiatric Center and the Victims Resource Center. Also, a Yoga demonstration was provided by instructor Bjarni Nermoe from the Yoga House. Participants then enjoyed a catered lunch from a local restaurant.



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Coal Township Recognizes Medical Department Employees

Nine SCI Coal Township Medical Department employees were recently recognized as Employees of the Quarter for the Third Quarter of 2017.

Doctor Michael Moclock, Physician's Assistant Nicholle Boguslaw, Registered Nurse Supervisor Blanche Milo, Registered Nurse Jaclyn Gaugler, Registered Nurse Betty Snyder, Registered Nurse Kevin Meitzler, Registered Nurse Kelli Mirolli, Licensed Practical Nurse Janine Garancosky, and Licensed Practical Nurse Patty Kulenguskey were all nominated for their actions when responding to a staff medical emergency in the inmate dining room on August 18, 2017.

Corrections Officer Hernandez experienced medical distress while eating lunch and became unconscious. LPNs immediately rendered first aid/CPR. Additional medical staff responded to the area with AED which was utilized several times. Eventually CO Hernandez regained consciousness. It's recognized that the outcome of this situation would have been different if not for the immediate response and dedication of the medical professionals at SCI Coal Township. It should also be noted that, besides the staff members recognized as performing lifesaving attention, the entire Medical Department stepped up to assist in other areas to ensure continued medical care and the efficient operation of the medical department.

Superintendent McGinley commended the Medical Department, specifically those nine individuals, and presented their awards at the Administrative staff meeting.



(Not available for the photo: Dr. Moclock, RN Mirolli and RN Snyder.)

Additional staff recognized by Coal Township:



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SCI Muncy Juvenile Lifer Friends & Family Day

By Allison Beck

On October 26, SCI Muncy's juvenile lifer community hosted an event for their friends and family.

Lee Mix, a parole agent, was the first guest speaker. She talked about the six things a paroled inmate should do to avoid violating their parole, and held an extensive Q & A session with the juvenile lifers and their families.

Paulette Carrington, a paroled juvenile lifer, spoke about her experience since leaving SCI Muncy. She had words of encouragement for the women who are still inmates at Muncy.

The final guest speaker was Joanna Visser Adjoian, co-director of Youth Sentencing & Reentry Project (YSRP). She talked about how YSRP is working in Philadelphia to advocate for juvenile lifers across the state.

After lunch, contract facility coordinators Jerome Koerner and Joshua Flinn provided guests with a virtual reality experience. The machines made it possible for participants to tour other facilities or go on a roller coaster.

Throughout the day, inmates and their families had the opportunity to take photos in front of a backdrop. Families could take a photo home to remember the event.

The event ended with presentations from the juvenile lifers. The women thanked their families and friends for coming to the event and gave knitted blankets as gifts.



Kellie, sister of inmate Tabitha, experiencing a VR roller



A juvenile lifer's family enjoying blankets and letters

Allison Beck is an intern in the DOC's Press Office until early December. She attends Shippensburg University as a communication/journalism major with a focus in public relations and a minor in psychology.

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PSU Students Tour Waymart

Penn State University, Schuylkill Campus, students and instructors toured SCI Waymart on October 26. Corrections Superintendent's Assistant Joseph Vinansky and Unit Manager Michael Skutack fielded questions from the group and led a tour of the facility. Students had the opportunity to visit the Forensic Treatment Center and observe therapeutic programs that benefit the unit's mentally ill population.



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Waymart Parole Agent Named Parole Agent of the Year

SCI Waymart Parole Agent John Evans was selected as the recipient of the 2016 Vicki Weasel Award -- Parole Agent of the Year. This award was presented during the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole's 2016 annual employee awards program held on October 18 at the Department of Corrections Training Academy in Elizabethtown. The ceremony was followed by a luncheon in honor of all of the award recipients. His immediate supervisor and one additional guest was invited to attend the event.

During a recent trip to SCI Waymart, Regional Deputy Secretary Mike Wenerowicz asked for a picture with Evans and the entire institutional parole staff.



Pictured, left to right, are: Jessica George, Linda Meyers, Superintendent Jack Sommers, Kevin Price, John Evans, Daniel Dragwa, Regional Deputy Secretary Mike Wenerowicz and Michele McGraw.

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Recognizing Parole Excellence

On October 16, at the DOC Training Academy, Parole employees were presented with a number of awards, ranging from Employee of the Year to Lloyd A. White Award for Excellence in Reentry. While these awards were presented before the DOC-PBPP Memorandum of Understanding was signed, we want to also highlight these individuals as well:

Employee of the Year – Professionals 2
Heather Winck, Parole Supervisor
SCI Rockview – Williamsport District

"...she manages her staff and the docket extremely well with a very low percentage of cases not seen...ensures staff are consistently working up to par, and pitches in when there is a staff shortage...assists with training new agents at BTA, and also assists in training new parole supervisors. Her leadership skills and overall work performance are outstanding, and she is a valuable board employee."

Winck, right, is pictured with Central Regional Institutional Parole Director Jennifer Zimmerman.



Employee of the Year –
Officials/Administrators
Robert LaBenne, Parole Manager
Erie District

"...took it upon himself to become proficient with EPICS coding very quickly, which has resulted in the timely coding of tapes. He remains dedicated to the commitment of continued fidelity of the EPICS model..."

LaBenne, right, is pictured with Parole Manager Melissa Repsher.





Michael M. Haduck Field Parole Agent of the Year
Larry Smith, Jr.
Harrisburg District Office – Harrisburg District

This award recognizes the outstanding service of a field parole agent by honoring his courage for protecting the community.

Typically, a FAST agent does not supervise active offenders; however, based on a tip from an individual who stated that he knew an absconder, Agent Smith began supervising the parolee and relayed information to the US Marshall's Service who were eventually able to locate and apprehend the absconder who was wanted for the attempted homicide of a Northern York County police officer. If not for his dedication to this parolee's supervision, the absconder may still be on the loose and a danger to the community.

Vicki D. Weisel Institutional Parole Agent of the Year
John Evans, Parole Agent
SCI-Waymart – Scranton District

This award recognizes the outstanding service of an institutional parole agent by honoring her work in the counseling of inmates in state and county correctional institutions.

While conducting a home plan investigation, Agent Evans discovered an active protection from abuse order filed by an inmate's ex-wife for threatening homicide and suicide. His dedication to caseload awareness and efforts to protect the public resulted in batterer's intervention being added as a parole requirement and the issuance of a no-contact order with the ex-wife and son.

Evans, right, is pictured with Parole Supervisor Anthony Spears.



John D. Perkis Award

Christopher Keller, Parole Agent

West Philadelphia Division – Philadelphia District



This award recognizes employees whose performance demonstrates courageous and significant service to the board and/or the community. Its aim is to recognize an employee whose job-related performance demonstrates strength of mind that enables the person to encounter danger and/or endure pain or adversity with courage and whose non-job related performance demonstrates a significant contribution to human welfare and social service.

On August 26, 2016, Agent Keller witnessed an automobile accident and remained on scene to provide aid and act as a witness. The at-fault driver appeared to be under the influence of illicit drugs and began assaulting the responding police officer. Without hesitation, Agent Keller went to the aid of the police officer, eventually deploying his taser in order to subdue the subject. Agent Keller then handcuffed the driver. His quick actions prevented serious bodily injury to both the police officer and the subject.

Group Achievement - Public/Employee Safety Category

Caitlin Krulock and Sarah Locke Thompson, Parole Agents

Northeast Philadelphia Division – Philadelphia District

The Group Achievement Award was established to recognize an outstanding accomplishment that was made through the coordination of many individual efforts and has contributed substantially to the accomplishment of the board's mission.

While conducting a home visit of a Megan's Law sex offender, Agent Krulock and Locke Thompson observed that he was in possession of various types of pornographic material, children's toys and images, and several prohibited weapons. A federal investigation was initiated as a result of their diligence.

Pictured, left to right, are Agent Sarah Locke Thompson and Agent Caitlin Krulock.



Lloyd A. White Award for Excellence in Reentry
John Filson Sr., Parole Agent
Pittsburgh District Office

"...belief in reentry is demonstrated by his almost non-existent technical parole violator arrest rates and successful completion rates... tirelessly pursues new knowledge that he might employ to the betterment of his parolees...is a valuable example for other agents at the board to demonstrate how to implement reentry principles into their supervision practices without compromising community safety."

Agent Filson has been dedicated to working with each offender as they re-enter the community and is committed to assisting offenders with their recovery process. He has implemented a new idea into the monthly court session where each offender who comes in front of the courtroom answers a question asked of them focused on the offender's recovery process. This has generated positive change talk with both the parolee, the judge and the board member. The monthly sessions have become more meaningful to the offenders and the reentry team. The judge has praised Agent Filson and stated that he has learned a lot from the program as it has changed his approach with his everyday actions as a judge. It is Agent Filson's passion, respect, and integrity to the program that has made the Allegheny Reentry Program a success.



Excellence in Leadership Award
Timothy Douglass, Parole Hearing Officer
SCI Laurel Highlands

This award signifies an employee's excellence in agency and mission leadership.

With minimal supervision, Hearing Examiner Douglass excels not only in his work, but also in his professionalism. He is a role model among his peers and is well respected by the Board. Despite having personal obstacles to overcome in the past



year, he never let his work suffer or used that as an excuse to produce subpar work. He shows commitment to the hearing division and to the work of the agency as a whole by providing practical suggestions for improvement. He also mentored the board's newest hearing examiner over the past year providing excellent feedback to both the mentee and his supervisor. He is an excellent leader vocally and leads by example.

PBPP Chairman's Achievement Award
Damien Mscisz, Parole Supervisor
Central Office

This award recognizes employees who, through their performance and accomplishments on and off the job, have most significantly impacted the advancement of the PA Board of Probation and Parole's mission during the past award year.

In an effort to improve communication and collaboration, the board and Department of Corrections initiated a new case notes system in 2017. This project has been in the works for several years and upon completion will provide a more informative, user friendly case notes system. CAPTOR is a continuous project with phases of improvements to come.

The board has also moved forward in the process of becoming a paperless agency by utilization of OnBase, an electronic file retention and management system. As of March 2017 all new files are opened electronically utilizing OnBase, therefore no more paper files are being created in the field across the Commonwealth. OnBase is a project that not only affects where files are stored, but in various processes throughout the agency. Upon full completion of OnBase implementation, the agency will be able to work more efficiently and be more mobile.

Supervisor Mscisz has been involved in the concept, design, implementation, and improvement process with both CAPTOR and OnBase, and continuously works to find improvements in the system and sits on several committees reviewing processes and efficiencies.

The creation of the "Office of the Future" or "Mobile Office" is another initiative of the board which began with the deployment of iPads to the field. He has provided valuable assistance and input regarding the concept, design, and implementation of this initiative, and continues to provide valuable input and advice regarding the next phase/stage of the implementation of mobility to the field.



Mr. Mscisz is always willing to assist with projects and provides essential input from the field. His assistance has been significant to the agency's initiatives, goals, and mission. He is enthusiastic and always looking for innovative ways to efficiently manage his unit while sharing those ways with other supervisors, and assisting his peers with new technologies by providing hands-on training and guidance. He also takes a hands-on approach to training new agents within his unit by frequently accompanying his agents in the field.

Pictured, from left to right, are: Supervisor Damien Mscisz and PBPP Central Region Director Kelly Evans.

Special thanks to the PA Board of Probation and Parole for sharing this information.

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Discussing the Impact of Crime



On October 23, Corrections Counselor Treatment Specialists Brian Delaney, Denise Bomba and Michelle Spataro hosted guest speakers for the Impact of Crime Program.

Husband and wife, Pat and Warren from Maryland, provided a presentation to both staff and inmates about domestic violence. Their presentation focused on their daughter and two grandchildren who are victims of domestic violence. The three were killed in a fire that was set by their son-in-law. Pat and Warren spoke about the impact these events had on their family and the community. This presentation was attended by reentrants from the Impact of Crime group, a Violence Prevention class, and three separate Batterer's Intervention classes.



Also on October 23, the same Treatment Specialists mentioned earlier hosted a Domestic Violence Vigil in honor of 102 Pennsylvania victims who lost their lives to acts of domestic violence in 2016. Inmate participants from the Batterers Intervention classes recited relevant quotes, read poems and sang songs. A single, large candle was lit by Brian and Denise in honor of these victims. A paper chain of quotes assembled by the inmates was later broken as a way to demonstrate the need to “break the chain of silence of domestic violence.” Deacon Matt Lorent then provided a powerful speech on the effects of domestic violence. The 102 victim names were read aloud and a moment of silence was taken for each victim. The ceremony was concluded by extinguishing the candle and having the group recite in unison, “No more domestic violence.”

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Wardens Tour K9 Academy

As part of the Pennsylvania Prison Wardens Association’s Fall Conference attendees were given options to tour local state prison operations. One that was offered was to observe a demonstration of the DOC’s drug interdiction unit. Here PPWA conference participants experience passive scanning, a technique where dogs simply walk around a sitting person and can smell/detect illegal drugs.



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PPWA Tours Benner Township

Members of the Pennsylvania Prison Wardens Association were provided a tour of SCI Benner Township as part of their Fall Conference and Training Symposium held October 25 - 27. As part of their symposium, members had the opportunity to tour SCI Houtzdale's Veterans' Service Unit (VSU), the Drug Interdiction Unit (DIU), SCI Rockview's Forestry Camp or SCI Benner Township's Transportation HUB, Residential Treatment Unit (RTU) and CI Laundry.



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NEW Visiting Room Procedure

NOTICE!! – New Visiting Room Food Procedure – NOTICE!!

Effective October 30, 2017, the Visiting Room Food Procedure will be implemented at all state correctional facilities.

Any food item purchased in the visiting room will be removed by the visitor from its original container/wrapper and placed on a provided plate in the designated area separated from inmates.

There are to be no inmates permitted in the designated area while the container/wrapper is being removed.

The visitor will then throw the container/wrapper in a trash receptacle prior to the visitor leaving the designated area. The items on the plate must remain in an unobstructed view of the Visiting Room Officer.

Your cooperation in this matter is appreciated.

This notice was posted to the DOC's website and in visiting rooms to alert visitors to a change in the way food from vending machines may be consumed. This change is another way the DOC is working to prevent the introduction of contraband into its prisons. Apparently individuals would hide items in an opened food item bag and then share the bag with the inmate, thus sharing a smuggled item. This move will eliminate the food wrappers and yet another way visitors and inmates were sharing items that were not permitted in prisons. The change became effective October 30, 2017.

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Feds Tour SCI Forest

In an email to Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal, Regional Deputy Secretary Trevor Wingard wrote:

"SCI Forest made us extremely proud today (Nov. 2). Bureau of Prisons Director Kane and Assistant Director Lara spent several hours there looking at their operations, while focusing on the Security Threat Group Management Unit (STGMU) process and touring the unit.

Superintendent Michael Overmyer, Deputy Oberlander, Deputy Sawtelle and all their team did a great job explaining and presenting the entire process. OSII Director Barnacle and Major Rivello joined the Forest team and answered all of the questions from the director and assistant director, both of whom passed along their 'thanks' to you.

Mike and his crew are getting it done up there and have a great team in place."

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Lt. Gov. Stack, Senator Brooks, Other Dignitaries Tour SCI Mercer's Veterans Service Unit

On November 2, Superintendent Brian Thompson and SCI Mercer's staff were honored to host a tour of the Veterans Service Unit (VSU) by Pennsylvania's Lt. Gov. Mike Stack. Also in attendance was Senator Michelle Brooks from Pennsylvania's 50th District serving Erie, Crawford, Mercer and Warren counties. Others touring the VSU included Matt Franchak, Lt. Gov.'s Chief of Staff; William Gelgot, Lt. Gov.'s Executive Assistant; Steve Burk, Secretary of the Board of Pardons; Ross Miller, DOC Chief of Classification and Assessment; and Richard Podguski, Director of Probation and Parole.

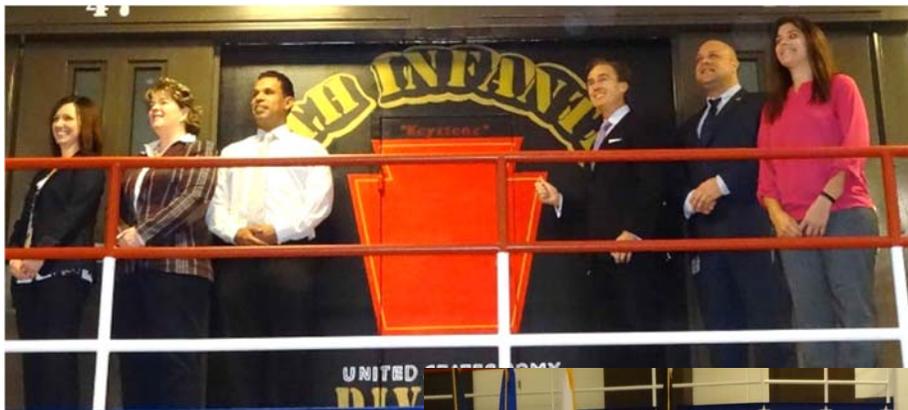


The tour was coordinated by DOC Statewide Veteran's Coordinator Ryan Yoder. Yoder stated that he arranged the tour as a way to show support and appreciation, as well as to say thanks to our incarcerated military veterans for their service as we approach Veterans Day.



Pictured left to right are Ryan Yoder, VSU Social Worker Erica Lyn, Lt. Governor Stack, VSU Unit Manager Lisa Graves, VSU Counselor Aaron Diaz and Deputy Superintendent William Woods.

Seventy veterans stood at attention as the group entered the unit, indicating that they are retaining their military discipline while incarcerated. Lt. Gov. Stack and Senator Brooks both spoke and personally thanked the veterans for their service. Before departing the unit, they both expressed how impressed they were with the painted murals on the unit and praised those who painted them. Lt. Gov. pointed out that one of his favorite paintings was the 28th Infantry Division mural.



Mercer was honored to host Lt. Governor Stack, Senator Brooks and the others who toured Mercer's VSU.





Pictured with left to right are Ryan Yoder, Senator Brooks, Lt. Governor Stack, Superintendent Brian Thompson, and Steve Burk.

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Camp Hill Holds Graduation Ceremony

On October 19, SCI Camp Hill held a graduation ceremony for the Class of 2017. A total of 85 inmates received a diploma, certificate or award in the following areas: Adult Commonwealth Secondary Diploma, General Education Diploma, Barber Manager License, Barber License, Business Education, ICDL, Culinary, Graphic Arts and HVAC Vocational Program.



Bruce Elliott, Camp Hill's principal, welcomed graduates, family, friends and staff.

John Horner, deputy superintendent for centralized services provided the opening remarks, and Daryl Carter, chairman & CEO of Avanath Capital Management, LLC, was the keynote speaker.

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Albion Employees Participate in Local High School Mock Interviews

On October 19, SCI Albion employees, along with several other community/businesses, participated in mock interviews for the senior class at Maplewood High School. Coordinated by Crawford County school district official Eileen Mullen, the event's goal was to connect students to the business community.

Students all presented the interviewers with a resume and cover letter. Then a rubric was completed by the interviewer rating the interview process, the resume and cover letter that was presented. At the end of each class period, there was a debriefing session with the students and the interviewers. Each business representative was able to make comments to the class as a whole on tips for landing a career position after graduation and also gave words of caution to the students on things to avoid when interviewing as well.



Unit Manager John Tiller conducts an interview.



Unit Manager Patricia Thompson (foreground) and HR Manager Theresa Croll (background) conduct interviews.

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Albion Conducts Full-Scale Exercise

On October 25, SCI Albion conducted an annual Full-Scale Exercise.

SCI Albion's Hostage Negotiations Team, Corrections Emergency Response Team (CERT) and numerous outside supporting agencies such as the West County Emergency Management Agency, Pennsylvania State Police and Albion Police Department participated.

The exercise scenario involved a breach of the perimeter fence requiring designated escape posts being manned by DOC staff and the Pennsylvania State Police. After all designated escape posts were manned, an inject (which is an unknown new issue related to the incident) was given to the incident commander indicating that the escaped inmate had entered the warehouse and had taken a hostage. The tactical resolution developed was a collaborative effort between the CERT team and the Pennsylvania State Police. Individual teams, made up of who CERT members and two PSP members, made multiple entries into the warehouse allowing both

departments to work together. The responding teams utilized Simunition equipment (or simulated ammunition) to make for a more realistic atmosphere.



Both departments commented on the value of the training and how they enjoyed working together. The exercise was a great learning experience for all involved departments.

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Accreditation Audit Passed

On October 25, SCI Huntingdon passed its ACA accreditation audit with a score of 100% on the mandatory standards and 98.8% on the non-mandatory standards.



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Hispanic Heritage Month Celebrated at Mercer

To celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month at SCI Mercer, the Activities Department hosted a paint night on October 17. Taught by Kayla Bickerton, a local painting class instructor, inmates had the opportunity to be creative in painting a "charging bull." Twenty inmates of all skill levels signed up to attend.

Attendees enjoyed Hispanic food items, as well as a bag of popcorn to snack on during the event. The paint night was enjoyed by all. Thanks to the Activities Department for arranging this well received event.



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SCI Coal Township Employees Donate Annually to Local Food Pantry

SCI Coal Township employees collected pantry items for the annual food drive which benefits a Shamokin charity, Manna for the Many. Boxes of various food items were delivered to Manna on October 27.

Manna for the Many is a local food pantry established through the Shamokin Area Ministerium to serve those in need in the Shamokin/Coal Township area. Manna opened its doors in 2000 and is supported entirely by private donations and staffed solely by volunteers.



Pictured with some of the donated items is Jodi Britton, who has coordinated the food collection since it began.

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DOC Employee to Star in Stiller Movie

SCI Fayette's own Corrections Officer 1 Heath "Lumpy" Ashmun scored a speaking role in Ben Stiller's mini-series "Escape at Dannemora."

Stiller and crew are currently filming at SCI Pittsburgh where CO1 Ashmun was on-set last Wednesday through Friday. He reported that he worked as a CO 1 at SCI Pittsburgh from February 1991 to January 2005, when he made the transition to SCI Fayette as a result of the first closure of Pittsburgh.

Ashmun's role is as a tower officer in the mini-series, and he shared that being involved in the three-day filming was a fun experience that brought back many memories of working at the historic facility.

Upon his return to work on Monday, he presented SCI Fayette (and former SCI Pittsburgh) Superintendent Mark Capozza with a personally autographed copy of his script. Ashmun's current assignment is R & D Officer at SCI Fayette.



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Right To Counsel

On November 2, Special Assistant to the Secretary Deb Sahd represented the PA DOC at the third annual meeting of the Right to Counsel National Consortium in Washington, DC. She participated in a panel discussion about the importance of funding indigent defense and the affect it has on each of us and why we think it is important to fund it.

Joining Sahd on the panel were Karlhton Moore, Executive Director for the Ohio Office of Criminal Justice Services and President of the National Criminal Justice Association; John Rago, Associate Professor of Law at Duquesne University; and Dagny Stapleton, Deputy Director Nevada Association of Counties.



Rago discussed what Allegheny County is doing to expand and support this area and their work on indigent defense and bail reform. They are piloting a program through a law clinic at Duquesne and working with their criminal justice advisory board in this area.

Moore and Stapleton spoke about the effect it has by not getting adequate counsel along with other things specific to their organizations.

Sahd talked about the effect it has through increased population and families/communities for those who don't have adequate counsel.

"Funding indigent defense is more cost effective on the front end, because it ensures appropriate counsel and could work to avoid state incarceration, especially for lower level offenses," Sahd said

She also noted the need to use precision with incarceration for better outcomes in and outside of the system. There needs to be a return on investment for foundations and funders to embrace some evidence based programs at the front end.

It should be noted that Pennsylvania doesn't fund indigent defense and is the last state not doing so.

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Reporter, Photographer Tour Contract Facility

On November 2, Bureau of Community Corrections staff took Reading Eagle reporter Ford Turner and his photographer on a tour of Adappt, which is a contracted community corrections center in Reading, Pa.

Turner has been closely covering the opioid epidemic in his newspaper's circulation area and is focusing recently on overdoses, including fatal ones, that involved reentrants that had been living at this specific contract facility. To help him understand how a "halfway house" works, officials thought that providing Turner with a tour would be beneficial.



Adappt has several buildings on Walnut Street in Reading. One is an office, another is an in-patient unit and another is a general population center.

Turner was very appreciative for the tour.



Above: A common TV viewing room.

Right: The dining area in the in-patient unit.

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New Murals at SCI Fayette



The SCI Fayette Mural Arts Program created and installed murals in one pod of the Special Management Unit.

Desert scenes with rock formations are seen on one side of the unit and a desert sunset is on the other side.

A crew of inmate artists paint the murals in Program Services. The

material they paint is later applied to the walls where they are to be displayed.

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SCI Pine Grove Veteran's Day Celebration

SCI Pine Grove planned a multitude of events for a Veteran's Day celebration. The facility's C.O.V.E.R. committee worked in conjunction with the Superintendent's Office, the Employee Association and the Empowerment Committee.

On October 27, Veteran Jeff Niklaus spoke to the staff. He comes from a long military heritage, with family serving in every war dating to the Revolutionary War. Jeff's college education includes degrees in forestry, business management and aeronautics.

In 1985 he joined the Army. In August 1993, he deployed to Somalia as part of Task Force Ranger. On October 3 of that year, he was pilot in command of Call Sign Super 67, a Blackhawk used for the Ranger blocking force during the operation. It was this mission that inspired the book and movie "Black Hawk Down."

From 1994-1996, Jeff was selected to serve as the 160th SOAR Liaison to Special Forces Operational Detachment Delta, otherwise known as "Delta Force," at Fort Bragg, NC.

Jeff deployed on various rotations to Operation Iraqi Freedom and Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan. During his Army career, he served as an Instructor Pilot, Instrument Flight Examiner and Standardization Officer.

Jeff boasts a long, impressive military history. He retired from the Army as a Chief Warrant Officer 4 and became a contractor to the U.S. State Dept., flying in support of the Poppy Eradication Program in Afghanistan.



SCI Pine Grove Major D. Fogle, COVER Coordinator with speaker Jeff Niklaus.



Walk-a-thon participants: Supt. E. Bush, CO1 K. Miller, Major Fogle, CC2 Weaver, DSFM Boyles.

Jeff now resides in Kentucky with his wife, Carrie. He works for Air Evac Lifeteam in Danville, KY, as an EMS helicopter pilot. In his spare time, Jeff travels and shares his story.

On October 31, SCI Pine Grove conducted the following events: Walk-a-thon, vendor fair, Basket Raffle, Cook-out lunch and a 50/50 Raffle. They also accepted donations for care packages to deployed facility military. All monies raised will be donated to local veteran's organization in the community.

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Phoenix Tours Continue

Lebanon County officials had an opportunity to tour SCI Phoenix on October 30.

Phoenix Transition team members Regional Deputy Secretary Steve Glunt, Major Scott Bowman and Lt. Walter Grunder provided a tour of the facility, which included SCI Phoenix West main control and a housing unit.



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Mahanoy Holds Graduation Ceremony

On November 1, SCI Mahanoy held its annual graduation ceremony for inmates who passed their GED, earned their Commonwealth school diploma and individuals who graduated a number of vocational courses, including auto tech, automobile electronics, PA state inspections, barber, barber manager license, business education, electronics – solar, Career Pathways pilot program and warehousing.

Keynote speaker at the ceremony was Dorenda Hamarlund who is the DOC's Career Pathways Program Manager.

At the ceremony, Hamarlund said:

Nelson Mandela once said "Education is the most powerful weapon for changing the world." Since relocating to Pennsylvania, this is the first SCI graduation I've attended and I'm honored to be a part of it.

My name is Dorenda Hamarlund and I am the Career Pathways Program Manager at Central Office. You may be asking "what is Career Pathways" and why does PADOE need a program manager. Some of you are being recognized today for completion of Pathway to Success. This is a small piece of a new Career Pathways framework PADOE is implementing. Career Pathways helps you think about a career from the moment you enter PADOE and continues to help you focus on your career goal through reentry and after release.

Today we are celebrating a number of achievements here at SCI Mahanoy. Some of you are receiving your GED or Commonwealth Secondary Diploma. Some are receiving a vocational certification. And others, as mentioned earlier, completed Pathways to Success. I want to speak to each group and share the benefits of your achievement.

For those of you who completed your GED or Commonwealth Secondary Diploma, you have taken a huge step in making your future a success. Let's go over some facts.

- FACT - A high-school dropout is ineligible for 90% of jobs in America.*
- FACT - A high-school graduate's lifetime income is 50 to 100% higher than a non-graduate's.*
- FACT - a high school dropout will earn \$375,000 less over his lifetime than an individual with a diploma.*
- FACT - Most employers require a high school credential to be considered for employment — making it even more difficult for dropouts to earn an income.*

That is all pretty doom and gloom, right. Let's discuss the benefits of your achievement.

- Benefit #1 – Better Job Opportunities – One of the main benefits of having your diploma is that you will be able to get better job opportunities.*

- Benefit #2 – Makes You Feel Proud – Of course having your diploma will also make you feel proud. It is quite an accomplishment and you can give yourself a pat on the back knowing you have worked hard to earn your diploma.*

- Benefit #3 – Allows You to Go on to College – Another benefit of having your diploma is that having it will allow you to go on to college, if you choose.*

- Benefit #4 – Higher Wages – Not only can your diploma help you get better job opportunities, but it can actually help you to make more money as well. People who do not have diplomas usually make less money, so if you want to make more money at your job, having a diploma is going to be very important.*

Now, those of you who completed a vocational certification have benefits too. According to the book "The Mind at Work" by Mike Rose, "students on the vocational education track aren't any less intelligent, or less capable, than their liberal arts peers; rather, they simply have a different set of interests, talents and skills. For these students, a traditional four-year college is not the right path."

I want to share some information we received from employers.

As part of the Career Pathways framework, we spoke with construction employers. According to a survey completed in August of 2016, two-thirds of construction firms that responded reported that they are having great difficulty filling hourly laborer positions that represent the bulk of the construction workforce.

The story in Pennsylvania is no different, there is a great shortage of laborers across the state and employers are struggling to find the needed workforce.

Between 2014 and 2024 the United States construction industry will add 10 percent more jobs, increasing the total number of construction employees from 6.5 million to 7.1 million.

In Pennsylvania alone, employment in the construction industry is projected to grow by 16.3% in this time period.

All four of the construction industry representatives interviewed emphasized that across Pennsylvania the industry needs skilled workers to become

trained and work ready in the next several years, before a large number of retirements happen.

Keeping with the construction theme, Milton Berle said, "If opportunity doesn't knock, build a door".

As I mentioned, construction may not be relevant to your certification; however, the same need is found across most vocational careers.

And last but not least, those of you who completed the Pathway to Success course. This will not be a required course for anyone interested in enrolling in a vocational certification. As part of the Career Pathways framework, this is the first step to building your career pathway. Some careers chosen by you and your classmates were:

- Auto Body and/or Mechanic*
- Tow Truck Operator*
- Teacher*
- Coach*
- Mason (Brick/Cement)*
- Warehouse Worker*
- Operating Engineer*
- Building Trades (commercial/residential remodeling)*
- Truck Driver*
- Carpenter*

Now that each of you has completed Pathway to Success remember your SMART Goals and achieve what you planned!

To close today, I want to leave you with a Walt Disney quote. If you have seen Lion King then you are familiar with Rafiki, the wise baboon. He told Simba, "Oh yes, the past can hurt. But the way I see it, you can either run from it or learn from it."

I want to impart that advice to each of you. I encourage you to learn and keep learning.

As Albert Einstein said, "Once you stop learning, you start dying".

Thank you and congratulations!



Dorenda Hamarlund, right, poses with inmates who completed the Pathway to Success pilot course.

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Perfect Sunrise

Christine Altemier, superintendent's secretary at SCI Waymart, shares a perfect sunrise taken on October 31, 2017.



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Fire Safety & Sanitation Excellence

The SCI Camp Hill's 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 of showing appreciation for their hard work and true concern for the environment that we all live and work in on a daily basis.

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). We would like to thank the Maintenance Department and Officer Shellenberger for a job well done. Your 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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BetaGov Interviews UM John Muick about Pilot Project

SCI Mahanoy conducted a Randomized Controlled Trial (RCT) to see if providing air plants to participants resulted in fewer placements to psychiatric observation and restrictive housing.

Tell us about your role in the air plant trial.

My housing unit was selected to participate in this study because of the inmates we have on the block. They're all diagnosed with mental illness. We were hopeful there would be an impact on the program, that there would be a reduction in the problems we see.

My role was to implement the trial. As unit manager, my role is to oversee everything that happens in this unit. I was involved with the random selection of the inmates, providing the plants, and fielding questions. Once it was implemented, the trial ran itself for the most part.

What outcomes were tested?

We were hoping to reduce the number of placements into psychiatric observation cells and reduce placements into restrictive housing that happen when inmates break the rules. We wanted to reduce incidents where the guys had to go under a disciplinary status. We were also hoping to see an overall improvement in mood, although I'm not sure if there's a way to capture that data.

Why were air plants, in particular, chosen for the trial?

This kind of plant is ideal for this environment because it didn't require soil or pots, so we didn't have those things to worry about, or having insects, so all those problems were eliminated. Even though the plant care instructions stated they needed direct sunlight, the plants were successful even removed from the light. The ones under more artificial conditions were thriving and doing better.

I thought maybe the inmates would forget about the plant or over-nurture it by watering it too much, but inmates would want to show me how well their plant was doing. If there were two cell mates in one cell, they would co-parent it, so to speak. Some of them even named the plant.



Photo by Handmade Sam Made

What procedures did you use to track data? Did you have to add any extra steps to your normal routine?

I was provided with a data record sheet on Excel from BetaGov, and that was where I recorded the data. We looked at people who were transferred off the block for disciplinary or psychiatric reasons, and accounted for dropout, whether that was people who gained parole, had served their sentence, or were moved to another unit.

It wasn't even a daily or weekly task. It was a three month trial, and I would update the form once a month. Just a little bit of data entry.

We're awaiting the result analysis. What were your observations about any effects the plants may have had?

I was uncertain of this trial at first because of this population and the nature of their illnesses. I thought there would be some people who behaved inappropriately, and that didn't turn out to be a problem at all.

I'm not sure that empirically we've demonstrated any improvement, but the plants were well received; the inmates enjoyed the opportunity and it was something that they embraced. They appreciated having something they otherwise wouldn't be able to have.

Eventually the plant will spawn baby plants, and the main plant will die. I think because of the jailhouse culture, the air plants could become currency

to trade for things that others want. To some degree it's a level of status just to have the plant.

This wasn't intended for the study, but a lot of staff would have liked to have air plants and the company sent us more than we needed in case some of them died, so I was able to give plants to some of the staff in my building. I think it did something for staff morale; everyone seemed to perk up about the whole program.

Do you think the air plants will be provided to more people in the future?

I don't know, I think that's a good question to bring up to our administration. They might be waiting for the final results. One thing I'll be able to say is it didn't cause any harm. At the very least I'm an advocate for continuing it.

It seemed like an odd idea at first, because in the prison we have a set ways of doing things and air plants don't fit with what we would normally do. Some people had concerns, some thought it was a good idea; in the end, it really didn't turn out to be a problem, so that lends itself to possibly expanding it.

What advice would you like to give to anyone who is leading a trial?

Just be open minded. Give it a chance to work. Don't try to steer the direction of the study, just be open to that. In corrections, that's a tough thing. There's a very rigid systematic way of doing things. So allow things to go the way they're designed and see how things turn out.

<http://www.betagov.org/blog/uncategorized/interview-with-unit-manager-john-muick-of-sci-mahanoy/> (October 25, 2017)

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BetaGov is Free!

By Maureen Millhouse

No, you didn't misunderstand: BetaGov assistance is free! We need a bumper sticker with this message since it is the inquiry that we get most often.

How is this possible? BetaGov is fortunate to receive funding from philanthropies that share our mission to encourage people in the public sector to come up with new ideas and test them. Funding from the Laura and John Arnold Foundation allows the BetaGov team to partner with criminal justice agencies to test innovative programs and procedures. Similarly, funding from the Smith Richardson Foundation supports BetaGov's work in school settings.

BetaGov offers our expertise to design and implement trials and to analyze research data. Our funders cover our salaries, our travel, and all the materials that we need to assist our practitioners. This is critical to our mission, because charging our partners for our services would create long delays in setting up contracts. So, while we don't say that research is free—after all, you may have to purchase supplies or other resources for your trial—our part in your research endeavor comes at no cost to you!

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We Want to Do What Works

By Lauren Rilling (April 25, 2017)

“We Want to Do What Works”: An Interview with Bret Bucklen

Dr. Kristofer (Bret) Bucklen, director of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections' Office of Planning, Research & Statistics, discusses the department's relationship with BetaGov, the logistics of gathering innovative ideas from a 15,000-person agency, and how practitioner-led trials have changed the way PADOCC discovers what works.

What inspired you to enter the corrections field?

After high school I lived in Chicago and did some volunteer work, and really got interested in criminal justice and urban problems. I went on to get a sociology degree and then a master's in public policy. Out of grad school I took a job here at the department and also completed a Ph.D. in criminology and criminal justice. My first job at the state was in an executive fellowship program, where I did rotations around different agencies such as State Police, the Board of Probation and Parole, and the Department of Corrections.

How are BetaGov-assisted trials different from other types of research you've been involved with?

I think BetaGov really turns the traditional research model on its head, and I've worked with a lot of academics over the years on a number of different research products. Typically the research model is that we go after a grant, we may not hear about that grant for six to eight months, and assuming we get the grant, then it's usually a year-long project, sometimes a two to three year project. By the time we get the results, the fast-moving policy world has changed, and the results we get may be old news and not even a priority anymore. So the traditional model is very slow. A lot of times it's very academic-driven and not necessarily attuned to the “real world” problems

that we're facing. The BetaGov model is the exact opposite of that: quick results, practitioner-driven, which is huge for me, having staff from the ground generating the ideas and getting the quick turnaround.

Tell us about the devoted email portal that you set up for staff to submit their ideas.

Basically, this started when BetaGov became involved with us. We had identified a couple of problems in our department that we wanted to tackle. One, how can we reduce the use of solitary confinement, and two, how can we reduce in-prison violence that was occurring? Those two issues formed the beginning of our relationship with BetaGov, and they came out of a need to respond to the national momentum to use solitary confinement less, while at the same time we saw an uptick in assaults in some of our prisons. Secretary Wetzel brought in a task force of over 100 staff— correctional officers, counselors, nurses, jobs in all different classifications— and charged us with coming up with a game plan. Shortly after, I was introduced to BetaGov, and I thought it would be perfect to have our staff come up with ideas for how we can tackle these two goals. Of course, Angela [Hawken] and the team were happy to be on board, and we brought them to the training academy for a task force meeting. As part of that day, we started to brainstorm about how we could expand this to the whole department. We have more than 15,000 staff at the PADO and we wanted to give everyone a voice, so someone came up with the idea to create a portal so that any of our staff can submit an idea to BetaGov. So we thought we could create an email address that we would blast out to the whole department. All of our staff have been given that email address. And we created a form with 5 questions to standardize the process. We sent that form out to the whole department three or four times to solicit ideas, and we've had well over 100 ideas come in through that email address so far. Even aside from the content of the trials, the engagement with staff and the process itself has value.

As a leader in PADO, you have a bird's-eye view of all the trial activity within the department. What have been some of the challenges you've encountered or observed with the ideas for RCTs or the trials themselves? Can you describe how you overcame or learned from those challenges?

One challenge is that it's a constant effort to build what you call "pracademics." Most people are not academically-oriented. They're good at what they do: they're good officers, nurses, and chaplains, but even after going through the pracademic training, there are questions like, what is random assignment? Sometimes they think they are doing random assignment and they aren't. It's a constant education thing. We're getting more people trained.

Another challenge is figuring out the timing of when and where to do these pilots, because in some cases I get feedback that we're moving too slow and everybody has all these great ideas that they want to move now on, and then in other cases I get feedback from others saying we're going too fast and doing too much. My role is to be the go-between in the department. We want to be responsive to staff who are submitting ideas, but on the other hand we don't want to overwhelm institutions with too many projects that can become unmanageable. It's a balancing act, and part of what I bring to the process is helping the team balance out the pace. Not everyone sees the bigger policy picture either, so that can be a challenge balancing priorities and managing the speed of the projects.

A third challenge that I've seen is that a lot of the ideas that staff have submitted have been incentive-oriented and in other places, like on our social media sites, we have received complaints about the trials coddling incarcerated individuals. What I'd like to see are some deterrence-oriented proposals that are of course legal and ethical, but try to pull in some of those staff who are harder to reach or convince. If we're truly open to ideas, then we need to hear those, too. If part of this whole process is giving everyone a voice, then we need to encourage them to submit their ideas. We want to do what works, and doing what works is separate from what's politically correct. I think we have to not be afraid to consider all ideas from all perspectives.

What advice do you have for a practitioner who has an idea but is hesitant to run their own trial?

I would say give us and BetaGov a chance and let us collectively prove to you that we will take your idea seriously. It involves trust. We mean it when we say we're going to take every idea seriously and that they're not going to get in trouble for having an idea that might not be the direction the department is going in. I've also received a lot of positive feedback from the people who have submitted ideas. They feel rewarded, and feel like they've been given a voice.

I want to see so many more government agencies do BetaGov, and I've told our executive team here at staff meetings that practitioner-based research is the way of the future. For the first 10 to 12 years of my career I was used to doing it the traditional way, and focusing primarily on the priorities for management. I wish everyone could experience this, and I think [practitioner-led research] has a better chance of succeeding and making a difference.

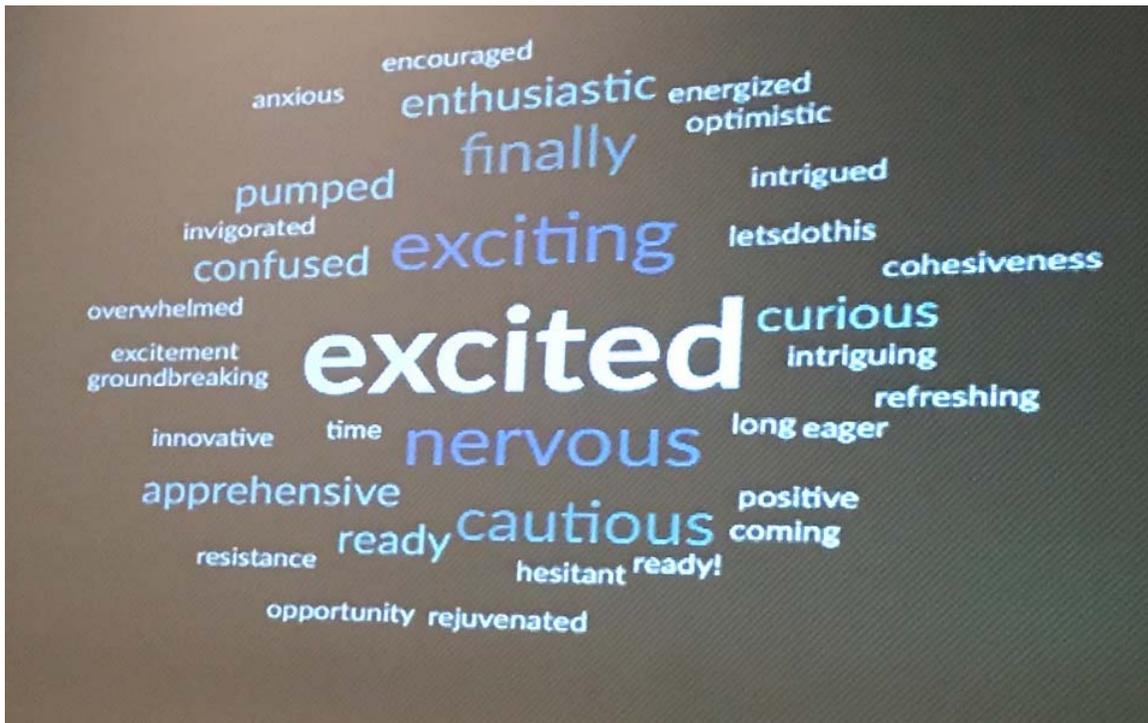
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Week of October 23...

Consolidating DOC & PBPP

First thing this week, Secretary Wetzel hosted a meeting of consolidated DOC and PBPP (PA Board of Probation and Parole) leadership. The purpose of the meeting was to allow everyone to meet and introduce themselves and to foster new work relationships.

Everyone at the meeting was provided access to a website that generates word clouds. For the purpose of this meeting, individuals were asked to enter one word that described their feelings about this consolidation.



In addition, everyone – while introducing themselves to the group – was tasked with providing the group with one rumor they have heard most about the DOC/PBPP consolidation.

Some of the rumors included:

"It won't happen."

"It will be a DOC hostile takeover of PBPP."

"All PBPP staff will be replaced with DOC staff."

"The consolidation will fall apart under a new governor."

"This is only being done to save money, to reduce beds and close prisons."

Secretary Wetzel then addressed the major rumors. **Video of his rumor responses can be viewed on the DOC's Facebook page at "Pennsylvania Department of Corrections."**

Following lunch, officials reviewed the project charter. This document provides the background, objective and timeline of the consolidation, along with other information that ensures all involved parties are all "on the same page." This document is being updated as input was received about some items that could be included.



The next step in the consolidation journey is the holding of employee focus groups or what are being referred to as "listening workshops." We are going to listen to what employees have to say about how they do their jobs, where there are overlapping duties and how we can make the system more efficient. Following that, committees will be established to finalize consolidation.

DOC/PBPP employees are encouraged to visit the DOC's intranet page, which will be continually updated as the consolidation progresses. The public can follow along by visiting the DOC's consolidation page at www.cor.pa.gov. And finally, ANYONE with questions, comments or concerns can email a specially-created/monitored mailbox at: ra-crdocpbppunificat@pa.gov

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Media Tour of SCI Phoenix Held

On October 24, DOC officials held a media tour of SCI Phoenix. It was attended by individuals representing KYW News, Allentown Morning Call, Pottstown Mercury, PennLive/Harrisburg Patriot-News and Billy Penn.



Between the perimeter fences of SCI Phoenix, Lt. Walter Grunder talks about the security aspects of the new prison.



SCI Graterford/Phoenix Superintendent Cynthia Link shows reporters the closed circuit monitoring at the new prison.

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Pennsylvania Newsmakers to Discuss Financial Reality Fairs!

Be sure to tune in to Pennsylvania Newsmakers this Sunday as host Terry Madonna talks about Financial Reality Fairs with guests DOC Secretary John Wetzel and Pennsylvania Credit Union Association President Patrick Conway.



Earlier this month, public and private entities joined forces to hold five simultaneous Financial Reality Fairs in Erie, Harrisburg, Reading Philadelphia and Pittsburgh. The goal was to provide reentrants with financial information and tools to help set them on a path to financial independence.

Make sure to tune in this Sunday! Pennsylvania Newsmakers airs Sundays at 11:30 a.m. on WGAL-TV, Harrisburg/Lancaster/York. Shows also are uploaded to their website at www.newsmakerstv.com

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Finding Jenn's Voice

On October 20, Victim Advocate Jennifer Storm hosted the screening of a powerful film that raises the awareness of domestic violence. You can learn more about the film at findingjennsvoice.com

Following the screening, the filmmaker, the mother of one of the victims, Victim Advocate Jennifer Storm and DOC Secretary John Wetzel talked about domestic violence.



Pictured are Victim Advocate Jennifer Storm, Patty Snyder, who lost her daughter to domestic violence, Tracy Schott filmmaker of Finding Jenn's Voice, and DOC Secretary John Wetzel.

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Laurel Highlands' THU Inmates Make Selfless Donation

While incarcerated in a safe, secure environment without the immediate threat of the torrential weather that Hurricanes Irma and Harvey recklessly and devastatingly imposed upon Texas and Florida as well as many other surrounding states, the participants in the Transitional Housing Unit (THU) at Laurel Highlands expressed their concern for the safety and welfare of those who weren't so fortunate.

They had a desire to do something to help.

Throughout a few weeks' time, flyers were posted within the THU advocating for those who chose to, to make a donation of their chosen amount for hurricane relief. While the collection of the monies ensued, a foundation was researched, identified and agreed upon to which to make the charitable donation.

After all was said and done, the THU participants raised \$255 which was donated to Direct Relief. Direct Relief gives 100% of all monies received to the efforts specified by the donor which was in this case Hurricanes Harvey and Irma Relief Efforts.

The THU participants at SCI Laurel Highlands continually strive to "Think outside the Fence," and are motivated to better themselves to be more productive reentrants upon returning home. That theme, and their collective philosophy of "starting now, rather than later," is clearly demonstrated in this selfless action.

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28 Years Ago...

While October 25, 1989, is mostly remembered for the Camp Hill prison riot, SCI Huntingdon also had a serious incident that took place prior to the riot.

Opinion Line
Monday 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.
Phone 642-1013

The Daily News

Our toll-free telephone number
1-800-645-5022
or 642-1000

Vol. 68 *ENTER TODAY* HUNTINGDON, MOUNT UNION, ORBISONIA and SAXTON TUESDAY, OCTOBER 24, 1989 No. 126

48 officers and inmates injured in SCIH fracas

Tentative building within the walls of the State Correctional Institution at Huntingdon erupted in violence last night and by the time order was restored 29 correction officers and 19 inmates were treated for injuries with one inmate and one officer admitted to the J.C. Blair Memorial Hospital.

The incident was confined to the "A" cell block at the institution and involved between 25 and 35 inmates initially and this group increased to about 50.

The extent of the demonstration was limited because at the time of last night's fracas the prison had been in a "lock-down" status since Friday evening. As the inmates on the "A" block were being returned to their cells following dinner a group refused to reenter their cells and started to break out windows and break up furniture to be used as weapons.

Following established procedures the officers in charge secured the exterior of the cell block and moved into the control center and the inmates were left in control of the cell block at about 6:10 p.m.

Correction officers locally and statewide were notified and off-duty personnel were summoned to the scene along with Huntingdon Borough Police. Troop G in Central Pennsylvania and fire and ambulance companies from throughout the district.

Trained emergency squads from the Huntingdon institution and from the State Correctional Institution at Stateville responded immediately and two hours and 40 minutes after the start of the incident the emergency squads moved in waves against the occupied cell block. The emergency squads approached the cell block at 8:30 p.m. and by 9:25 p.m. institution officials announced that the cell block was secured.

During the takeover effort an institution spokesman said 29 correction officers received injuries with 18 of them being treated at the J.C. Blair Memorial Hospital. One officer received a fractured arm and another, identified as Lance Allison, received a head injury and is listed in satisfactory condition in the hospital today. Hospital officials reported that a total of 18 correction officers were treated at the hospital.

There was also some confusion over the treatment of inmates with the institution reporting that 19 inmates were injured and five were treated at the hospital. However hospital officials reported that two inmates were treated and one was admitted as a patient and is in satisfactory condition today.

Most of the injuries remained of lacerations and contusions.

SCIE officials said the emergency damage to the cell block was not extensive as the block was used to house prisoners after the incident. Most of the damage was to windows, radiators, drain pipes and furniture. During the time the inmates held the cell block there were several money firms where papers were ignited and thrown from the windows but there were no serious fires.

(Coe's on Page 7)

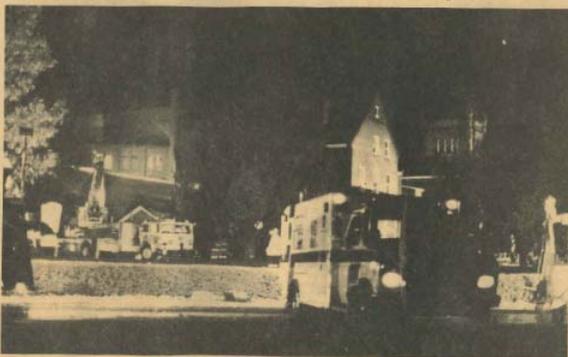


PHOTO BY JAY BECK
THE WALLS OF SCIH were under fire and surrounded Monday night by corrections officers, local and state police, and area emergency personnel. The heavy response of emergency personnel followed a rebellion of approximately 50 inmates in the prison's "A" cell block around 6 p.m. This photo was shot from the employees' parking lot at approximately 8:45 p.m. At that time several aerial trucks, including the one pictured, had been stationed around the prison to extinguish potential fires. Inset in the right is the front of the administration building and the tower above the main entrance.

On October 23, 1989, more than two dozen employees and 19 inmates were injured during an incident in SCI Huntingdon's A Block. According to this Huntingdon Daily News article from October 24, 1989: "The extent of the demonstration was limited because at the time of last night's fracas the prison had been in a 'lock-down' status since Friday evening.

As the inmates in the 'A' block were being returned to their cells following a dinner a group refused to reenter their cells and started to break out windows and break up furniture to be used as weapons."

According to the news account, the prison, along with assistance from SCI Smithfield staff got the situation back under control two hours and 40 minutes after it began.

48 officers

(Con't from Page 1)

The lock-down at the institution, which started on Friday, is continuing today and a spokesman said that the prisoners will be fed in their cells today. Normal visiting hours have been suspended until further notice.

Because the corrections officers left the cell block when the disturbance started the prison officials were not faced with dealing with a hostage situation and none of the inmates had the opportunity to attempt to escape.

The first injured officer to be brought from the institution was treated in the visitors room by Drs. Thomas Meloy and Charles R. Reiners before being transported to the hospital.

The extensive distribution of fire fighting equipment around the institution was used for auxiliary lighting and to be prepared for firefighting if serious fires were started by the rebellious inmates. The normal population of the 'A' cell block is between 280 and 284 inmates.

Responding to the general alarm were the Huntingdon No. 1, Huntingdon No. 2, Huntingdon Hook and Ladder, Smithfield and McConnellstown Fire Companies. Also at the scene were hook and ladder trucks from Saxton, Tyrone and Bedford. The fire companies at Alexandria, Marklesburg, Mount Union and Stavers Creek were all placed on standby.

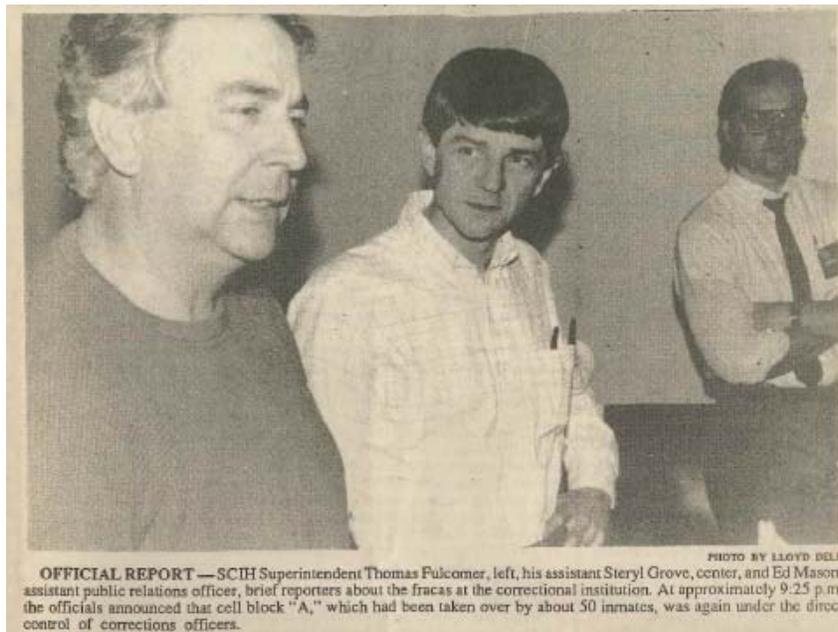
Ambulances were on the scene from Huntingdon, Mount Union and Juniata Valley.

The Pennsylvania State Police, including specially equipped emergency teams responded from Troop G headquarters in Hollidaysburg and from stations at Huntingdon, Lewistown, McConnellsburg and Bedford.

Monday night's troubles were traced, by institution officials, to a pair of incidents that occurred on Thursday and Friday of last week. An inmate struck and injured an officer on Thursday and a similar incident occurred on Friday. Because of the incidents the inmates were placed in secure housing units and then late Friday afternoon a group of about 50 inmates approached the control center and demanded to see the two inmates. The demand was refused and the inmates went into a small exercise yard and were joined by other inmates until the group numbered near 150. After a short while the group started to disperse and the inmates were placed in a lock-down status and were fed the Friday night meal in their cells. Work details were suspended and the institution remained in the secure position until last night's trouble erupted.

Institution officials emphasized today that the institution personnel were in complete control throughout the incident and additional police officers were called as a backup.

At the present time there are more than 2,000 inmates in the State Correctional Institution where double-celling has been a common practice for a number of years.



OFFICIAL REPORT — SCIH Superintendent Thomas Fulcomer, left, his assistant Steryl Grove, center, and Ed Mason, assistant public relations officer, brief reporters about the fracas at the correctional institution. At approximately 9:25 p.m. the officials announced that cell block "A," which had been taken over by about 50 inmates, was again under the direct control of corrections officers.

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Tours Continue

A group of 22 students from St. Vincent College Correction Class in the Criminology Department toured SCI Pine Grove on October 24, 2017. The students visited the prison's Young Adult Offender Program, the Program Services Building, the Tails Unit and were able to look at some of the weapons that have been confiscated from inmates over the years.



The group was escorted by Lt. Scalia and Public Information Officer Judy Smith.

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AREA Highlight: SCI Mahanoy's Mailroom

By Faith Walter, Mailroom Supervisor

Here in the mailroom we feel that by being one of the first points of entry we can help maintain the security of the prison by stopping contraband from getting in to the inmates. It can be very challenging finding the many ways and places that people try to get contraband into the prison through the mail.

We do that by following the DC-ADM 803 policy. You would be amazed at what people think they can send to an inmate. Just when we think we have seen it all, something comes in and makes us either shake our heads in disbelief. We could write a book.

Doing the mail for both SCIs Mahanoy and Frackville, another challenge we face can be the sheer volume of mail we receive. With six of us doing the mail for approximately 3,700 inmates, some days it can be overwhelming. On average we receive and process 4,050+ pieces of first class mail each week. That does not include the many bins of newspapers and magazines, not to mention the vast amount of books. We also have to watch publications that are on the denial list and the ones that aren't but should be. Those items are sent to the Incoming Publication Review Committee (IPRC), but mostly what we send to the IPRC are pictures. Through all these challenges we do manage to stay up-to-date with all mail processing. The holidays present their own challenges as the volume of mail increases exponentially.

Of course, we not only process inmate mail, we also process all staff mail, both incoming and outgoing. We do all the mail not only by utilizing the U.S. Post Office, but other carriers as well, such as UPS and FedEx.

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Proud of Our Honor Guards

Once again this year, SCI Huntingdon's Honor Guard participated in the community of Huntingdon's annual Halloween parade.



**Pictured, left to right:
Sgt. Nicholas Moore, CO1 Douglas Clark,
CO1 David McMahan, CO1 Michael Miller
and Lt. Samuel Harker.**

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Mercer's Bill Davis Retires After 30 years of State Service

William "Bill" Davis began his career as a unit psychologist at Polk Center in 1986 and in 1987, he transitioned to the Western Center in Canonsburg, Pa. Upon closure of some of the centers and hospitals, he then transferred to the Department of Corrections, beginning his career at SCI Mercer in 1996 as the educational guidance counselor. Bill also had the opportunity to serve as the acting school principal for a period of time.

Bill stated that during his career, he most enjoyed providing services to the inmates, as well as collaborating with various departments to support educational initiatives. During his tenure at Mercer, Bill was a member of the Hostage Negotiation Team (HNT) and later was a member of the Critical Incident Stress Management Team (CISM). Bill stated that in his retirement, he looks forward to spending his mornings at the local gym, as well as traveling with his wife and spending more time with his family and friends.

On October 5th, Superintendent Brian Thompson presented Bill with his 30 year certificate and service pin and congratulated him on a job well done.



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Benner Township Names Employees of the Quarter

Superintendent Ferguson is pleased to announce that Education Guidance Counselor Benjamin Gehlman and Corrections Officer 1 D. Rider have been selected as the SCI Benner Township Employees of the Quarter for the 4th 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 and their commitment to excellence.



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Albion Holds Mind and Body Wellness Symposium

SCI Albion's Empowerment Committee hosted a symposium for mind and body wellness on October 18 in the prison's education building and chapel.

DOC and PBPP employees from SCIs Albion, Cambridge Springs and Mercer attended the event.

Opening remarks from Superintendent Michael Clark were followed by Donnie Zarembinski's presentation on 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.

Throughout the day, staff was introduced to "The Consequences of Unmanaged Stress" and "Facing the Cost of Caring: The Impact of Burnout." Additionally, workshop activities focused on stress management in various forms, including music therapy, chair yoga, lumbar back pain management and an introduction to various work outs.



Regional Deputy Secretary Steve Glunt gave two presentations on "The Importance of Fitness."

It was a full day focused on staff wellness. The day ended with door prizes which included a membership to SNAP fitness, a money tree (donated by SCI Albion business department) and a gift card to Subway.

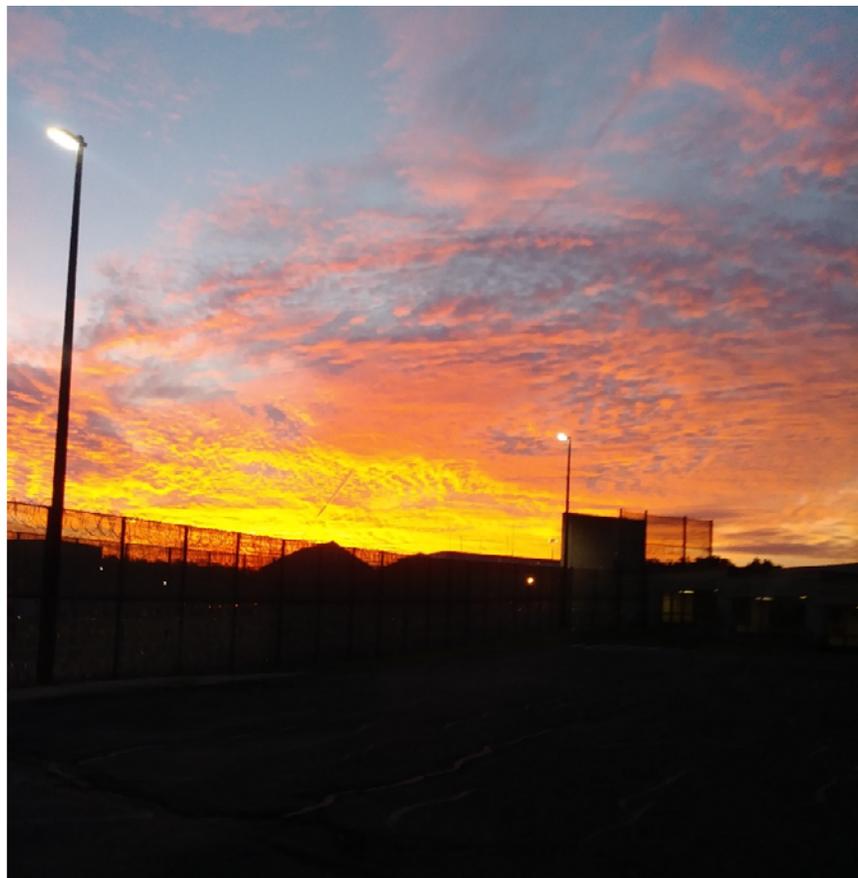
SCI Albion's Empowerment Committee Members that arranged the symposium are:

Superintendent Mike Clark (Chair), Patty Thompson (Co-Chair), Chris Seymour, Frank Egan, Kim Robinson, Kim Shrader, Jodi Stevens, Sara Eddy, David Jackson and Josh Moore.

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Albion Sunrise

Officials at SCI Albion wanted to share this glorious picture of a sunrise on October 23, 2017, which was taken by Field Human Resource Officer Theresa Croll. Enjoy!



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Recognizing Domestic Violence Awareness Month

During the month of October, all staff and inmate dining hall tables were draped in purple cloths in recognition of domestic violence awareness. Table tents that provided information and statistics on domestic violence were provided on each table.



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25th Anniversary Celebrated

SCI Cambridge Springs held a 25th Anniversary Dedication Ceremony on October 17, 2017. The event was well attended by current and former SCI Cambridge Springs employees as well as Central Office executive staff.



Speakers included Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal, Regional Deputy Secretary Steve Glunt, Superintendent Lonnie Oliver, Deputy Superintendent Debra Rich, Deputy Superintendent Paul Ennis, Corrections Classification Program Manager Dr. Richard Learn and Ms. Stacy Mott - speaking on behalf of her grandmother, Josephine Haluch (a retiree of the prison). Nurse Tamara Coburn delivered the invocation and Maintenance Foreman Lance Aylsworth closed the ceremony with the benediction.

Special recognition was given to the following five staff members that have been employed at SCI Cambridge Springs since the opening of the facility in 1992:

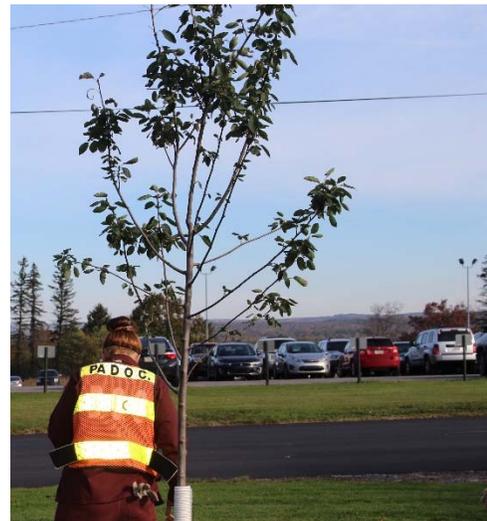
- Dr. Richard Learn – Corrections Classification Program Manager
- Michele VanTassel – Corrections Officer 2
- Joan Ledford – Corrections Officer 2
- Janell Coffee – Corrections Officer 1
- Carla Rodgers – Corrections Officer 1

A tree was planted to commemorate the 25th Anniversary of the facility. Additionally, items are being collected and finalized for inclusion in the SCI Cambridge Springs 25th Anniversary Time Capsule that will be sealed later this year.

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Run-a-thon Held

SCI Huntingdon's inmate organization, the Altar Rock Jaycees, recently conducted a successful run-a-thon. As a result, they were able to donate \$2,800 to Hand in Hand, a charity that supports the victims of the recent hurricanes. The money for the donation was provided by the inmate population and the Altar Rock Jaycees.



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Graduation Ceremony Held

October 18, SCI Greene held a graduation ceremony recognizing the accomplishments of 74 graduates which included 12 General Education Development (GED) diplomas, 6 Adult Commonwealth Secondary (ACSD) diplomas, 54 National Center for Construction Education and Research (NCCER) vocational certifications and 2 post-secondary college diplomas. This year's graduation theme was "Believe in yourself and be prepared to work hard." Keynote speaker for the ceremony was Greene County Commissioner Blair Zimmerman. A total of 40 family members from across the state attended the ceremony.



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PPWA Fall Conference

October always marks the fall conference for the Pennsylvania Prison Wardens Association, and this year is no exception, with the conference being held October 25 and 26 at the Toftrees Golf Resort near State College, Pa.

Members of the PPWA will attend workshops covering drug addiction treatment; autism awareness; drug concealing; veteran inmates; staff suicide, depression, PTSD and C.O.V.E.R.; incarcerated veteran outreach; and JNET update.

During the afternoon of the second day tours of local state prisons include: SCI Houtzdale's Veterans Service Unit; a K-9/drug interdiction unit demonstration and tour of SCI Rockview's forestry camp; and a tour of SCI Benner Township's transportation hub, residential treatment unit and CI laundry.

The conference's keynote speaker on the evening of October 26 is Earl Granville. Granville's brother worked for SCI Waymart and committed suicide. Granville speaks about his experience in the military and the loss of his brother. Granville plays a large role in helping to educate our staff about Corrections Outreach for Veteran and Employee Restoration (C.O.V.E.R.), which 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.

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Rockview's Historic Greenhouse is Being Relocated

Officials from the Boal Mansion recently purchased, for \$65, an old, abandoned greenhouse that has been on the grounds of the state prison at Rockview since the prison's opening in 1915. Prison officials stopped using it in 2000 and replaced it with a modern greenhouse.



The Victorian-designed greenhouse at Rockview state prison went out of use in 2000 and will be dismantled and relocated to the Boat Mansion. **Abby Drey** - adrey@centredaily.com

Boal Mansion has great plans for the old greenhouse that will include restoration and eventual raising of butterflies and the raising of trees and an internal rain forest which will work with their already-existing public trails.

You can read more about this relocation, thanks to the Centre Daily Times, in the "Corrections In The News..." section of this newsletter.

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Understanding DOC Administrative Policies

By Allison Beck

The Department of Corrections has hundreds of policies. But it has a group of core policies called DC-ADMs. These policies govern the basic operations of state prisons and treatment of its inmates. This article is to provide readers with a general overview of these core policies.

DC-ADM 001 – Inmate Abuse – This policy ensures that inmates are not subjected to corporal or unusual punishment or personal abuse or injury. It provides definitions outlining what abuse is and provides directions for how allegations may be reported. It also provides details about abuse allegation investigations, collection of evidence (including photography of physical injuries, etc.).

DC-ADM 002 – Inmate Cable Television Service – This policy provides general population and certain administrative custody status inmates the opportunity to purchase cable television service from the cable service provider. It outlines the responsibilities of the cable service provider, the inmates, the business office and the unit manager.

DC-ADM 003 – Release of Information – This policy establishes procedures and responses to requests for information. It ensures that information is released in accordance with applicable laws and department policy. The policy includes specific protocol for requesting inmate information, requesting department information and Right-To-Know Law requests (including staff responsibilities, fees, etc.).

DC-ADM 004 – Criminal Violations – This policy ensures that prosecution and/or administrative action is used to process and investigate all alleged criminal acts. All alleged acts must be referred to the appropriate law enforcement authority and disposed of. The policy covers criminal complaints by inmates and criminal complaints against inmates.

DC-ADM 005 – Collection of Inmate Debts – This policy states that the department can collect, consistent with current law, all inmate debts which it is authorized to collect, and transmit the proceeds to the appropriate party/parties. The policy includes responsibilities of central office and facilities, court orders and filing fees, information on different collections and financial information provided upon release.

DC-ADM 006 – Reasonable Accommodations for Inmates with Disabilities – This policy establishes procedures for an inmate to request an accommodation for a qualified disability that affects a major life activity. It ensures that every inmate, including an inmate with a qualified disability, is housed safely and that reasonable accommodations are made in regards to programs, services and activities offered.

DC-ADM 007 – Access to Provide Legal Services – This policy ensures that legal reference materials are acquired, maintained and made available to an inmate, and that assistance in the use of legal reference materials is made available to an eligible inmate.

DC-ADM 008 – Prison Rape Elimination Act/PREA – This policy prohibits any form of sexual abuse and/or sexual harassment of an inmate. The department has zero tolerance for sexual abuse or sexual harassment of any individual under the supervision of the department. Anyone who engages in, fails to report or knowingly condones sexual abuse or sexual harassment of an inmate shall be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination, and may be subject to criminal prosecution. A claim of consent will not be accepted as an affirmative defense for engaging in sexual abuse or sexual harassment of an inmate. The department prohibits retaliation against an inmate who reports sexual abuse or sexual harassment, staff members who report sexual abuse or sexual harassment of an inmate or anyone who cooperates with sexual abuse or sexual harassment investigations. The department shall designate a statewide PREA coordinator to develop, implement and oversee the department's efforts to comply with the national PREA standards across all facilities. Each facility shall designate a PREA compliance manager to coordinate the facility's efforts to comply with the standards.

DC-ADM 009 – News Media Relations – This policy establishes procedures for informing the public and the news media of events within the department's areas of responsibility. The department shall ensure that an area is identified in each facility that is accessible to news media representatives and that a contact person is designated for routine requests for information at each facility. The policy includes general access information and procedures for filming department property, news media access to inmates, news media access to employees, news media coverage of emergency situations at a department facility, requests by movie companies and public information officer guidelines.

DC-ADM 201 – Use of Force – This policy states that the use of force against an inmate is authorized when the acting staff member reasonably believes such force is necessary to accomplish certain objectives, including

the protection of self or others. When force is used, a staff member should use the least amount of force reasonably necessary and the use of force will stop once control is achieved. Force is not authorized as a means of punishment or revenge. Deadly force against an inmate is authorized only when the acting staff member reasonably believes such force is necessary, and that a lesser degree of force would be ineffective or insufficient. Planned uses of force shall be videotaped, and every incident of use of force shall be reported, documented, and reviewed. Every employee shall receive training regarding the contents of this policy.

DC-ADM 203 – Searches of Inmates and Cells – This policy prohibits the introduction and presence of unauthorized weapons, drugs and other contraband that presents serious threats to the security and proper management of a correctional facility. It calls for searches of facilities and inmates to control contraband and provide for its disposition. The policy includes information on cell searches, K-9 inspection, pat searches, strip searches and body cavity searches.

DC-ADM 610 – Food Services – This policy establishes standards and procedures for the preparation and service of all food items. These standards ensure compliance in maintaining the highest professional standards of security, sanitation, physical hygiene, food handling practices and safety. Facilities should produce healthy meals that satisfy the nutritional requirements of the facility population, as identified by the National Research Council Food and Nutrition Board Dietary Reference Intakes and the Department's Food Services Procedures Manual. They should provide religious diets as required to meet the needs of religious groups in accordance with department policy DC-ADM 819, "Religious Activities." Additionally, they should provide a therapeutic diet program to address medically required diets as prescribed by a physician, psychiatrist, dentist, physician assistant or nurse practitioner (medical/psychiatric).

DC-ADM 801 – Inmate Discipline – This policy establishes a disciplinary process that provides clear notice of prohibited behavior, outlines a fundamentally fair hearing process and establishes consistent sanctions for violations of Department rules and regulations. Additionally, the policy states that information concerning an inmate's criminal acts shall be forwarded to appropriate court or law enforcement officials for consideration for prosecution. The policy specifically covers misconducts and rule violations, informal resolution, misconduct hearings, disposition of charges and misconduct sanctions, appeals, disciplinary custody status inmates, community corrections and assessment of financial losses and costs.

DC-ADM 802 – Administrative Custody Procedures – This policy allows for placement of an inmate in Administrative Custody (AC) status whose presence in general population would constitute a threat to life, property, himself/herself, staff, other inmates, the public or the secure or orderly running of the facility. The policy covers specifics of the placement process, administrative hearings and release from AC status.

DC-ADM 803 – Inmate Mail and Incoming Publications – This policy allows an inmate access to communication with members of society through the established public mail system. Facilities are to inspect mail, determine the types of publications allowed and review publications intended for inmates. Restrictions are related directly to facility order and security, public safety and obscenity laws and statutes.

DC-ADM 804 – Inmate Grievance System – This policy ensures that every individual committed to DOC custody has access to a formal procedure through which to seek resolution of problems or other issues of concern arising during the course of confinement. For every such issue, there shall be a forum for review and two avenues of appeal.

DC-ADM 805 – Outside Work and Housing Units, CWP, Forestry Units, etc. – This policy ensures that each inmate being considered for placement in an outside work or housing assignment is reviewed and approved by a formal staffing process. In instances involving problematic cases, each inmate must be reviewed and approved by the appropriate regional deputy secretary and, in specific cases, approved by the secretary.

DC-ADM 807 – Inmate Grooming and Barber/Cosmetology Programs – This policy allows inmates personal freedom in their appearance as long as it does not conflict with the facility's procedures for safety, security, identification and sanitation efforts. This policy also gives guidelines for vocational programming in the barber/cosmetology fields.

DC-ADM 812 – Inmate Visiting Privileges – This policy sets forth standardized rules and procedures governing inmate visiting privileges to facilitate a fair and consistent implementation of this policy. The policy includes general procedures, procedures for special inquiries and visits, security procedures and procedures for private viewings and deathbed visits.

DC-ADM 813 – Guest Speakers – This policy furthers the communication of ideas, philosophies and information by permitting representatives of recognized and approved organizations to speak to the inmate population or a segment of the inmate population. The policy covers requests and request determinations.

DC-ADM 815 – Personal Property, State Issued Items, and Commissary Outside Purchases – This policy ensures inmates are provided with basic hygiene items, clothing items and the opportunity to purchase a reasonable variety of items in addition to those furnished by the facility. Inmates are permitted to purchase and possess only those items approved as personal property, issued by the facility and/or listed on the Approved Correctional Industries (CI) Catalog. Limitations on the amount and variety of inmate property may be imposed for security, hygiene and/or safety reasons. Commissary funds will be independently audited following standard accounting procedures and an annual financial report will be produced.

DC-ADM 816 – Inmate Compensation – This policy states that the department should compensate an inmate for participating in work and/or education programs. An inmate is not an employee of the department. Compensation and opportunities to advance provide positive reinforcement for developing good work habits that are important for the inmate's reintegration into the community upon release. The policy covers general procedures, responsibilities and payroll information.

DC-ADM 818 – Automated Inmate Telephone System – This policy grants inmates the privilege of legitimate telephone communications with individuals in the community, while at the same time protecting society from harm, including, but not limited to criminal activity, harassment, threats and intimidation using the inmate telephone system. The policy covers general procedures, privileges and restrictions and electronic surveillance.

DC-ADM 819 – Religious Activities Policy – This policy ensures that the department accommodates inmates' religious beliefs consistent with the security needs and orderly administration of the facility by providing for the orderly management of religious opportunities for all inmates under the department's jurisdiction.

DC-ADM 820 – Co-Payment for Medical Services – This policy discusses the department's right to require a co-payment fee whereby an inmate will share in the cost of his/her medical services. It covers co-pay fees and the Medical Services Program.

DC-ADM 821 – Inmate Marriages – This policy permits inmates to marry while incarcerated, in accordance with the procedures set forth in the accompanying procedures manual. The policy discusses marriage requests, obtainment of license and the performance of ceremonies.

DC-ADM 822 – Guidelines for Inmate Organization Picnics-Banquets

– This policy permits picnics, banquets and fundraisers for inmate organizations. A facility is not required to permit one of these events. The policy discusses general guidelines, the request process, inmate/visitor eligibility, security and menu/cost.

You can view these basic DOC policies and all others on the DOC's website at <http://www.cor.pa.gov/About%20Us/Pages/DOC-Policies.aspx>

Allison Beck is an intern in the DOC's Press Office until early December. She attends Shippensburg University as a communication/journalism major with a focus in public relations and a minor in psychology.

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Muncy Holds C.O.V.E.R. Wellness Event

On October 13, SCI Muncy's C.O.V.E.R. Team partnered with Federal Bureau of Prisons' Bureau Battle Buddy (B3) program staff to host the first "Run for C.O.V.E.R. – B3 Wellness Walk/Run/March" at the Allenwood Federal Correctional Complex.



Participants included Bureau staff, their families, community and K9 Hero Haven dogs and handlers.

Approximately 100 participants took part in the event including county, state and federal corrections staff as well as members of the local community. With their paid registration, participants received the Earl Granville Hero T-Shirt from Oscar



Mike. A total of \$2,500 was collected through registration fees, and all of that money was donated to Oscar Mike Foundation which helps wounded veterans continue to live an active life.

The 2.2 mile course was specifically chosen to represent the 22 veterans who commit suicide every day in the U.S. The event followed the B3's Annual Retreat designed to provide assistance to veterans working within the Bureau. The

Department of Corrections modeled the Corrections Outreach for Veterans and Employee Restoration (C.O.V.E.R.) Program after the B3 program.

C.O.V.E.R. is 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 and strives to promote a worksite culture that supports employees' desires to make healthy lifestyle choices.

SCI Muncy's Wellness Committee provided water for participants during the event. SCI Muncy's C.O.V.E.R. Team's goal is to help staff cope with post-traumatic stress and decrease the number of suicides amongst corrections staff. All corrections, law enforcement, veterans and first responders face a higher risk of suicide, mental health issues, divorce, and substance abuse. We want to work together to improve the health and wellness of our staff through peer to peer support.



Members of SCI Muncy's C.O.V.E.R. Team with Earl Granville.



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Corrections In The News...

PennLive/Harrisburg Patriot-News (10/25/2017)

http://www.pennlive.com/news/2017/10/sci_phoenix_graterford_prison.html#incart_river_index

'Sentimental' inmates get ready to move from 88-year-old prison to modern facility

By Wallace McKelvey

SKIPPACK TOWNSHIP -- The past and future of prisons exist side by side--for now--as the \$400 million SCI Phoenix nears completion and the state prepares to mothball the 88-year-old-old SCI Graterford.

"Here, we use big brass locks. Over there, it's all touch screens," said Maj. Scott Bowman, who started as a corrections officer at Graterford in 1997 and returned a few weeks ago to aid in the transition.

Graterford, which opened in 1929 to accommodate overflow from Eastern State Penitentiary, is situated behind imposing 30-foot-high concrete walls. Each of its five cellblocks stretch on for two football fields. Guards use the original system of mechanical levers when they need to close and lock all the doors at once.

Work on Phoenix, a complex of 30-odd buildings encircled by fencing, pressure sensors and razor wire, began nearly a decade ago. The project faced one delay after another due to midstream design changes as well as legal and political skirmishes over contested bids and labor contracts.

Please click on or copy/paste the URL to read the entire article.

Pottstown Mercury (10/24/2017)

http://www.montgomerynews.com/northpennlife/news/graterford-prison-replacement-sci-phoenix-is-state-of-the-art/article_5cb40e90-0077-59ed-bdb4-e74d80fbd9df.html?utm_medium=social&utm_source=twitter&utm_campaign=user-share

Graterford prison replacement, SCI Phoenix, is 'state-of-the-art' facility

By Marian Dennis

SKIPPACK >> The stony, towering walls of Graterford State Prison that secure more than 3,000 inmates will soon be replaced with a high-tech, newer version.

The prison, which was constructed in the 1920s, will soon be closing down for a newly constructed prison that officials say will better serve the purposes intended for a correctional facility.

"We're really very excited to assume this building. We really believe that this is going to function so much better than Graterford. Graterford is old and falling apart. It was built in 1929 and has had hard use all of those years. So we're moving to a facility that is brand new, that is state-of-the-art," said Graterford Superintendent Cynthia Link.

Please click on or copy/paste the URL to read the entire article.

Allentown Morning Call (10/24/2017)

<http://www.mcall.com/news/police/mc-nws-new-prison-sci-phoenix-opening-tour-20171018-story.html>

Pennsylvania's new, \$350 million high tech prison unveiled
By Laurie Mason Schroeder

A shiny, new, razor-wire fence backed up with a digital surveillance system powerful enough to thwart even the most daring escape is one of many details that sets Pennsylvania's newest state prison apart from its aging predecessor.

The State Correctional Institution at Phoenix in Skippack, Montgomery County, also boasts air conditioning and state-of-the-art kitchen and laundry facilities, definite upgrades for the approximately 3,600 inmates who will call it home next year.

Please click on or copy/paste the URL to read the entire article.

KYW News Radio 1060 (10/24/2017)

<http://philadelphia.cbslocal.com/2017/10/24/sci-phoenix-to-open-next-summer/#.We-lkCNWXC8.twitter>

Behind Bars: A Look Inside Long Awaited Graterford State Prison
Replacement

By Jim Melwert

MONTGOMERY COUNTY, Pa. (CBS) – It's been one delay after another for SCI Phoenix, the state prison that is to replace Graterford in Montgomery County. But as the prison nears completion KYW Suburban Bureau Chief Jim Melwert got a behind-the-scenes look.

Once it finally opens, SCI Phoenix will house about 4,000 inmates, but with new technology and more efficient staffing, Penna department of Corrections secretary John Wetzel says compared to Graterford, SCI Phoenix will save tax payers about 10-million dollars a year:

“But more importantly, it has lots of program space, and what we know about inmates who come in today is they’re not educated.”

Please click on or copy/paste the URL to read the entire article.

WHP-TV (10/22/2017)

<http://local21news.com/news/face-the-state/face-the-state-john-wetzel>

Face the State | John Wetzel

On this episode of Face the State, the discussion focuses on the consolidation of the DOC and PBPP and also about children of incarcerated inmates and early childhood education.

Click on the link to watch for yourself.

Washington Post (10/24/2017)

https://www.washingtonpost.com/business/technology/cell-game-novel-software-helping-inmates-find-a-home/2017/10/24/bee033a8-b900-11e7-9b93-b97043e57a22_story.html?utm_term=.04bfe2f54df2

Cell game: Novel software helping inmates find a home

By Michael Rubinkam | AP

A university engineering department has developed what amounts to a Tinder app for criminals — a computer program that matches inmates with suitable prisons.

The software, unique in the corrections field, has saved the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections about \$3 million in its first year. Officials said it has resulted in fewer prison assaults, shortened wait times for treatment programs by nearly two months, reduced the number of prison transfers and lightened the workload of corrections staff.

Corrections officials marvel that nobody thought of it sooner.

Please click on or copy/paste the URL to read the entire article.

Centre Daily Times (10/25/2017)

<http://www.centredaily.com/news/local/article180905141.html>

Rockview prison greenhouse to be transplanted to Boal Mansion

By Lori Falce

Transplanting is nothing new for a greenhouse. It's where new plants are born and grow until they can be moved somewhere else.

The greenhouse on the grounds of Rockview state prison is still full of leaves and plants, but they are the ones that have taken it over slowly since the old Victorian structure of glass and wood was abandoned in 2000.

It isn't the vines twining through broken windows or weeds clustering around the stone foundation that are being transplanted — it's the building itself.

Please click on or copy/paste the URL to read the entire article.

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Week of October 16...

Gov. Wolf Will Consolidate DOC, PBPP Functions

Memorandum of Understanding will combine agencies' similar, shared and overlapping resources and functions

On October 19, Governor Tom Wolf announced that his administration is moving ahead with a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole (PBPP) that results in the combining of the agencies' similar, shared and overlapping resources and functions. The consolidation will be effective immediately upon signing of the MOU by all involved parties, including the chairman of the PBPP, the secretary of the DOC, the respective agencies' chief counsels, and the deputy general counsel of the Office of General Counsel.

The Administrative Code authorizes commonwealth agencies to enter into agreements for cooperation and coordination of work and the elimination of duplicating and overlapping of functions and allows the respective parties to share in the use of employees, land, buildings, facilities and equipment. 71 P.S. § 181.

"On June 30, both the House and Senate passed a \$31.83 billion budget that decreased spending while still prioritizing funding for important government functions like schools, health and safety," Gov. Tom Wolf said. "That budget was passed based on the bi-partisan agreement that the DOC and PBPP's parole supervision duties be consolidated under one agency.

"This MOU puts Pennsylvanians first by respecting their finances and their security while shrinking the size of state government," Gov. Wolf said. "We are moving forward in our efforts to eliminate bureaucratic redundancies and to do so while still allowing these agencies to continue to serve their individual missions. This is government that works.

"We are giving legislators exactly what they have been calling for – taxpayer savings through the restructuring of state government; and we're doing so in a way that continues to provide for public safety while eliminating duplication of efforts."

Under the MOU, both agencies – the DOC and the PBPP – will remain separate from each other; however, the community supervision of parolees and all other reentry services will be combined under a new, centralized chain of command that everyone in those areas will report to and follow. It will involve reentry tasks, such as but not limited to inmate/reentrant records, inmate/reentrant reentry planning, reentrant placement and supervision and parole violation management and return process.

"Today is an important day in Pennsylvania's criminal justice history," DOC Secretary John Wetzel said. "By combining similar reentry and parole supervision

duties and responsibilities, officials now can fine-tune and focus their efforts as they relate to reentry.

“This move, while saving taxpayer dollars, also allows for better and more timely record-sharing, allows for consistent delivery of reentry programming, better employee communications and training, and better transition via a smooth handoff to community parole agents and supervisors. We look forward to a close and productive partnership with our Parole Board coworkers.”

DOC and PBPP personnel combined within the new organizational structure will fall within direct supervision of that new structure, but shall remain employees of the respective agencies. Employees will continue fulfilling the duties and responsibilities of their respective agencies and there will be no changes in salaries or collective bargaining agreements.

“Employees from each agency should report to work as normal on their next scheduled shift/work day,” Secretary Wetzel said. “There should be no disruption in services staff provide to individuals, nor should employees themselves encounter any disruptions where their employment statuses or duties are concerned.”

“The MOU does not change the independency of the Parole Board,” PBPP Chairman Leo Dunn said. “The Parole Board will continue to exercise its exclusive and independent decision-making role with regard to decisions to parole, re-parole, commit and recommit for violations of parole and to discharge persons sentenced by any court at any time to imprisonment in a correctional institution.”

In addition, the Office of Victim Advocate and the Sex Offender Assessment Board will continue to be independent from the DOC.

Finally, this MOU will consolidate the agencies’ business administration offices, internal affairs and investigative offices. The communications/public information offices will also be combined. The MOUs that DOC and PBPP had previously entered into to consolidate information technology, management of data and research functions will continue and not be affected by this new MOU.

“We look forward to working with our PBPP coworkers to enhance public safety by streamlining community supervision of parolees, and we will hold a number of leadership meetings soon to help reinforce this positive relationship,” Wetzel said.

Realizing that change may give rise to questions, officials encourage employees to send their questions, comments and concerns about the MOU to:

Ra-crdocpbppunificat@pa.gov.

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Mercer Holds “Day of Responsibility”

“Be the person who creates positive ripple effects.” ~ Camilla Kragius. This was the theme for SCI Mercer’s third annual Day of Responsibility held on October 5, which was coordinated by the Activities Department. Fifty-seven staff and 110 inmates attended this powerful event that was packed with extraordinary speakers.



The Day of Responsibility is a day-long event designed to educate participants on the impact of crime and to motivate and assist individuals to make positive changes in their lives to ultimately live responsibly. Guest speakers from the community shared their stories on how crime has impacted them and their families.

The speakers captivating the audience at this event included:

Walter Everett, from the PA Prison Society and a retired United Methodist pastor, presented with Michael Carlucci, who is from Connecticut. Their topic was about the murder of Everett’s son for which Carlucci was found responsible and how they have become good friends through these very uncommon circumstances. Their story embodied addiction, recovery and the power of forgiveness.



Pat Lupson, from the D.C. area, spoke about the murder of her daughter and grandchildren at the hands of her son-in-law, who set the house on fire while they were asleep.

Marsha Campbell, board member from the Alle-Kiski HOPE Center for battered and abused women in Tarentum, spoke on her experience with domestic violence and the verbal and mental abuse she endured from her husband after they were married.

The McBrides, who are from the Penn State area, spoke next. Mrs. McBride told her story of being sexually abused by her father as a child and Mr. McBride spoke about her struggles and how the abuse has affected her over the years.

SCI Mercer ABE

Instructor Noel Berkley spoke about the Act 143 Victim's Awareness class that he teaches and explained some of the topics that are discussed in the class. Berkley explained other things the speakers may have gone through that they did not bring up in their presentations that may have also impacted them. In addition, he asked the attendees to consider how what they heard from the speakers could change their thoughts on responsibility and how it will impact them when they re-enter society.



Attendees were given a folder containing an array of information regarding the effects of drug use, sexual abuse, domestic violence, responsibility and gratitude. At the end of the program, everyone was given the Responsibility Pledge to sign, affirming their commitment to live so that their actions build and strengthen relationships and communities, as well as pledging to become more responsible individuals. In addition, attendees were given an invitation to "Pay it Forward," including ideas on how to start their own positive ripple effect.



Pictured, left to right, are Deputy Superintendent William Woods, Activities Manager April Harvey, Mr. Carlucci, Mr. Everett, and Superintendent Brian Thompson. Thanks to Ms. Harvey and her staff for coordinating an emotional event enjoyed by all.

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Graterford Blood Drive

On October 17, SCI Graterford hosted its quarterly Red Cross Blood Drive. This drive honored Ashton Millsap, son of Corrections Officer A. Millsap. Ashton requires regular blood transfusions due to illness. Graterford staff were honored to have Ashton visit the donors during the drive. The drive, which lasted from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., collected 31 pints from 39 donors.

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Information Gathering Session Held

On October 12, DOC officials held a tour and information session for community reentry service providers at the newly-built, yet-to-be-opened female transition unit (FTU) at SCI Phoenix.

DOC Secretary John Wetzel and SCI Graterford Superintendent Cynthia Link started the day with welcoming remarks and introductions.

Later an overview of the FTU was presented as were practical expectations. Following a tour of the complex, DOC Bureau of Treatment Services Tracy Smith led a “sharing of ideas” discussion.



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DOC Officials Tour SCI Greene

October 17, staff from Office of Chief Counsel met with Administrators at SCI-Greene and toured several areas of the facility.



Pictured L to R: Chief Counsel Theron Perez, Deputy Chief Counsel Tim Holmes and Paralegal Elaine Redmond.

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Employees' Mission Trip to Arizona

Four DOC employees traveled on the same mission trip to the Native American Christian Academy in Sun Valley, Arizona during the first week in October.

"We spent a week at the academy doing a variety of tasks/chores, cheered on the students during a cross country race, and bonded with others on the team as well as making new friends at the academy," said Tracy Gibson, who serves as the Human Resource Field Officer for SCI Houtzdale and the Quehanna Boot Camp. "It was an experience none of us will forget and are very thankful for the family, friends and things we have."



Pictured, from left to right, are: Captain Darren Dickson from SCI Huntingdon; Collette Harclerode, IT Generalist from SCI Huntingdon; Tracy Gibson, FHRO from SCI Houtzdale/Quehanna Boot Camp; and Jay Fichter, Corrections Officer 2 at SCI Smithfield.

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SCI Retreat Welcomes Kings College

Superintendent Vince Mooney and SCI Retreat staff had the privilege of hosting a group of students from Kings College on October 12. The students had the opportunity to talk with three inmates, ask questions from some staff members, and take a brief tour of the facility. Hope and Joy also visited with the students.



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Legislator Visits Phoenix

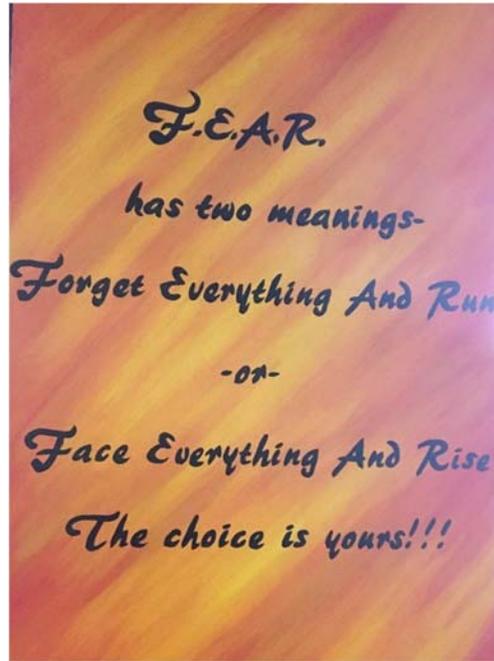
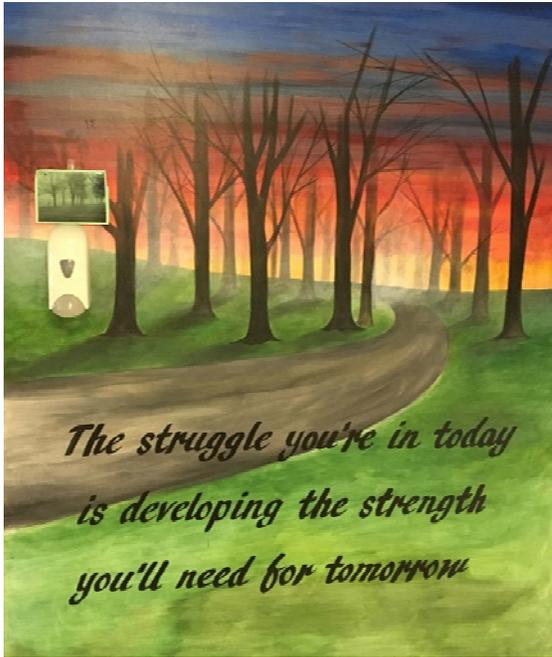
On October 11, State Representative Michael Corr toured SCI Phoenix. The tour, led by Lt. Walter Grunder, included various housing units, the Program Service Building, CI Laundry, the Medical Department and the inmate dining hall (pictured).



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Positive Affirmations

Under the direction of Wernersville Community Corrections Center (CCC) Director Theresa Granville, the walls within a common room in building 27 was painted with colorful art work containing positive and encouraging affirmations. This art work was done solely and voluntarily by the hands of a one reentrant, who recently was paroled to the street successfully to an approved home plan. What a great job he did while he was at the center.



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The Puppies Are Coming!

"The Puppies Are Coming," was the title of the e-mail sent to staff by Superintendent Vince Mooney. On October 16, SCI Retreat employees were thrilled to announce the arrival of three canines from the Luzerne County SPCA -- Lucy, Precious and Louie. The dogs arrived as a part of a new beginning to a program primarily to give SCI Retreat the opportunity to, once again, give back to the community. Going forward SCI Retreat will work in conjunction with the Luzerne County SPCA to give selected canines a second chance at life, hope and the opportunity to become adopted to a FUREVER home!



Currently six inmate handlers have been selected and trained to work with the dogs over the next 6 to 10 weeks on basic obedience training and socialization skills. Again, the common goal upon completion is to have the dogs more prepared and ready for adoption to a good home.

Louie



Precious



Lucie



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BetaGov Officials Visit Pine Grove

On October 17, Maureen Hillhouse and Lauren Rilling from BetaGov visited SCI Pine Grove to discuss and observe some of the current randomized controlled trials that were being conducted at the prison.



Pictured are: H Unit – Swift Certain Fair – Sgt. Lightner, Deputy Superintendent Jamie Boyles, Unit Manager Dan Yingling, Maureen Millhouse and Lauren Rilling.

Some of the trials started during this past year include:

- Modified Privileged Housing Unit
- Peer Assistance for Youthful Offender
- Staff Wellness
- Swift Certain Fair

Other pilots that are in the planning/development phase include:

- Youthful Offender Leadership Course (not started yet)
- PORTAL – which is a step-down unit for long term segregation

About [BetaGov](#)

BetaGov's mission is to help policymakers, government agencies and other practitioners develop, conduct, analyze and share empirical research, helping improve the policies and practices that affect all Americans. Their team includes psychologists, economists, policy experts and statisticians, all with extensive experience planning, conducting and evaluating randomized controlled trials (RCTs).

BetaGov works with practitioners to turn their ideas into trials that empirically test policy usefulness and effectiveness. They help practitioners test existing practices and also develop new ideas into well-designed, feasible trials. Their assistance is available at all levels: from process improvement evaluations with findings applicable only to the trial agency, to larger scale RCTs with findings applicable to other agencies, populations and settings. Assistance is free and trial results are posted at BetaGov.org and affiliated outlets.

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SCI Retreat Welcomes College Students!

Students from Luzerne County Community College and Bloomsburg University visited SCI Retreat on October 18, 2017. The students had the opportunity to meet three inmates and ask them questions about being an inmate in today's prison system. The class also talked with some staff members about their jobs in corrections, and toured certain areas of the facility.



(Left) The students listen to the staff members and inmates as they talk about their experiences

(Below) Chris Stout explains his role as Unit Manager



(Left) CO1 Taylor explains the control room on B-Unit



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Week of October 9...

Government that Works!

On October 13, a consortium of agencies today held simultaneous “Financial Reality Fairs” for reentrants, or incarcerated individuals getting ready to reenter the community, in Harrisburg, Pittsburgh, Reading, Erie and Philadelphia.

The fairs, which involved a great deal of coordination and planning, were spearheaded by the Pennsylvania Departments of Corrections and Banking and Securities, the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole, the Pennsylvania Credit Union Foundation, with contributions from the Insurance Department, the PA Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) and individual credit unions. Hundreds of community volunteers, who were trained by credit union officials, also helped to make the Financial Reality Fairs possible.

“Each year, the DOC releases – either on parole or after completion of a sentence – nearly 23,000 individuals,” Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel said. “During their transitions home, reentrants face a variety of barriers that often impede their success. We believe in doing all that we can to help reentrants overcome the barriers they face in order to reduce future criminality. Money management plays a huge role in everyday life. So, it is only fitting that we aid their transitions by providing these Financial Reality Fairs.”

Today’s Financial Reality Fairs helped approximately 150 reentrants at each location learn how to manage a “real life” budget, including paying for rent and utilities, their court costs, restitution and, for many, child support. There were financial counselors on hand to assist the reentrants as they moved through the workshop, managing life expenses.

This is the first time in Pennsylvania’s history that the agencies have held five Financial Reality Fairs simultaneously.

At the Reality Fairs, reentrants are provided the opportunity to learn about:

- The importance of and basics about working with a financial institution like a credit union or bank
- The importance of credit reports and credit scores
- How to create a personal budget and spending plan



Pittsburgh CCC Director Rick Dotson and Counselor 2 Tara Marhefka-Steiner pose with "The Wheel of Reality" at today's Financial Reality Fair in Pittsburgh.

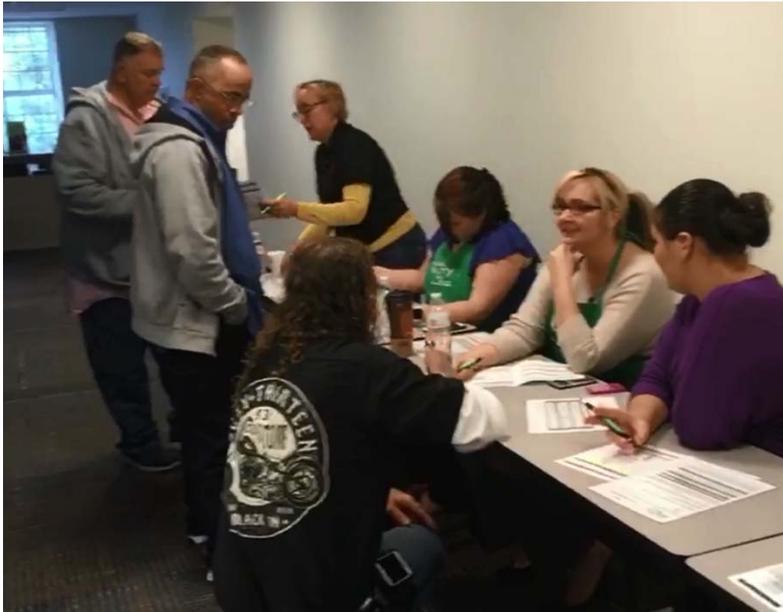
"We are very proud of the work of our Foundation, which is collaborating with the Pennsylvania Departments of Corrections and Banking and Securities, to bring Financial Reality Fairs to individuals re-entering society. With a joint goal of increasing the financial capability of those leaving the corrections system, we are playing an important part in helping these individuals and in reducing their probability of relapsing into the system," Pennsylvania Credit Union Association President & CEO Patrick Conway said. "After the success of our first reentry Financial Reality Fair earlier this year and the ones held today, we look forward to expanding this important program statewide in the future."

"Equipping parolees with financial skills necessary to make good decisions improves their ability to be successful. This builds upon the increase in the number of parolees employed we have seen over the past two years," said Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole Chairman Leo L. Dunn.

The goals of the Financial Reality Fairs are to:

- Address one of the barriers facing reentrants as they return home from prison by teaching them how to plan a budget
- Help to reduce recidivism by providing reentrants with financial tools needed to achieve self-sustaining independency
- Improve the transition for reentrants from prison to community
- Raise awareness of the PA \$AFE initiative, the state's clearinghouse of consumer protection information
- Educate citizens about the Commonwealth's [Consumer Financial Protection Initiative](#)
- Recognize the innovative, inter-agency work to reduce recidivism
- Share reentry best practices with citizens and other state corrections departments

"This is government that works -- breaking down barriers, drawing on expertise and experience from different agencies and perspectives, and working together to protect Pennsylvanians," said Secretary of Banking and Securities Robin L. Wiessmann. "I hope that other states look at our efforts and successes as a model for how they can create partnerships and develop similar programs to help their citizens."



"Clearly this program has terrific potential to help people better make the transition from prison life back to society," said Brian Hudson Sr., executive director of the Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency. "Our goal is to reduce recidivism, and by providing financial education in an engaging way, we give former inmates more tools to be successful in their new lives. That benefits them and everyone else."

One Financial Reality Fair was held earlier this year at the Harrisburg Community Corrections Center. After attending that event, reentrants said that they learned to "keep focused on their *needs* and not their *wants*," and that they "never had to worry about a budget, so the fair was helpful" to him. Another said that "when it comes down to it, we don't want all the luxuries when we see the prices."



In addition to Financial Reality Fairs, the Departments of Banking and Securities and Corrections – as part of PA \$AFE – began offering earlier this year financial education courses to inmates who are nearing release from prison.

The courses focus on the basics of banking, understanding credit reports and credit scores, saving money and avoiding predatory lending, creating spending plans, investing, and benefit programs.

Agencies and organizations involved in this endeavor plan to make these Financial Reality Fairs annual events.



A reentrant spins the Wheel of Reality at the Financial Reality Fair in Harrisburg.

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Keeping Staff Informed During a Drug Epidemic

On October 13, the DOC's Bureau of Community Corrections (BCC) hosted a "Current Drug Trends" training for its employees at the DOC's Elizabethtown Training Academy. The training was conducted by John F. Goshert, who is chief county detective of Dauphin County, where he is responsible for the administration and operation of the Dauphin County Drug Task Force, which encompasses the supervision of investigations and the debriefing of subjects involved in the illegal drug trade at all levels.

At the training, more than 50 BCC employees learned about:

- The history of drug abuse in society
- Why people use drugs
- The importance of understanding the drug culture
- Ways to identify commonly abused substances, including their effects, methods of ingestion and paraphernalia associated with their use
- The current opioid crisis and steps that are being taken to deal with the problem

- How to stay current on drug trends
- New substances that are on the horizon

Several local news crews covered the event, and one of their stories can be viewed here:

<http://abc27.com/2017/10/13/police-warn-3-drugs-could-explode-onto-local-streets/>

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SCI Cambridge Springs Shares Optical Education Program Knowledge with Florida DOC

On October 3, two Florida DOC employees visited SCI Cambridge Springs' Correctional Industries Optical Lab. One was Remero Green, director of programs for Florida's DOC with Pride. The other was Janet Higgins-Weston, workforce development specialist for Pride.

Green and Higgins-Weston are interested in starting their own education curriculum for their optical industry. They spent a day at Cambridge Springs to gain knowledge on how the prison's Optical Education Program works.

CI Optical Lab Supervisor Tony Rentz escorted them throughout the facility and introduced them to Gregory Stephenson (Optical Teacher) and School Principal Harold Heckler. The visitors also talked to the inmates to get their point of view and opinions on the education program.



An SCI Cambridge Springs Optical Lab inmate worker shows Mr. Green and Ms. Higgins-Weston the functions of the Optical Lab equipment.

The visit went very well, and SCI Cambridge Springs can proudly say they have a "sister institution" in the state of Florida.

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Inmate Graduation Ceremony Held

October 10th saw 55 inmates at SCI Mercer graduate from the Education Department academic and vocational programming. Of those, five received their GED, 19 earned their Adult Commonwealth Secondary Diploma, and 31 graduated from a vocational program.

The graduates processed from the Education Department into the Chapel to music played by the inmate band.



The theme for this graduation ceremony was “Tenacity.” Andrew McLaughlin, the prison’s academic instructor, welcomed the graduates, staff and approximately 30 family members to the ceremony, which was held in the facility’s chapel. Rev. Joseph Kosarek gave the invocation. Superintendent Brian Thompson welcomed all and congratulated the graduates.

The keynote speaker, Brenda Martin, spoke about her experience of earning her GED and about her journey to obtaining her bachelor’s degree and the “tenacity” it required.

Diplomas were awarded to the inmates by School Principal James Oppman, Supt. Thompson and Deputy Woods. Deputy Woods gave the closing remarks, congratulating the graduates for their “tenacity” in obtaining their educational goals at SCI Mercer.

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Raise Your Voices

Members of the Voices of Praise Choir from Calvary Baptist Church in Winston Salem, NC, performed for inmates at SCI Mahanoy on October 11. The choir presented their rendition of Daniel the Prophet. Forty-three members of the choir attended.



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DOC Employees Participate in State Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration

On October 4, DOC Statewide Diversity Recruiter Pedro J Gratacos and EEO Specialist Samuel Colbert served food to more than 600 attendees at this year's Hispanic Heritage Month Celebration.



Above: Samuel Colbert (gray shirt)

Right: Pedro Gratacos (red shirt)



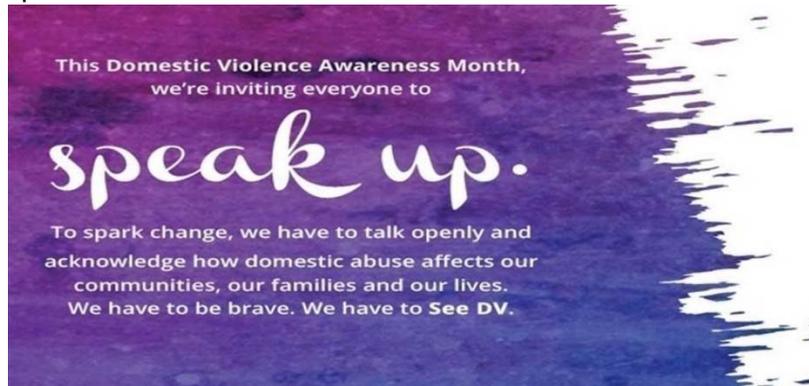
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SCI Laurel Highlands Promotes Domestic Violence Awareness Month

In recognition of Domestic Violence Awareness Month, SCI Laurel Highlands will promote awareness throughout the institution.

Throughout October, the Activities Department will run PowerPoint presentations on the dedicated inmate channel. These presentations provide facts and statistics about domestic violence and its effects and urges everyone to speak out against domestic violence. The #1 fact listed in the PowerPoint is that most domestic violence incidents are never reported.

Treatment Specialists Martha Boyer and Adam Cuturilo will pass out bookmarks with an awareness advertisement on it (pictured right), and they will share true stories in a group setting.



Additionally, the Transitional Housing Unit will provide "purple-colored" perennials, Salvia, to plant in front of C-block as a seasonal reminder of Domestic Violence Awareness. Maintenance will assist in making a placard to place along with the plants. There will be a brief dedication ceremony once the work is complete.

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SCI Mercer Joins Slippery Rock University for First Animal-Assisted Stress/Anxiety Group Session

With the help of Slippery Rock University (SRU), SCI Mercer began a newly-initiated research project called Animal-Assisted Stress/Anxiety Group with Incarcerated Males. The first session with inmate participants was held on October 3 in the Psychology Department.

This research study is being conducted by Dr. Yvonne M. Eaton-Stull, assistant professor of social work at Slippery Rock University, in conjunction with Dr. Cynthia Wright, licensed psychology manager at SCI Mercer.



Inmates petting Danny and Ginger, trained, registered therapy dogs

Through the use of trained therapy dogs and psychoeducational group interventions, this collaborative

project seeks to improve anxiety and increase coping skills of incarcerated males affected by stress and anxiety.

Dr. Eaton-Stull says learning to manage mental health challenges is key to successful reentry and community reintegration. It is hoped that this research will provide evidence to demonstrate the effectiveness of animal-assisted intervention and lend credibility and support for this innovative intervention.

Dr. Eaton-Stull, two SRU social work students and Dr. Wright will facilitate three, 10-week Reoccurring Stress/Anxiety Groups. Dr. Wright and her psychology staff identify a maximum of 10 individuals for each group who may benefit from this intervention, with participation in the groups being voluntary.



Pictured left to right: Sue Anderson from "Paws Hand Delivered in Conneaut Lake, PA"; SRU social work student Cassandra Spirnock; Dr. Yvonne Eaton-Stull; SRU social work student Maura Vulakovich; and Dr. Cynthia Wright.

"It has been a great pleasure working with Dr. Wright and developing interventions to improve the mental health of the group participants," said Dr. Eaton-Stull. "I also have to commend SCI Mercer for being such a progressive facility, willing to invest time and resources in exploring innovative treatment for the inmates."

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Albion Inmates Donate to Hurricane Relief Efforts

By Rev. Dr. Scott D. Graubard, Chaplain

The memory of the winds and floodwaters devastating Houston is still fresh in the minds of most Americans. Eighty-two lost lives were attributed to the storm. Although the cost of the damages cannot be quantified in dollars alone, it is estimated that more than \$180 billion will be spent on the recovery.

While Texas was being battered by the storm, life experienced at SCI Albion was just like any other day. The Albion routine continued unabated.

Yet, many inmates seem to closely follow important events by television. I was not surprised when during prayer before our Sunday service, several men prayed for those in the path of the monster storm. I was not surprised when several inmates approached me following the service to suggest that they collect money to donate to the relief efforts.

The next day, several inmates representing the Roman Catholic, Hispanic and Muslim faith communities approached me expressing interest in being part of this

collection. Over the next two weeks, inmates from all of these worshipping communities raised \$583.99. While this contribution is hardly a dent in \$180 billion dollar restoration cost, it represents a significant amount from this population of men many of whom earn between \$25 and \$50 per month.

These men, stirred by compassion for those suffering great loss from the storm, gladly and sacrificially gave to this cause. Their generosity is testimony to the truth that while these men may have made poor choices in their lives that led them to Albion, they are still men of character who desire to positively impact the world around them.

The funds collected have been donated to Convoy of Hope, which was deployed to Port Arthur Texas to assist in the cleanup and to deliver basic necessities to storm victims. To date they have delivered 158 loads comprised of 5.5 million pounds and delivered to almost 250,000 people.

One need look no further than SCI Albion to see first-hand faith in action.

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Maintaining a Prison

Recently, SCI Mercer has been completing several major maintenance projects, requiring the use of large equipment and vehicles inside the secure perimeter of the facility.

A partial roofing project on housing unit G began on September 18 and is anticipated to be completed by mid-October. This project entails replacing the rubber roof and installing five new air handling units.



Pictured, left to right, are maintenance staff Junior Cox, Steve Croy and Superintendent Brian Thompson, along with the crane operator.

Another major project being completed is the removal of seven underground fuel tanks. This project was spearheaded by Facility Maintenance Manager Larry Boogs. In the original design of SCI Mercer, each building had its own individual generator and a fuel tank to power it. Currently, a large generator is in place that is used to provide power to the institution if required, rendering the individual generators and their fuel tanks inside the facility unnecessary.

The week of September 25, approximately 13,000 gallons of fuel was removed and properly disposed of from the seven underground storage tanks. Maintenance Manager Boggs has been working with Total Tanks Works LLC to do the soil testing and paperwork through DEP for the tanks to be removed. Since October 5, five of the fuel tanks have been removed from within the institution, and on October 16 another tank will be removed. The last tank will be removed in the near future.

The removed tanks are staged outside the institution to be cleaned and then taken to a landfill per regulations.



Observing the removal of one of the tanks is Major Rodney Painter, Superintendent Brian Thompson and Deputy Lee Estock.

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Fayette Holds Runathon

The SCI Fayette Activities Department conducted a Little Debbie Sale for inmates in general population during September. Orders were taken in August and September, with the distribution of the product on September 21. There were nearly 800 orders with more than 9,000 items purchased. Nearly \$5,600 was raised for two different inmate-selected charities. This sale was done in conjunction with the prison's annual runathon.

With October being Domestic Violence Awareness Month, the Domestic Violence Services of Southwestern PA was the recipient organization of the runathon and received all runathon entry fees plus half of the proceeds from the Little Debbie Sale – a total of \$3,455. The Wesley Health Center in Fayette County will receive the other half of the proceeds from the Little Debbie Sale - \$2,798.40.

The annual SCI Fayette Runathon took place on October 5, from 8 a.m. until 2:30 p.m. The entry fee was \$3 per inmate participant. There were 219 inmate participants, 28 committee members and 6 band members. Three staff members participated all day, including Deputy Superintendent Armel, who completed the whole 26.25 miles finishing first among all participants with a time of 3:14:58! Several other staff members did a few laps here and there throughout the day to show their support. Three representatives from the runathon charity, the Domestic Violence Services of Southwestern PA, were also in attendance.

For entertainment, the institutional band played, and other music was played between their sets. Gatorade and fruit was available to participants and a bag lunch was provided at mid-day. All in all, the event was a success!



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Centre Co. Commissioner Visits Quehanna Boot Camp

Michael Pipe, chairman of the Centre County Board of Commissioners, visited the Quehanna Boot Camp (QBC) on September 25. Commissioner Pipe also serves as chairman of the Centre County Prison Board of Inspectors and the Centre County Reentry Coalition.

Commissioner Pipe toured the facility, visited several housing units and spoke with inmates in both the Boot Camp and State Intermediate Punishment (SIP) programs. Topics of conversation included the inmates' experience at QBC and their future plans.



Centre County Commissioner Michael Pipe speaking with Quehanna Boot Camp staff during tour

Commissioner Pipe also spoke with staff about the SIP and Boot Camp programs, educational/vocational opportunities, drug and alcohol treatment and reentry initiatives.

QBC officials appreciated the opportunity to share ideas to expand its reentry efforts, and to provide an opportunity for a county prison official to experience the application of alternative sentencing.

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QBC Officer in the News for Donation

Logan Liptak, the 10-year-old son of Quehanna Boot Camp Officer Alisa Liptak, was recently highlighted on his local news station for raising \$10,000 for the American Heart Association. Logan was diagnosed at the age of 6 with a congenital heart defect, and that is what has inspired him to raise money for the association.

Logan is stable now, even though he spent time in the hospital over the past few years. It was during that hospitalization that his family learned that the hospital was receiving funding from the American Heart Association, and that's what led Logan and his family to raise money that will stay local.

During half-time of a local football game, Logan was honored for his charitable work. He was presented with a medal and a jersey signed by PSU's Saquon Barkley.

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Week of October 2...

Norway Correctional Services Officials Visit PA DOC

Just as corrections officials from the United States have had the opportunity to tour various European prisons – Secretary John Wetzel toured prisons in Germany and the Netherlands – prison officials from Norway are now visiting U.S. prisons.

This week officials are visiting SCIs Camp Hill, Chester, Graterford, Muncy and Phoenix (which is Graterford's replacement that is presently under construction).



Norwegian prison officials, along with individuals from Drexel University, pose with SCI Camp Hill officials during their recent tour of that prison.



At SCI Camp Hill, the tour stopped by F Block to learn about that unit from Ian Taggart.

In fact, earlier this week an event was held at SCI Chester, which included DOC officials from Central Office and the eastern region of the DOC, Norway officials and academics and students from Drexel University. The event provided a tour for the Norwegians and also provided an opportunity for a discussion about prisons and how our prisons compare... or don't... to those prisons operated in Norway. Called "What is Prison For? Perspectives from Norway and Pennsylvania," officials discussed the practical and philosophical goals of prisons in their respective jurisdictions.



The event began with a welcoming and presentation of colors by SCI Chester Superintendent Marirosa Lamas and the prison's honor guard. Next, the president of Drexel discussed her university's criminal justice related work and studies, including partnership with several PA state prisons for inmate-student classes which are held three times each year.

Next Are Hoidal, warden of Halden Prison in Norway, gave an overview of his system, including the troubles they had experienced 30 years ago and how their criminal justice system and their government worked together to change their system for the better.

DOC Secretary John Wetzel then spoke about his trip to Europe, and talked about what he learned from that experience and about concepts he brought back with him and put into place, such as the DOC's Transitional Housing Unit.

After all of the presentations were concluded, Drexel played its documentary, "Breaking the Chains: From Halden to Attica (2017)," which can be viewed on YouTube here:

<https://youtu.be/a7TfBLvw4FY> .



A question and answer session followed the video.

Later in the week, Norway officials continued their tours of PA's state prisons, and they gathered at the DOC's central office to meet with officials and continue the discussion of difference in prison systems, etc.

Norway's Prison System Facts:

Norway has 5.2 million citizens. It also has 3,900 total inmates housed in 43 prisons at 61 prison locations – all of which are small, with largest holding 260 individuals and smallest holding 13.

They have more staff than inmates – about 4,400 employees, of which 3,600 are corrections officers, or what they call police/prison officers in their prisons. Staff is unarmed, and 40 percent is female.

The 3,900 inmates are pretrial and sentenced inmates all mixed together. They have open prisons and closed prisons, and in the closed prisons they use single cells. An inmate will begin his/her sentence at a higher level of security and phase down to less secure levels at time of release from prison.



Halden Prison Warden Are Hoidal is interviewed by Philadelphia Inquirer reporter Samantha Melamed prior to the event at SCI Chester.

They say that inmates like the prisons and they don't escape. In fact, inmates are permitted to leave – something similar to a furlough system – and they still return.

In Norway, they have two social missions – 1) security of society and 2) rehabilitation.

Sentences on average are eight months long, and inmates never serve longer than the maximum of 21 years. Although there is a new law called preventive detention in which a violent individual can be kept beyond their sentence and where they are evaluated by a team of experts every five years, but such a person could conceivably be in prison for their entire life.

They have four main values:

- openness – invite society in/nothing to hide
- respect – inmates and employees are respected like human beings
- professionalism – honest and trust
- commitment – employees are proud of their work

However, their system wasn't always this way.

Thirty years ago they had a lot of problems with drugs, psychological problems with inmates and a high recidivism rate of 60-70%. They also had two officers killed, riots and lot of escapes.

They recognized that something had to be done.

A white paper was written that focused on police/prison officers (the term they use for corrections officers) and having them be more involved with inmates – turning them more into like social workers. They spend all day with the inmates – talking with them, learning why they are in prison and helping the inmates with their future plans.

They went from walls, fences, cameras, schedules and routines where security is concerned to what they call dynamic security, where inmates and officers are together all day, including leisure activities. The officers now talk to inmates like they are normal people.

The change took time – about 10 years, but officials focused on training for the officers, including subjects such as psychology, ethics, law and human rights. Training consists of two years that takes part at a central training academy and also at various prisons. The employee must work at least a year after conclusion of training before leaving the correctional service for other work. They say that prison officer jobs are sought after jobs where an individual can earn \$60,000 per year.

They now have a ratio of three inmates per officer, and the officers motivate, guide, coach and serve as role models to inmates.

Another white paper was written in 2008 that focused on helping inmates return home after prison and how the community has to help with housing, jobs and networking. Five government organizations/ministers – justice, culture, health, education and local government – came together and formed a plan about rehabilitation and wrote this white paper.

Norway now operates using their “Principle of Normality,” where prisons look like society and where inmates are still citizens with all of their rights. The only thing taken away from them is their FREEDOM, which IS the punishment in Norway

School, health care and religion come from outsiders who provide it at the prisons. They come into the prisons to deliver the services and are not prison employees.

As a result of all of the changes made to their prison system, Norway officials say there is no violence. There are no fights. They don’t have segregation units. And now their recidivism rate is down to 20-30%

When asked about the differences between Norway prisons and U.S. prisons, Warden Hoidal said, “Here you have too much segregation/isolation for small things. Where in Norway we would do cell confinement for up to eight days max, U.S. prisons put people in segregation for months.”

He also said that the U.S. has too many prisons that cost too much money. But he loves our dog programs.

Norwegian and Drexel University officials pose with SCI Graterford staff.

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Financial Reality Fairs

On October 5, officials from both private and public agencies announced that their partnership will result in Financial Reality Fairs being held simultaneously on from 8 to 11 a.m. on October 14 at locations in Erie, Harrisburg, Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Reading.

The fairs, which involve a great deal of coordination and planning, are spearheaded by the Pennsylvania Departments of Corrections and Banking and Securities, the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole, the Pennsylvania Credit Union Foundation, with contributions from the Insurance Department, the PA Housing Finance Agency (PHFA) and individual credit unions. Hundreds of community volunteers, who were trained by credit union officials, will help to make the fairs possible.



The goals of the Financial Reality Fairs are to:

- Address one of the barriers facing reentrants as they return home from prison by teaching them how to plan a budget
- Help to reduce recidivism by providing reentrants with financial tools needed to achieve self-sustaining independency
- Improve the transition for reentrants from prison to community
- Raise awareness of the PA \$AFE initiative
- Educate citizens about the Commonwealth's [Consumer Financial Protection Initiative](#)
- Recognize the innovative, inter-agency work to reduce recidivism
- Share reentry best practices with citizens and other state corrections departments

Each year, the DOC releases – either on parole or after completion of a sentence – nearly 23,000 individuals. During their transitions home, reentrants face a variety of barriers that often impede their success. Money management plays a huge role in everyday life, and this program will help put them on the path to financial security and independence.

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2016 Pew National Crime Rate Statistics

By Allison Beck

On September 25, the FBI released a survey of the 2016 National Crime Rate Statistics. Despite violent crimes increasing nationwide by 4.1 percent between 2015 and 2016, Pennsylvania's violent crime rate has been reduced by 1 percent. Additionally, Pennsylvania's rate of overall property crime has dropped 3.9 percent, which is double the national reduction rate.

Overall, Pennsylvania's crime rates are significantly lower than the national average. The only category in Pennsylvania that increased in 2016 was aggravated assault. However, this 2.7 percent increase was still much lower than the national increase of 5.1 percent in this category.

"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."

There is no evidence that increasing incarceration will have any impact on violent crime rates. Many cities experiencing rises in violent crime are in states that have not made significant sentencing and corrections reforms. Over the past several years, crime rates have been falling faster in states that reduced imprisonment rates than in states where prison populations continued to grow.

States adopting reforms have done so with wide bipartisan majorities, shifting dollars from prisons into strategies that cost taxpayers less and do a better job of slowing the cycle of recidivism. Using these strategies, many states are making significant reductions in their recidivism rates. Pennsylvania is one of these states.

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.

Although violent crimes, such as murder, rape, robbery and aggravated assault, have increased nationally when compared with 2015 data, crime rates are still half of what they were at their peaks in the early 1990s. Recent increases in violence have been concentrated in persistently high-crime neighborhoods in a handful of major cities. It is important to note that, due to natural fluctuations, it typically takes 3 to 5 years to establish a trend. In many cities, crime rates continue to fluctuate incrementally while remaining at historically low levels.

Leading crime and criminal justice experts offer a number of possible explanations for why violent crime is rising nationally, but there is no definitive research since the increase is so recent. The theories, for which there is varying evidence, include territorial battles between gangs, proliferation of firearms and increasing willingness to use them to resolve disputes, the heroin/opioid epidemic and fractured police-community relationships.

Allison Beck is an intern in the DOC's Press Office until early December. She attends Shippensburg University as a communication/journalism major with a focus in public relations and a minor in psychology.

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SCI Retreat Invites Retirees to Celebrate 30-Year Anniversary



On September 28, Superintendent Vince Mooney invited SC Retreat retirees to a luncheon cookout on institutional grounds. They were given the opportunity to purchase Retreat's challenge coin and clothing items to help celebrate the prison's 30 years of operation. The guests of honor were also invited inside the institution to tour designated areas. Their comments were overwhelmingly positive:

"It was amazing seeing everyone. So glad I came. My Thanks to the superintendent for allowing us this opportunity. We all had a great time, it was much appreciated," said Todd C. Bynon.

"Please let Vince know that the party was very nice and it was very thoughtful of him have it," said Walter Pritchky Jr.

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Penn State Fayette Nursing Program Partners with State Correctional Institutions

Penn State Fayette 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, will attend a daylong tour of SCI Greene or SCI Fayette during the month of October. Each student will shadow and observe a registered nurse.



“This is an opportunity for students to go beyond of the hospital setting,” said Melissa Miner, the campus coordinator for nursing. 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.

“This is not for everyone. This is a different environment, but this is a great job to have,” said Tina Walker, human resource director at SCI Fayette, citing competitive benefits, demand and job security. She encouraged students to apply after graduation and licensure.

“The prison setting poses a unique set of responsibilities for healthcare professionals. The work is inherently litigious, so thorough documentation is critical to the healthcare process,” explained Bill Nicholson, a correctional healthcare administrator at SCI Fayette. Additionally, proper assessment in the prison population is key, as inmates may feign or fail to report medical issues.

“In the hospital setting, we rush to treat a patient. In the prison setting, our first priority is to secure the inmate and then to treat him,” said Nedra Grego, a correctional healthcare administrator at SCI Fayette.

Each of the representatives emphasized the priority of safety in their facilities, with secured nurses’ stations, security staff available for assistance and comprehensive resources for occupational concerns.

“You have all these preconceived notions about being a woman in a prison setting, but [the professionals] helped to ease my fears,” said student Ashley Davis. “Now, I’m thinking of it as a possibility after graduation.”

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SCI Houtzdale Memorial Wall Softball Tournament

SCI Houtzdale's Morale Committee hosted a benefit Softball Tournament to raise money for the SCI Houtzdale Memorial Fund. This fund was established in order to build a memorial for all fallen staff who worked at SCI Houtzdale over the years. This tournament raised \$332, and was a great start toward collecting enough money to build the memorial. With the assistance of the Empowerment Committee and Employees Association, the Morale Committee hopes to complete this project in the spring of 2018.



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Retiree Luncheon Held at SCI Houtzdale



SCI Houtzdale hosted its annual Retiree Luncheon on October 3 for 24 retirees. They had with a lunch with the facility's current employees and also toured the facility where they used to work.

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Day in the Park

On September 28, the SCI Houtzdale Journey for Change (inmate) Organization, in conjunction with the Inmate General Welfare Fund committee and the Activities Department, held its annual "Day in the Park" event in the prison's north yard.

Approximately 360 inmates participated in numerous activities, ranging from 3-on-3 basketball tournaments, runs of multiple distances and a variety of table game competitions.



From the proceeds of the event, the Journey for Change Organization will be able to donate \$1,000 to the local Big Brothers/Big Sisters organization, \$600 to the YMCA Backpack program, and buy turkeys for Thanksgiving through the local YMCA.

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Walk for a Wonderful Life

On September 24, SCI Pine Grove employees participated in the Suicide Task Force of Indiana County's "Walk for a Wonderful Life." The facility raised a total of \$300 to support this cause. The Walk for a Wonderful Life is the Suicide Task Force's primary fundraising event. Proceeds from this event are used to support suicide awareness throughout Indiana County.



Corrections Counselor 2 Tammy Delosh with Packer; Drug and Alcohol Treatment Specialist Christina Smith with Kato; and Psychological Services Specialist Rebecca Andrews.

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Barks Against Violence

SCI Pine Grove staff recently participated in "Barks against Violence," a fundraiser for the Alice Paul House, whose goal is to help raise awareness about domestic violence.

Two of SCI Pine Grove's TAILS puppies Polar and Parker attended, and a presentation about the prison's dog training program was provided by Ms. Delosh and Ms. Smith.



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County Opens VSU

By Ryan Yoder, Statewide Veterans Coordinator

A few months ago, prison officials at York County Prison reached out to me regarding information on DOC Veteran Services. They were particularly interested in our Veterans Service Unit (VSU) program.

I arranged a meeting with them at Central Office, where I provided them with a PowerPoint presentation as well as information and materials to assist in creating a Veterans Service Unit within their prison.

On October 2, I was invited to visit the newly operational VSU at York County Prison. I was very impressed and proud of their staff for being vested in the commitment to help our incarcerated veterans.

During my visit, I had the opportunity to sit down with the inmates to share thoughts and ideas on the VSU program as well as their perspective on the struggles of life beyond the military.



The experience was extremely gratifying and rewarding, and I am happy to see other prison facilities showing interest and initiative in providing services and support for incarcerated veterans.

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WRAP Training Conducted

By Lynn Patrone

Staff from across the DOC recently participated in Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) Training. WRAP is an evidenced based tool which helps individuals address distressing feelings through a personally developed response.

"The evidence is that when individuals write their own 'WRAP', they are able to maintain continual wellness and address feelings or symptoms that may cause distress," Mental Health Advocate Lynn Patrone said of the training.

The goal is to use one's WRAP to maintain wellness every single day. This tool offers a structured plan to address distressing feelings, anxiety, other emotions, life issues and to ultimately prevent a person from experiencing a crisis.



Comments received from central and western region employees who have attended the training include:

"This is the best seminar the DOC ever offered."

"I have gained an understanding of how to better manage difficult situations."

"WRAP offered me an opportunity to build a support with my co-workers. I know I am not alone."

"I felt supported, and since I struggle with trusting anyone in this environment, I now feel as though there is a network of care."

"It reminded me of my group therapy classes during my graduate program in counseling. So much stuff that we have pushed down surfaces during sessions like this, but it feels so good to let it out in a supportive and safe environment. I know I feel energized, and I feel a deeper connection with my peers that I work with every day. The negativity which had been growing inside of me seems to have been replaced overnight with a sense of hope and optimism."

"This should be part of block training."

Next steps: Train the eastern region staff and then facilitate a train-the-trainer course so that staff may be trained and offer it to their colleagues and also to the inmates.

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SCI Smithfield Leads Out of the Darkness Walk

On October 1, the 2nd annual Out of the Darkness walk was held for the Juniata Valley region, the Juniata Valley Healing Connections and American Foundation for Suicide Prevention. This year, the walk was held simultaneously in Huntingdon and Lewistown. SCI Smithfield supported the cause.

A small group of staff members from SCI Smithfield made a team to support the cause and walked at the Huntingdon location this past Sunday. Because the team made the largest donation of the day, they were allowed to kick off the walk, and the rest of the walkers followed. The team started with a goal of \$250, but thanks to the support of SCI Smithfield staff, the team raised a total of \$1,042.

Between both locations that day, a total of \$23,000 was raised. The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention reported that "Team PA" raised over one million dollars in support of suicide prevention and awareness. More than 83¢ of every dollar is invested in research, education, advocacy and support for those affected by suicide.



TOP ROW: Terry and Lisa McMullen, Nancy Thomas, Pam Magill, Gracey's Mom, Ryan Reed, Marty Hobbs. BOTTOM ROW: Amy Lingle, Heather Bishop, Christy Stone, Keshia Crawley, Stephanie Yurita, Daryle Gracey.

The goal is to reduce suicides by 20% by 2025. The Out of the Darkness events raise awareness, provide support, and provide a memorial opportunity to share, remember, and activate change for a great cause. Locally, funding will support educational and collaborative events in the community. Funds will be used to provide training for schools, professionals and other individuals in the community. In addition to the walk, the goal is to have a support group for families, friends and individuals affected by suicide.

The SCI Smithfield staff's support of the team is greatly appreciated. Suicide affects a lot of people, including some of those at SCI Smithfield. The team would like to thank Superintendent Eric Tice for all of his support throughout this campaign, and they also thank each person who helped them reach their goal. Hopefully this will continue each year, and we can help reduce the number of suicides and help our local communities.

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SCI Albion Earns ACA Audit Mandatories Score of 100%

During ACA auditing, SCI Albion scored a 100% in their mandatories and a 99.77% in their non-mandatories. They would be 100% across the board if not for a standard that the whole DOC takes as non-compliant, so they essentially lost no standards at the facility.

These auditors were from all over the country, and each had more than 30 years in corrections. They continued to commend SCI Albion Superintendent Michael R. Clark on his great facility and great staff.

"I couldn't be more proud of this facility and each of you," said Clark about his staff, "This was a team effort."



Auditors Bonnie O'Brien, Katherine Brown, J.W. Fairman Jr. and Laura Giles, CEVC. In the background is Michelle Roscinski, CEVA in Inmate Employment.



Labor Foreman John Cacchione with auditors Katherine Brown and J.W. Fairman Jr. in Albion's plumbing Department.

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SCI Albion Hosts Olympic Event for Inmates

On September 20, SCI Albion held its first Olympic event between the Residential Treatment Unit (RTU) and the Special Needs Unit (SNU). The event was held in the West Yard with approximately 200 inmate participants.

The purpose of the event was to give inmates with mental health and physical limitations an expanded opportunity for development and fellowship and to encourage physical activity.

The Olympic events included a 40-yard dash, a 100-yard dash, an 800-yard run, a medicine ball throw and a one-mile relay with a four-man team running one lap each.

The event was extremely well received by all who attended. There was a strong showing of support from staff throughout the institution.

Certificates were issued to all participants.

The event was coordinated by Activities Specialist David Jackson and his staff with the full support of Unit Managers Melanie Kosinski (SNU) and Kevin Lantz (RTU).



Psychological Services Specialist Amy Snow, A-Unit Manager Melanie Kosinski and I-Unit Manager Kevin Lantz.

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Horticulture Class Participates in Bloomsburg Fair

This year is the 162nd annual Bloomsburg Fair. Since 2014, SCI Dallas has been entering the fair with student projects. The fair is the largest agricultural fair in Pa., and one of the largest on the east coast.

The fair entries must follow the rules and guidelines of each individual category. The students must complete an entry form and pay \$2 per building entry. Each individual category pays out various monetary amounts for the winners, along with a ribbon that the students will receive at graduation. Pictured is the first place flower arrangement.



1st place artistic flower arrangement.



4th place flower pot figure.

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SCI Muncy Holds 'Clean and Sober Fun' events

To support National Recovery Month, SCI Muncy held three separate "Clean and Sober Fun" events during the month of September. The photo below shows the last softball game of the month, held on September 27.

The players involved were women currently going through the intensive therapeutic community (TC) Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) program. The designated pitcher in these events was LSW/DATS manager John Matthews. Other DATS staff also came out to support the event.



One team consisted of the Wings of Life Therapeutic Community, and the other team was the Journey to Freedom Therapeutic Community. This positive experience gave the facility's TC women a chance to experience sober fun, which is essential in the recovery process. Sports is a great way to improve sportsmanship, encourage positive connections and promote healthy living.

The AOD staff and TC women would like to thank the prison's supportive Activities Department and supportive Administration Team for this year's National Recovery Month activities.

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National Recovery Month at Quehanna Bootcamp

Quehanna Boot Camp has done multiple activities with their State Intermediate Punishment (SIP) therapeutic communities (TC) for National Recovery Month. They performed talent shows, painted murals, updated treatment signs and made a "Wall of Remembrance."

Employees, along with TC community members/inmates, have used their creativity to show that recovery and change are hard work, but can be fun, too. This is just a small sample of activities that were done. The Bureau of Treatment Services commends all institutions for participating in National Recovery Month!



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DOC Sex Offender Treatment

By Allison Beck

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections is working hard to improve sex offender treatment reformation within its institutions. The department's resources include but are not limited to the Association for the Treatment of Sexual Abusers (ATSA), the Pennsylvania Sex Offenders Assessment Board (SOAB) and the Medlin Sex Offender Treatment Programs (SOTP). All program components and therapeutic strategies are centered on an evidenced-based, cognitive behavioral model.

Upon arrival into the Department of Corrections, individuals with a current conviction for a sex offense or a prior sex offense are evaluated for the need to be assessed for sex offender programming. Once these individuals arrive at their permanent institution, they are evaluated with a validated instrument that measures both unchangeable and changeable risk factors. The risk assessment is updated as their dynamic factors change, minimally post-treatment and at the time of parole review.

Permanent facilities identify, track and assess all individuals convicted of sex offenses. Participation in sex offender-specific treatment is "minimum sentence-driven," meaning a reentrant closest to his/her minimum date takes priority. However, when a slot is available, lifers or individuals with long sentences also may be entered into the treatment program.

Based on results of the sex offender assessment, individuals are categorized and placed into either Low Intensity SOTP or Moderate/High Intensity SOTP. Responsible Living: A Sex Offender Treatment Program has specialized treatments laid out to benefit participants in both the Low and Moderate/High categories. Individuals without a sexual conviction who sexually assault during incarceration are also evaluated for treatment needs.

Because the DOC supports a multidisciplinary approach to the treatment and management of individuals with sex offenses, a variety of staff members within the DOC participate in the assessment and treatment of sex offenders. Staff involved must have the appropriate level of education, training, experience and, when indicated, clinical supervision.

To graduate from the program, participants must earn 85% of total possible points in the point system. They earn these points by participating in group therapy, completing homework assignments, completing a major project for each phase of the program, and filling out a variety of forms, including a relapse prevention plan.

With skilled clinicians, group therapy can be very helpful for some individuals convicted of sex offenses. Groups are limited to a size of 15 participants. Individuals may be separated into different groups based on the nature of their offense(s). Group sessions are conducted weekly for two consecutive hours. Protocol is put in place for inmates who deny responsibility of their sex offense. No more than 20% of inmates in the program group can be deniers.

“Responsible Living: A Sex Offender Treatment Program” was designed for the males, so programs for females are modified as needed. Treatment may also be modified based on mental illness, physical illness, developmental disability and best practices for certain populations based on field research.

Allison Beck is an intern in the DOC’s Press Office until early December. She attends Shippensburg University as a communication/journalism major with a focus in public relations and a minor in psychology.

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Additional Pups Graduate

On October 3, SCI Greene held its 3rd annual Canine Partner’s For Life Graduation Ceremony. Staff, inmates and volunteers attended the ceremony and received certificates for their continued commitment and support of this program. A cake, pastries and refreshments were provided and enjoyed by all.

Congratulations to our canine graduates—Cassidy and Kona.



Left: Cassidy. Right: Kona.

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Nursing Students Tour Pine Grove

Indiana University of Pennsylvania senior nursing students toured SCI Pine Grove on October 3, 2017. The main focus was on the medical area with Health Care Administrator Assistant Bobbi Pavlick assisting. The group also toured several housing units, including the one that houses the dog training program, the Program Services Building and Medical. After the tour, the group looked at the weapons made by inmates that have been found since the opening of Pine Grove.



Lt. Martynuska and PIO Judy Smith escorted the group.

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October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month

- In the last 10 years, more than 1,600 people have died in domestic violence-related incidents in Pennsylvania.
- Those killed included women, children and men of all ages, race and socio-economic groups.
- In 2016 alone, there were 102 people killed: 56 women and 46 men.
- The youngest victim of a domestic violence-related incident in 2016 was 1 and the oldest was 86.

(All Information was gathered from the 2016 PCADV Fatality Report)

As diverse as the victims are -- from all corners of the Commonwealth and of all ages, races, incomes and educational levels -- their struggles often share eerie similarities. Many were attempting to end abusive relationships, seeking legal protections and hoping to obtain custody of their children, while trying to stay safe.

So many of the perpetrators' stories also share eerily similar elements - intimidation, obsession, possessiveness, revenge and refusal to accept the end of a relationship. Firearms are the predominant choice of weapon in domestic violence fatalities in Pennsylvania.

PCADV produces an annual domestic violence fatality report as a chilling reminder of the consequences of unchecked violence and the suffering and loss experienced by families, friends and communities.

For more information, please visit www.pcadv.org

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Around the Centers...

Berks Connect/Pretrial Services' R³ Training Kicks Off

October 2, 2017, was orientation and the first cognitive class for Rebuilding Reentrants and Reading (R³) training program's first 14 participants. R³ is funded through a Department of Labor Reentry Training grant recently received by Berks Connections/Pretrial Services (BCPS). The grant will fund a comprehensive training program in the construction trades for more than 150 reentrants over the next 24 months.



Participants will take part in classroom training at the Reading Muhlenberg Career & Technology Center, get hands-on experience with Habitat for Humanity and a local cabinet manufacturer, and attend a BCPS-run



evidenced-based cognitive group specific to workforce development.

For one year post-training, BCPS will provide transportation to participants, pay stipends for all training hours and provide case management and job placement assistance. BCPS recruited an Industry Advisory Council made of local businesses in the construction trades. The council will provide its expertise in training, and assist with employer outreach. The Berks County Workforce Development Board is assisting with these efforts.



Representatives from the training partners joined staff to provide some motivation and speak about their role in this exciting initiative.

The participants got to meet all the BCPS staff who they will be working with. Participants left feeling excited about the

opportunities ahead, and their supportive team.



Participants are selected from the pool of successful BCPS workforce development program participants for both state and county involved reentrants. This first cohort is comprised of all state-involved reentrants. Most are residents of the Wernersville Community Corrections Center.

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Reentrants Participate in Recovery Walk

On September 23, ADAPPT AOD reentrants were eager to participate in the Recovery Walk held by Council on Chemical Abuse and Easy Does It that was held in Reading, Pa.

The walk started at Reading Community College and ending at City Park of Reading. This was a great opportunity for everyone to witness how strong recovery efforts are in Berks County

The reentrants were able to meet individuals in the recovering community and share the experience of strength and hope. They were encouraged by others who had struggled with the disease of addiction and were able to make positive life changes to support building strong relationships.

Participating in this event gave reentrants the opportunity to see recovery in action.



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Renewal, Inc. ~ Success Stories

Jason D. was placed at a local business through Renewal Inc.'s GETPAID employment program. His criminal background involved a theft from a past employer which became a big barrier for him. He also had extensive drug use and little employment history. This six-month on-the-job training was a perfect match for the business, and Jason was able to be hired. After being released from Renewal, Inc., he continued working there and is now in a leadership position and has played a large role hiring others from Renewal.

Todd S. was placed at a bakery through Renewal Inc.'s GETPAID employment program. He had a long history of criminal activity and struggled to pay his restitution month to month which led him to violate parole. He started out in the assembly line and, through weekly job coaching and hard work, he worked his way up the ranks. He is currently in an upper management position and has helped employ several other reentrants through GETPAID/Renewal, Inc.

Donald M. was placed at a local business through GETPAID. Donald struggled with addiction and was in and out of treatment most of his life. Through the training program, Donald began to excel at this company. After six months, he was hired and remains an employee to do this day. He has stopped in time to time to update the workforce department as well as to thank everyone for their services. He was able to purchase his first car at 43 years of age and has his own apartment. He has a completely different outlook on life and has continued doing well.

Travis B. came into the workforce department looking for a job. He was 31 years old looking for an employer to give him a chance. Having a sex offense created a big barrier for him. In March, the workforce department was able to secure a roofing job for him at local construction company as a roofing laborer. Today, he continues to be employed as a roofer and is doing extremely well.

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In The News...

Sunbury Daily Item (10/05/2017)

http://www.dailyitem.com/news/local_news/prisoners-urged-to-take-responsibility-for-impact-of-their-actions/article_0613becb-e3c6-518b-a371-4b0c2d6a1909.html

Prisoners urged to be responsible for actions

By Francis Scarcella

SCI Coal Township Superintendent Thomas McGinley is continuing his efforts in his attempts to rehabilitate inmates on Wednesday the prison held the first "Day of Responsibility."

More than 80 inmates participated in the day, which included 10 speakers.

Please visit the URL to read the entire article

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette (09/26/17)

<http://www.post-gazette.com/local/city/2017/09/27/Pittsburgh-crime-rate-2016-violent-violence-FBI-statistics-national/stories/201709270169>

FBI data shows violent crime in Pittsburgh rose in 2016, echoing national trend

Pittsburgh saw more violent crime in 2016 than 2015 with increases in reported robberies, rapes and aggravated assaults, according to data released Monday by the FBI.

The city's overall violent crime increased by about 9 percent in 2016. Reported robberies increased by 17 percent, rapes by 22 percent and aggravated assaults by 3 percent, according to the FBI's data, which the agency collects from police departments across the country and releases annually.

Please visit the URL to read the entire article

ABA Journal (October 2017)

http://www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/prison_law_office_innovation_specter/P1

Attorney hopes to import the best practices of European prisons to the United States

By Rebecca Beyer

Attorney Donald Specter spent more than three decades working to protect the rights of incarcerated people before he finally saw a prison he believed in.

He was in Europe, having just won perhaps the biggest ruling of his career—a 2011 U.S. Supreme Court decision in *Brown v. Plata* that required California to reduce its inmate population by more than 40,000. But Specter, executive director of the Berkeley-based Prison Law Office, wasn't there to celebrate. He was a co-instructor on a study-abroad trip about correctional practices with University of Maryland students.

Please visit the URL to read the entire article

WFMZ (10/02/2017)

<http://www.wfmz.com/news/lehigh-valley/lehigh-students-use-math-to-help-state-prison-system/629641908>

Lehigh students use math to help state prison system

By Tom Rader

BETHLEHEM, Pa. - It all started with a phone call.

"There's someone calling from the prison," recalled Tamas Terlaky, Professor of Industrial & Systems Engineering at Lehigh University.

Terlaky is known in the world of optimization for solving problems and was sought out by the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections because it was having a problem of its own.

"We are having a problem with population management; assigning the inmates properly," Terlaky was told.

He took that problem to his students and made it into a real world exercise.

Please visit the URL to read the entire article

Harrisburg Patriot-News/PennLive (10/02/2017)

http://www.pennlive.com/news/2017/10/maps_manga_and_racy_magazines.html#incart_m-rpt-2

Maps, manga and Kim Kardashian: Banned books in Pennsylvania's prisons

By Wallace McElvey

TEXAS inmates are free to delve into Adolf Hitler's Mein Kampf but can't read The Color Purple.

Frederick Douglass is persona non grata for detainees at Guantánamo Bay.

Prior to a 2012 legal settlement, one South Carolina jail banned virtually every book

Prisoners live their lives under careful surveillance—for good reason—and their days are scheduled with military precision. That control extends even to their inner lives: what they can read and, in a sense, what thoughts they are allowed to think.

One would have a difficult time making out genitalia in the book but nudity, even covered in paint, led to a ban on a book of Joanne Gair's body painting artwork.

Until recently, Pennsylvania's list of banned materials included quite a few head-scratchers: a book of Pablo Picasso paintings, the State Employees'

Retirement Code and a tourism brochure promoting "scenic Route 6" barred for purported sexual content, not for security reasons.

Please visit the URL to read the entire article

Altoona Mirror (09/30)

<http://www.altoonamirror.com/news/local-news/2017/10/blair-approves-acting-warden/>

Blair approves acting warden

Marsh serves as director of psychology for state Department of Corrections

By Kay Stephens

HOLLIDAYSBURG — A state Department of Corrections employee is being assigned as acting warden at the Blair County Prison starting later this month.

Dr. Robert Marsh, the department's director of psychology and a former deputy superintendent at the state prison at Rockview, Centre County, is expected to work a few days with retiring Warden Michael Johnston, whose last day on the job is Oct. 25, then take over as the prison's acting warden.

"This is not the first time that a senior DOC official has stepped in to help a county jail," department spokeswoman Amy Worden said. "DOC has sent senior officials in to other counties to serve as temporary wardens when asked."

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