

Correctional Newsfront

The official newsletter of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole



2018 News ~ July to September

COT Earns Good Samaritan Award

Just days after completing his Basic First Aid and CPR Training course, Dante Martino put his training into action.

Martino was a Corrections Officer Trainee (COT) at SCI Waymart when he saved a life at Brownstone Café in Middletown. After hearing panicked cries for help and chaos from a large dining party across the café, Martino leapt into action.



Pictured from left: Associate Director for Basic Training Greg Young; Dante Martino; and Regional Deputy Secretary Trevor Wingard.

The man choked on his dinner and was unresponsive on the restaurant's floor. Martino cleared the crowd and used CPR and basic first aid—the same skills he had just learned—to use the Heimlich to save the man's life.

"If it wasn't for the training I received just one week prior at the Academy, I wouldn't have had the abilities or confidence needed to save the man's life," Martino said. "I am just happy he is alive and didn't succumb to the choking incident in the presence of all his family and loved ones."

At his COT graduation on Sept. 21, Martino was awarded the American Safety and Health Institute Good Samaritan Award for his heroic efforts.

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A Look at Retreat's Therapeutic Garden

The Therapeutic Garden at Retreat began with a vision within the Religious Services Department. CCPM Stacy Miller, along with the chaplains, came up with a plan to make this vision a reality.

The Retreat Therapeutic garden has one, singular purpose, which can be summed up in the following statement:



The Therapeutic Garden will serve as a platform for transformation as each inmate is connected to nature.

This purpose statement can be broken down into seven objectives. These objectives are designed to influence both the inmate population and the employees who staff the institution.

1. Promote positive community participation and moral accountability.
2. Produce therapeutic activities and events for the therapeutic and lifer communities.
3. Promote a peaceful community atmosphere, which will help make the prison a safer place to live and work.
4. Produce clean and healthy herbs and vegetables to be used within the prison
5. Promote vocational education in horticulture
6. Produce at least 16 paid positions for inmates
7. Promote positive relationships with outside community organizations through produce donations.

The garden started with a 100' by 30' plot of land in 2017, which produced nearly a thousand pounds of fresh vegetables. These vegetables were not only used in the ODR but were distributed to two different charities in our local communities: Ruth's Place and the West Side Food Pantry. Several public visitors were also invited to provide inmates educational opportunities related to horticulture and the value of organic foods.

In 2018, the garden was expanded. Three more plots were added, allowing us to produce summer, winter, and fall crops. So far this year Retreat has donated to the Hope Center and the West Fide Food Pantry.

The future is bright for the therapeutic garden. We hope to continue expansion to provide more job opportunities, more educational events, and to be a greater blessing both to outside charities and the incarcerated community. We further hope

to reach a point of self-sufficiency by utilizing the seeds of previous crops for the following season.

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Food Truck Visit Raises Money for COVER

SCI Forest welcomed Felt-N-Burgerz last month in a special fundraiser for C.O.V.E.R.

The event, organized by the C.O.V.E.R. committee, raised \$127 thanks to the participation of 225 staff members. The generous food truck employees participated too, donating their tips to the organization.



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Cambridge Springs Visits Job Fair

Staff members from SCI Cambridge Springs participated in the Penn State Behrend Career and Internship Fair on Sept. 19 to recruit corrections officers, registered nurses and psychology staff.

Left to right: Lt. Murray DeForce (Training Lt.); Nicole Wiercioch (HR Intern); and Ira Doubet (Human Resources Analyst).



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Pine Grove Staff Collect Items for County

Throughout August, staff members from SCI Pine Grove collected a variety of items to support a pair of local organizations.

Last week the collection of nonperishable foods, backpacks, games and more were donated to Indiana County Community Action Program and Indiana County Children and Youth Services.



Left to right: Chelsea Arn (ICCAP); Christina Smith (SCI Pine Grove); Leslie Bradley (SCI Pine Grove); Terri Wells (ICCYS); Kasey McGinnis (ICCYS); and Tammy Delosh (SCI Pine Grove).

ICCAP provides programs aimed at helping low-income families and

individuals attain self-sufficiency. Their programs provide new ways to solve household problems, manage emergencies, learn new living skills and foster community involvement. They also examine and promote methods by which organizations and institutions can deal with problems of rural and disadvantaged people.

Indiana County Children and Youth Services is a nonprofit agency that strives to ensure the protection of children from the damaging effects of abuse and neglect. It is sometimes necessary to provide safe placement for children, while the parents are addressing safety concerns. During the children's separation time, there are regular visits between the parents and the children. These visits, sometimes, occur in Indiana County CYS' visitation rooms, located at their office.

The games and backpacks donated by Pine Grove staff will be utilized at the visits.

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Prosecutor Impact Visits Chester Inmates

Former Boston Assistant District Attorney Adam Foss and 40 newly appointed prosecutors from the Philadelphia District Attorney's Office visited inmates at SCI Chester to talk about their time incarcerated.

Foss is with Prosecutor Impact, an organization that was started to provide prosecutors new to the job with the tools, data and training to make compassionate, fair and informed decisions. The organization aims to help prosecutors demonstrate a commitment to the safety of the public, the well-being of the victim and the betterment of the person charged with the crime.



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Coal Township Employee Presented with 25 Years of Service Certificate

Congratulations to UPO Len Huxta, who has completed 25 years of service in the DOC. Superintendent Tom McGinley presented Len with his certificate. Thank you for your service, Len!



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Lisa Cope Earns Victim Advocate Award

Since becoming a parole agent in 2002, Lisa Cope has been a center agent, a field agent and an Assessment, Sanctioning, and Community Resource Agent (ASCRA). At the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole Awards on Sept. 19, Lisa was honored for her excellence and dedication.

Lisa was awarded the Victim Advocate Award for Excellence in Victim Services at the event at the Governor's Residence. The award was created to recognize an employee who leads by example in providing exemplary services to victims of crime, goes above and beyond to assist victims, proactively enforces the protection of a victim, increases restitution collection efforts for victims or collaborates with the Office of the Victim Advocate on a regular basis to enhance victim participation in the parole process.

From her bio in the awards brochure: She possesses the exceedingly rare ability to perfectly and consistently balance victim safety with parolee accountability. She has established rapport with victims through her professionalism, her ability to suspend personal judgement, and empathy. She is a resource for her offenders due to her awareness of local treatment programs and service providers to address the needs of her offenders thereby helping to bolster the safety of the community in general and the victim(s) in specific. She is a mentor for less experienced agents by virtue of the fact that she leads by example and is never afraid to roll up her sleeves and get the work done. She has used information gleaned through meeting victims in wrap-around cases to improve the supervision of these offenders as well as enhance the safety of the agents supervising them. She has demonstrated grace under fire by handling cases that were high profile in nature, cases that had they not been handled as well, and could have resulted in additional victimization as well as negative publicity for the Board. Agent Cope is a shining example of what an ASCRA should be. Her masterful handling of victim wrap-around cases should be presented to all future ASCRAs as a model.



Parole Agent Lisa Cope, right, receives her award from Office of Victim Advocate Director Jennifer Storm.

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Muncy Hosts Career Fair

It was almost as if reentrants got to have a look at their futures as SCI Muncy held its Annual 2018 Career Fair Sept. 21.

More than 30 professionals came to SCI Muncy to share their work and life experiences as part of the annual Career Fair.

“We want reentrants to be both informed and confident as they leave Muncy and return to their communities,” said Reentry Services Coordinator Troy Edwards. “The Career Fair brings so many people from diverse professional backgrounds, so reentrants have the chance to explore their interests and needs during one exciting day. The better a reentrant knows what they need, the better support we can offer as they begin to approach the end of their time at Muncy.”

Hundreds of reentrants were in attendance to get some facetime with Muncy’s regional reentry administrator, career pathways program manager, parole manager, CareerLink, OVR, HOPE Enterprises, Berks County Reentry, employers, community stakeholders, transitional housing representatives, workforce

development professionals and many more. It’s a personal and direct way for reentrants to seek guidance as they continue their path to reentry and a new beginning.

Reentrants can often feel overwhelmed with the pressure of departure and the Career Fair is a great chance to ask questions and use the day to develop a comprehensive pathway to success. “I think Muncy’s Career Fair is absolutely wonderful because you gain a lot of



knowledge that you wouldn't otherwise acquire, learn things that you wouldn't otherwise have thought of, and most importantly make 'real' community connections in preparation of reentering society," said one reentry career fair participant. "It helps to create a successful reentry plan, get into the workplace, and provides strategies to remain successful. I learned a lot from this experience and from everyone that was present, thank you!"



"The career fair is a great time to talk to a lot of different providers," said another reentrant participant. "They help you realize there's a lot of different options out there. I think it is a wonderful effort by our Facility to connect reentrants with potential employers and give them that opportunity to get face-to-face connection with them, which I think often, is really important. It's a lot more difficult to make an impression over an online application or introduction than it is with someone face to face and this is our opportunity to do just that! I want to thank SCI-Muncy and reentry for providing us this opportunity!"

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Work Release Crew from Huntingdon Play Huge Part in Flood Relief

Huntingdon, like much of Pennsylvania, was hit hard with rain early in September that led to flooding.

When the rains stopped, it was up to the communities to clean up and rebuild, and work release inmates from SCI Huntingdon were among those who helped. Their efforts were praised in *The Huntingdon Daily News* as they played a key part in ensuring Huntingdon Area High School could play its varsity football game despite the damage done by the rains.



The following is a story printed in *The Huntingdon Daily Times* about the great work done by the DOC Community Work Program.

Many benefit from DOC work program

By KAYLA HANDY
Staff Writer

With extensive flood damage and general upkeep needs of local parks and fields, some townships and school districts are engaging in the State Correction Institution's Community Work Program. The program permits pre-determined inmates

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Photo by KAYLA HANDY

A work crew from SCI Huntingdon helped Smithfield Township employees clean up debris at Riverside Park this week. The inmates are easily identifiable by their bright red shirts.



Program

From Page A1

from SCI Huntingdon and SCI Smithfield to conduct general labor for requesting townships and municipalities, including park restoration, mowing, general upkeep and maintenance chores.

Although residents may pass a work crew alongside of the

road on a daily basis, many fail to realize the level of precaution, screening and monitoring SCI officials conduct before allowing certain inmates to help maintain property within the local community. SCI Huntingdon classification and program manager Jill Spyker explained each inmate who expresses interest in the program is screened and processed extensively.

"They are appropriately processed and screened for their eligibility to receive outside clearance," said Spyker. "The criteria for custody levels are outlined in confidential policy, however, there are five custody levels within the Department of Corrections. The highest custody level inmates are housed in restricted housing units. There are special designations within the lowest custody level to determine if they can be off institution grounds."

Spyker further explained that inmates must maintain positive institutional adjustment and meet and uphold their programming requirements. Prior incarceration history and length of their sentence is also taken into account

when determining an inmate's eligibility for the program.

"All inmates on these crews are expected to maintain a high level of accountability and responsibility while focusing on learning the skills required to reintegrate back into the community," continued Spyker. "They are expected to conduct themselves as good citizens."

Some outside work program inmates are cleared to only work on state property, while other outside clearance inmates can work for the community. Community sites can include PennDOT projects, state parks, community centers, churches and nonprofit organizations. For example, some community work program projects for SCI Huntingdon inmates include general labor for Smithfield Township, Greenwood State Park, Newton Hamilton Borough, Huntingdon Community Center, Wood Community Association and Bricktown Senior Citizens Center.

This week, SCI Huntingdon's work crew cleaned up debris and cut down stumps in Riverside Park, Smithfield Township. Last week, they helped prepare Hunt-

ingdon Area High School's War Vets Football Field.

When inmates are seen working, local residents are prohibited from interacting with them and staff. Although they are working to help the local community, the inmates are still incarcerated and under the supervision of the Department of Corrections (DOC).

SCI Huntingdon superintendent Kevin Kauffman said the community work program is essential to teach inmates a positive work ethic and allow them to give back to the local community.

"While the public should always remember these crews are inmates," he said, "they should also realize the services they are donating to the community while under supervision. The DOC crews are able to provide skilled services and alleviate the financial burdens on many of the organizations and agencies that benefit from these programs."

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Coal Township Staff Visit State Capitol

Six SCI Coal Township Unit Team members visited the State Capitol in Harrisburg on Sept. 21 to attend the Board of Pardons Public hearings.

After the hearings, staff members were introduced to Secretary of the Board of Pardons Steven Burk and other Board of Pardons members. Unit Team members stated that their experience was very interesting and they appreciated the opportunity.

Pictured: Eric Stracco, Rich Cory, Kate Sentelli, Jason Gatewood, Stacey Brecker and Kathy Biscoe



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Eastern Region Hosts Visitors from Tunisia, Japan

The PBPP Eastern Region has been involved in a variety of activities that allow it to share its initiatives and engage audiences that expand far beyond the Commonwealth.

A delegation of judges from Tunisia visited and met with Regional Director Louis Narvaez. The group met with various partners in the east, including Philadelphia County Corrections System and the



From left: Zouhaier Jaouadi, Justice Advisor, INL – U.S. Embassy Tunisia; Judge Kais Frioui; Judge Jamal Hammami; Executive Assistant Neal Kokatay; Grace Frank, Executive Assistant to Deputy Secretary Stephens; Judge Ali Rhayma; Deputy Commissioner Gerald May, Philadelphia County Correctional System; Regional Director Louis Narvaez; and Nizar Dridi, interpreter.

First Judicial District of Pennsylvania, they took a tour of the county corrections system.

The Eastern District was also visited by a delegation from Japan. This group was preparing for the 2020 United Nations Summit on crime prevention and criminal justice.

This group met with juvenile probation staff, juvenile justice service center partners, the adult probation department chief and staff, and Dr. Jean Wright of Philadelphia's Behavioral Health Care System.

After touring the facilities, there were presentations on the various initiatives and partnerships shared in servicing the populations and families.

Also new this month for the Eastern Region was a foray into radio. Deputy Secretary of Probation and Parole Field Services Christian Stephens participated in the Philly Cam Reentry Radio broadcast to share the PBPP's initiatives statewide in addition to addressing the statewide lockdown. RD Narvaez will be a guest on the broadcast once per month to highlight the various initiatives in place in the east.

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From left: Shinsuke Togashi, Chief of the Rehabilitation Bureau, Ministry of Justice; Naoko Higuchi, Secretary General Kinki Regional BBS Association; Regional Director Louis Narvaez; Katsutoshi Takahashi, Legislation and International General Affairs Division Rehabilitation Bureau, Ministry of Justice; Director Michelle Rivera; and Director Mike Willis.



From left: Deputy Secretary Christian Stephens; radio host Jeffrey Abramowitz, Esq; and Dr. Chris Kimmenz from Healing Communities.

Graduation Held at Somerset

Families and friends visited SCI Somerset for a special event: the graduation of their loved ones.

On Sept. 26, 73 inmates received diplomas and certificates in various areas including carpentry, masonry, HVAC, business education, plumbing and electrical, barber and interior finish. The guest speaker was Annemarie Swanlek, Western Division Chief of Bureau of Corrections Education. She was previously the school principal at SCI Somerset.

The speaker of the class was Jose Cucurrulo-Taveras, who was a barber graduate. He was accompanied by his CPL dog, Ella, who he is in the process of training.

Congratulations to everyone who earned their diploma and certifications!

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Week of September 17...

SCI Laurel Highlands Employees Volunteer at Flight 93 Memorial

Seven SCI Laurel Highlands employees had a very special opportunity to give back the week of Sept. 11 this year.

On Sept. 10, the employees were invited to volunteer at the Flight 93 memorial in a flag-folding ceremony—with one of the family members of a Flight 93 passenger.

Deborah Borza is the mother of Deora Bodley, who—at 20 years of age—was the youngest passenger aboard the flight that day. Debby is a frequent visitor to SCI's throughout Pennsylvania where she shares her story with Impact of Crime and Day of Responsibility groups.

During her last speaking engagement at SCI Laurel Highlands, she discussed many volunteer opportunities available at the Flight 93 Memorial. Among them is a ceremony where volunteers fly flags over the memorial which will ultimately be sold in the gift shop or online. As the demand of these flags is large, many flags need to be flown. The SCI Laurel Highlands C.O.V.E.R. and Empowerment Committees decided together that this would be something they would love to be a part of.

To date the staff has had nine members participate on two separate occasions. They hope to do this on a consistent basis and would love more staff to join them in this experience that is so worthwhile.

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SCI Laurel Highlands staff along with Deborah Borza (middle, blue jacket), whose daughter, Deora Bodley, was the youngest passenger on Flight 93 on Sept. 11, 2001.

Inmates Participate in Day of Responsibility

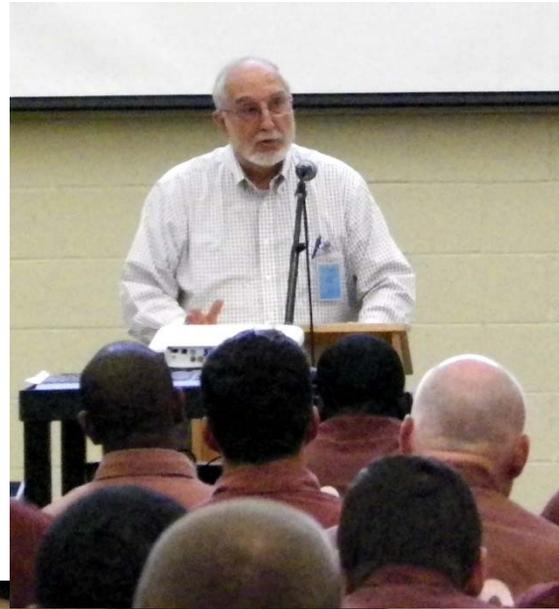
Hope for Change, the SCI Forest inmate organization, held its annual Day of Responsibility for more than 100 inmates in August.

Inmates were addressed by Potter County Senior Judge J. Leete, Victim Advocate Coordinator Heather Cattron, Treatment Specialist Rebecca Coull, PSS Dr. J. Crants and Chaplain Stacy Shaffer. Leete opened with a discussion on "What is Responsibility" followed by speakers addressing making amends.

Inmates later had a chance to sit with speakers in a small group setting to further discuss their topics and ask questions.

To close the day, inmates recited the pledge and signed the wall in the program services area where the pledge was painted by a former inmate.

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Phoenix Unit Manager Volunteers at Food Drive

Juanita Wilcox, unit manager at SCI Phoenix, is also a student at The Culinary Arts Institute of Montgomery County Community College. Last week, Wilcox volunteered along with the school staff and students to kick off the 4th Annual Valley Forge Freedom from Hunger Food Drive.



The volunteers prepared, cooked and served a 3-course hot meal to 150 guests at a local soup kitchen. The food drive was created in 2015 when Pope Francis stayed in Montgomery County at the St. Charles Borromeo Seminary. The Valley Forge Tourism and Convention Board started the food drive as the county's farewell "gift" to the Pontiff.

In its fourth year, the drive continues to support the community. The goal has increased each year, and to date more than 9,000 pounds of food to feed the hungry have been collected.

This year's goal is to collect 5,000 pounds of food during the drive from Sept. 16-30. For more information on how to donate, visit valleyforge.org/hunger.

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CISM Training Continues

Round two of DOC's Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) training was held from Sept. 11-13 in State College.

The team was trained in the CISM basic training course "Assisting Individuals in Crisis." CISM is the world's oldest and most widely-used approach in the law enforcement community to help individuals who were exposed to a traumatic incident cope with the incident using the peer to peer support model. The emphasis is on keeping staff safe, providing support and helping them cope with the traumatic incident.



During the three-day course, some of the objectives learned were to practice basic communication techniques, understand the nature and definition of critical incident stress management and recognize common crisis reactions. Our executives recognize the importance of providing crisis intervention services to staff following a traumatic incident to help them cope with the stress of the incident and help to reduce their stress and normalize the situation as much as possible, understanding that we need to take care of ourselves before we can provide care for others.

The third session is set for October. Those who took the September training will attend an additional class called "Group Crisis Interventions" next year.

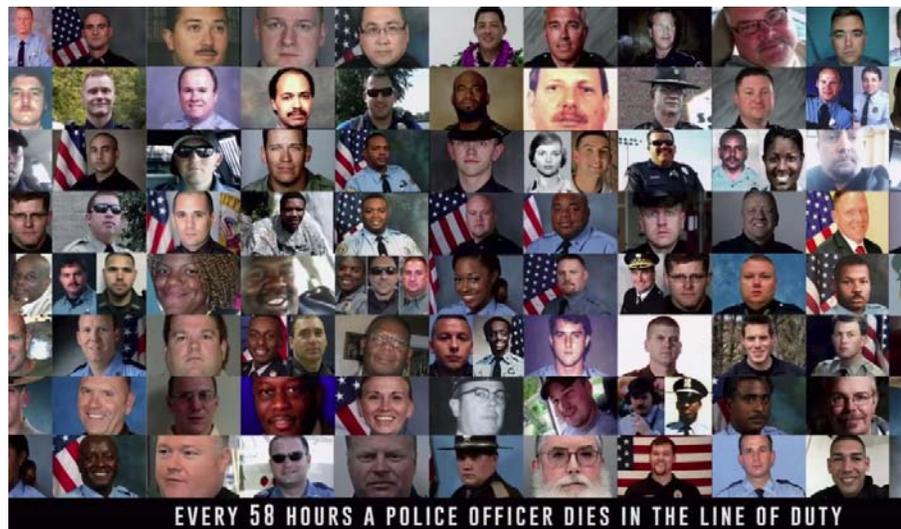
Employees who are interested in becoming CIRT/CISM member are encouraged to contact their agency coordinator, Kim McGriff (PBPP) or Sheila Hagemeyer (DOC).

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Fallen Corrections Officer Featured in New Music Video

Metal band Five Finger Death Punch is known for powerful music videos in support of veterans and American service members, but their most recent one was dedicated to men and women in law enforcement.

And the end featured fallen Pennsylvania Corrections Officer Sgt. Mark Baserman, who was killed in February at SCI Somerset.



The video is for the song "When the Seasons Change" and shows the story of two police officers involved in a firefight that goes wrong. The end of the video shows a collage of law enforcement personnel killed in the line of duty, and Baserman's photo is in the middle of the bottom row.

Baserman was killed by an inmate who beat him and repeatedly kicked him in the head.

The video can be seen at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WSwJZdxarC8>

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ASCRA, Sound Community Solutions Present at Chester District Meeting

Sound Community Solutions presented at the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole Chester District's recent quarterly meeting.

The organization offers a mentoring program for reentrants. It provides a host of training and services and participants are involved for a year, which includes phone calls, individual face-to-face meetings and group meetings.

The presentation was organized by Assessment Sanctioning Community Resource Agent Reggie Haines.



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FERT Training at Mahanoy a Success

In response to the recent drug incidents, SCI Mahanoy held a special FERT training to ensure preparedness.

The team went over proper procedures for putting on and off the personal protective equipment provided by DOC. Members also learned how to reduce the risk of cross contaminating each other or objects that they may come in contact with, such as keys, clipboards or pens.

FERT members were very receptive to training and all questions and concerns were addressed.



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*Dear Friends at
SCI Waymart,*

*Thank you so much for all the fresh produce
you have been sending to the Scranton
location of Keystone Mission. It has been a
blessing to be able to provide our guests
with fresh produce!!*

*Sue
Brenda Thomas HQ*

*Thanks & Blessings from the Staff at
Keystone Mission
Bill Kathy Tony Bryan C*

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## Albion Staff Recruit at Gannon University

Acting Maj. Patricia Thompson and Lt. Tim Anderson of SCI Albion presented at Gannon university in Erie, Pa., about careers with DOC.

For Anderson, it was a return to his alma mater as he informed the students about many of the opportunities DOC offers. Albion and Gannon already partner with the Inside Out program, where students and inmates attend a classroom-like setting at the prison. The program involves students in nursing, psychology and criminal justice taking classes at the facility along with inmates in a psychology-based course.

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## SECA Kicks Off with Fun at Mahanoy

To launch the start of the new SECA campaign, SCI Mahanoy celebrated with a picnic.

Staff also enjoyed a soft pretzel sale, candy bar sale, bake sale, 50/50 drawings and gift basket raffles with proceeds going toward SECA.

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## Retired Corrections Employee Completes Second “Thru-hike” of the Appalachian Trail

(This article is being shared with the permission of Gant Daily. McKenzie was an employee of the Quehanna Boot Camp.)

By Kimberly Finnigan, GantDaily.com

Since the Appalachian Trail opened in 1937, only about 15,000 people have been able to complete the 2,000-mile trek from Georgia to Maine. Of that number, only about 700 have completed the trek more than once. After four months and three weeks, Frenchville native Scott McKenzie can count himself as one of them.

After serving in the military, McKenzie began hiking as a way to combat Post-traumatic Stress Disorder. “Hiking is the best therapy,” McKenzie said. “It’s my way to walk off the war and deal with my PTSD.” He said had read numerous books on the Appalachian Trail, which had inspired him to take the walk himself.

McKenzie began his hike, which would take him through Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire and Maine on March 10 and completed his journey by reaching Mount Katahdin, the highest peak in Maine, on Aug. 3. McKenzie was able to finish his hike nearly a month faster than his first trek. He said he had to temporarily abandon his first attempt when he developed issues with his feet and stomach ulcers. He was able to recuperate and finished the final leg of his journey.

For his second attempt, McKenzie said he wanted to hike the entire trail straight through with no injuries.

He was mostly successful but took a bad fall while climbing Mount Moosilauke, one of the most dangerous parts of the trail. He said he had injured his elbow, but with the help of a “trail angel,” he was able to continue hiking. “I had fallen and a spot on my elbow had swelled up almost the size of a golf ball,” McKenzie said. “There was a trail angel set up in one of the parking lots and she was able to give me a bag of ice. It helped get the swelling down and I was able to keep going.” McKenzie said “trail angels” are people, usually hikers or local residents, who leave things like food or water, or who offer other types of assistance to hikers.



He said the only other major mishap he had was when his hiking shoes “blew out” and he had to hike in his sandals until he was able to get another pair.

While hiking between 15-22 miles per day, McKenzie would occasionally take “O-days,” or days where he did not walk any further, to allow his body to heal. McKenzie said he had to take a few “O-days” simply due to bad weather. “There was some really bad weather,” McKenzie said. “There were days where there was freezing rain or snow. There were days in the mountains where it was 15 degrees with a windchill of 0. It just seemed like the longest winter I can remember. I thought it would never end.”

McKenzie said he used many of the lessons from his first hike to better prepare for his second. “The first time, I started out with about 46 pounds of gear. This time I had about 26.5 pounds. I carry the basic gear, clothes, about five days of food and water, a tent and basic stuff,” he said. While there are shelters for hikers along the trail, McKenzie said it’s good to take a tent, because many of the shelters will become crowded and there may not always be room.

McKenzie said this time, he started hiking on the 8.8-mile “approach trail,” which is something he did not do for his first hike.

He said his favorite part of hiking is meeting new people. “I met a bunch of great hikers and we hope to stay friends for years to come,” he said. One of the more memorable parts of his hike was encountering the “naked hikers.”

“For about 105 miles, the Appalachian Trail is shared with the Long Trail,” McKenzie said. “I didn’t know this at the time, but you’re allowed to hike the Long Trail naked. We ran into these two older guys hiking buck naked, except for their hiking shoes. One of them would put clothes on when we all were eating dinner at the picnic tables, but the other one didn’t. I really learned to be very careful washing my hands after that. You don’t think about it a lot, but when you go to stand up from sitting at a picnic table, you put your hands on the bench to push yourself up. All I could think of is ‘how many naked people have sat on this bench that I just put my hands on.’” He said he only encountered the “naked hikers” one day. He said at that point, he was hiking about 22 miles per day and was getting more miles in than the “naked hikers.”



**Scott McKenzie of Frenchville poses in the snow during his second “thru-hike” of the Appalachian Trail. McKenzie braved all types of weather during his four months and three weeks on the trail.**



**Scott McKenzie uses an improvised ice pack to treat an elbow injury during his second thru-hike of the Appalachian Trail. McKenzie injured his elbow climbing one of the most dangerous sections of the trail. Fortunately, he was able to get an ice pack from a "trail angel" to reduce the swelling.**

McKenzie said this hike was 2,190.9 miles, while his first hike was 2,189.2 miles. He said this increased distance is due to the trail having to be rerouted due to storm damage and other issues. Having accomplished his goal of making the entire hike without injury, he has decided to focus on shorter hikes.

"My body is just breaking down," McKenzie said. "There were sections when I was climbing the mountains where my knees were just full of stabbing pains the whole time. I plan on doing sections of the trail, but not for months and months at a time."

McKenzie said he is getting ready to attempt the "A-100 Challenge." He said it's held on one of the more remote areas of the Allegheny Trail where hikers must carry all their own supplies, first-aid gear and food without any assistance. "I tried it in 2014 and I failed," McKenzie said. "I'm ready to defeat this course."

McKenzie said his advice for anyone thinking of hiking the trail is to be sure to save enough money and to use it wisely while on the trail. "Don't waste your money," he said. "I saw a lot of young people going into the towns and wasting their money on alcohol. They'd have a few drinks, then they'd want to be friendly and buy a round for other people. Next thing they know, they're out of money and they have to end their hike." He also recommends that any hikers take the time to research the trail thoroughly as well as to research the types of gear they will need.

McKenzie said he considers himself very fortunate to have been able to hike the trail twice. He said of the 15,000 people who have hiked the trail from beginning to end since it opened in 1937, only about 700 have been able to hike the trail straight through more than once.

"I'm very thankful to have the opportunity to do this. I'm thankful for my sister who kept my dogs while I was gone. I'm thankful for my brother and his wife, who made sure my bills were paid while I was away. I'm thankful for my neighbors for taking care of the house while I was gone. Mostly I'm thankful to God for giving me the ability to do this and for keeping my body from breaking down so I could keep going."

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Week of September 10...

## **Brother Boxers at SCI Greene**

Brothers Tommy and Dan Karpency are registered nurses at SCI Greene.

But outside the facility, they are known for something more: boxing.

The two brothers are professional boxers, with the elder, Tommy, having international experience—including a pair of world title bouts.

Tommy has been boxing since he was a kid, and professionally fighting since 2006. He only fights once or twice per year now, but his schedule can change if the right opportunity opens up.

His brother, Dan, most recently won his fight at the Meadows Casino by TKO in August. The nurse secured his victory 44 seconds into the second round with his fight against Roger Blankenship.

The duo work together on the mat and in the walls of Greene.

"I really enjoy working here, much more than a hospital setting," Tommy said. "I love working with Dan. We have a great relationship, and he's a huge help training me here at Greene and also in my boxing career."

Dan credits Tommy with being his inspiration and getting him into boxing. The brothers have a third brother, Jeremiah, who also boxes, and their sister, Rachel, is a promoter who puts on local shows for them.

"My father, Tom Sr., has been my coach not only in boxing but in life, and I can't thank him and my mother, Christy, enough for what they've helped me accomplish in boxing and life," Tommy said.

Tommy is also very grateful to his wife, Andrea, for her support and said his family has been a huge part of his success in boxing.

Most of their colleagues know about their other role as a boxer, and even some inmates know.

"I have been asked about it by some of them," Dan said.



**SCI Greene RN Dan Karpency celebrates after a victory in August at the Meadows Casino.**

He hopes to be the best he can and work hard and hope for the best. And in addition to his family, Dan is thankful for the support he gets from his friends at Greene.

"I'd like to thank all of my coworkers for the support they've shown me and coming to the fight [to watch me]," Dan said. "It's motivation for me knowing that they are also in my corner."

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## **SCI Coal Township Employee Presented with 20 Years of Service Certificate**

Congratulations to Major Renee Foulds for completing 20 years of service to the Department of Corrections!



**Major Renee Foulds  
with SCI Coal  
Township  
Superintendent  
Thomas McGinley**

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# Staff Comes Together at SCI Cambridge Springs

During the lockdown, DOC staff throughout the state have risen to the challenge. At SCI Cambridge Springs, several staff volunteered to work dietary, while others formed an assembly line to package food efficiently. Great work, team!



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## Record Sales for VIP Mums

Employees at SCI Waymart raised \$728 from mum, aster and kale orders for the Victims Intervention Program—a new record high.

Proceeds benefit the VIP providing counseling and support services for victims and survivors of domestic violence, sexual abuse and other serious crimes in Wayne County.

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## Pine Grove FERT Completes Training in Light of Drug Exposures

The Fire Emergency Response Team (FERT) at SCI Pine Grove took their drug exposure training even further with a table top exercise.

The exercise involved exposure to an unknown substance and medical treatment, and Safety Manager Robert Adams said it was in response to the recent drug issue. The training was for all safety managers and back-ups, and it was then presented to the teams.

“The training went well and a lot of information was put out and received,” Adams said.

The Pine Grove FERT tries to train once a month.

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## Women Transform, Transcend, and RISE at Graterford

SCI Graterford may no longer house inmates, but it is still an active facility. On Sept. 6, Graterford was home to the inaugural Women in Criminal Justice conference.

Despite the muggy heat, the event was a huge success as women from around the criminal justice system gathered to hear speakers and songs to motivate and inspire them to “Transform, Transcend, RISE”—which was the day’s theme.

Executive Deputy Secretary of Corrections Shirley Moore Smeal was the mistress of ceremonies on a day that saw speeches by reentrants, corrections officers, state police officers and so much more.

Enjoy these assorted pictures from the great day!



Television news anchor and media specialist Flora Posteraro was among the day’s speakers.

From left: Supervisor Chanelle Braswell; ASCRA Nailah Johnson; Supervisor Adina Williams-Jones; ASCRA Mea Williams; Deputy Latasha Fisher; and Deputy Lakeisha Cooper.





**Left: A reception was held the night before the conference in one of the cellblocks at SCI Graterford.**

**Above: Staff from SCI Chester provided food for the reception.**

**Below: Terri McDonald, Chief Probation Officer with the Los Angeles County Probation Department, speaks at the conference.**



## SCI Retreat Honors Employee of the Quarter

Lourene Robinson, clerk typist 2, was selected as SCI Retreat's Employee of the Quarter for the third quarter of 2018.

Nominated because of her hard work and dedication to the human resources department during a time of staff changes, Robinson played an integral role in the team's ongoing transition.

"Your outgoing and positive attitude, as well as your willingness to help others at any time, has not gone unnoticed," wrote Superintendent Vincent Mooney in Robinson's selection letter.

Congrats, Lourene!

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**SCI Retreat Employee of the Quarter Lourene Robinson receives her certificate from Superintendent Vincent Mooney.**

## Sweet Day at Camp Hill

SCI Camp Hill enjoyed a very sweet day with "Donut Day"—and it was all to help prevent suicide.

Staff at Camp Hill bought 780 donuts and raised more than \$350 to donate to Prevent Suicide PA, an organization which strives to support those affected by suicide and work with the community to prevent it. It also tries to reduce the stigma associated with suicide. September is National Suicide Prevention Awareness Month.

Staff from multiple departments volunteered to sell donuts, which were from Maple Donuts based in York, Pa.

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## Greene Wins Annual DOC Softball Championship Again

Staff from SCI Greene prevailed in the PA DOC Annual Softball Invitational Championship in Williamsport for the fourth straight year.

The tournament was between 14 teams from around the state. Greene played four games to secure another championship, winning the final against SCI Smithfield by a score of 18-16.

The team included: David Angelo; Sully Angelo; A.J. Ardabell; Mickey Ardabell; Sam Ardabell; Craig Haywood; Chris Hechavarria; Wesley Hughes; Jacob Lewis; Jeremy Lewis; Ron Lewis; Phil Peters; Robert Plavi; Terry Riddle; Ernest Walters; and Jason Walters.

All-Tournament players included: David Angelo; Mickey Ardabell; Chris Hechavarria; Wes Hughes; and Terry Riddle.

A.J. Ardabell was named tournament MVP.

Congratulations to Greene and great work to everyone who played!



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## Career Day at SCI Chester

With more than 20 participating partners in reentry, SCI Chester put on a very successful Career Day on Sept. 12.

More than 400 inmates attended the event, held by the SCI Chester Education Department in the Transitional Housing Unit. Companies included Aramark, Sheet Metal Labor Union Local 19, Career Link and Berks County Reentry were among the employers at the event.



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## Health and Wellness Symposium Held in Somerset

SCI Somerset's Empowerment Team, along with C.O.V.E.R., hosted a Health and Wellness Symposium for staff in the chapel.

The event featured several speakers and three breakout sessions. Topics included nutrition, stress management, yoga, sleep, exercise and PTSD.

Staff learned much about ways to help improve their health, and they also enjoyed snacks, door prizes and raffles.



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## **Rockview Deacon Named Chaplain of the Year**

Deacon means "servant," and that's a title one chaplain takes very seriously.

SCI Rockview's Deacon Tom Boldin has been serving as the Facility Chaplaincy Program Director since January 2007, and his work focuses on building relationships and achieving harmony for all. This month Boldin's work was recognized as he was honored with the Pennsylvania Prison Chaplains Association State Chaplain of the Year Award.

Originally Boldin came to Rockview as the Farm Manager in 1991. In 2004 he became a chaplain before accepting his current role in 2007.

Boldin treats all faith groups fairly and meets with members of each group to resolve conflicts, and he never turns away a request to see a chaplain no matter what the situation.

Even outside of Rockview Boldin takes time to serve others. Boldin serves his local church and is on the Centre County's Community Youth Aid Panel for Balanced and Restorative Justice since 2004. He also serves on the Centre County Conservation Board.

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Week of September 3...

## **Governor Wolf Meets with Corrections Officers to Discuss Safety Concerns, Announce New Protocols**

On Sept. 5, Governor Tom Wolf met privately with Department of Corrections staff at the State Correctional Institution Greene to discuss safety concerns amid the recent spate of staff exposure to unknown substances in several of the state's correctional facilities.

Immediately following the meeting, Gov. Tom Wolf and Corrections Secretary John Wetzel announced new protocols being put in place to protect staff, visitors and inmates at Pennsylvania's 25 state correctional facilities. All facilities have been on lockdown since August. 29.

"Pennsylvania's corrections officers put themselves in harm's way to make our commonwealth safer, and it is up to us to provide them protection from harm," Gov. Wolf said. "I met with several of the corrections officers here at SCI Greene today and I want to assure them that their concerns are valid and were heard."





“It is our responsibility to keep all commonwealth employees safe while at work so that they return home each day to their families.”

Corrections Secretary John Wetzel detailed the new protocols, which are already being phased in and which Wetzel said he hopes will be completed within the next 90 to 100 days.

The changes involve a plan that Sec. Wetzel explained at today’s press conference:

### **Mail**

- All mail currently in correctional facilities will be returned to the sender.
- All mail will be sent to a separate address where it will be scanned and processed six days per week. After scanned and processed, mail will be delivered to inmates.
- Legal mail will be opened and copied by corrections staff wearing protective clothing in the presence of inmates. The copying process will be videotaped and videos will be preserved and burned weekly to a disc. Original documents will be placed in a secure bag and maintained for 15 business days.

### **Drone Detection**

- Multiple Pennsylvania Department of Corrections facilities are currently utilizing drone detection; those without drone detection will be receiving the technology.
- Procedures will reflect specific protocols for when a drone is detected, especially procedures for when a drone is present when inmates are at yard.

### **Body Scanners**

- Body scanners will be purchased centrally and distributed to all correctional facilities as soon as possible.

### **Ion Scanners**

- Each facility will receive two scanners: One for visitors and one for staff.

## Visiting Rooms

- Staff will be doubled in all visit rooms effectively immediately.
- There will be a 90-day moratorium on photos and on vending while the department develops more strict criteria for protocols on consequences of the introduction and possession of drugs by visitor and/or inmates.

## Books

- The department is beginning the transition to e-books coupled with a bolstered department library system featuring centralized purchasing and an ordering process.
- The same protocol applies to magazines.
- A resource account will be created where friends and family can make requests to purchase books to be delivered to inmates. All purchases will be made by the DOC.

## Drug Information Hotline: 717-728-4743

- The hotline is for callers to provide any information related to the introduction of drugs or possession of drugs in a state correctional institution by inmates, visitors or staff members.
- Callers may remain anonymous but if any wish to speak to an investigator, may leave a name and inmate number.
- Family members, staff and members of the general community are also encouraged to use this PA DOC Drug hotline.

"We are focusing on doing the next right thing for our staff, the inmates, the system and the commonwealth," Sec. Wetzel said. "With the announcement of these plans to eradicate drugs in the corrections system, we are demonstrating our all-hands-on-deck approach to safety in our prisons."

"I have confidence that the Department of Corrections, working with state agency partners and law enforcement will determine the cause or causes of the recent sickening of staff and will put in place the necessary protections and procedures to ensure staff safety," Gov. Wolf said.

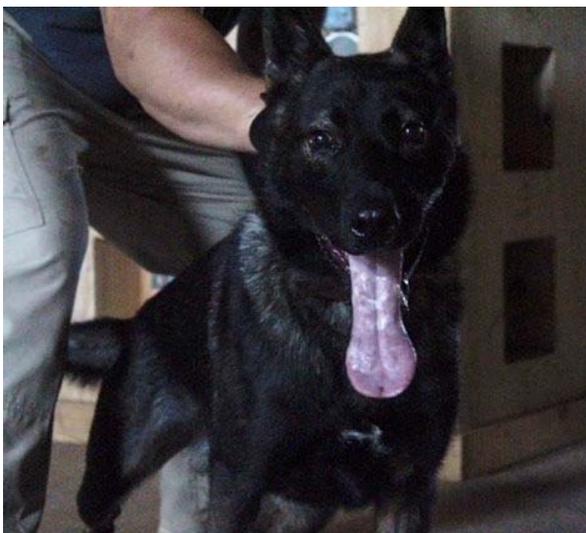
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## New Recruits Begin Training at Rockview

The Drug Interdiction Unit at SCI Rockview welcomed some furry new recruits in August.

Three dogs—Brano, Johnny and Alex— started their 8- to 10-week training at the K9 Academy to become drug-sniffing agents in K9 units throughout the state. Two vets, Miki and Kira, took the training again to familiarize themselves with their new handlers. The pups, who are between 11 and 14 months old and include German shepherds, Belgian malinois and a Labrador, come in fresh with no drug training, so their new handlers start from scratch.

The first week or two is orientation with scent and the odor of drugs. Sgt. Thomas Hocking explained the dogs will play with various toys with the odor of drugs inside, thus associating the scent with a toy to find. As training goes on, the toys are more difficult to find. Once the pups pass, they go home with their handlers and work whatever region they are in for the county, federal or state governments, or whoever needs them. (Photos by: Sgt. Joyce Rose)



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## PBPP Helps with Bar Compliance Tour in Norristown

A joint team of law enforcement agencies worked together on a bar compliance tour in Philadelphia one late August night.

Chester District and Philadelphia District of the PBPP worked with Norristown Police, Pa. Liquor Control and Enforcement, Norristown Codes, Norristown Fire Marshall and Montgomery County Probation. The team began around 2,100 on a weekend to pop in on local bars. A strong correlation between local bars and crime has been discovered, so these agencies work together to inspect local bars.

The goals of this team are:



- Support our efforts to reduce crime and increase quality of life.
- Develop positive relationships with our business owners and their patrons.
- Remove the sense of anonymity that tends to be persuasive when regulatory and enforcement agencies avoid working after hours.
- Ensure that state parolees are complying with conditions of parole.
- Ensure that these establishments are operating within compliance of state and local statutes.

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## Pair of CO's Selected to Train Overseas

Two lieutenants from SCI Coal Township will take their talents abroad this October.

Lt. Ricardo Contreras and Lt. Chris Brownawell will travel to El Salvador and Niger, respectfully, to provide corrections-specific training for local officials.

In El Salvador, Contreras will assist local staff to develop consistent policies to guide their staff in executing High Risk Prisoner Transportation functions. Pennsylvania's DOC was selected due to its expertise in this area.

Brownawell will teach 20 Niger prison officers what contraband is and how to deal with it, how to conduct searches and some basic rules on discipline for infractions.

Both lieutenants are also on special teams, with Contreras being the Hostage Negotiations Team leader and Brownawell being the Corrections Emergency Response Team leader.

All staff at Coal Township, along with Secretary John Wetzel and the executive team, congratulate both men on this honor and wish them luck and safe travels.

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From left: Lt. Chris Brownawell with Sec. John Wetzel



Lt. Ricardo Contreras, who will be heading to El Salvador to train local staff.

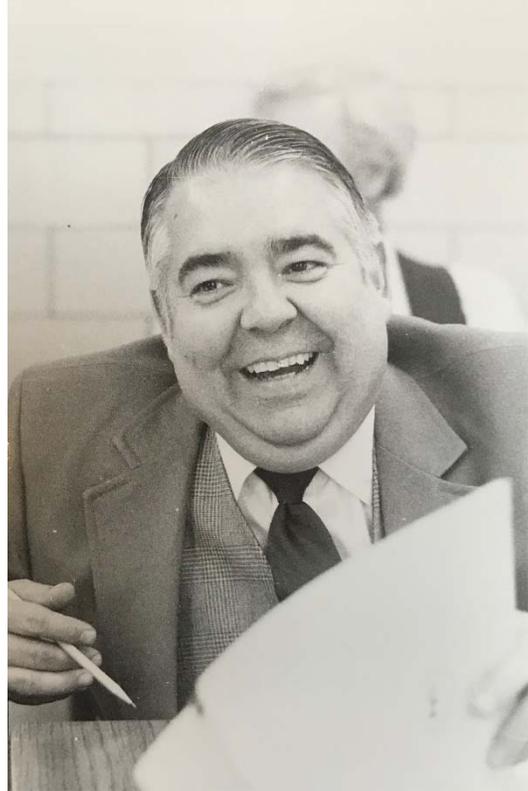
## **DOC Says Goodbye to Glen Jeffes**

Glen R. Jeffes, the very first leader of this agency after it was elevated to a cabinet level agency, passed away Aug. 24 and was honored with services in Northumberland.

Raised in Flint, Michigan, Jeffes served in the U.S. Army from 1957-1959. He served in corrections in Atlanta, Iowa, Idaho and finally Pennsylvania in 1972 where he began the Deputy Superintendent for Treatment at SCI Rockview. He went on to be superintendent of SCI Dallas and SCI Graterford before he was appointed by Governor Dick Thornburgh as the Commissioner of Corrections for the Commonwealth, a cabinet-level position that would become Secretary of Corrections.

We honor and thank Glen for his service and dedication to the DOC.

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## **Fayette Celebrates 15 Years**

Despite the lockdown, it was a week of celebration at SCI Fayette as the staff honored the institution's 15-year anniversary.

Food was the recurring theme as Monday featured donuts, Tuesday a picnic in the visiting room (with SCI Fayette retirees), Wednesday saw ice cream in the ODR, Thursday popcorn and nachos in the ODR and finally a big picnic with kielbasa, sausages, baked potatoes, sauerkraut and rolls.



Despite the institutional lockdown, staff pulled together to make the celebration a success and to honor the 15 years of the institution being in operation.

Sponsors for the week include C.O.V.E.R., Cultural Change, Employees Association, Empowerment and Mentoring Committees.

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## Quehanna Boot Camp Prepares More for Successful Reentry Efforts

Another group of inmates are set to be released to a CCC.

On Aug. 21 the inmates met with Regional Reentry Administrator Janeen Christ, Western Region Parole Manager Larry Powell and Region 3 Evaluation Supervisor Julian Rubeo to prepare for the transition. Rubeo discussed the various BCC contracted reentry services available to reentrants, including day reporting services, housing assistance program, family reunification and much more.

Rubeo also brought virtual reality goggles so inmates could see what it's like in the center to which they will be assigned.

Quehanna also got to see some successes from past efforts when Reentry Specialist Michelle Durn visited the Johnstown Community Corrections Center for a tour. While in town, Dunn met with Jackie Kulback from Gautier Steel, a mill that offers employment to successful Boot Camp graduates. While on tour, Dunn saw Rakim Johnson, a recent graduate of the Camp hard at work and doing very well on his path to success.

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## 66 Graduate at Albion

SCI Albion celebrated a special night on Aug. 22 as 66 inmates graduated with a host of diplomas.

Inmates earned their GED diplomas and Commonwealth Secondary diplomas, and some graduated from the Business Education, Custodial Maintenance & Trades and the Warehouse Operations programs.

Held in the visiting room, students could share this important milestone

with their family and friends.

The Keynote speaker was Stephen Durant, the EUMA Veterans Affairs Manager and Supervisor at Liberty House.

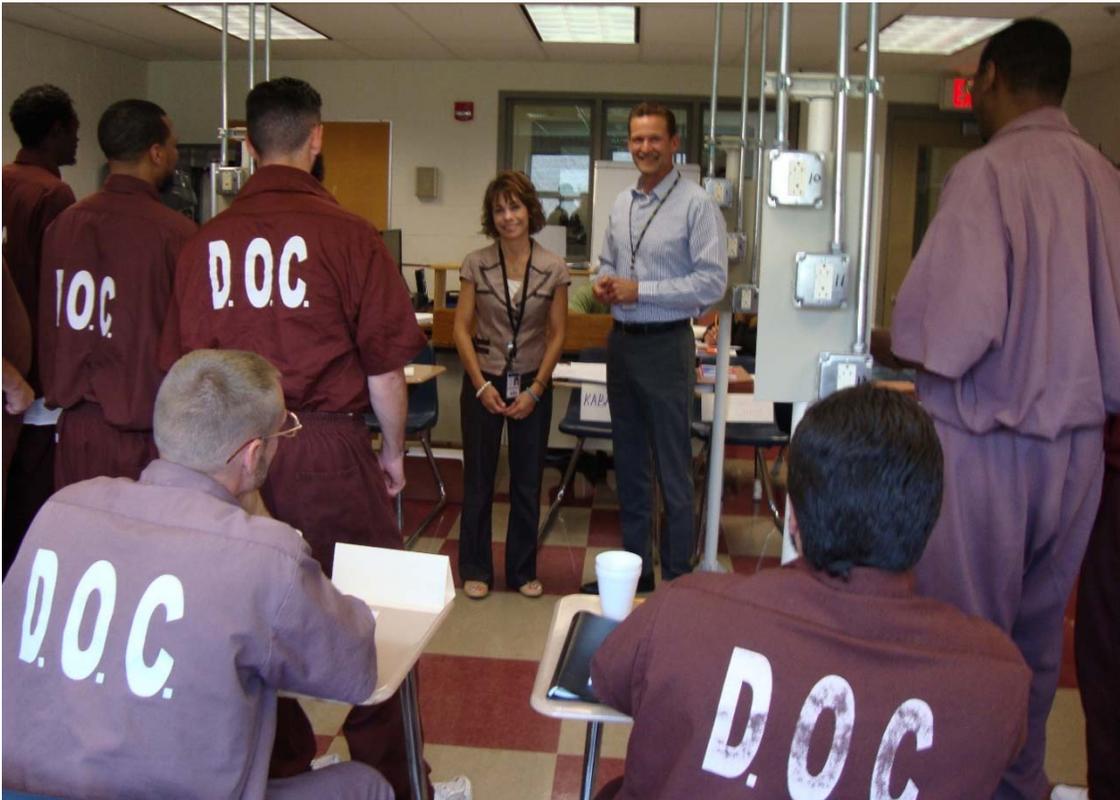
Congratulations to all who earned their diplomas and certifications!

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## Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) Training Held at Fayette

Participants from SCI Fayette, Greene, Laurel Highlands and Chester took a five-day training on Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP). The training was held by Mental Health Advocate Lynn Patrone and Reentry Coordinator Troy Edwards. Inmates that completed the training will become Certified WRAP Facilitators and can conduct training with the inmate population.



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## Staff at Muncy Fill the Bus for Local Girls

For two weeks in August, SCI Muncy staff participated in a Fill the Bus campaign to collect back-to-school items for teenage girls in placement at a nearby residential program, Clear Vision.

Pens, pencils, notebooks, books, backpacks and duffle bags were placed inside a bus built out of boxes by an inmate from the House of Hope Trauma Treatment Program.



Pictured from left: CCPM Baez-Sprague; Clear Vision Executive Director S. Alberti; DSCS McKee; Superintendent Nicholas; CCS Deibler-Gorman; Activities Specialist Lowe; and Major Rowe.

The Muncy Inmate Organization also helped. Led by Activities Specialist Lowe, MIO donated \$863.60 to purchase backpacks for girls at Clear Vision.

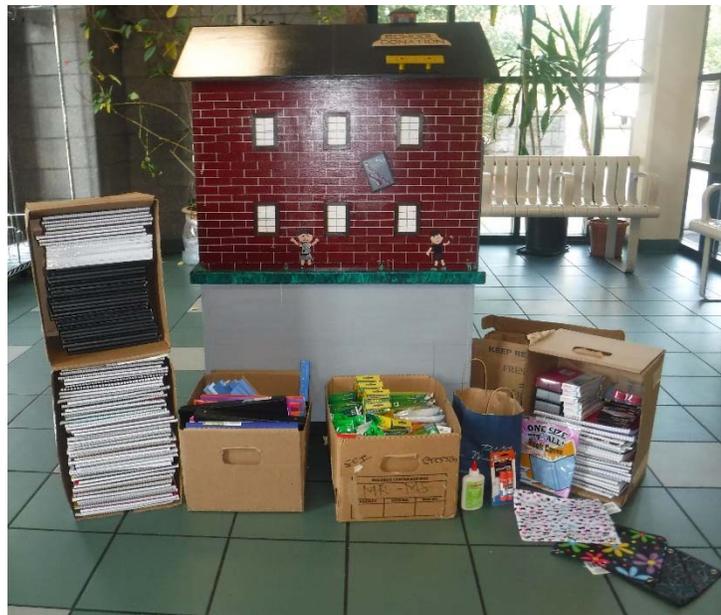
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## Chester Staff Support Local Charter School

Throughout August, staff at SCI Chester donated back-to-school supplies to support the Chester Community Charter School.

In the end, they collected 10 boxes full of items! The large donation included more than 100 spiral notebooks, dozens of boxes of crayons, pencils, markers, protractors, glue sticks, colored pencils, rulers and binders.

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## Phoenix Holds Inaugural Family Fun Day

Family, friends and children of inmates at SCI Phoenix experienced a fun day at the facility with the first ever Family Fun Days on Aug. 25 and 26.

Inmates and their families enjoyed a variety of activities in visiting rooms East and West. Families played games, painted t-shirts and enjoyed arts and crafts.



Food included popcorn, soft pretzels, cotton candy and hot dogs.

To top it all off, children received an age-appropriate toy and educational book.

The event was a big success and families are already looking forward to next year.



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## New Scanners Debut at SCI Coal Township

DOC Secretary John Wetzel and Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal visited SCI Coal Township to check out a new, state-of-the-art body scanner. Currently plans are to place one in every state prison to strengthen efforts to keep drugs and contraband out of the facilities and keep staff safe.



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## C.O.V.E.R. Visits Kennywood

Volunteers from SCI Fayette's C.O.V.E.R. program participated in the annual First Responders Appreciation Day at Kennywood Park in West Mifflin, Pa. The day is for all police, fire, EMS, military and corrections personnel and their families, with free admission to the park.

Multiple agencies provided demonstrations throughout the park, and the C.O.V.E.R. program hosted a booth. Pictured is Unit Manager Seth Erickson.

C.O.V.E.R. stands for Corrections Outreach for Veteran and Employee Restoration, a program aimed at helping the mental wellbeing of current and former corrections employees.



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## DOC Counselor Runs Memorial 5K for Late Friend, CO

Nicholas Wilson, acting counselor at SCI Mahanoy, ran a 5K in August in honor of a beloved friend and fellow corrections worker.

The Kris Moules 5K and Walk for Heroes in Kingston is held in honor of Kris Moules, a DOC employee who died in an elevator accident at the Luzerne County Correctional Facility two years ago. Moules and Wilson were childhood best friends who went on to play college baseball together at Lackawanna College.

The money raised from the race will go to a scholarship fund for local high school students in Moules' name.

Wilson finished 15th overall in this special event for him.

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**From left: Nick Defebo, federal corrections officer from Canaan, and Nicholas Wilson, acting counselor at SCI Mahanoy**

## **PBPP Deputy Secretary Holds Skype Training**

The first official mobile unit with parole has been utilizing Skype to hold unit meetings and conferences with reentrants.

Now in an effort to get everyone in the field used to using Skype for meetings with reentrants, PBPP Deputy Secretary Christian Stephens met with district directors and regional directors to walk through how to use the program.



The goal of the training was for the directors to familiarize themselves with the tool so they could do the same for their districts and expand its use. Skype allows for conferencing and meetings remotely, which cuts down on travel and saves time.

“Everyone is learning together and as a team we will work together to learn better ways to more efficiently do our jobs,” Stephens said.

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## **Lifeline Crosses \$5,000 Mark in Donations**

SCI Coal Township’s Lifeline Program made its first sale in April 2017.

In August, Lifeline’s total donations crossed \$5,000 to local charities, including \$1,000 to Mt. Carmel Food Pantry, \$500 to Marley’s Mission and \$3,800 to Kuapas Summer Camp.

SCI Coal Township’s inmate organization, Triumph, also conducted fundraising sales and donated to the organizations as well.

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## **PBPP Partners with Chester Police**

A team from the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole met with the Chester Police Department to discuss and develop a partnership between the two. The goal is simply to better serve the Chester community.

This meeting was part of an ongoing practice in the Eastern Region of enhancing and initiating partnerships with local law enforcement in addition to various community organizations. District

Deputy Director Michael Micciche of West District Office in Philadelphia introduced an endeavor with the Philadelphia Police Department that involves various local, state and federal law enforcement partners. Micciche has received the full support of District Director Mike Willis in the roll out of this initiative.

These collaborations and strategies with law enforcement are crucial in developing and forging relationships in the communities the offices service.

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## **New PBPP Deputy District Director in Harrisburg**

Parole Supervisor Kirk Loos has been promoted to Deputy District Director within the Harrisburg District.

In his 10-year career with the PBPP, Loos has involved himself and gained experience in many diverse aspects of the Agency and offender supervision. He is currently the parole supervisor of the Harrisburg District Office (DO), Unit 5, where he oversees the District's FAST Unit, Dauphin County Reentry Program, Mental Health Unit and Juvenile Lifers.

Loos began his career with the PBPP as a parole agent within the York Sub-Office working as a York County reentry program agent and later transferring to the Harrisburg DO, where he worked as a CCC/CF agent at Keystone Correctional



**Commissioner Otis Blair; Eastern Regional Director Louis Narvaez; Chester District Director Michelle Rivera; and Deputy District Director Freddie Joe.**

Services, Inc., supervised a sex offender caseload and a special probation caseload. This year, he led his unit to receiving an outstanding unit audit, reflecting less than 10% deficiencies. He is involved in the PBPP's recent initiatives regarding the consolidation process, ONBASE, CAPTOR, serves as an EPICS coach and is a member of the PBPP/DOC Consolidation Special Teams Committee with a strong interest in staff safety.

In addition, Loos is a certified CPR/AED/First Aid instructor, and previously served as a risk reduction trainer for the PBPP.

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## Coal Township Employee Celebrates 2 Decades

Congratulations to SCI Coal Township CO 1 R. McDonald for working for DOC for 20 years.

Pictured is Superintendent Thomas McGinley with McDonald and his 20-year service certificate.

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## In The News...

### Workers with Criminal Records

The number of Americans with a criminal history is on the rise, and nearly one-third of the adult working-age population has a record. A new nationwide study commissioned by the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) and the Charles Koch Institute (CKI) finds that, while these Americans do face additional scrutiny during the hiring process, many employees, managers, and Human Resources (HR) professionals, are open to working with and hiring people with criminal histories. [Read More](#)

### Is Hiring Ex-Offenders a Good Idea?

Employers grappling with the dearth of job applicants all too often ignore entire segments of our population as pools of potential applicants. Among them are people convicted of crimes who are returning to society following stints in prison. However, there is evidence they can provide real value to employers and be accepted by the other employees they work with. [Read More](#)

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## **Wolf Administration takes steps to improve safety, security in state prisons**

The Department of Corrections is taking aggressive measures to address new threats to staff and inmate safety within the state prison system.

"The safety and security of staff and inmates is paramount to the Department of Corrections," said Corrections Secretary John Wetzel. "Whether the threat is drugs or staff assaults, the agency is working vigorously to combat these threats on many fronts."

The DOC is redoubling its efforts to address the evolving threats, particularly those involving illicit, harmful substances and the violence that can be connected to their illegal trade.

The DOC has developed [a multi-point plan](#) to respond to these new threats to safety and security within the facilities:

- Implementing new training in the use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for the majority of institutional staff - including all corrections officers, maintenance, and food service staff who handle inmate clothing or property – to ensure the use of protective gear when conducting searches and processing inmate mail or other items.
- Training in-house Fire Emergency Response Teams (FERT) in hazardous material response.
- Increasing the inventory of protective gear, including purchasing special gloves and respirators to ensure that staff have greater protection when handling potentially hazardous material.
- Purchasing safety disposal equipment for unknown substances, including an appropriate container and bags that can be sealed for use in the mailrooms to safely secure and dispose of questionable items.
- Expanding the use of body scanners at state prisons and community corrections centers. The DOC has installed body scanners at SCI Coal Township and soon SCI Huntingdon on a pilot basis. The Community Corrections Center at Wernersville purchased a body scanner after experiencing promising results. The agency plans to install body scanners at all institutions to be used following inmate visitation to ensure contraband does not enter the institutions.
- Reviewing procedures for inmate mail processing to identify better means to safely and efficiently detect and divert contraband before it is delivered to the inmate population. Attempts to introduce narcotics through the mail have increased significantly in recent years. Illicit substances are often secreted under stamps, in pictures or saturated into the paper itself, making detection of drugs a time-consuming and difficult undertaking.

- Purchasing K9 Narcan auto injectors to be available for use on drug-sniffing K9s.
- Expanding the K9 unit by three teams dedicated to searching community corrections facilities.

The Department of Corrections is not immune to the drug epidemic that has affected record numbers of individuals on the outside, one that has been made more complex and more dangerous to those simply exposed to the drugs by the introduction of various synthetic compounds.

Since the beginning of August, 18 staff members at three institutions in western Pennsylvania were sickened by exposure to an unknown substance. The Pennsylvania State Police is currently conducting testing on samples of the substances to determine their identity.

As new toxic substances are introduced that are more difficult to identify, the DOC is working to eliminate the avenues for contraband to enter the system. The DOC believes there is a link between increased drug trade in prisons and the uptick in violence, both inmate-on-inmate and inmate-on-staff assaults.

The staff assault rate has inched up by 4 percent in the first half of 2018, but the overall downward trend in the staff assault rate continues, remaining lower today than it was 25 years ago.

DOC is confident that introducing new training and safety measures to limit the introduction of contraband will reduce potential exposure and further drive down the number of assaults.

“Prison staff, especially corrections officers, risk their lives on a daily basis,” said Tabb Bickell, the DOC’s executive deputy secretary for institution security. “We are moving quickly and deliberately to make sure they have all the available tools and training to ensure their safety.”

Earlier this year, following the fatal assault on Sgt. Mark Baserman, the DOC instituted new staff training protocols in violence prevention and response, instituted weekly intelligence briefings, added dedicated intelligence lieutenants at each facility, and contracted with an information technology firm to enhance risk assessment especially in predicting violence.

The Department of Corrections continues to explore avenues to increase the safety and security of its staff, inmate population, and the public.

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## **Facilities across the state collect suitcases for kids**

Staff from SCI’s and CCC’s throughout Pennsylvania collected suitcases, backpacks and duffle bags for children this summer. Check out some of the great gear that was donated!

- SCI Greene collected 102 bags for the Greene County Children and Youth Agency.



- SCI Dallas donated more than 100 bags to Luzerne County Children and Youth Services for children in foster care. Pictured are Tia Rodriguez, LCSW, Mary Ritsick, RPA, and Corrections Counselor 2 T. Zoltewicz and Corrections Officer 1 A. Larios.



- Pittsburgh Community Corrections Center raised more than 50 bags for children in the foster system in Allegheny and Westmoreland counties.



- The Chester District Office of the PBPP collected backpacks to donate to local students.



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## **DOC presents national webinar on mental health**

The DOC's mental health advocate Lynn Patrone led a webinar on Aug. 16 attended by 220 mental health professionals from around the world to discuss the work DOC is doing to address mental health issues in prisons. Patrone's talk focused on the introduction of Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP) developed by the Vermont-based Copeland Center.



WRAP is an evidenced-based tool that helps individuals address distressing feelings through a personally-developed response. WRAP is being used both for inmates as a way to address mental illness and reduce violence and for staff as part of the staff wellness campaign.

Patrone was joined in the webinar by Lt. Rachel Shoeman and Troy Edwards, both advanced WRAP facilitators at SCI Muncy, who shared their experiences both personal and professional.

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## **Phoenix to begin receiving PVs and new commits again following move**

With the recent move to SCI Phoenix complete, the facility will again accept new court commitments, parole violators, D roster releases, temporary transfers for court and medical trips. Some operations were on hold until the move was complete, but things will go back to normal Aug. 27.

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## **Guardian Angels Medical Service Dogs visit Mercer veterans unit**

On July 25, 2018, Senator Michele Brooks (R-50) introduced SCI Mercer administrative staff to Carol Borden, founder and chief executive officer of Guardian Angels Medical Service Dogs, Inc. (GAMSD), headquartered in Williston, Florida. With Ms. Borden was Robert Wagner. DOC staff in attendance were Superintendent Melinda Adams, Deputy Superintendent for Facility Management William Woods, Deputy Superintendent Shane Dady, CCPM Lisa Graves, Unit Manager Marcia Combine, Superintendent's Assistant Andrea Shiock, and Statewide Veterans Coordinator Ryan Yoder. Melinda Gosser, Field Representative to Senator Brooks also attended the meeting.

Senator Brooks first learned of the Guardian Angels Medical Service Dogs company from Dusty Durand, Legislative Liaison for the PA Department of Military and Veterans Affairs (DMVA), when discussing her interest in finding a service dog



program to partner with that was specifically for veterans who suffer from PTS (Post-Traumatic Stress). Being familiar with the canine training programs currently in place on the Veterans Service Unit (VSU) at SCI Mercer, Senator Brooks reached out to DOC Veterans Coordinator Ryan Yoder and Diana Woodside, DOC Director of Policy, Grants & Legislative Affairs, to discuss instituting a service dog program for veterans housed on the VSU at Mercer and to facilitate a meeting between GAMSD and the administrative staff at Mercer.

GAMSD's motto is "Together, we can unleash the power to heal." Since its inception in 2009, Guardian Angels has donated and partnered more than 300 service dogs across the United States with deserving veterans and others in need. Guardian Angels provides service dogs primarily to veterans with Post-Traumatic Stress, traumatic brain injury symptoms, seizure or insulin medical issues, mobility issues, and more. GAMSD states that it costs more than \$25,000 to raise and train the dogs, which are then provided to the veteran recipient at no cost. The company is currently a non-profit organization funded entirely by donations and private grant support. Funding received goes toward feeding, housing, caring for and training the dogs.



Pennsylvania has been selected for GAMSD's first campus outside of their Florida headquarters. GAMSD Pittsburgh Regional Campus will be constructed near the Pittsburgh airport, which is in close proximity to several National Guard and Military Reserve Units.

Learning more about GAMSD's service dog program and that the company would soon open a multi-million dollar dog breeding and training

facility in Pennsylvania, Senator Brooks became passionate about starting a GAMSD dog training program on the veterans unit at SCI Mercer, where the dogs would be trained by veterans for veterans. A GAMSD program at Mercer would be the company's first program to be initiated outside of their Florida headquarters and the first program of its kind to be initiated specifically for veterans in a correctional facility.

At the initial meeting, GAMSD provided statistics from the Department of Veterans Affairs from June 2018, indicating that an average of 20-22 veterans commit suicide each day in America. Also a Brigham Young University study has found that first marriages of veterans are 62% more likely to end in separation or divorce.

After nine years and pairing nearly 300 service dogs (most of them German Shepherds with 20% of them being homeless dogs from animal shelters), GAMSD reports there have been zero suicides and only one divorce among the veterans who were recipients of a Guardian Angels Medical Service Dog. According to GAMSD, there have also been cases where prescription medications have been either dramatically cut down or stopped entirely under a doctor's supervision. GAMSD reports that these highly-trained service dogs retrieve hope for the veterans and make a difference in the lives of veterans whose wounds cannot be seen. Ms. Borden stated that GAMSD assists and empowers veterans from every era.



Senator Brooks stated her tremendous respect and gratitude for our veterans. She remains committed in finding effective ways to assist our service members as they return home to their families and our communities. It is her goal that in creating this partnership between SCI Mercer and the Guardian Angels Medical Service Dog Program, it will provide another tool that aids in making a seamless transition. The Senator worked to ensure that the graduating service dogs stay in the Commonwealth to assist the veterans of Pennsylvania. This collective effort will also help our incarcerated veterans as they work with these future service dogs. She would like to thank the Department of Corrections, SCI Mercer, and GAMSD for teaming up with her in this special endeavor.



Ms. Borden noted that she often hires those veterans who complete the training program. Mr. Yoder stated that this would help prepare the inmate participants for employment and successful reentry into the communities.

GAMSD also has an Accredited Dog Training Program in Florida. Ms. Borden stated that if the program is approved in Pennsylvania, inmates enrolled in the program may be certified as trainers and also could earn

college credits, resulting in the capability of inmate apprentices to earn a living wage once released from prison.

Administrative staff gave the group a tour of the facility. The first stop was the visiting room to explain that on non-visiting days the dogs are brought to this area for training and to meet with the outside trainers from the shelter. The next stop was a tour of the Veterans Service Unit. This included speaking to one of the inmate trainers from the existing dog training program and to meet his dog. The tour ended with a tour of the inmate dining hall.

A follow-up meeting was held on August 6th with Mercer administrative staff and Jack Wagner, former PA State Auditor General and GAMSD Regional Development Director; Nate Burney, GAMSD Canine Program Director who will manage the Pittsburgh branch; and Melinda Gosser from Senator Brooks' office. They were provided a tour of the facility and the VSU where the dogs would live and be partnered with an inmate veteran.



Mr. Yoder states he is excited to partner with GAMSD at SCI Mercer because this nationally recognized and accredited training program will not only provide incarcerated veterans with an opportunity to train future service dogs for fellow veteran recipients in Pennsylvania, but also has the ability to provide certification to the dog trainers who participate in the program. Mr. Yoder is honored to partner with an organization so committed to assisting and supporting veterans, regardless of their circumstances. Together, this partnership can truly make a positive

difference in the lives of so many individuals, while continuing to set the standard for veteran services in Corrections.

Marcia Combine, Unit Manager of the VSU, relates that the veterans on the VSU are looking forward to having this type of dog training program on the unit, which would also provide them the opportunity to give back to the community and to their fellow veterans.

Superintendent Adams expressed that a program such as this at SCI Mercer will not only give the inmate veteran participants an opportunity to help other veterans who may be going through what they have gone through but it may enhance their employment opportunities once they finish their incarceration. She states that once the approval process is completed, the facility is looking forward to partnering with GAMSD in providing trained service dogs to Pennsylvania veterans, which will not only change their lives but their families as well.

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## **DOC and PBPP attend Health and Wellness Weekend**

BCC Contract Facility Coordinator Jessica Doris and PBPP acting supervisors Robert Thornton (Pittsburgh District Office) and Charles Ackerman (North Shore Sub Offices) attended the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual health and Wellness Weekend in Pittsburgh. The event was hosted by The People's Office and State Rep. Jake Wheatley, Jr.

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## Eastern Region leaders work with Habitat for Humanity

The Eastern Region superintendents and the Eastern Region inspection team did a Habitat for Humanity project in Berks County on Thursday. Habitat's ultimate goal is to strengthen working families and neighborhoods by constructing safe, decent, affordable housing. Staff moved furniture from their ReStore warehouse. The ReStore is a place where people can shop for donated items such as:



furniture, appliances, cabinets, lighting, flooring, windows, shingles, as well as other items. The team moved over 1,300 pounds of furniture. Pictured are the following staff that participated. Pictured are: RDS Wenerowicz; Supt. Ransom-WAY; Supt. Natoli-QUE; Supt. Marsh-Benner; Supt. Mahally-DAL; Supt. Britain-FRA; Supt. DelBalso-MAH; Deputy Eason-CHE; Staff assistants R. Hammond and C. Hensley; and Inspection Captains N. Wynder and J. Eyer.

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## Annual Probation and Parole training a successful event in Philadelphia

Downtown Philadelphia was the site of the 43rd Annual American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) Training Institute in from July 29-Aug. 1.

The event included a focus on the opioid epidemic affecting the country, highlighted by a roundtable discussion by subject-matter experts. The goal was for attendees to learn about the role of community supervision agencies in fighting the opioid crisis. Speakers included Philadelphia District Attorney Larry Krasner, Secretary of Corrections John Wetzel, Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley R. Moore Smeal, and Victim Advocate Jennifer Storm.



Eastern Region Parole and Probation staff volunteered throughout the event, and SCI Chester's color guard presented the colors. Director of Probation and Parole Services Christian Stephens provided support.

The event also had some star power courtesy of Philadelphia's pair of champions, the Philadelphia Eagles and Villanova Wildcats. Both teams provided gear and paraphernalia to display at the event.



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## 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Second Chance Festival in Scranton

In an effort to raise awareness and funds for reentrants, the Lackawanna County Reentry Task Force (LCRTF) held the second annual Second Chance Festival in Scranton. The festival included music, food and a 5K race.

The vision of the LCRTF is that every citizen who returns from incarceration actualizes a responsible, productive, and fulfilling life. Committed, competent, and compassionate professionals along with vested community stakeholders support returning citizens within the full spectrum of the human condition. What remains are respected and restored lives that exemplify character, benefit the communities, and strengthen the hope for the future. The primary goal is to reduce recidivism and improve outcomes in Lackawanna County. The mission of the LCRTF is to successfully reintegrate recently incarcerated citizens back into the community. The task force's comprehensive and customized approach to integration includes pre-release assessments, systematic identification of needs, and linkages to services. A strong diversified network of community and professional partnerships establishes the framework to bolster public safety, break the cycle of recidivism, and enhance lives, families, and society.



Pictured from left to right Jim Marsico, Dan Dragwa (finished 1st for men), Cathy Dragwa (finished 1st for women), Dave Gorman (finished 1st for his age group), Joe Grillo (finished 1st for his age group), Nathan Mihal and Heidi Fuehrer.

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## **Albion Honor Guard participates in service for fallen police officer**

On Monday, August 20, 2018, SCI Albion Honor Guard paid their respects and took an active role in the funeral service of Erie police officer Michael Conway by presenting and retrieving the colors during the ceremony.

Nearly 900 people, including a large contingent of law enforcement officers from throughout Erie County and around the state, were in attendance. Officer Conway, 46, served on the Erie Bureau of Police as an officer for more than 19 years and passed away unexpectedly while on duty at the Erie police station on August 11, 2018 due to a massive heart attack.

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## **In the Centers...**

### **Jen Henry named BCC Employee of the Quarter**

Administrative Officer Jen Henry was named Employee of the Quarter for the second quarter for the Bureau of Community Corrections. In addition to her tireless efforts and positive attitude that she displays daily to support the Bureau, she was recently the driving force behind coordinating a multiple agency drug awareness training. These trainings were met with such success that the Bureau will be bringing them back to ensure that all staff and fellow agencies are well trained and can continue to combat the ever-changing drug trends throughout the Commonwealth. Administrative Officer Henry is a testament to us all, showing that coordinating with other agencies only makes us all stronger.



**Pictured, from left to right, are: BCC Director Daniel McIntyre, Administrative Officer Jen Henry, Major for Security and Training Michael Gourley and Deputy Director of Programs and Administration Luis Resto.**

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## Pittsburgh donates stamps to Humane Society

Over the past few weeks, reentrants of the Pittsburgh Community Corrections Center continued their nearly 5-year commitment to the Humane Society of Westmoreland County by donating postage stamps. PCCC Reentrants donated over 1,500 postage stamps to the shelter.

The Humane Society of Westmoreland County is dedicated to meeting the challenge of “rescue.” Each month nearly 400 dogs and 400 cats pass through the doors of the Humane Society of Westmoreland County in need of veterinary care, spay/neutering, or rescue and adoption. All of dogs released to the shelter are spay/neutered, vet checked, vaccinated according to age, tested for Lyme disease and heartworm and treated for all parasites. The dogs are well socialized and exercised while in their care. They are walked three to four times a day and have play time in the one acre dog park on the shelter property. The shelter cats are free roaming with screened porches to enjoy fresh air and climbing. All cats/kittens are spay/neutered, vet checked, tested for feline leukemia and aids, vaccinated and treated for all parasites. In addition, the Humane Society has low cost “clinic hours” twice per week for the residents of Westmoreland County.



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## BCC Region 3 hosts positive trainings



DOC, PBPP and BCC staff completed Motivational Interviewing 1 training on Aug. 15 and 16.

Motivational interviewing is a helpful way of assisting people in finding their own reasons for using questions and statements strategically to help them think and talk more positively. It is most useful when:

- The goal is an observable behavior change.
- The person is more resistant, angry or reluctant to change.
- The interviewer can separate him/herself from the program participant's attitude, actions or consequences.

After completing the training, participants can now take Motivational Interviewing 2 and progress to become MI certified.

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## Johnstown holds open house

In effort to strengthen relationships between State Correctional and County Jail Reentry staff, Johnstown CCC held an open house on August 21.

Visitors took a guided tour of the facility led by Director Helsel and Acting Director/CFC McCollim where they learned about the day-to-day operations within a CCC, the Reentry Focus Plan, BCC Reentry Services, Medically-Assisted Treatment options, Centers of Excellence, BCC workshops and other services offered to reentrants. They also utilized virtual reality headsets to view other centers throughout the state—and ride a roller coaster for those who were brave enough.



Overall the event was a success and another step forward in improving the coordinated efforts between these agencies and institutions for the betterment of staff and reentrants. The event was attended by staff from Altoona PBPP, Cambria County Jail, SCI Benner Township, SCI Smithfield, SCI Huntington, SCI Laurel Highlands, SCI Fayette, SCI Somerset and Quehanna Boot Camp.

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## Scranton donates \$500 worth of school supplies

Reentrants at Scranton CCC donated roughly \$500 worth of school supplies to the United Neighborhood Center in Scranton. Pictured from left to right are Kayleen Pystrona and Jim Mackleroy from the United Neighborhood Center and Scranton CCC Monitor Kenny Jordan.



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Week of August 13...

## **The “War on Drugs” Enters PA DOC Facilities**

Just like in the community, the DOC also is dealing with the increase of illegal drugs inside of its state prisons.

This past week several facilities has situations where staff had become sickened through contact – either directly or indirectly – with some sort of substance. The contact happened during cell, inmate property and mail searches.

As a result, on August 13, Executive Deputy Secretary for Institutional Operations Tabb Bickell and Deputy Secretary for Administration Chris Oppman emailed a memo to DOC Leadership about the use and ordering of personal protective equipment (PPE):

“We have experienced several incidents over the past week in which staff and inmates have incurred adverse effects from illicit substances. Staff should take all precautions and utilize the appropriate personal projective equipment. The DOC's Bureau of Operations has identified the Ambitex N720BLK black 6 mil nitrile glove as exceeding the occupational safety standards.”

The memo provided information for the ordering of the gloves, and staff was told to order a sufficient quantity to outfit staff conducting searches, handling mail or inmate property.

The DOC is taking the following steps to ensure the safety of staff and inmates:

- ✓ Development of employee training regarding the use of personal protective equipment (PPE)
- ✓ Training and equipment procurement for the safe handling and decontamination of illicit substances



- ✓ Procurement of safety disposal equipment
- ✓ Evaluation and procurement of body scanner devices for each facility
- ✓ Implementation of inmate mail processing through a third-party vendor that will receive, scan and forward copies of mail back to the respective facility for distribution



- ✓ Implementing a procedure to copy legal mail
- ✓ Procurement of K9 Narcan auto injectors.
- ✓ Development of a drug awareness public service announcement to be shown on the inmate TV channel

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***“We are going to do whatever we need to do to protect staff and if we have to lock down every day, that’s what we’re going to do.”***

*John Wetzel, Corrections Secretary*

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In addition to the memo from the deputy secretaries and the information provided at this week’s meeting, prison superintendents are also sending correspondence to their inmate communities asking them to join DOC staff in the fight against drugs:

*“A Message from the Superintendent:*

*I am addressing this to the entire inmate population. What you experienced last week, and today, will be a common occurrence if we do not collectively get the issue of drug abuse, possession and sales under control at this facility. Visits will be cancelled if we have to search, and we will be following Department policy on visitation, which will include inmates indefinitely losing contact visits upon the 3<sup>rd</sup> drug related misconduct.*

*As most of you are aware, we have had multiple extreme reactions over the last week. The staff at this facility will continue to do what is necessary to manage this behavior and unfortunately, for those that are not involved with it, you also will be impacted by the behavior of others.*

*While each of you are incarcerated at this facility, you ultimately live in this "community." Like a neighborhood in a community, eradicating this issue here will take a committed effort from staff as well as inmates. I am not asking you to take this issue into your own hands, but for those that are seeing things going on; I encourage you to talk to staff so that we can address the issues at hand.*

*Again, being locked down and having your cells searched is going to become very commonplace in this facility if we are unable to safely manage daily operations. We will involve the Pennsylvania State Police and the District Attorney's Office every opportunity we have to charge inmates who are involved in drug possession and sales at this facility.*

*At the end of the day, the safety of the staff and the inmate population at this facility is paramount. I believe that the majority of you feel the same way and trust that collectively we will do what is necessary to address this current epidemic of drug use at this prison."*

The letter to inmates was the topic of an article in the Sharon Herald on August 15:

## Third incident reported at prison

Superintendent warns SCI Mercer inmates that drug issues must stop

By ERIC POOLE  
Herald Assistant Editor | News

FINDLEY TOWNSHIP — As SCI Mercer underwent its second lockdown in a week, the prison's superintendent issued a written warning, and a call for inmates to report drug users within the prison's walls.

"At the end of the day, the safety of the staff and the inmate population at this facility is paramount," Superintendent Melinda Adams wrote in a letter, dated Monday, to inmates at the facility. "I believe that the majority of you feel the same way and trust that collectively we will do what is necessary to address this current epidemic of drug use at SCI-Mercer."



Adams

See PRISON, page A-2

### Prison

Third incident reported at SCI Mercer

FROM PAGE A-1

On the same day, prisoners were on lockdown for almost 12 hours in what public information officer Andrea Shiock called a continuation of an investigation into drug use in the prison that began last week.

Shiock said the latest lockdown followed an incident Saturday in which a female commissary worker came down with an ailment and was taken to the prison infirmary. She was treated at a nearby hospital and released.

That was the third time in less than a week that prison workers required hospital treatment for incidents that occurred in the prison.

On Aug. 6, a prison doctor and five guards were treated for contamination after being exposed to what prison officials called an unknown substance. All six employees had to undergo decontamination procedures and one was treated with Narcan,



CORY BYKNISH | Herald

SCI Mercer has been shutdown after the third incident of contamination from a foreign substance found inside the facility.

which is typically used for emergency treatment of opioid overdoses.

The prison went on lockdown for more than three days after the incident.

On Friday morning, three guards required hospital treatment for an unknown incident, although Shiock said at the time that she could not release details on the incident.

Shiock called Adams' letter a "proactive way to get the inmate community on board in the effort to get this problem under control."

The letter amounted to a warning about the consequences of continued incidents, and a call for cooperation among inmates. In the letter, Adams said that future occurrences would cause more lockdowns,

which would result in cancellation of visits for inmates.

Further, inmates violating drug policy on three instances would lose visitation privileges indefinitely.

Adams also warned that the prison would work with state police and Mercer County District Attorney Miles Karson on any investigation at the facility.



protective gear. Including respirators, to ensure that staff have greater protection when handling potentially hazardous material.

The DOC has installed a body scanner at SCI Coal Township on a pilot basis with promising results. The agency is now looking to install body scanners at all institutions to be used in a variety of ways, including after inmate visits to ensure contraband does not enter the institutions.

The DOC also has posted at all of its facilities posters to remind staff how they should respond to substances that could be fentanyl (see image at right).

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## How Deadly is Fentanyl?

It's deadly enough to be used as a method of lethal injection in Nebraska. If you don't think you're gambling with your life by taking fentanyl, you need to think again.

Associated Press via correctionsone.com (08/14/2018)

[https://www.correctionsone.com/capital-punishment/articles/479096187-Nebraska-executes-first-inmate-since-1997/?NewsletterID=460735&utm\\_source=iContact&utm\\_medium=email&utm\\_content=TopNewsMainTitle&utm\\_campaign=C1Member&utm\\_id=%5Bcub\\_id%5D](https://www.correctionsone.com/capital-punishment/articles/479096187-Nebraska-executes-first-inmate-since-1997/?NewsletterID=460735&utm_source=iContact&utm_medium=email&utm_content=TopNewsMainTitle&utm_campaign=C1Member&utm_id=%5Bcub_id%5D)

### Nebraska executes first inmate since 1997

The state used a never-before-tried combination of drugs, which included fentanyl

By Grant Schulte, Associated Press

LINCOLN, Neb. — Nebraska carried out its first execution in more than two decades on Tuesday with the lethal injection of a convicted murderer who had been on death row for nearly twice that long.

Carey Dean Moore, 60, was pronounced dead at 10:47 a.m. after he was injected with a never-before-tried combination of drugs including the first use of the powerful opioid fentanyl. Moore, who had been sentenced to death for killing two cab drivers in Omaha in 1979, also was the first inmate to be lethally injected in Nebraska, which last carried out an execution in 1997, using the electric chair.

Moore's execution comes a little more than three years after Nebraska lawmakers abolished the death penalty, only to have it reinstated the following year through a citizen ballot drive partially financed by Republican

Gov. Pete Ricketts. The governor, a wealthy former businessman, has said he was fulfilling the wishes of voters in the conservative state.

According to prosecutors, Moore was 21 when he fatally shot Reuel Van Ness during a robbery with his younger brother, and used the money to buy drugs and pornography. Moore fatally shot Maynard Helgeland by himself five days later, saying he wanted to prove he could take a man's life by himself. Moore was arrested a week later. He was charged and convicted of first-degree murder, while his 14-year-old brother was convicted of second-degree murder.

Moore has faced execution dates set by the Nebraska Supreme Court seven times since he was convicted, but each was delayed because of legal challenges and questions over whether previous lethal injection drugs were purchased legally. For some relatives of Moore's victims, that was far too long — and they hope his name and crimes will finally vanish from headlines.

"We're sick of hearing about Carey Dean Moore," Steve Helgeland, one of Maynard Helgeland's three children, said ahead of the execution. "All we really want is for him to go away."

Helgeland said the numerous delays in executing Moore had left him ambivalent about whether his father's killer dies by lethal injection or spends the rest of his life in prison. Helgeland said he plans to be present at the prison for the execution to honor his father's memory, but that he won't witness it.

"There was a point in my life when I probably would have pulled the switch myself, but 39 years has a way of dissipating your anger," he said.

A Germany-based drugmaker tried to halt the execution last week, filing a lawsuit that alleged the state had illegally procured at least one of the company's drugs. The company, Fresenius Kabi, argued that allowing the execution to go forward would harm its reputation and business relationships.

But a federal judge sided with state attorneys, who argued that the public's interest in carrying out a lawful execution outweighed the company's concerns. The judge also noted that Moore had stopped fighting the state's efforts to execute him.

A federal appeals court upheld that ruling Monday, and Fresenius Kabi decided not to take the issue to the U.S. Supreme Court.

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## Houtzdale Holds Career Fair

On August 14, SCI Houtzdale hosted a Career Fair/Reentry Services Office (RSO) event in which 15 vendors/services provided information to approximately 100 inmates. Representatives from the following agencies participated: Bureau of Community Corrections, Parole & Re-entry, Pennsylvania Housing Finance Association and Mental Health Services.



The inmate population also was able to discuss possible job prospects with several vendors including American Building Contractors Association, Tradesman International and employment assistance representatives from the PA Office of Vocation Rehabilitation (OVR) and Express Employment Pros. Vendors provided literature and were available to answer questions and discuss possible opportunities and assistance to those in attendance.

Inmates with a minimum or maximum sentence expiration date occurring in the next 12 months, or inmates who had passed their minimum date, but were able to provide a positive parole action were invited to attend. In addition to the inmates who fit the admittance qualifications, 12 RSO inmates were in attendance with the goal to experience the Career Fair/RSO event and be able to share their experience with future RSO participants through peer/mentor services within the RSO program.

Inmates who requested a mock interview following the event were provided one with Education and RSO staff. Pamphlets and literature obtained during the Career Fair/RSO event were made available to the entire SCI Houtzdale population through a binder located in the general population library for future assistance with reentry needs.

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## A DOC Proud Father-Son Moment

SCI Laurel Highlands Corrections Officer Trainee Nick Beers recently posted this – along with this picture taken at the DOC’s Training Academy – to Facebook:

“It’s officially over. My training is complete! I’m the nerd of the group, I received the academic award for highest class average.”

Nick is the son of SCI Laurel Highlands Intelligence Gathering Lieutenant John Beers.

John began his DOC career in 1996 as a corrections officer at SCI Greensburg. In 2001 he promoted to sergeant. In 2008 he was promoted to lieutenant and took the role of training lieutenant. When Greensburg closed in 2013, he transferred to Laurel Highlands, again as the training lieutenant. May of this year, he took the newly created position of intelligence gathering lieutenant.



John said that Nick chose the job of a corrections officer because it was something he always wanted to do, having seen it and been around it all his life through his dad.

“Nick said he is extremely excited to begin his career and thinks that it’s great to be able to work beside me,” John said.

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## Reducing Medical Care Redundancies – County/State Cooperation

For about six months now, officials from the DOC’s intake centers (SCIs Graterford/Phoenix, Camp Hill and Muncy) have been obtaining information – via a collaborative agreement with Philadelphia County Prison System – concerning medical services and procedures provided to inmates at the county who are scheduled for delivery to the state prison system. Because a large majority of our inmates come to us from Philadelphia County, this is a huge step toward increasing efficiencies.

Up until this time, the DOC only received minimal information which could, as an example, result in the inmate possibly needing repeat medical testing, such as lab work.

“As a result of this partnership, our medical and psychiatric providers are better informed and prepared to meet the needs of the county prison inmate receptions coming to us,” said Bureau of Health Care Services Director Joseph Silva.

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## Forest Names EOM

Corrections Officer 1 R. Smith was recently named Employee of the Month for August.

In a letter to Smith, Superintendent Michael Overmyer said:

“You were nominated by your peers as being a model of professionalism in corrections. You were instrumental in the removal of all the Timberland boots from the institution. You organized, logged, packaged and shipped nearly a thousand pair of boots out of the institution. Reception and Discharge (R&D) would not have been able to do this without you.”

Congratulations, Officer Smith!

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**Pictured, right to left, are: Deputy Superintendent for Facility Management John Sawtelle and CO1 R. Smith.**

## Community Corrections Staff Complete Training

Bureau of Community Corrections employees recently completed the 4 Core Competencies/Brief Intervention Tools training at the DOC's Training Academy on August 14 and 15.

The 4 Core Competencies include:

1. Building a Professional Alliance
2. Skills Practice
3. Effective Case Planning and Management
4. Appropriately using Rewards and Responses to Noncompliance

Brief Intervention Tools (BITS) are evidence based tools designed to assist the corrections professional in helping individuals involved in the justice system make positive decisions. The BITS are short, easy to use and applicable in a wide variety of circumstances.



**Front row: S Breen, R. Piorko, M. Millet, M. Stanley, C. Barton, K. Luckenbill**

**2nd row: C Doutrich, J. Rupert, J. Huben, A. Owens, L. Faulkner, A. Blyth, A. Uhrich**

**3rd row: M. Moore (instructor), K. Sommers, L. Reilly, J. Flinn, A. Dryden, R. Acosta, M. Helsel, D. Kopinski, T. Lehman**

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victimization than their heterosexual peers.<sup>1</sup> This information was unknown to many of the transgender community members who were present at a local/statewide support group meeting facilitated by TransCentralPA in January 2015, during which several PADOC employees attended when the department initially began exploring the concept of offering support group services to the transgender prison community.

There were many takeaways from that evening, but most impressionable was the level of interest in the PREA standards, the efforts required of facilities to be deemed compliant, and how the enactment of this law forever changes the landscape of sexual safety during incarceration. PADOC's goal was to provide the most beneficial support to the transgender community. Therefore, it began exploring the most conducive approach to achieve this while confined by the institutional structure. Through a unique partnership, a cutting-edge practice was formed which offers support and connection to local and state transgender community members through hosting a monthly support group via video conference.

Like all PREA compliant agencies, the department enforces a zero-tolerance standard. Any staff member who engages in, fails to report or knowingly condones sexual abuse or sexual harassment of an inmate is subject to disciplinary action up to and including termination, and may be subject to criminal prosecution. "Consensual" sex between inmates is prohibited in the department and often leads to disciplinary action. In instances where an imbalance of power can be identified, the alleged sexual abusers are tracked and monitored locally to protect others from their predatory behavior.

When developing the PREA policy and revising existing policies, PADOC concentrated its efforts to ensure that each inmate has the opportunity to live authentically and with dignity. Several key considerations addressed through policy were:

- Addressing transgender inmates respectfully and by their preferred pronoun or as "Inmate [last name]."
- Providing private showering opportunities for transgender inmates.
- Training staff to conduct professional and respectful searches of inmates by using respectful terminology and physical search techniques.
- Meaningful consideration of an inmate's own views

with respect to safety and housing determinations through the Gender Review Committee process.

Perhaps the most controversial change throughout each facility was the modification to basic issue and commissary policies to provide access to gender-affirming clothing and cosmetics at both male and female facilities. By providing universal access to these items, individuals have the means to express their authentic self.

### Trickling down

How do confinement settings adapt in real time to social change? Education and more education. Learning about best practices in the community, seeking advice from subject matter experts and incorporating best practices related to diversity and inclusion in the workplace all help create a positive shift in culture change.

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**Many lessons learned by the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PADOC) have helped it develop and implement improved policies and practices that are proactive and enable staff to be sensitive to the needs of those who may be perceived as different**

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Ongoing training requirements under the PREA standards are a perfect vehicle to reinforce cultural expectations. Staff and inmates hold deep, personal views that may conflict with necessary cultural transformations. Buy-in, candidness and demonstrable action from leadership are crucial to setting cultural change into motion and fostering a supportive environment for vulnerable populations. Leading up to the first audit cycle, PADOC's Secretary John E. Wetzel and Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal consulted with, and relied



upon, the expert guidance of The Moss Group to facilitate group discussions with executive leadership to gauge the cultural environment identifying pathways to culture change. Both inmate and staff educational standards have increased awareness of the means to ensure sexual safety and acknowledge vulnerabilities of LGBTQ inmates.

How much of an impact has this heightened level of awareness of LGBTQ inmates created within PADOC? Just over three years ago, the number of self-identified transgender inmates hovered under 50. As a culture of acceptance emerged, PADOC believes more individuals felt safe disclosing their gender identity. By the fall of 2015, the department tracked 113 self-identified transgender individuals. In 2016, that number increased to roughly 140. Currently, there are 182 self-identified transgender inmates.<sup>2</sup>

Equally important to the interpersonal relationship between staff and inmates are the respectful cultural norms that are realized by adhering to firm professional boundaries. Cultivating an environment where staff has the professional courage to challenge group norms and confront wrongdoing ensures that all inmates are treated with dignity. Even when the groundwork has been laid, meeting the needs of LGBTQ inmates requires a concerted effort and thinking outside the box to accommodate unique circumstances that have not been encountered to date.

## Keeping it up

Historically, the treatment and support of transgender individuals within a correctional setting is often restricted to hormone therapy and individual counseling with staff that have minimal experience working with transgender individuals. Compounding these limitations, transitioning inmates often have a narrow degree of peer support within their assigned facilities. Those inmates who may be questioning their gender identity or who have made the decision to transition while confined are often faced with challenges and questions that are best answered by individuals from community support services, relevant state agencies and those who have previously traveled the same path.

This leads us to address the purpose of the transgender support groups and how they function. The purpose is two-fold. First, the support groups provide a safe



environment where common individual experiences can be shared among participants to assist with adjustment to the correctional environment. Secondly, the support group serves as a means to educate and introduce accepted community levels of care to inmates before the re-entry process begins.

Wetzel's forward thinking led PADOC to initiate partnerships with outside resources that could assist the transgender community outside of prisons, including TransCentralPA and Alder Health. Representatives from both organizations help facilitate the agency-wide monthly transgender support group meetings. TransCentralPA has been actively involved in the community since 1989, providing advocacy and caring support for transgender individuals, their significant others, families, friends and allies. Alder Health operates under a mission of improving the health and wellbeing of individuals living with HIV/AIDS and members of the LGBTQ community.

Since PADOC's transgender population consists of approximately 180 self-identified individuals spread among 19 institutions throughout the state, support group meetings are held via video conference, which helps connect those individuals who may have limited peer support at their individual facilities. Lynn Patrone, a regular observer of the support group, states, "This partnership creates a vital connection to the trans community, educational components, and most importantly, a connection to peers within the facilities across the state. By offering a support group, we mitigate the sense of loneliness which can have an adverse impact on one's mental health. This

is one tool in ensuring that we are meeting individuals where they are.”<sup>33</sup>

Common questions, uncertainties and anxieties are addressed through this forum to alleviate symptoms of gender dysphoria and to help individuals adjust to life as an incarcerated transgender individual. Originally, the support group was designed to address frequently asked questions, concerns and emotional needs of the transgender population through facilitators who have transitioned and subject matter experts in the area of transgender health care. As the group meetings progressed, participants were given the opportunity to exchange supportive comments and affirmations to capture the essence of a true support group.

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**The success of the transgender support group initiative can be attributed to the fact that it recognizes the unique needs of the transgender inmate population and is committed to providing services for successful adjustment to incarceration and community reintegration**

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The support groups are facilitated every month and have been ongoing for the past 22 months via video conference. While attendance fluctuates between a high of 60 participants across 14 facilities; there is a consistent base of approximately 40 individuals across 10 to 12 facilities that regularly attend and contribute to the group. This forum enables all transgender inmates, who are currently housed throughout the Commonwealth, an opportunity to be involved in an open discussion about the physical and emotional tolls experienced through transition. Liz Leen of Alder Health said, “I honestly didn’t know how we would manage 12 facilities and up to 60 individuals

on one Skype meeting. However, after the first month or two, we found a flow and set some ground rules and it works! This group is the highlight of my month and I am really excited about how everyone has come together to support one another. Thank you for the opportunity to serve the community in a new way.”<sup>34</sup>

The start of each group began with introductions and instructions reminding everyone of the “ground rules” that individual medical concerns or department policy are not open for discussion. If such topics are presented, the leader redirects the group, and individuals are referred to the appropriate means to address their concerns locally.

The agenda items are generally established beforehand and are created based on participant feedback forms provided by the inmates to the local PREA compliance managers or submitted via correspondence sent by inmates directly to Joanne Carroll, the president of TransCentralPA. Frequent discussions revolve around how an individual discloses their changed gender identity to their family members, how to thrive among family and friends and gain overall social acceptance once released, the side effects of hormone treatment, changing gender markers on legal identification forms and other available community resources upon release.

After preselected topics have been addressed, the group transitions to a “live” dialogue. One of the challenges of a video conference support group is to overcome the “cross-talk” created by open microphones at each location. To overcome this, facilities are called upon individually and participants are invited to ask additional questions, provide supportive affirmations to one another or share how they were able to personally address challenges they have experienced. It is during this portion of the group that participants find the greatest benefit and rewards, addressing the meaningful individual challenges in their daily lives.

Gretchen Little, a TransCentralPA representative, said, “The group has made great strides in its first year. We’ve developed a core group of regular contributors, who provide insight and compassionate support to their fellow trans-inmates across the state. As a facilitator, it’s been rewarding to share my knowledge and experience, but I’ve learned every bit as much as I’ve shared. I think the project has great value, and I’m proud to be a part of it.”<sup>35</sup>



## Comments of inmate attendees who have participated in transgender support groups throughout different polling sessions:

*"First, let me thank you for allowing me to attend the monthly video conference meetings. It's very helpful."*

*"I am so thankful for this program, mainly because I can be me, and knowing of other incarcerated individuals who are going through similar situations."*

*"For 12 years, I have been called 'gay' and other various words. No one understood when I'd say I'm not gay. I'm a woman in a man's body."*

*"I have learned so much just by listening during our group. Most of us are shy when it comes to speaking, but we learn from others and you."*

### Further signs of success

When PADOCC first shared the existence of the transgender support groups at the August 2016 American Correctional Association conference in Boston, Mass., they were immediately approached by PREA Resource Center representatives and inquiries followed. It was recognized that the transgender support group was the first known resource of its kind nationwide. Shortly thereafter, Moore Smeal and several other key individuals were interviewed and featured in the National Institute of Corrections "Transgender Persons in Custody: The Legal Landscape," broadcast in early 2017.

Dr. Rachel Levine, the current Pennsylvania Secretary of Health and Physician General and a transgender woman, has been instrumental in the department's pursuit of the fair and equitable treatment of the LGBTQ population and exceeding PREA guidelines. Levine has publicly commended PADOCC for being "ahead of the curve nationally in responding to the needs of LGBTQ inmates," particularly with the establishment of the transgender inmate support group.

The success of the transgender support group initiative can be attributed to the fact that it recognizes the unique needs of the transgender inmate population and is committed to providing services for successful adjustment to incarceration and community reintegration. Wetzel and Moore Smeal are credited with ensuring all executive and

senior-level staff have been afforded training by transgender subject matter experts to provide sensitivity and awareness at each facility. With a fundamental understanding of the dynamics of transitioning, facility leaders can model the values necessary to build a supportive culture throughout the ranks.

In 2017, the administration of Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf produced a video featuring a number of agency leaders, including Wetzel, to highlight the Commonwealth's policy of tolerance and inclusion. This video, "Pennsylvania Has Your Back," is shown on the in-house prison channels for inmates and staff throughout the system.<sup>6</sup>



*David Radziewicz is statewide PREA coordinator for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections.*



*Carole A. Mattis is director of the Bureau of Standards, Audits and Accreditation for the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections.*

*Endnotes on p. 101*

Graphic: iStockphoto.com/Balabir77



# Parole Violator FAQs

## What does it mean to be a parole violator?

Parole violators are classified as either convicted parole violators (CPVs) or technical parole violators (TPVs).

**A CPV** is a parolee under the jurisdiction of the board who violates the terms and conditions of the parole by committing a new crime. They are detained in prison under a board warrant until their new charges have been settled – even if they post bail. In the instance of a non-violent offense, the board has discretion to take or not take the “street” time the parolee spent on parole. For violent offenses, the parolee loses all of the street time spent on parole, which leads to a sentence recalculation and a parole violation maximum expiration date.

**A TPV** is a parolee under the jurisdiction of the board who violates the terms and conditions of parole, other than by committing a new crime. Breaking curfew, moving without permission or unauthorized contact with a victim are examples of technical parole violations. These violators may be sanctioned by an additional constraint on their freedom, sent to a treatment program or be recommitted to prison, depending on the severity and frequency of the violation.

## What do I need to know if I am detained or recommitted for a parole violation?

You have a right to both a first and second level hearing as part of your due process rights. You may waive these rights.

### First level hearings:

Preliminary hearings are for parolees with technical parole violations. These hearings are held within 14 days of detention on the board’s warrant.

Detention hearings are for parolees with new criminal charges. These hearings are held within 30 days of detention on the board’s warrant.

The burden of proof for preliminary and detention hearings is “probable cause,” which means there is a reasonable basis to find that you violated your parole. These hearings may not be needed under certain circumstances.

### Second level hearings:

Revocation hearings are for parolees who committed a criminal act while on parole or delinquent on parole (convicted parole violator) and are convicted or found guilty by a judge or jury or to which the parolee pleads guilty or no contest in a court of record of a crime punishable by imprisonment. This hearing is held either within

120 days from the date the board receives official verification of the plea of guilty, no contest plea or guilty verdict at the highest trial court level or within 120 days of the date the board receives official verification of the return to a Pennsylvania state correctional institution depending on the circumstances. You may waive this hearing right.

Violation hearings are for parolees who violated either a general or special condition of parole (technical parole violator). This hearing is held within 120 days of the preliminary hearing. You may waive this hearing right.

The burden of proof for revocation and violation hearings is "preponderance of the evidence," which means it more likely than not that the parolee violated parole.

### **Is my case considered under Act 122 of 2012?**

As a result of Act 122 of 2012, there are three tracks for management of a technical parole violator.

#### **TRACK 1**

Offenders whose recommitment (recorded board decision) occurred before January 1, 2013, are not affected by Act 122. These offenders may be recommitted to serve the remainder of their sentence.

#### **TRACK 2**

If any of the following types of violations occur, the parolee will be detained in or recommitted to a state correctional institution (SCI) or a contracted county jail (CCJ). A parolee recommitted for any of these violations can be recommitted for up to six months for the first recommitment, up to nine months for the second recommitment, and up to one year for the third and subsequent recommitments:

1. The violation was sexual in nature.
2. The violation involved assaultive behavior.
3. The violation involved possession or control of a weapon.
4. The parolee absconded, and the parolee cannot be safely diverted to a community corrections center or community corrections facility.
5. There exists an identifiable threat to public safety, and the parolee cannot be safely diverted to a community corrections center or community corrections facility.

At the end of the commitment period, the offender is automatically re-paroled, unless during the commitment the offender committed a disciplinary infraction involving assaultive behavior, sexual assault, a weapon or controlled substances; spent more than 90 days in segregated housing due to one or more disciplinary infractions; or refused programming or a work assignment.

#### **TRACK 3**

All other technical parole violators will be placed in a secure parole violator center (PVC). In a parole violator center, offenders are not permitted to leave the center without an official escort.

Parole violator centers are designed to focus on providing immediate treatment and programming that is specific to each offender's circumstance. The goal of the board

is to quickly address the circumstances that caused the offender to violate the conditions of parole and to facilitate behavior change in order to help offenders successfully complete parole and lead a law-abiding lifestyle.

The length of stay is dependent on offender programming needs and commitment to satisfying the requirements of the program and satisfactory adjustment while at the center. The maximum period of custody is six months.

### **When and how does a recommitment affect my sentence calculation?**

There are two times when recommitment may change your maximum sentence date calculation.

**First**, if you are recommitted as a convicted parole violator, the board may deny you credit for all of the time you are at liberty on parole by adding this time to your prior maximum sentence date. This includes street time, time in halfway houses that are not deemed to be equivalent to imprisonment and time incarcerated on another sentence.

**Second**, if you are recommitted as a technical parole violator and you are found to be delinquent (i.e. you failed to report or you changed your residence without permission), the board will deny you credit for the time you were delinquent by adding this time to your prior maximum sentence date.

### **When can I be re-paroled?**

Your board action/decision will state when you are to be re-paroled or you are eligible for re-parole. You will be interviewed approximately four months prior to any review date, or on the next available docket following that date. However, there is no right to be reviewed for re-parole absent a parole application.

### **How long does it take for my board action (“green sheet?”)**

The re-parole decision generally takes 6 weeks to process from the date of the parole interview. Recommitment decisions generally take 12 weeks from the hearing date (or the waiver date). If it has been three months since the date of your parole interview or recommitment hearing (or waiver date), **YOU NEED TO CHECK DIRECTLY WITH YOUR INSTITUTIONAL PAROLE AGENT.**

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## Career Pathways: Laying the Groundwork Meetings

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.

Six state correctional institutions (SCIs) were involved in the development of the Career Pathways Framework to determine how we can help inmates become “job ready.” Officials thank SCIs Coal Township, Dallas, Fayette, Houtzdale, Mahanoy and Pine Grove for pioneering the original framework.

During Spring 2018, the remaining 19 SCIs were visited and introduced to the Career Pathways Framework. Almost 200 employees were provided the framework and instructions to think about how their SCI would implement the framework by fall 2018.

In July 2018, six off-site meetings were held throughout Pennsylvania for the 19 non-pilot SCIs to review the Career Pathways Framework. At this meeting, each SCI



discussed what they are already doing to prepare inmates to be job ready, how these current activities fit into the Framework, and what can be improved. Based on this information, each SCI created action plans for how to implement the framework in its entirety.



Officials want to thank those who attended the Laying the Groundwork meetings in July. As discussed at the meetings, this is the first step to implementation. Facility employee efforts to help inmates become “job ready” is an ongoing process.

Individuals seeking additional information on the Career Pathways grant, please contact Career Pathways Program Manager Dorenda Hamarlund at 717-728-3525 or [dhamarlund@pa.gov](mailto:dhamarlund@pa.gov).

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## Parole Personnel Notes

Effective August 18, Michael Willis will return to his role as Philadelphia District Director.

"I would like to thank Mr. Willis, Mr. Ward, Ms. Healey, and Mr. Shellenberger for their leadership in their acting capacity these past few months," said Deputy Secretary Christian Stephens. "Each one of you stepped up to the plate and performed an excellent job in your acting roles helping to keep operations moving forward in this time of transition."

Also effective August 18:

Allentown District Director Fredrick Riccio will be the Acting Central Regional Director.

Eric Pennypacker will be the Acting Allentown District Director.

Kathy Bolonski will be the Acting Allentown Deputy District Director.

Matthew Jones will be the Acting Supervisor for Reading Sub Office Unit 2.

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## The Passing of an Icon

It is with great sadness the Quehanna Boot Camp reports the passing of Commander John F. Wertz (the Boot Camp's first commander) on Tuesday, July 24, 2018, following a long, hard-fought battle with cancer.

John Wertz began his DOC career in 1975 as a corrections officer at SCI Camp Hill. He then moved on to the Training Academy in 1976 as its assistant chief. In 1979, he became chief of the Academy and remained in that capacity until he was appointed Academy manager in 1988. He was appointed commander of the newly-created Quehanna Boot Camp in June 1991. He served as Quehanna Boot Camp's commander until his retirement in 2000.



Prior to his DOC career, Commander Wertz served in the U.S. Army from 1956 to 1959 as a military policeman. He earned a bachelor's degree in secondary education from West Chester University and a master's degree in divinity from the Eastern Theological Seminary. He was a doctoral candidate at the seminary when he joined the DOC.

When Commander Wertz started the Quehanna Boot Camp, there were 26 staff members. He set the philosophy of the boot camp as "The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, Quehanna Boot Camp, will provide a secure, safe and humane alternative to standard incarceration. This voluntary six-month program is designed to enforce positive life building skills in a regimented, disciplined

environment in concert with intensive drug and alcohol therapy and educational classes. The goal of this program is to provide each inmate with the opportunity and mental tools for positive change. Each staff member is committed to the ideal, 'One person can make a difference, and together we can achieve anything.' For the staff of Quehanna Boot Camp, 'Excellence is not an option it is our standard.'"

Quehanna Boot Camp is proud to continue Commander Wertz's philosophy and continues to positively impact the individuals charged to our care.

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## Suitcases for Kids

SCI Frackville staff recently collected and donated bags to the Schuylkill County Women in Crisis center. Pictured below is Superintendent Kathy Brittain and her "assistant" Tucker displaying the bags collected.



Unit Manager Renee Styka (on the far right) coordinated the drop off with Communications Director Amy Newton, and in the middle is Compliance Officer Janel Firestone.

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## Somerset Holds Reentry Fair for Inmates

On August 8, SCI Somerset officials held a Reentry Fair in its gymnasium for more than 250 inmates. There were approximately 20 vendors represented bringing an abundance of beneficial resources for those preparing to reenter the community within the next six months.

A sample of the agencies and programs represented include ASCRA, All State Career, PA Department of Banking and Security, Salvation Army, Peer Star LLC, Cambria/Somerset Victim Services, Unite Way, Pittsburgh CCC, DOC Veterans Services, Bureau of Education, Foundation of Hope Aftercare, PA Innocence Project, Institute for Community Justice FIGHT from Philadelphia, Goodwill and SCI Greene Employees.



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## ODAAT's Dogs are Going to Prison!

On August 10, One Dog at A Time (ODAAT) posted to Facebook that they are teaming up with SCI Rockview to help their dogs with basic training, deal with trainable behavior issues and also – for some – to be service dogs. All of this is being done to give the dogs chances at finding the best FOREVER homes possible.

“Josh Coble has volunteered to dedicate himself to coordinate this program. The 9 inmate handlers at SCI Rockview already have experience in training dogs, as they were partnered with another rescue prior to ODAAT. Out of the 9 dogs they have trained, 4 have moved on to become service dogs, 2 moved on to become emotional support dogs and the 3 others are loving the life of a family pet! THIS IS HUGE FOR US!”



Learn more about ODAAT by visiting [www.onedogatatime.us](http://www.onedogatatime.us) or follow them on Facebook – One Dog at a Time ODAAT.

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## Sgt. Mark Baserman Memorial Donation



In early April, through generous donations by Quehanna Boot Camp staff, \$1,165 was donated to the Humane Society of Cambria County in memory of Sgt. Mark Baserman. A plaque was ordered by Humane Society of Cambria County Executive Director Vamos and was recently received. The plaque is currently on display in a memorial garden at the Humane Society. The Humane Society is discussing adding a bench next to the garden and attaching the plaque to the bench.

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# August 7 was National Night Out

## Newville National Night Out



**Pennsylvania Department of Corrections**



August 9 at 11:27 AM · 🌐

Oh what a National Night Out in Newville! More than 450 people showed up to chat with DOC/Board of Probation and Parole staff at their booth. There were trinkets for the kids and fun picture taking for all. Thanks to all the DOC and PBPP staff who participated in this important event!



## **Cambridge Springs – NNO was a Positive Initiative**

By Lt. John Oliver

On August 7, 2018, I had the pleasure of representing SCI Cambridge Springs at the National Night Out in Cambridge Springs, Pa. There were several local law enforcement agencies, as well as volunteer fire departments in attendance.

The following agencies were represented at this event:

- Cambridge Springs Police Department
- Edinboro Police Department
- Conneautville Police Department
- Crawford County Sheriffs
- Cambridge Springs Fire Department
- Edinboro Fire Department
- Saegertown Fire Department
- Venango Fire Department
- Northwestern Search and Rescue – K-9 Unit
- State Representative Roae
- Pennsylvania Board of Parole and Probation – Erie
- Pennsylvania Department of Corrections – SCI Cambridge Springs

There were several booths set up and activities for both children and adults to interact with the participating agencies. I had a booth set up with Departmental CERT equipment and FERT equipment. I explained to the children that we are like a city within the town and have to be prepared for emergencies until the “professionals” arrive to help. Many of the children tried on the fire fighter hat and enjoyed the explanation of why firefighters must wear all of that equipment. Everyone from the local community that stopped were pleased and surprised to see what we as a department do to prepare for various emergencies that could arise.

I believe that this was a positive initiative for our facility to participate in and received a lot of good feedback from the members of the community.



**Lt. John Oliver interacts with members of the community during National Night Out.**

## Scranton Parole District Office – Scenes from NNO in Moscow

Parole Supervisor Jack Aversa (SCI Retreat) and Agent Joe Phillips participated in Moscow Borough's National Night Out on August 7, 2018. This is a photo of the crowd and some tables set up at the event.



Many children stopped by the PBPP table and picked up badges, tattoos and candy.



## Frackville Employees Participated in NNO

SCI Frackville Lt. Donald Newberry, attended National Night Out on August 7, where he networked with members of the Frackville Borough Police Department, including Chief Bell and District Attorney Mike O'Pake. The event was held at the Frackville Elks, where there was plenty of food, games and face painting. The prison hopes to set up a table at next year's event.



## Huntingdon's National Night Out



SCI Huntingdon employees participated in the 34th Annual Blair County Night Out Against Crime in Duncansville on August 7, 2018. Lt. Daniel Wendle, CO1 R. Auker, CO1 S. Weyant, Ed McEwen, and Records Specialist Beth Linn (with CPL puppy, Tore) represented the institution with a contraband display, recruiting display and service dog program display. Officer Weyant presented

a Corrections Emergency Response Team/Corrections Rifle Specialist Team display, explaining how special teams interact with each other.

There were over 40 organizations distributing information to the community. Approximately 1,400 people attended the event. Staff had the opportunity to personally interact with around 600 people explaining various aspects of the Department of Corrections.



 **Pennsylvania Department of Corrections** added 6 new photos \*\*\*  
to the album: **National Night Out.**  
August 8 at 4:05 PM · 🌐

The DOC and Board of Probation and Parole staff stepped out last night to participate in National Night out across the state. Staff members handed out children's stickers and temporary tattoos and posed for pictures with crime-fighting mascots and local lawmakers. In all, more than 75 employees staffed more than 65 locations statewide.

National Night Out is an annual community-building campaign that promotes police-community partnerships and neighborhood camaraderie to make n...  
[See More](#)



**National Night Out**  
6 Photos

## Somerset NNO

In Somerset, National Night Out activities were held on August 14. Representatives from SCIs Somerset and Laurel Highlands participated in NNO at the Union Street Playground in Somerset, Pa. Our display included dogs from the CPL program, job recruitment, pictures and facts regarding both SCIs Somerset and Laurel Highlands, as well as



games and treats for the kids. The event was very positive, well attended, and there were many fun activities to do. There was a variety of community service organizations there promoting a safe and healthy community. It was unfortunate that rain dampened the evening and cut the festivities short.

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## How to Visit if you have Medically Implanted Metal

If you are a visitor with a metal implant or you must wear an item constructed with metallic items (such as back brace, knee support, etc.), or if you are medically required to use an ambulatory assistance device (wheel chair, walker, cane, crutches, etc.), you must provide a doctor's certificate verifying the medical requirement in order to have contact visits.

If you show up for a visit without a doctor's certificate, you may be permitted to have a non-contact visit. A doctor's certificate is required at the subsequent visits for contact visits to be conducted. A visitor with such requirements will be scanned with a hand-held metal detector for detection of metallic objects other than those medically required.

Medically required ambulatory assistance devices are permitted in the visiting area, but inmates are prohibited from handling any of them.

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## Peerstar LLC Visits SCI Houtzdale for VSU/RSO Workshop



August 7, 2018, marked the start of SCI Houtzdale's first Citizenship group that is being facilitated by Peerstar, LLC. This workshop is made available to through a Bureau of Community Corrections service lot provider voucher.

Peerstar, LLC's Citizenship Program is an interactive and non-traditional mutual support group designed to be a beneficial resource for peers involved in the criminal justice system. Group sessions cover a wide range of topics such as healthy relationships, communication skills, negotiating the criminal justice system and strategies for successful community reintegration. The group is facilitated by a forensic certified peer specialist and is made up of five participants. Participants attend two groups per week for four weeks (eight groups total) and receive a certificate upon completion of the program.

The Citizenship Program uses the framework of Citizenship, an innovative model for community integration and social inclusion developed by PRCH. These non-traditional classes are geared toward the "5 R's" of community membership: *Rights, Responsibilities, Roles, Relationships and Resources*. Group skills building is combined with wraparound forensic peer support and role modeling within a social program with links to both treatment providers and the community at large. The program targets participants' isolation and lack of valued social roles and skills for successful community living.

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### Speaking of Peerstar...

Read about how Peerstar is helping inmates in the Vermont DOC:

Valley News (08/16/2018)

<https://www.vnews.com/Inmates-Helping-Inmates-18935381>

Vermont Prisons: A Cultural Shift

By Jim Kenyon

On a Friday night in March, a 37-year-old inmate at the Southern State Correctional Facility in Springfield hanged himself in his cell. Some inmates were having difficulty coping with the sudden loss of a friend. Others were angry the Vermont Department of Corrections hadn't done more to prevent the tragedy.

To help them sort through the range of emotions, prison officials called on Dave Rice. Over that weekend, Rice met one-on-one with prisoners behind closed doors.

"It's not about giving a right answer, but just listening," Rice said. "It's about letting guys express their feelings."

Rice, 51, might have seemed an unlikely choice to serve as counselor. He's an inmate himself.

In January, Vermont became one of the first states to use offenders to provide forensic peer support services. Rice was among 16 inmates from across the state handpicked to undergo training to become "Open Ear" coaches.

So far, Rice has met with about 30 inmates who are looking for someone to talk with about their problems. They might have just received news that their wife has filed for divorce or they're about to lose their parental rights.

First-time inmates — too scared to approach other inmates or guards — bring their questions about the routines of life behind bars. The food? "Not great," Rice warns them.

In prison, offenders are told when to eat, where to sleep and when they're allowed outdoors. "Control of their lives have been taken away from them," Rice said.

I suspect about now that some people are wondering: Why should the outside world care about the mental well-being of convicted criminals?

Simple: About 90 percent of offenders eventually get out. It's in society's best interest that they have tools to better prepare them for life back on the streets.

The way I look at it, any program that might keep people from returning to prison is worth a shot. It costs Vermont taxpayers nearly \$60,000 a year to keep an offender locked up. With an annual corrections budget of \$150 million or so, the \$16,000 it cost to get the "Open Ears" program off the ground is money well spent.

Some background:

About 10 years ago, a private Pennsylvania company called Peerstar began working with the Yale School of Medicine to provide peer support to inmates with mental illness in hopes of reducing recidivism.

"Forensic peer support is a young but growing field," wrote the nonprofit Center for Public Policy Priorities, of Austin, Texas, in 2014. "Peer support specialists make contributions to recovery above and beyond what is provided by traditional mental health staff. Three of these unique contributions are: role modeling, street smarts, and empathy.

"In sharing their personal stories, peer support specialists become role models for self-care and instill hope."

Vermont's prison population has declined in recent years, but the state still has about 1,750 people behind bars, including 207 in Pennsylvania. Roughly 45 percent of the state's prisoners receive mental health services. But the bottom line: "Mental health workers don't know what it's like to be an inmate," said Ed Adams, superintendent of the Springfield prison, which currently has 360 inmates.

When the decision was made to give peer support a try, the staffs at the state's six prisons were asked to identify offenders who would make good coaches. It wasn't just about selecting people who were trustworthy and good listeners. "They needed to be guys who could handle the added stress," Adams said. "They had to have stability in their own lives."

Some inmates declined the offer. They weren't interested in moving for a month to the Northwest State Correctional Facility in St. Albans, where the training was taking

place. They also weren't given much incentive. Since Vermont eliminated so-called good time about 15 years ago, participating in the program wouldn't earn coaches a reduction in their sentences.

"It was a massive experiment," said Annie Ramniceanu, the DOC's addiction and mental health systems director. "We had never as a department, as far as I know, developed an inmate-to-inmate program."

She briefed lawmakers on the program during this year's legislative session. She emphasized that it would be open to all inmates — not just those who were struggling with mental illness.

"It makes a lot of sense," said Rep. Alice Emmons, a Springfield Democrat who chairs the House Committee on Corrections and Institutions. "Offenders are more likely to connect with other offenders than supervised staff who go home at the end of the day."

Coaches are "experiencing the same things day-to-day" as the inmates they're working with, Emmons added.

Ramniceanu wasn't involved in selecting the potential coaches and didn't ask about their crimes. "As long as someone was willing to do this, I was willing to take a chance," she said.

Rice and two other Springfield inmates were transported to St. Albans in the middle of the night without being told a lot about what was ahead of them.

Why did Rice sign up? When he was incarcerated in the early 2000s, he told himself that his time in prison "wasn't going to be all for nothing." He'd already been volunteering inside the prison to help inmates with chronic illnesses, along with working as a janitor.

In St. Albans, they were enrolled in Peerstar's training program, which was led by a former Pennsylvania inmate. After graduating from the month-long program, the 16 men learned they'd earn \$7 a day — the most that inmates can earn in Vermont — for coaching.

Providing the program took root.

Prison staffs — from superintendents to correctional officers — had to be convinced that Open Ears would be effective in reducing inmates' stress levels, which could make their lives easier and safer. At the same time, inmates had to be assured that it wasn't a DOC trick to get them to open up, only to have what they said used against them.

"This is a cultural shift," said Colleen Nilsen, the DOC's chief of mental health services. "It's been a leap of faith on both sides."

The one-on-one sessions were scheduled in rooms reserved for confidential meetings between attorneys and their incarcerated clients. There'd be no guards or audio recorders in the room. (In Springfield, a glass partition separates the room from a guard station.)

Rice starts off by telling offenders that this is a "safe environment where you can talk about whatever you need to get off your chest, and it doesn't go beyond this room."

It was made clear to prison staffs that “coaches weren’t rats,” Ramniceanu said. “They couldn’t be used as informants and the staff couldn’t strong-arm them into providing information.

“The amount of freedom we were giving inmates was new to everyone.”

DOC officials drew up confidentiality guidelines to protect coaches and their clients. Secrecy was to be maintained “except when someone reports they have a plan to kill themselves or someone else, escape from custody, kill a victim upon release or plan to introduce a weapon.”

For the coaches to have credibility, they couldn’t be doing the DOC’s dirty work or blabbing to other inmates. If either happened, the “program would be over,” Ramniceanu said. “Offenders wouldn’t come back.”

But even with the promise of confidentiality, it was a hard sell. Many inmates think, “I’m tough. I don’t need this,” said superintendent Adams.

In addition, “no inmate wants to be the first or second to sign up,” he said. “But inmates are seeing that it’s not a big deal. It’s starting to take off.”

Inmates can request to see a coach or be referred by the staff. “The buy-in by staff is slowly happening,” said Kristen Sulzman, the volunteer coordinator at the Springfield prison.

In June, Springfield’s coaches had 65 requests for their services. In just the first two weeks of July, there were 38 requests, Sulzman said. One coach recently left prison after completing his sentence, leaving Rice and another inmate to carry the load.

Rice agreed to be interviewed and photographed last week. Under DOC rules, the state contacts victims in advance to get their consent. In Rice’s case, the victims were OK with him appearing in this column.

Rice, who is from Springfield, is serving a minimum sentence of 20 years for sex offenses. He’s been incarcerated for 16 years. “I know the damage that I’ve done, but it doesn’t excuse my previous behavior,” he told me.

As a coach, Rice said he encourages inmates to focus on what they can control, which in prison isn’t much. He often pitches the benefits of Community High School of Vermont, the DOCs educational program where he earned his degree in 2014.

When the time is right, Rice is frank with the men who come to see him. “Your past doesn’t have to define you, but what are you are going to do about it?” he asks. “You have to get right. You have to change the behavior that got you in here.”

Often that behavior includes abusing drugs and alcohol. Rice can relate. “I’m a former heroin addict,” he said.

Participation in Open Ears is strictly voluntary. Rice has had inmates who were referred by staff walk out after five minutes. It wasn’t for them.

“The power is in their hands,” he said. “I’ve done a lot of time. I let them know there’s always hope.”

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## Fayette's July Donations

During the month of July, SCI Fayette accepted donations from employees for the Domestic Violence Services of Southwestern PA. Items that were collected included paper towels, toilet paper, sponges, diaper rash ointment, infant nail clippers, Neosporin, band aids, cotton balls, orange copy paper and stamps. Gina Perry and Rebecca Palmer were the points of contact for the project.



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## Employees Present at APPA Conference

On July 31, a "Reentry: From The Inside Out" workshop was presented at the American Probation and Parole Association's 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Training Institute Philadelphia, Pa.

Presenting the workshop was SCI Laurel Highlands Unit Manager Rebecca Witt, SCI Laurel Highlands Reentry Parole Agent Tim Ross, Altoona Parole District Office ASCRA Michael Corson and former juvenile lifer and successful reentrant Joseph Romeri.

The presentation covered reentry programming in SCIs throughout Pennsylvania to an audience comprised mostly of individuals from other states. There also was a question-and-answer session with the highlight being Mr. Romeri, who shared his life experience of incarceration at a young age and his accomplishments throughout at 38-year sentence and how the reentry program at SCI Laurel Highlands (which he helped begin) ultimately assisted him in his successful reentry. He also shared with the crowd the process of being resentenced as a juvenile lifer, the parole process and his trials and tribulations of his release experience.



**Pictured, left to right, are: Lisa Cope and Mike Corson, PBPP ASCRAs; Tim Ross, Reentry Parole Agent; Joseph Romeri; Rich Podguski, Director PBPP; and Rebecca Witt, Unit Manager at SCI Laurel Highlands.**

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## Bishop Celebrates Mass at Mercer

The Most Rev. Lawrence T. Persico, JCL, Bishop of the Erie Roman Catholic Diocese, celebrated Mass in the chapel at SCI Mercer on August 2. This was Bishop Persico's second visit to the facility since his appointment in 2012.



Bishop Persico was the principal celebrant at the Mass, along with Father Matt Kujawinski, pastor of Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish in Mercer. Deacon Ed Horneman, chaplain at SCI Mercer, read the Gospel and assisted with the Mass. Master of ceremonies was Father Michael Polinek, director of vocations for the Diocese of Erie. Several inmates assisted as altar servers. In addition, the chapel choir provided uplifting music selections.

More than 40 inmates attended the service. Of those in attendance, two received the sacrament of baptism and four received confirmation. The Bishop encouraged everyone to renew their own baptismal promises as well.

All in attendance were greatly blessed by the Bishop and the message he communicated during his homily.

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## Waymart Continues their Donations!

Recently SCI Waymart donated items from their institution garden to Keystone Mission.

Donated items included 110 cucumbers, a dozen squash, tomatoes, broccoli and cabbage!

Kudos to Waymart staff and inmates for helping to provide fresh vegetables to local food pantries and missions.

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## Smithfield Holds Hope and Reentry Program

On August 7, SCI Smithfield hosted a "Hope and Reentry" program, which was attended by PA State Senator Camera Bartolotta, PA Representative Chris Rabb, staff from The Center for Returning Citizens and the Pennsylvania Prison Society. Also in attendance was a former SCI Smithfield juvenile lifer John Thompson, Jr., who is working for a reentry program in Philadelphia. The day's program provided information regarding reentry services and current legislative initiatives as it relates to juvenile lifers.



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## Ice Cream for Staff

JR's Ice Cream Truck, The Café, came in to serve SCI Waymart employees who enjoyed hot fudge sundaes, hard ice cream, root beer floats, cold brewed coffee floats and/or cold brewed coffee – all in support of the prison's Mentoring Committee.



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## **Mercer Joins in the Statewide Suitcase Project in July 2018**

SCI Mercer took part in the statewide "Suitcases for Kids" challenge by Secretary Wetzel, providing donations to the local Children and Youth Services.

On July 23, approximately 45 donations were received, which included suitcases, duffle bags and backpacks. Some donations came with blankets, books, stuffed animals, pillows, toothbrushes and toothpaste, pencils and notebooks.

CYS Supervisor Debra Jazwinski and CYS Caseworker Gina Fertig (both from Mercer County Department of Children and Youth Services) were on hand to receive the donations and were greatly thankful for the heartfelt generosity of the SCI Mercer staff.

Ms. Jazwinski said there are approximately 47 foster homes for children in the Mercer County area who will benefit from the donations.

Superintendent Melinda Adams thanks the SCI Mercer staff who stepped up to the secretary's challenge to support their local community and the children who may be in need during a difficult situation.



**Pictured with Superintendent Melinda Adams, left to right are: CYS Caseworker Gina Fertig, CYS Supervisor Debra Jazwinski, Superintendent Adams, Deputy Superintendent Shane Dady, Classification Program Manager Lisa Graves and Activities Manager April Harvey.**

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## SCI Frackville Names EOQ

Superintendent Kathy Brittain named Corrections Counselor Jill Marhelko as the prison's Employee of the Quarter for the third quarter of 2018.

In a letter to Marhelko, the superintendent wrote:

*"Your care has been displayed in your many years of service in assisting the Employee Recreation Association in organizing and funding its numerous annual events. Management recognizes your quality work skills as well as supporting you for this award.*

*You demonstrate professionalism at the highest level. You take great pride in your appearance and are always willing to assist your co-workers. Your greatest asset is the kindness and attention that you demonstrate to all employees that you come in contact with.*

*I applaud your selection as Employee of the Quarter because you continue to best represent our profession with a high level of pride and professionalism. You promote the teamwork philosophy and attributes that deserve this special recognition."*



**Pictured, left to right, are: DSFM Lori White, Superintendent Kathy Brittain, Corrections Counselor 2 Jill Marhelko and Unit Manager James Weissinger.**

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## Albion Celebrates 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Residential Community Day

On July 28, the Residential Treatment Unit (RTU) at SCI Albion celebrated its 4th annual Residential Community Day under the supervision of Therapeutic Activities Services Worker Allison Richard and RTU Unit Manager Kevin Lantz.

The theme this year was "Strength and Courage."



Events included an art contest judged by prison administrators, a talent show, a motivational speaker (Drug and Alcohol Treatment Specialist Shawn Crosby), an essay presentation, a slide show pertaining to the theme, a picnic lunch on the unit, and an awards and certificate presentations. The RTU inmates and staff were entertained in the chapel by the institutional band, The Fabulous Corvettes.

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## Coal Township CWP Helps Clean Up Sunbury Town Park



This week's preparation for Sunbury's River Festival included cleaning up the Town Park and Front Street areas. Tammy, an employee for the City of Sunbury, stated, "These guys, the workers, are a blessing. We have so much to do with very few employees, they truly are a blessing. There's just not enough hours in a day."

SCI Coal Township's Community Work Program (CWP), under the supervision of Labor Foreman Joe Mazer, spent two days assisting with clean up and beautification of the city's landscaping, etc. Sunbury officials were extremely grateful for the assistance received from the CWP.

Sunbury River Festival annually welcomes thousands of visitors to Sunbury for a weekend celebration. This year's theme is "Bringing Family Home."

Sunbury River Festival kicks off Thursday evening and carries through the weekend with live music, the Car Cruise-In, Chalk the Walk, Cardboard Boat Regatta, a variety of food and craft vendors plus activities and learning opportunities for the entire family. The festival closes on Saturday evening at the Riverfront Amphitheater with live music, food and FIREWORKS!

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## Huntingdon Holds First C.O.V.E.R. Event

On August 8, SCI Huntingdon hosted its first C.O.V.E.R. event, which was held to promote this initiative at SCI Huntingdon and to help promote staff wellness through the program.

Three guest speakers were invited:

**Natasha Amaral** is the DOC's Chairperson for the C.O.V.E.R. program.

**Earl Granville** is a combat-wounded retired Army staff sergeant who lost his twin brother (a DOC employee) to suicide.

**Kevin Bittenbender** is an Army sergeant major and 33-year veteran of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. Mr. Bittenbender is the founder of the Bureau's Battle Buddy Program which inspired the creation of the C.O.V.E.R. program.



Invitations were also extended to staff from SCI Smithfield, Huntingdon County Jail, Huntingdon County police departments, the Huntingdon County Sheriff's Department and Pennsylvania State Police.

All three speakers graciously held two sessions to gain maximum exposure and attendance. The messages put forth by all were that of staff wellness and helping each other through the sometimes-difficult times. Staff at SCI Huntingdon received them well and were extremely thankful for the time and messages.

SCI Huntingdon's C.O.V.E.R. Committee has also put into place a plan to start selling institution specific merchandise which will include the C.O.V.E.R. emblem and SCI Huntingdon on them. Special thanks go out to the guest speakers, the C.O.V.E.R. committee, Jami Stuller of the Culinary Department, and Curt Frailey of the Activities Department, for all that was done to make this event a success.

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# SCI Coal Township Employees Presented with DOC Years of Service Certificates



**Deputy Superintendent for Centralized Services (DSCS) Tony Luscavage and Deputy Superintendent for Facility Management (DSFM) Victor Mirarchi present Corrections Officer 1 K. Treon with his 25-year DOC Service Certificate.**



**DSCS Luscavage and DSFM Mirarchi present Lieutenant Steve Young, Plumbing Trades Instructor Ray Mrozek and Food Service Instructor Jake Davis with 20-year DOC Service Certificates.**

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## Reentrant Success Story!

On Saturday, August 11<sup>th</sup>, four employees of Berks Connections/Pretrial Services (BCPS) spent the morning volunteering with Habitat for Humanity Berks County (HFHBC) at their Tulpehocken Street property in Reading, Pa. The BCPS crew was joined that morning by Roberto.

Roberto was first referred to the BCPS Workforce Development Program while housed at the Wernersville Community Corrections Center in April 2017. He quickly completed his scheduled classes and was referred by the agency to an employer. Roberto began employment on May 15, 2017. He has retained his employment since that day. During that time, he has continued to work with our financial program coordinator to save a significant amount of money as well as begin to invest for his retirement.



BCPS has developed a collaborative partnership with Habitat for Humanity Berks County through the agency's U.S. Department of Labor Reentry Employment Opportunity Training Grant Award. Although Roberto did not take part in the training program, he was referred to their home ownership program based on his success throughout our Workforce Development Program.

Roberto was accepted into their homeowner program and is well on his way to achieving home ownership through HFHBC! BCPS employees Nicolle Schnovel (Co-Executive Director), Christine Guistwite (Reentry Director), Kerry Kerschner (DOC Reentry Director) and Willie Colon (Reentry Mentoring Specialist) volunteered their time and donated their volunteer hours to Roberto towards his required total needed to complete the HFHBC ownership program.

BCPS is proud of Roberto and his commitment to his reentry and changing his life! He is one of many successful reentrants who have been referred to our services through the Department of Corrections/Bureau of Community Corrections' Reentry Support Services Program.

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# DOC Facebook Postings of Interest

 **Pennsylvania Department of Corrections** August 10 at 12:32 PM · 🌐

Rakim Johnson graduated from Quehanna Boot Camp on July 25 and immediately landed a job with Gautier Steel, Ltd. in Johnstown as a result of QUE's reentry efforts. A staff member at Gautier Steel has been working with Reentry Specialist Michelle Dunn to afford employment opportunities to motivated Boot Camp graduates. Congratulations to Mr. Johnson and to Ms. Dunn and the other staff at QUE who helped prepare Mr. Johnson for successful reentry.



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| \$1,673,911 |
| 29          |
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| MON         |
| TUES        |
| 377,3       |
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| THUR        |
| 201,80      |
| FRI         |
| 15,00       |
| TOTALS      |
| 1,281,15    |



**Pennsylvania Department of Corrections**

August 9 at 11:40 AM · 🌐

The Minnesota Department of Corrections kindly sent us pictures of DOC honor guard members participating in the funeral on July 26 of MN corrections officer Joseph Gomm. Officer Gomm was killed by an inmate early last month. The photos were taken by Lynn Cronquist, a board member of the MN Law Enforcement Memorial Association.



## JOSEPH BRIAN GOMM

A Service of Remembrance  
and Celebration of Life

January 21, 1973 - July 18, 2018

North Heights Lutheran Church  
1700 W. Hwy 96  
Arden Hills, Minnesota



**Pennsylvania Department of Corrections**

August 12 at 4:51 PM · 🌐



<http://www.readingeagle.com/.../guest-op-ed-success-stories-i...>



READINGEAGLE.COM

**Guest op-ed: Success stories in Community Corrections**

State official discusses efforts to help people released from prison.



**Pennsylvania Department of Corrections** shared a photo.



August 6 at 12:24 PM · 🌐

DOC Secretary John Wetzel is named president of the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA).



**Pennsylvania Department of Corrections**

August 10 at 1:45 PM · 🌐



Catch Sec. Wetzel in part 2 of "Field Days" podcast produced by the Michigan DOC. Here Wetzel talks about his "transformative" experiences visiting corrections facilities in Europe.

<https://soundcloud.com/field-days/padoc-wetzel-2>



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## Huntingdon Opens VSO

On August 1, SCI Huntingdon hosted an opening ceremony for the new Veterans' Service Office. In attendance were representatives from the Altoona Veterans' Hospital, Veteran's Leadership Program, Tomorrow's Hope and the DOC's Statewide Veterans' Coordinator Ryan Yoder. There were 30 incarcerated veterans in attendance in addition to numerous staff members, including Superintendent Kevin Kauffman. The attendees were privileged to hear a moving dedication speech from Sgt. Matt Gibbons (retired), of the United States Army. The SCI Huntingdon inmate color guard presented the Colors prior to the ceremony. Following the ceremony, the incarcerated veterans networked with the outside agencies and staff members. The SCI Huntingdon's Veterans' Service Office was formally dedicated to all veterans who are incarcerated or employed at SCI Huntingdon.



**A mural in the Veterans' Service Office at SCI Huntingdon.**

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# Finances After Prison A Collaborative Approach

John E. Wetzel, Pennsylvania Secretary of Corrections  
Robin L. Wiessmann, Pennsylvania Secretary of Banking and Securities





Returning citizens have the best chance at success in the community if they have the tools they need upon release. Having a high school or equivalent degree, completing job training, gaining access to housing, medical care, and employment, and achieving financial capability are all essential parts of becoming a productive citizen.

### The Challenge

Individuals who are incarcerated are often ill-prepared to address financial realities of life in the community, can repeat poor financial decisions, and are vulnerable to scam artists.

Most inmates have never had a bank account. They may have grown up in households where everything was “cash only,” and never worked a job for which they received a regular paycheck, with the option for direct deposit and 401(k) savings.

After being released from prison, one individual remarked to our staff that “people aren’t ready for the real world. Understanding that costs on the street are higher than in prison came as a huge surprise to me. You need to live within your means. But budgeting doesn’t come naturally, especially when you’ve had everything you needed provided to you for decades.”

This man was stunned that he’d have to pay \$225 for a new pair of eyeglasses, whereas inside an institution, they cost him only \$30.

Another individual immediately became a victim of identity theft upon release. He opened a bank account with assistance from his Community Corrections Center (CCC) and bought a cell phone. Someone called him the next day to say “You opened a bank account on Monday with us and we need to verify your Social Security number.” He didn’t realize this was a scam and provided his Social Security number. His sister overheard the conversation and immediately helped him take some preventative measures, with help from the CCC staff, but this incident highlights the vulnerability of reentrants who are not warned about scams and identification theft.

We have heard of cases of formerly incarcerated individuals discovering that – upon getting copies of their credit reports – they had been become victims of identity theft. Sometimes the perpetrator is someone close, including families or friends.

Individuals coming out of prison sometimes want to open their own businesses but they do not always see the connection between stable finances and good credit and the ability to achieve their dreams.





The Department of Corrections (Corrections) did not have the expertise or resources to provide up-to-date, real world budgeting and money and credit management training to those individuals returning to the community.

### The Role of Personal Finance In Recidivism



In Pennsylvania, about 90 percent of people incarcerated are eventually released back into society. That equates to about 20,000 people each year reentering communities across the commonwealth. One of the many challenges faced by men and women returning to society – sometimes after decades of incarceration – is their unfamiliarity with financial concepts and tools. Opening a banking account, using a credit card, or saving money can be overwhelming and intimidating. Often, reentrants make mistakes with finances because of a lack of knowledge, thus creating problems in their personal lives that can lead to narrower ranges of choices and bad decisions. History has shown these bad decisions have led to additional criminal charges and incarceration.

Corrections' research has shown that 73 percent of "successful reentrants" (those out three or more years) had an account with a bank or credit union. Of unsuccessful reentrants (those recidivating before three years) only 39 percent had accounts. While Corrections did not dig into the WHY of those statistics, it does tell us that we are onto something good.

The research also showed that successful reentrants had accrued about \$5,000 in debt, while unsuccessful reentrants only had about \$2,000. This outcome shows the willingness of financial companies to extend credit to an individual. Credit, when used appropriately, can help individuals get back on their feet. Whether it is to buy a work wardrobe, or a car to get them to and from a job, individuals need to understand how to use credit wisely.

### Creation of an Interagency Collaborative Approach

As part of Pennsylvania's Consumer Financial Protection Initiative, announced by Governor Tom Wolf in 2015, state government agencies engaged in financial education formed a working group called the Pennsylvania State Agency Financial Exchange (PA \$AFE).

In the fall of 2016, the Department of Corrections and Department of Banking and Securities (DoBS) began discussions about creating a unique interagency collaboration to address the challenges of reentrants making educated decisions about money. Our two agencies formed two unique partnerships the following year, designed to provide a new skill set to a reentrant's toolbox for success: financial capability.

At first, our discussions focused on inmates sentenced as juveniles to life in prison without parole, who became known as "juvenile lifers." Pennsylvania had more than 500 juvenile lifers in its State Corrections Institutions (SCI), the largest population in the country.

In 2012, the United States Supreme Court held in *Miller v. Alabama* that it is unconstitutional to sentence a juvenile offender to mandatory life-without-parole. In practical terms, this means that those juvenile offenders previously sentenced to mandatory life-without-parole can seek resentencing by the trial court. Since 2016, 112 juvenile lifers have been released.



Beyond the juvenile lifer population, our two agencies also began to discuss financial concerns with inmates in the transitional housing units (THUs) and through reentry service offices (RSOs), as well as residents of community corrections facilities who were no longer incarcerated. Their challenges with money represent a broad variety of issues, from never having had a banking account or credit card, to not understanding how credit history can affect the ability to find employment and housing, to never having been exposed to the technology of financial services, including automatic teller machines (ATMs) and online banking.

Our agencies formalized a partnership through a Letter of Understanding in February 2017.



### **The Approach to Financial Education in Correctional Facilities**

While DoBS has a vast repository of knowledge and resources spanning topics from consumer protection to financial basics to investor education, it was important to address Corrections' specific needs, and tailor content to this unique audience. In addition, by bringing in Corrections' stakeholders representing the spectrum from intake/entry, incarceration, transition to release, community corrections and parole, we developed an approach which focused on the unique needs Corrections expressed.

First, the content is targeted based on their time left until reentry. In short, those beginning a sentence need to understand how to monitor their credit while incarcerated, so they are not further "in the hole" when they get out and can make restitution payments. Those nearing reentry need to understand banking basics and budgeting.

Next, DoBS wanted to make sure that what was developed was scalable and sustainable, given limited resources. Also, understanding that one presentation couldn't change a lifetime of habits, DoBS worked to create a holistic and tiered approach.

Taking a triage approach based on Corrections' need, DoBS initially offered a seminar entitled "Credit and Banking Basics." The seminar covers credit reports and scores, why credit is important, and the basics guidelines for how to use a bank or credit union. Demand from inmates also allowed DoBS to offer "Creating a Spending Plan" (aka budgeting), "Protecting Yourself from Identity Theft and Scams" (mostly for juvenile lifers), and surprisingly, "Investing 101."

The education has been provided in-person in classroom and large-meeting settings, as well as webinars. All programs have been delivered by a DoBS outreach specialist.

The focus of these courses was on juvenile lifers, and those living in the THUs or accessing RSO's. Some institutions invited DoBS present to the inmate general population and some had the agency present to the Veterans Service Units, being piloted at three state prisons.

DoBS also prepared a short DVD for the SCIs to run bi-weekly in their dayrooms. The DVD topics covered "Credit Reports and Scores," "Banking Basics," "Cybersecurity," and "About the Department of Banking and Securities."



### Creation of a Public-Private Collaborative Approach to Financial Education for Reentrants

In addition to educational programming delivered in correctional facilities, a second partnership of state government agencies and non-profit organizations delivered programming to reentrants in the community.

Using the Financial Reality Fair concept designed for high school students by the National Credit Union Foundation, Corrections, DoBS, the Pennsylvania Credit Union Foundation, with contributions from the PA Insurance Department, the PA Housing Finance Agency, and individual credit unions launched the PA Financial

Reality Fair for reentrants. Hundreds of community volunteers, trained by credit union officials, helped to make the PA Financial Reality Fairs possible.

The goals of the PA 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
- Share reentry best practices with citizens and other state corrections departments

At the PA Reality Fairs, reentrants were 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

The PA Financial Reality Fairs helped reentrants learn how to manage a "real-life" budget, including paying for rent and utilities, their court costs, restitution and, for many, child support. Financial counselors at each location assisted the reentrants as they moved through the workshop, managing life expenses.

#### Experience to Date: First-Year Report

Early indications are promising: for example, one individual received a secured credit card upon release to help him establish and build his credit. He recently called the DoBS program provider with glee to report his credit score was going up and he had been notified again of his progress.

And in learning about personal finance, one reentrant learned for the first time: how to open a bank account to lower transaction fees; the need to pay federal, state, and local income taxes; how to budget for everyday tasks like doing his laundry; how to use coupons to save money when shopping; and how to save money every week. His advice: "Watch and learn before you do."



**In the first year of this partnership:**

- DoBS held 102 presentations at all 25 SCIs, visiting each facility at least once. The program reached approximately 4,300 inmates, who represented a mix of THUs, RSOs, general population, and juvenile lifers.
- DoBS hosted a webinar for 125 juvenile lifers in December 2017.
- DOC also allowed DoBS to train their staff through webinars and presentations which reached 165 state employees.
- DoBS provided materials from its library of consumer education and protection brochures and one-page pamphlets.
- Community Corrections Centers (CCCs) hosted six PA Financial Reality Fairs for their residents.
- Corrections, DoBS, and several other groups hosted five more PA Financial Reality Fairs in one day (October 14). Events were held in Erie, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Reading, and Harrisburg for 373 participants.
- Beyond the reality fairs, five other CCCs hosted DoBS for classes, educating about 100 residents.
- Note: DoBS was also invited to the Allenwood Federal Correctional Center and gave one presentation to 135 inmates.

Feedback from the inmates has been overwhelmingly positive. They are hungry for this information and ask many questions.

The stories we have heard and feedback received suggest there is a need for financial education within the prison system. Individuals are hungry to learn how to access tools and resources to become financially capable upon release. Independent research indicates that inmates who participate in educational programs while incarcerated are 43 percent less likely to return to prison, and post-release employment rates are 13 percent higher for people who participated in education or training while incarcerated.

**Survey of Inmates**

Throughout the first year, DoBS surveyed participants in the program, providing a sample of 378 responses to the following questions:





1. Do you currently have a savings account with a bank or credit union outside of the State Correctional Institution?
  - Thirty-two percent responded "yes"; 68 percent "no."
2. If yes to Question 1, did you open this savings account before your incarceration?
  - Seventy-six percent responded yes; 24 percent no.
3. If no to Question 2, how did you open your account?
  - Ninety-four percent opened the account several years ago
  - Twenty percent opened a joint account with a family member or friend
  - Twelve percent opened the account using Power of Attorney; and
  - Six percent opened an account with an internet-based bank or credit union.
4. If you do not currently have a savings account with a bank or credit union outside the State Correction Institution, would you like to open one?
  - Seventy percent responded yes; 30 percent no.
5. Have you attempted to open a savings account with a bank or credit union while incarcerated?
  - Thirteen percent responded yes; 87 percent no.
6. If yes to Question 6 and you were denied an account, what was the reason given for denial?
  - Thirty-seven percent responded that they did not possess required identification
  - Thirty-seven percent responded that they owed money to a bank or credit union (and were in the ChexSystem)
  - Seventeen percent responded that they did not have enough money for a minimum deposit
  - Twenty-seven percent responded with a variety of answers,
7. Do you have outstanding student loan debt?
  - Fifteen percent responded yes; 85 percent no.

#### Lessons Learned In First Year

DoBS has been working on ensuring that both inmates and Corrections staff have correct and current information related to financial services, products, and institutions, including:

- **There is no law, rule, or regulation that prohibits an inmate from having a bank account.** There are no state or federal laws that disallow an inmate from opening an account. Corrections policy states they may have one savings or investment account. Every financial institution has their own policies regarding opening accounts.
  - o **NOTE:** Current regulations in the banking industry ask for photo ID when opening an account, which means it is very difficult to open a new account from an SCI via the mail.
- **Inmates may not have multiple accounts.** Some inmates have requested that they be allowed to open investment accounts at the same place as their bank accounts, but to date, the limit is one savings or investment account.
- **Some banks may not allow inmates to open bank accounts.** Some financial institutions will not allow inmates to open accounts while incarcerated. Regulations



regarding ID encourage banks to have customers face-to-face with the bank employees when opening accounts. However, there are some banks and credit unions that WILL work with the incarcerated population. They may allow a Power of Attorney to open an account, or a family member or friend may be able to help open a joint account.

- **Inmates can receive/hold their credit reports in prison.** There is nothing that prohibits an inmate from requesting and receiving their credit reports.
- **Credit report request letters do not have to be notarized.** While a letter of residency is needed on SCI letterhead for each of the three main credit bureaus, recent changes do not make notarization necessary. The letter must state the inmate's prison ID number and dates of incarceration.
- **This program does not require that an inmate have internet or phone access.** DoBS provides mailing addresses for all communications that is distributed with the knowledge the internet and phone access is severely limited. For inmates, traditional mail may still be an easier way to request a credit report because of the ability to write in an inmate number. Internet sites do not take that into account. Another issue with internet access to AnnualCreditReport.com is that if the same computer is used by inmates to request credit reports, the same IP address is sending requests for different individuals and flags this activity as fraudulent. We are working with the credit bureaus to fix this issue by providing a list of IP addresses to [Annual CreditReport.com](#).

DoBS surveyed inmates on their experiences with banking from prison. We plan to have the data to present to the three main industry associations (Pennsylvania Bankers Association, Pennsylvania Association of Community Bankers, and the Pennsylvania Credit Union Association) to ask for more assistance in helping inmates.

#### Goals and Objectives for Second Year

DoBS is working with Corrections to make sure every inmate is given a letter upon incarceration, orienting inmates to financial education resources in the prison libraries. DoBS is also working on an updated DVD that will cover "Debit vs. Credit," "Easy Money Loans" (aka payday and auto title lending), and "529/ABLE Savings Accounts." Included will also be a video on interest rates on various loans and several insurance videos.

The consortium of agencies and organizations involved with the PA Financial Reality Fairs plan to continue offering this program to reentrants. There are plans to do one event 2018 for community corrections (in Scranton) and one inside an institution at the Quehanna Boot Camp. Moving forward we hope to have two a year at a minimum.

DoBS has developed a survey for Corrections staff. This will help us get feedback on the quality of our presenters, the information and the materials from the eyes of staff.

While continuing to provide this service to inmates and reentrants throughout the correctional system, we will also be developing research to measure the effect of financial education on rates of recidivism.

#### Measuring Success of Program

We will create a sample size of female and male inmates at four correctional facilities with similar resources. All inmates will be 6-9 months from release, housed either in THUs or taking advantage of RSOs. All inmates will have expressed a desire to receive this instruction and will be divided into a pilot group of inmates who will





receive instruction and a control group of inmates who will not receive instruction. We will create a sample size of 400 from the groups. We will use the inmate's Department of Corrections Number to track their progress following release. We will coordinate with the Department of Labor & Industry about employment and about public benefits. We will also look at recidivism rates.

With those cohorts, we will conduct pre- and post-tests for the sessions and when possible, administer another post-test prior to release.

We will eventually conduct a separate survey of participants to find out what action they took as a result of the classes offered by the DoBS.

#### Definition of Success

Success will be measured in a variety of ways: We will see if there is a difference in recidivism rates between the two groups of inmates – those that received the financial information and those that didn't. Success will also be if we see those who received financial tools more successfully employed and not on public benefits. We will see how many individuals were motivated to take action to do something as a result of the education, such as open an account with a bank or credit union, or start a business. Lastly we'll also check satisfaction of the programing with the inmates as well as staff to insure we are offering the best information.

While research is underway to determine the long-term effects of the programs, our anecdotal evidence shows a measure of success in the sheer numbers of inmates provided this invaluable education as an important first step toward successful reentry.

#### Approach to Replicate this Program by Other Organizations and States

We believe this program can be transferred to other political entities and scaled to meet statewide, county, and municipal needs. Staff members from the Department of Corrections and the Department of Banking and Securities are available to give in-person presentations and webinars on this program to trade associations, state government agencies, and service providers. As we develop data on program outcomes and/or adjust the program, we can share with stakeholders.



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Week of July 30...

## Paying Tribute to A Fallen Officer

The Pennsylvania DOC's Honor Guard attended the funeral services for slain Minnesota DOC Corrections Officer Joseph Gomm.



The following officers represented the DOC: Doug Clark, Andrew Roof, Joshua Shorts, Shawn Lacich, Doug Crile, Melissa Bernette Tiffany Grundy, Gary Hubbard, Chad Williams, Kathaleen Holland, Sean McGahey, Chris Cowher and Brian Hall. The staff came from SCIs Benner Township, Houtzdale, Huntingdon, Mercer and Somerset.

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SCI Mercer shares the funeral program...



*Do not stand at my grave and weep,  
I am not there; I do not sleep.  
I am a thousand winds that blow,  
I am the diamond glints on snow,  
I am the sunlight on ripened grain,  
I am the gentle autumn rain.*

*When you awaken  
in the morning's hush  
I am the swift uplifting rush  
of quiet birds in circle flight.  
I am the soft stars that shine at night.  
Do not stand at my grave and cry.  
I am not there; I did not die.*

IN LOVING MEMORY OF  
**Joseph Brian Gomm**

**BORN**  
January 21, 1973 in Bluehill, Maine

**DIED**  
July 18, 2018 in St. Paul, Minnesota

**FUNERAL SERVICE**  
Thursday, July 26, 2018 at 11:00 AM  
North Heights Lutheran Church  
Arden Hills, Minnesota  
Rt. Rev. Marty Shanahan

**SURVIVED BY**  
Mother – Gloria Gomm  
Brothers – Ken (Mary) Shuey,  
Norman Gomm, Jr. and Anthony Gomme  
Sisters – Angela (George) Wood and  
Audrey (Chris) Cone  
Several Aunts, Uncles, Nieces, Nephews and Cousins  
Loving Friend – Denise Vician  
Special Friends – Tom & Vicki Chronakos and  
Rich Rauschendorfer

Many Corrections Officers and Colleagues  
**INTERMENT WITH HONORS**  
Roselawn Cemetery - Roseville, Minnesota

*Holcomb-Henry-Boom-Purcell Funeral Homes  
Shoreview and St. Paul, Minnesota*

## DOC Hosts Opioid Conference



**Secretary Wetzel and Dr. Rachel L. Levine kick off the conference.**

On July 31, the Wolf Administration announced the availability of \$3 million in state funds for counties seeking to purchase Vivitrol to treat incarcerated individuals with substance-use disorder.

The announcement was made at a conference on Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) at the DOC's Training Academy, which drew 155 county officials representing 37 counties and was the first of its kind in the state.

Topics covered at the one-day event included implementing a successful Vivitrol program; application process, reentry efforts, partnership with the PA Board of Probation and Parole, allowable expenses, lessons learned, reporting requirements, staffing, budget development, research, barriers and protocol development.

"The number of individuals entering state prisons with substance use disorder has doubled in the last decade from 6 to 12 percent," said Corrections Secretary John Wetzel. "If we can address the issue while someone is in county jail, we can better ensure they successfully reenter the community and do not end up in the state prison system." Secretary of Health Dr. Rachel Levine, the keynote speaker at the event, emphasized the need for a multi-pronged approach to curb the opioid epidemic and save lives.

"The opioid and heroin crisis is one of the biggest public health crises that we have seen, and the response to it requires a multi-disciplinary, collaborative approach," Levine said. "We must continue to remember that addiction is a disease, and is not a moral failing. Through Governor Tom Wolf's disaster declaration, we are working

to provide resources, such as vivitrol, to help Pennsylvanians suffering with this disease.”

As part of its ongoing mission to better equip reentrants as they return to their communities, the Department of Corrections began providing Vivitrol for female inmates at SCI Muncy in 2014. Vivitrol is now available in at all state correctional institutions.

Vivitrol is a non-narcotic medication indicated for the treatment of alcohol use disorder as well as opioid use disorder.

The grant funding announcement represents the second round of state funding for Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) for county jails. In 2017, 11 counties received \$1.5 million in grants for Vivitrol treatment.

The Non-Narcotic Medication - Assisted Treatment (MAT) solicitation was established by the DOC to increase opportunities for counties to provide long acting non-narcotic, non-addictive medication (Vivitrol), combined with comprehensive substance abuse treatment, to eligible offenders upon release from county correctional institutions.

Administration of this drug prior to institutional release will allow newly released participants to focus on immediate reentry needs without also having to struggle with drug craving as Vivitrol is designed to reduce cravings for alcohol and/or opiates, while also blocking the ability to get high or feel euphoria.

Learn more about the DOC’s Medication Assisted Treatment initiative at [www.cor.pa.gov](http://www.cor.pa.gov)

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## **APPA Holds National Conference in Philadelphia**

The American Probation and Parole Association (APPA) hosted its 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Training Institute in Philadelphia this week.

The theme of this year’s conference was “Restoring Trust and Creating Hope.”

Keynote speaker for the opening session of the conference was DOC Secretary John Wetzel, who spoke about



the role of APPA and the joining of the PA DOC with PA Parole and how that consolidation makes us stronger.

The Plenary session included panelists who discussed Habilitation Empowerment Accountability Therapy (H.E.A.T.) and engaging young black males.

Panelists included:

**Mr. Darryl P. Turpin MPA, CADC** is currently a co-principal for a social justice firm, Heat Time. He is the principal investigator for clinical research with young black men in the criminal justice system. Formally he was the coordinator for the City of Louisville, Kentucky, Department of Public Health and Wellness, Men's Health initiative.

**Dr. Douglas B. Marlowe** is chief of Science, Law and Policy for the National Association of Drug Court Professionals (NADCP). Dr. Marlowe is responsible for translating the latest scientific findings into useful and understandable practice and national policy, addressing legal issues facing the drug court model and expanding NADCP's role in the full problem-solving court arena.

**Mr. Guy Wheeler** is a national expert in the area of treatment, consulting, and training with a strong focus on substance abuse and criminal behavior for both juveniles and adults. Mr. Wheeler is a faculty member for the National Drug Court Institute, National Council of Juvenile and Family Court Judges, and the International People of Color Conference.

**Mr. Wallace Green** is a Licensed Independent Chemical Dependency Counselor (LICDC) with a degree in Social Work. He has worked in the treatment field for over 20 years. Wallace began his career in 1990 as one of the first minority chemical dependency counselors at Turning Point Center in Brecksville, Ohio. In 1995 he began working at Community Assessment and Treatment Services in Cleveland, Ohio where he eventually worked his way up to become the Director of Outpatient Services.

Conference workshop topics included:

- Addressing Infrastructural Needs in Tribal Probation: An Overview of the Tribal Probation Academy
- Beyond the Usual Suspects: Collaborating Outside of the Box
- Changing Behavior in Community Supervision: Is Technology the Answer?
- Connecting the Dots: Housing for the Homeless Offender
- Effective Multi-Agency Collaboration in the Supervision and Management of Violent Offenders
- Envisioning the Future of Juvenile Community Supervision
- From Challenges to Opportunities: What's Your Legacy?
- Inspiring Hope and Passion: Serving Veterans in the Massachusetts Probation Service
- Juvenile Lifers in Pennsylvania and the Process of Reentry
- Measuring Offender Opinions on Probation and Supervised Release

- Supervising Opioid-Addicted Populations: When Evidence Conflicts with Criminal Justice Culture, What Should the Agency Do?
- Approaches to Address Violence and Illegal Immigration Through Effective Community Supervision
- Dinosaurs, Antelopes, and Fentanyl – Oh, My!
- How the 12 Steps Can Work for Justice-Involved Individuals
- Is Risk a Four-Letter Word? A Discussion of Risk at the Pretrial Stage
- Discussing a National Information Sharing Solution for Community Supervision Professionals
- Oklahoma DOC: Shedding Light on Officer Safety
- The Future of Juvenile Community Supervision
- Understanding, Harnessing and Leveraging the Power of the Unconscious Mind
- Welcome Aboard Drug Court Airlines: Piloting Programs for Client Success
- Creating Hope and Resilience in Arizona Community Corrections
- Roundtable Discussion – Alternatives to Incarceration, Comparative Systems.
- Domestic Violence: Safer Releases, Safer Communities
- Essential Elements of a High Functioning Pretrial Agency in Allegheny County, PA
- Millennials & Xennials on Supervision
- Children of Parents in Prisons and Jails
- How to Reach Your Hip-Hop Acculturated Client
- Essentials for your DUI Toolbox
- Probation and Parole Officers as Agents of Positive Youth Behavior Change
- Court System Response to Human Trafficking
- Tribal Reentry Programs
- Workforce Challenges and Evidence-Based Practices
- Drug Testing

Special Session speaker was Pennsylvania's Victim Advocate Jennifer Storm, who presented an interactive program that looked at one woman's recovery from addiction, trauma and adversity, and identified key components of what can help a person turn their life around. She is the ultimate survivor turned thriver having recently chronicled her own story of victimization and recovery in her memoirs *Blackout Girl: Growing up and Drying out in America* and *Leave the Light On*. Her story gives key insights to those working with individuals afflicted by trauma and substance use disorders, and provides tools on how to effectively identify and interact with clients to motivate success.



Closing Session Speaker was Larry Krasner. As one of Philadelphia's most outspoken and highly regarded progressive attorneys, for 30 years he has been fearlessly demanding fair treatment and justice for Philadelphians of all backgrounds.

DA Krasner was born in 1961 in St. Louis, the son of a World War II veteran father and minister mother. After attending public schools in St. Louis and the Philadelphia area, Larry earned degrees from the University of Chicago and Stanford Law School with the help of student loans and scholarships.

While at Stanford, rather than focusing on corporate law, he worked for indigenous rights, homeless people, and the poor, in criminal matters. After graduating in 1987, he received several job offers from prosecutors' offices around the country, but instead chose to return to Philadelphia to work as a public defender.

In 1993, DA Krasner started his own law practice in Center City specializing in criminal defense and civil rights. Since then, he has tried thousands of cases in criminal and civil court and represented countless defendants and filed more than 75 civil rights lawsuits against the police for corruption and physical abuse.

DA Krasner stands up for immigration, disability and gay rights, as well as the right to free speech. He has defended, normally at no cost, protesters at RNC 2000 and DNC 2016, members of ACT UP, Black Lives Matter, Casino-Free Philadelphia, DACA Dreamers, Decarcerate PA, Earth Quaker Action Team, Heeding God's Call, Kensington Welfare Rights Union, Occupy Philly and Reclaim Philadelphia, advocates of public school funding and opponents of the death penalty.

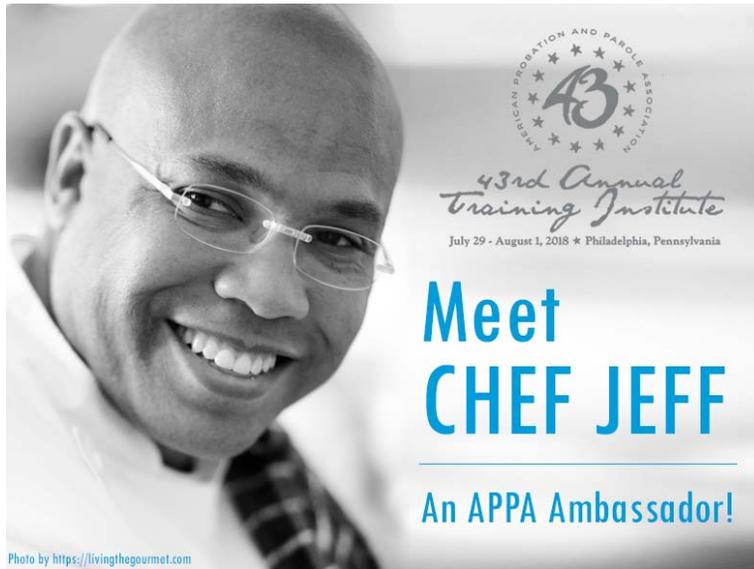
## **About APPA**

According to its website, the APPA is the voice of the community corrections industry, serving as the field's leading professional membership association. Its work is supported by thousands of passionate members throughout the U.S. and Canada, as well as other countries actively involved in strengthening community corrections work.

APPA has members at all levels of government and the private sector, including: community corrections professionals, service providers, libraries and educators, research students, volunteers, concerned citizens, corporations, public policy advocates, and others with an interest in criminal and juvenile justice.

APPA's purpose is aimed at reducing recidivism to keep communities safe, and that means strengthening the role of the community corrections industries. APPA informs the field, develops professionals and leads best practices. Learn more at [www.appa-net.org](http://www.appa-net.org)

## Meet An APPA Ambassador



**Chef Jeff Henderson is one of APPA's newest ambassadors, and conference coordinators were ecstatic that he was able to join everyone at the conference.**

**During the conference, he participated in several events including being a special guest one stop on the Community Corrections Chase (C3) route, co-hosting the VIP reception, and presenting a learning lab workshop entitled, **WHAT EVERY FELON NEEDS TO KNOW™**.**

### Who is Chef Jeff?

Jeff Henderson is a top-rated speaker, award-winning chef and New York Times Best-Selling Author. He inspires with his emotional journey of redemption from the streets to the stove, sharing real-life strategies to help you achieve your dreams, no matter your stage of life.

From humble beginnings in South Central Los Angeles, to life as an imprisoned drug dealer, and then as an award-winning celebrity chef and best-selling author, Jeff is a role model for anyone who needs the encouragement to reinvent their life. Since he discovered his passion and gift for cooking in the unlikeliest of places – prison – Jeff has completely turned his life around, and today serves as a popular and powerful voice for self-transformation.

The creator of Food Network's reality series, "The Chef Jeff Project," host of "Family Style with Chef Jeff," and the star of the TV series, "Flip My Food with Chef Jeff," he is also the best-selling author of two books.

From overcoming hardship to identifying one's personal talents, Jeff reveals his hard-knock yet transformative life lessons and the secrets to rising above and realizing your potential. His dynamic and engaging presentations help audiences discover their hidden business aptitudes, make life-changing decisions, and gain a new foothold on the ladder to success.

Learn more at [www.chefjefflive.com](http://www.chefjefflive.com)

## Secretary Wetzel met Chef Jeff



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## Scranton CCC Holds Tour

As part of the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration of the DOC's Bureau of Community Corrections, officials of the Scranton Community Corrections Center (CCC) opened their doors to local reporters on July 30.

Read the article published July 31 by the Scranton Times-Tribune:  
<https://www.thetimes-tribune.com/news/community-corrections-center-helps-reintegrate-offenders-to-society-1.2367781>

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## Highlighting Work Done by Becky MacDicken

The DOC worked with Moneyish.com to set up an interview with Pennsylvania Department of Banking and Securities Outreach Specialist Becky MacDicken to highlight the great work she's been doing to educate inmates about banking and financial issues.

Reporter Meera Jagannathan met MacDicken at SCI Chester, and the result is this outstanding article about MacDicken:

["This woman teaches personal finance to prison inmates."](#)

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## “Living with Life”

Recently Chester Deputy District Director Freddie Joe served as a panelist at the symposium on “Living with Life” at the Chester City Hall held by the Mayor of Chester Thaddeus Kirkland and the Office of Reentry, a Division of the Department of Public Affairs.



Here’s an article about this symposium:

Delaware County Daily Times (07/26/2018)

<http://www.delcotimes.com/general-news/20180726/symposium-explores-life-after-prison>

Symposium explores life after prison

By Kathleen E. Carey, Delaware County Daily Times

CHESTER >> At the “Living With Life” symposium Thursday, experts talked about how everyone in the community has a role to help those trying to re-enter society after serving a prison sentence.

“Re-entry is everybody’s business,” Lisa Dennis, Chester’s Director of Community Liaison who oversees the re-entry office, said.

The symposium was hosted by Darren Laws, community liaison consultant for Mayor Thaddeus Kirkland. It was also supported by the mayor’s Office of Re-Entry and Keith Isam Smith, a former lifer, to talk about ways to reduce recidivism and to help those re-entering to more fully engage in integrating into the community.

Showing parts of a documentary called “Living With Life & Beyond the Walls,” Smith shared his story that led him to prison at the age of 19.

“I always wanted to be a part of something,” he said, explaining how he had dropped out of school in the 10th grade and how he was hanging out with gangs as a teen.

Smith said he was coming home from a job interview when a couple of guys asked him to be a lookout while they commit a robbery. A man was fatally shot during the crime.

"I never even seen the guy who got hit," he said, adding, "I never thought I would get life."

In 1993, his mother, who had been visiting him every month in jail for 19 years at that point, died.

"We learn from our experiences," Smith said. "I don't think there's a day that goes by that I don't ask for forgiveness."

At the symposium, he gave an example of how things have changed after he served 38 years of a life sentence. His sentence was commuted in 2010 by then-Gov. Ed Rendell.

He said when he entered prison in 1974, there was only seven state prisons with 10,000-16,000 inmates. Today, he added there are 30 state prisons with more than 50,000 people.

And, Smith said, that doesn't include the county prisons.

"We know dealing with re-entry," he said, "everybody has to combine together with the solution to help."

Chester City Councilman William Jacobs, a lawyer who worked as a public defender, said preventing recidivism takes more than offering those trying to re-enter into society employment.

"You have to treat the whole person," he said. "You can't just talk about providing jobs for them."

One thing it takes, Jacobs said, is a change in mentality.

"To understand that ... when you go and commit a crime and then get caught, you're simply providing jobs for folk – the judges, probation officers, police officers," he said. "And you start to look at it like that, you start to look at crime a little differently."

Jacobs said Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder also needs to be addressed.

"It's nothing short living in certain communities, certain areas that you end up with PTSD," he said, adding that it's not just for the military. "Living out on the streets and being out on the streets is nothing short of being in war ... If you're a child growing up in a neighborhood and you hear a whole of gun shots, you'd develop PTSD."

In addition, he said going to prison itself can lead to PTSD because of the amount of violence there.

Debra Jackson, chair of Chester City's Health Board, spoke about how prisons have also become homes for the mentally ill since state mental institutions were closed.

At the state institution level, 73 percent of women and 65 percent of men have a mental health diagnosis, she said, adding that at the local level, 73 percent of women and 63 percent of men having a mental health condition.

So, she encouraged the community to have a basic understanding of how to deal with mental health crises as a way to assist those who need help.

"If you're not afraid of somebody with diabetes, then you're not afraid of somebody with a mental health issue either," she said, adding that the stigma needs to be stripped.

And, she said faith alone won't cure mental illness.

"What I tell my Christian friends is, 'If faith in God can take away depression, I want you to stop taking your blood pressure medicine,'" she said, adding that something is actively and physically happening in the brain sometimes from when they were born and sometimes from experiences they've had.

Jackson encourage the community to notice if a person has had a change in habit – they've stopped doing something they've normally done, they're more restless or more solemn than they usually are.

Also, she said watch to see if they seem to be responding to internal stimuli, such as people who are hearing or seeing something that is not there.

Finally, Jackson said to be aware if they are paranoid, if they have a great feeling of fear that is irrational or who is hinting that "It's no use," "I'm done."

"(It's) a mistake we sometimes make as a community, we don't address it," she said. "What I would say, if you have a suspicion about something to do everything you can to get that person to get the help that they need," she said.

Jackson said to ask those who are hearing voices if they are and what they are telling them. She said ask people if they are thinking about committing suicide and how they plan to do it.

Then, don't leave them alone, get in touch with one of their loved ones, get them to a crisis center like Community Hospital.

"A lot of times if you're going, 'Hmmmmm...', there's something there, trust yourself," she said. "And, then, begin to act, begin to talk to them, don't mince words."

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## Wetzel Participates in MI DOC Podcast

PA DOC Secretary John Wetzel was interviewed by Michigan DOC officials for their podcast called "Field Days." Part one can be found here:



<https://soundcloud.com/field-days/pa-corrections-sec-john-wetzel>

A link to this podcast also is available on the PA DOC's website at [www.cor.pa.gov](http://www.cor.pa.gov)

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## Ackley Presents at Conference

Employees of the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, SCI Pine Grove and Skills of Central PA presented at this year's State Community Transition Conference to an audience of 100 professionals. The presentation, "PETS behind Prison Walls: A collaborative Approach in Serving SCI Pine Grove Youth" outlines a year-long effort to secure services typically offered by Office of Vocational Rehabilitation in mainstream schools to incarcerated youth by a subcontractor. The intent is not only to secure services but also to demonstrate the ability to think outside the box and work together as a network in new and creative ways to prepare future reentrants for community living. This project is just the beginning of the development of expanded services and new relationships for all three organizations.



**Stephanie Ackley, Reentry Specialist at SCI Pine Grove, was a presenter at a state educators conference in State College last month.**

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# One Hundred Nights of Taps

From [www.destinationgettyburg.com](http://www.destinationgettyburg.com):

The notes of Taps have been filling the air in Gettysburg every evening this summer as the famous 24-note call is sounded in honor of those who have served our nation. The Lincoln Fellowship of Pennsylvania, in partnership with Gettysburg National Military Park and Taps For Veterans, invite the public to attend One Hundred Nights of Taps between Memorial Day and Labor Day at the Soldiers' National Monument in the Gettysburg National Cemetery.

Performers have been assembled to sound the iconic bugle call each evening at 7 p.m. Among the buglers signed up to perform are military veterans, Civil War re-enactor buglers, community band members, high school and college students and music teachers.

Our very own Corrections Officer 1 Damon Morris, from SCI Coal Township, played Taps on July 28:



Officer Morris often performs Taps at DOC employee recognition ceremonies.

The public is cordially invited to attend any evening performance and recommended parking is at the Gettysburg National Cemetery Lot on Taneytown Road. For more information and to sign up to perform on an evening please visit:

[www.tapsbugler.com/100-nights-of-taps/](http://www.tapsbugler.com/100-nights-of-taps/)

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## Waymart Community Garden Donation

Keystone Mission in Scranton was the most recent recipient of vegetables harvested in the Waymart Community Garden. Pictured is Rabbi Joe Kolakowski FCPD at Waymart and Keystone Mission representative Tom Hill. The garden provided Broccoli, cucumbers, beets, cabbage and carrots.

### Overview of the SCI Waymart Therapeutic Garden Project



Waymart’s gardening project began in May 2018 with boxes being built and filled with dirt around May 14. Plants were planted around May 24.

Nine inmates from the Intermediate Care Unit and three general population inmates are on the daily callouts to tend to the garden.

Vegetables grown include tomatoes, carrots, squash, beets, cucumbers, broccoli, cabbage and more!



On July 13 and July 26, vegetables were harvested and taken to St. Francis Kitchen in Scranton by Rabbi Kolakowski. The first two harvests included a total of about 20 beets, three tomatoes and 45 cucumbers. In the future, vegetables will be donated to other charities in the area.

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# Employees Recognized for Years of Service

Several SCI Coal Township employees were recently recognized for their DOC service.



**Pictured with Superintendent Thomas McGinley (second from left) for 25 years of service are Utility Plant Operator Ken Bogutskie, Clerk 3 Judy Fenix and Unit Manager Howie Hack.**



**Pictured with Superintendent McGinley are Deputy Superintendent for Facility Management Victor Mirarchi (20 years of service) and, both for 25 years of service, Human Resources Assistant Grace Piaseczny and Deputy Superintendent for Centralized Services Tony Lusavage.**

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## Moving Parole to a Mobile Office Model

By Grace Franks, Executive Assistant  
Office of Field Probation and Parole Supervision

The vision for Field Services is to enhance community collaboration and partnerships and to promote successful reintegration of reentrants into the community. To this end enhancing agent mobility and reducing leased real-estate square footage or eliminating leased office space where possible will promote a culture of collaboration and produce significant cost saving that will be reinvested into the agency, reentrant and communities.

In March 2018, Deputy Secretary for Field Services Christian Stephens and District Director Brian Helfrich visited Georgia state parole to learn about their mobile office initiative. Georgia State Board of Pardons and Paroles piloted a virtual office in 2012 due to budget cuts. The goal was to reduce office space in the community and improve outcomes for parolees. Georgia state parole cited that there were many benefits to going mobile including enhanced public safety, increased positive work results, flexibility and an increase in the percentage of successful completions of parole.

Pennsylvania State Parole has been working toward moving to a mobile model since June 2016. After the trip to Georgia, Pittsburgh District Director Brian Helfrich said, "The trip to Georgia was very beneficial and opened our eyes as to how great this could be for us out in the field. I got back and was ready to go. I was so excited about moving forward with the project after seeing how it looked in Georgia."

Through converting to a mobile office model, PBPP strives to increase reentry partnerships and resources, increase successful completion rates, parolee contacts and collateral contacts, employment, participation in treatment services, reduce violations and recidivism, reduce costs associated with leasing office space, and enhance public safety.

Beaver Falls Sub Office was chosen as the pilot office because of several factors:

- it is a single unit office consisting of eight agents, two clerical staff, and one parole supervisor
- those supervised resided mainly in Beaver County
- approximately 420 parolees are supervised out of that office

Beaver Falls Sub Office closed on June 30, 2018. The staff are now assigned to the North Shore Sub Office, however they do not need to report to the office. Being that this is a pilot, the agents and supervisor are trying many different things, such as conferences and weekly unit meetings via Skype or Facetime, push-to-talk applications on their iPhones, intakes in the parolee's home and different equipment/devices that may aide in their day-to-day work.

Deputy Secretary Stephens is excited about how the pilot is shaping up and he has been the driving force behind the mobile office concept.

"I understand that some agents may be apprehensive about going mobile, and I am hearing a lot of misinformation out in the field," Stephens said. We are in the pilot

phase. We are not closing every office, and we have no intention of doing that. We are just consolidating some of our offices to reduce costs and focus more on being out in the community where our parolees live.”

Stephens said he tells everyone who is apprehensive to talk to the agents from Beaver Falls to get their take on it.

The Beaver Falls agents, Supervisor Chris Bellotti, District Director Helfrich, and Regional Director James Williams are doing a great job communicating with central office regarding their needs and concerns. So far, the pilot seems to be going great, and the agents and supervisor are pleased so far with the outcomes.

### **What Beaver Falls Mobile Office Staff Think of the Pilot Project**

By Supervisor Chris Bellotti

The mobile project has been extremely beneficial to the Beaver Falls Unit in the short amount of time that it has been operating. My biggest concern at the beginning of the project was with the potential IT issues. However, the administration’s commitment to the project and ensuring that we have the proper equipment has made the transition almost seamless. Some of the immediate benefits that we have seen have been:

- **An increase in quality time and contacts with reentrants.** Agent Dave Sedon stated that he has found himself spending more time with reentrants, addressing their needs and concerns.
- **The supervisor has noticed an increase in the agents and his own productivity.** It is believed that the increase in agent productivity is due to the elimination of paperwork and the availability of electronic forms. It is believed that the increase in supervisor productivity is due to the removal from the office environment and need to account for time.
- **The mobility model has allowed for the supervisor to manage agents more effectively in the environment which they operate on a daily basis.** It has removed the need for agents to travel to an office outside of their supervision area in order to meet with their supervisor. The supervisor is now meeting them in their respective areas, whether it is to address agent or reentrant needs.
- **The introduction of Facetime and face-to-face field conference policies has created a better process which provides two benefits.** First, it does not require reentrants, who may have difficulty doing so (for economic, employment or other such reasons), to report to an office in order to have a conference with the supervisor. This relieves a burden and provides efficiency. Second, this provides continuity for the reentrant in the message from both agent and

supervisor. The supervisor has noticed an increase in inclusion in reentrant contacts due to these benefits.

- **The mobility model has allowed for the unit to develop deeper community networks in the areas which we operate.** The agents and supervisor have established relationships with other community partners in an effort to minimize the loss of a physical infrastructure in the area. These partners range from other law enforcement entities to program and community services. The agents have developed cooperatives with these partners which allow them to utilize their facilities (to meet reentrants, place mobile printers and refer services).

As with any change, there have been some issues. The most notable are:

- **Buy in.** In any organization there are going to be individuals who will resist change. In our organization, we have agents who have been operating in the same fashion for the better part of their entire career and may be resistant to the loss of a physical office space, as it has been an integral part of their job functions. Their anxiety can be compounded by a lack of ability or understanding of the technological advances which the board has been implementing over the last two years. The administration has done a good job trying to overcome this issue by implementing technology trainings and developing local technology ambassadors to help with IT issues as well as being available to address employees concerns. It will be incumbent upon the supervisors to bring hold-out agents to the table by addressing their day-to-day concerns and providing them with viable options for performing their duties.
- **Loss of unit cohesion.** We operate in an environment where we often need to rely on our fellow agents for support and assistance. Physical office spaces can act as a common meeting ground for employees which can build unit cohesion and trust. The loss of these spaces can begin to erode that cohesion, especially as new members are added. Again, it will be incumbent upon the supervisor to ensure that the unit is functioning as a unit and that its members are sufficiently supportive of each other. The weekly Skype meetings currently being held during the pilot of the mobile office model has helped to maintain unit cohesion and monthly face-to-face meetings may also be beneficial.

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## SCI Forest Holds Graduation

On July 18, SCI Forest held a graduation ceremony for 105 inmates. Keynote speaker was DOC Bureau of Correction Education Chief of Specialized Facilities and Program Jeff Magnani. At the graduation, 18 inmates received Commonwealth Secondary Diplomas (CSD), six inmates received General Education Diplomas (GED) and 81 inmates received vocational diplomas in the following trades: auto technology, building trades, custodial maintenance, electricity, fiber optics, HVAC and masonry.



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## Take-Out Tuesdays

SCI Camp Hill Psychological Services Specialist Danielle Tedesco recently coordinated "Take-out Tuesdays," where staff can purchase fresh food from local caterers during their lunch breaks on all shifts. Sir D's catered the first two events in the institution's visiting room (during days it was not open). The most recent "Take-out Tuesday," held on July 31, included an Italian menu. SCI Camp Hill officials hope to expand the types of cuisine offered and frequency of events in the future.



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## Successful Partnership Involves Successful Reentrants

Recently, Harrisburg City officials held a ribbon cutting for Harrisburg Uptown Building (HUB) and Veteran's Housing (HUB VH). The HUB campus is the result of an innovative and much needed collaboration and partnership of people and organizations throughout the City of Harrisburg. The HUB, the building that formerly housed Hamilton Health Center, will be home to various for profit and non-profit organizations that provide services to Harrisburg residents with a focus on community services. The HUB VH, which is new construction, is the result of an awarded tax credit awarded by Pennsylvania Housing Finance Agency and financed through a local bank, to build a 20 one-bedroom apartment facility for veterans. With the partnership of his aunt, Juanita Edrington-Grant, and her non-profit, Christian Recovery Aftercare Ministry, Inc. (CRAM), Tarik Casteel, a local entrepreneur and reentrant, participated as a co-developer, project manager and general contractor, and was able to successfully bring to life their vision which is now known as The HUB Campus, primarily using local residents and contractors.

Successful reentrants who previously had been supervised out of the Harrisburg District Office have given back to the community through their many skills and experiences.



Shown in the photos are: Mayor Eric Papenfuse of the City of Harrisburg; The HUB; and Parole Supervisor Ebony Anderson with builder Tarik Casteel (reentrant).

Casteel and others, including additional reentrants, spent countless hours building programs designed to help other convicted felons to become productive members of society. Their programs offer housing for homeless veterans, computer literacy, GED classes, work-based training programs, mentoring, family reunification and the list goes on.

It was 10 years ago that Mr. Casteel was incarcerated in a state prison. He wrote his business plan while incarcerated, and immediately upon his release from prison, he put together a team of individuals to help him move forward with his plans. The HUB Veteran House was built in less a year after breaking ground August 2017.

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## What to Expect at a CCC

On July 31, Bureau of Community Corrections Program Manager Julian Rubeo visited the Transitional Housing Unit at SCI Pine Grove to share with the inmates what to expect if they are being released to a community corrections center (CCC). He also shared information on mentoring, family reunification, workforce development and housing assistance provided to reentrants by the Department of Corrections. During the presentation, the 25 inmates in attendance also were able to tour a CCC in their home region through the use of virtual reality equipment.



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## Certified Peer Support Graduation

On July 20, Kaitlyn Simon and Kristin Johnson, both newly appointed Certified Peer Support facilitators, hosted a graduation ceremony for their inaugural class of Certified Peer Support Specialists (CPS's) at SCI Waymart.



Fourteen men, all in the midst of their own mental health recovery stories, spent two 40-hour weeks dedicated to learning the skills to empower peers to lead their own recovery processes through hope, spirituality, love and mutuality.

On July 30, these newly-appointed certified peer support specialists dispersed throughout all areas of SCI Waymart to start working in the human service field and giving back to their community. This professional certification, through RI International, will transfer with our recipients into the community, upon reentry, and provide opportunity for competitive employment in the mental health field.

Each student spoke at the graduation ceremony and shared what the experience has meant to them. The commonality between speeches was that they were grateful for the very therapeutic opportunity and eager to spread their newly acquired hope through the institution.

SCI Waymart congratulates these hardworking individuals!

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## **Parole Staff Assisting with the SCI Phoenix Transition**

By Missy Repsher

Director of Specialized Services and Community Outreach Division

What do the Assessment, Sanctioning, Community Resource Agents (ASCRA's) and Reentry Parole Agents (RPAs) do when asked to help? They spring into action to do what they know best -- help address the needs of inmates/reentrants/parolees.

The PBPP Philadelphia ASCRA's and the SCI Phoenix RPA immediately rearranged their schedules to be available when a request was made for extra help during the Graterford/Phoenix transition. The ASCRA's, RPA and Parole Manager rotated daily for the past two weeks and one weekend providing their assistance. They specifically focused on the parole violator blocks addressing many questions and concerns.

The following were some of the more commonly asked questions:

- When is my next hearing?
- How long do I have to wait to schedule a hearing?
- I signed my Act 122 papers that means I'm leaving, right?
- My charges have been disposed of, what happens now? When will I get out of here?
- What determines whether I'll stay here or go to a CCJ/PVC?
- How do I start these programs so I can leave before the 6 months?
- Where do I take these programs?
- I had my hearing in April/May/June/last week, where is my Board Action?
- How much time can they take for new conviction?
- What kind of hit can I get for my new conviction?
- Do I get credit for time served in the county on new convictions?
- Can they take my time even if the Board has a detainer on me?
- Who is my agent?

The RPA and ASCRA's will continue to assist, collaborating with SCI staff and providing an orientation for parole violators arriving at the institution. A "Frequently Asked Question" violator fact sheet has been developed so it may be handed out during the orientation to assist with some of the more common questions. As a part of the reentry process, the ASCRA's will begin focusing the violators on steps they need to take to once again return back to the community. Addressing the inmate's motivation to change and helping the inmate understand how their thoughts and feelings influence choices and behaviors is a step in the right direction.

We'd like to give special thanks to the Bureau of Offender Reentry and the following employees: Reentry Parole Agent Amy Mammarella; ASCRA's Reggie Haines, Adrienne Jones, Nailah Johnson, Patricia Sutton, Mea Williams; and Eastern Region Parole Manager Javier Cintron.

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## Update on a “Juvenile” Lifer

At the age of 15 Bobby Harris was sentenced to life in prison. As a result of the U.S. Supreme Court’s ruling in 2010 (Miller v. Alabama), which ruled that it is unconstitutional to sentence a juvenile offender to mandatory life-without-parole and the 2016 Montgomery V. Louisiana ruling, Harris’ case was reviewed and, based upon his position adjustments in prison, the district attorney’s office recommended a shorter sentence of immediate parole eligibility.

Pennsylvania, among all other states, had the highest number of such “juvenile” lifers, with a total of 521. As of June 2018, 291 “juvenile” lifers have been resentenced, and 129 have been released from prison.

Harris spends his time working with at-risk juveniles to educate them about living a crime-free life to avoid spending 29 years in prison like he did.



“He works tirelessly to help and make a difference in not only the youths, but the adults as well. I’ve watched him take calls daily from his brothers that are currently incarcerated and who need his assistance and expertise in the specific areas of their need, or just to give a positive word,” said Harris’ girlfriend Lisa Muhammad.

Recently Harris attended a DePaul University Workshop for Community Leaders. Harris has been hired fulltime and will full benefits with Just Leadership USA as a community organizer, and he will speak at an upcoming event for Gov. Wolf.

“I am extremely proud and excited to see what the future holds for him,” Muhammad said. “In fact, the district attorney has accepted the scholarship that Bobby has put together in prison, as the face of the District Attorney Restorative Justice Department.”

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## Looking for a Good Read about Reentry?

Try the Central Pen Biz Journal’s July 13, 2018, article “Tight labor market, new law offer second chances for ex-offenders” by Emily Thurlow.

<http://www.cpbj.com/apps/pbcs.dll/article?AID=/20180713/CPBJ01/180719948/tight-labor-market-new-law-offer-second-chances-for-exoffenders>

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# CISM Training Conducted for Parole Supervision Staff

By Kimberly McGriff, Executive Assistant, Reentry Office

At the beginning of the year, intense efforts were implemented to train veteran and new members of PBPP's Critical Incident Response Team (CIRT), and the DOC's Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) team was invited to participate. There was an overwhelming response to the call for peer support.

Through the collaboration of Deputy Secretary for Reentry Kelly Evans and Dr. Lucas Malishchak, acting director of the DOC's Psychology Office, on July 24-26, staff from both PBPP and DOC partook in a Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) basic training course titled "Assisting Individuals in Crisis!"

CISM is an intervention protocol developed specifically for dealing with traumatic events. It is a formal, highly structured and professionally-recognized process for helping those involved in a critical incident to share their experiences, vent emotions, learn about stress reactions and symptoms and be referred for further help if required. The program is peer driven, and all interventions are strictly confidential. The emphasis is always on keeping people safe and returning them quickly to more normal levels of functioning.

Due to the high volume of interest, three sessions were scheduled with the first held at the Sheraton Hotel in Harrisburg, Pa. The other sessions are scheduled for September and October. A possible fourth session may be needed. Next year, those trained in "Assisting Individuals in Crisis" will attend an additional training called "Group Crisis Interventions." In this course, participants will leave with the knowledge and tools necessary to provide several group crisis interventions. Going forward, booster trainings will be provided bi-annually.

Employees who are interested in becoming a CIRT/CISM member are directed to contact their agency coordinator. For more information on CISM, visit <https://icisf.org/a-primer-on-critical-incident-stress-management-cism/>

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**ICYMI!** In case you missed it... a recent article about SCI Cambridge Springs' optical lab made it into a recent edition of the American Correctional Association's (ACA) weekly email update to ACA members:

**At women's prison, a vision for success** -- Inmates at the correctional facility about 25 miles south of Erie make more than 15,000 pairs of eyeglasses a year, and a position in the optical lab is a coveted job requiring months of study. Prisoners who make the grade leave prison with the skills they need to start a career.  
<http://www.mcall.com/news/nationworld/pennsylvania/mc-nws-jail-to-jobs-female-inmates-make-eye-glasses-20180604-story.html>

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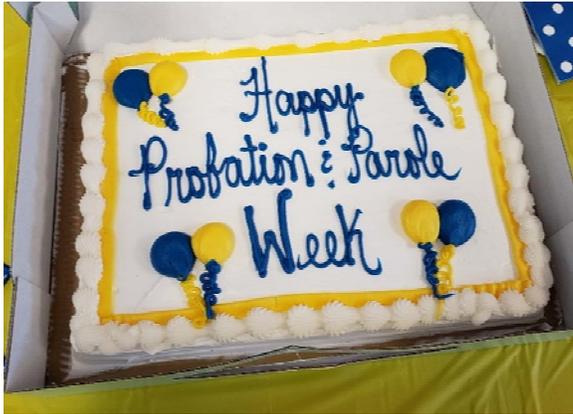
Week of July 23...

## Probation & Parole Week Celebration

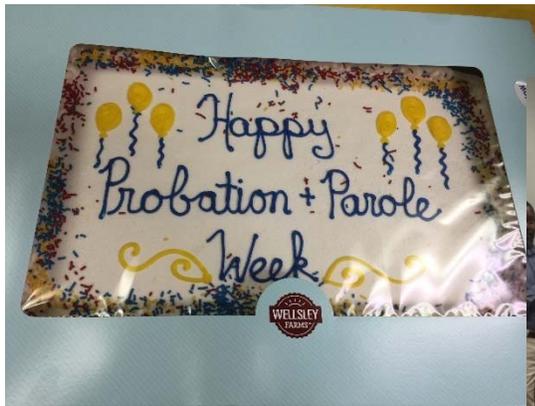
On July 19, employees from the Countywide/Specialized Division held a cookout to celebrate Pretrial, Probation & Parole Services Week, which was July 15-21, 2018.



Chester Parole District Office and Norristown Sub-Office employees celebrated as well...



...and newly hired Deputy District Director Freddie Joe was the guest speaker at both events.



Finally, (at left) SCI Benner Township staff baked their parole employees a cake in recognition of this special week.

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## More Suitcases!

As you recall, last week we talked about a wonderful collection project that took place across the commonwealth (see article at right or in last week's edition of this newsletter). Well, we've received additional photos of various collections that we wanted to share with our readers.

### SCI Forest's Collection...



**Corrections Activities Manager 2 Cindy Hays and EA Board Member Carol Niederriter are pictured with Forest's donations.**

### SCI Waymart's Collection...

SCI Waymart staff donated more 50 suitcases, backpacks and bags to Wayne County Children and Youth and Wayne County VIP in support of the "Suitcase Drive." It is no surprise that staff at Waymart went above and beyond to support their local community as they always do. The SCI Waymart Community Support Committee supports both organizations every year donating backpacks, Christmas gifts, and Easter baskets

**Pictured, from left to right, are: Capt. Paul Horvath, Daniel Dragwa, Deputy Bassett, Lt. Dennis Cush, UM Dave Gorman, Alice Emmett, Nicole Welles, Nadine Miszler, Christine Altemier, Kathy Millard, and Lt. Joe Villella.**



### **Suitcase Collection Becomes Worthy Challenge**

By Janet Kelley, Special Assistant to Secretary Wetzel

Children in foster care move, on average, three or four times a year, with nothing but a garbage bag to carry all their worldly belongings.

We can't control much of that sad scenario, but the one thing we could do is at least give them a suitcase. And we did - in abundance.

It started with a simple request to the staff at Central Office and the Riverfront Office Center, to collect items we could give to Dauphin County children and youth agencies and local foster care services.

The response was overwhelming. In the first week, we had piles of suitcases, duffel bags and backpacks at every donation point. The suitcases kept coming and, by the third week and the end of the project, the pile had become a mountain.

From classic luggage to camouflage, Sesame Street to Spiderman, there were many, many variations on the theme - all of which we hope will make a child's life just a little better. There were also many heartfelt messages of support from staff members.

Once again, as always, state employees - including the DOC and its community corrections and parole supervision staff, the PA Board of Probation and Parole, Board of Pardons, Office of Victim Advocate and Sex Offender Assessment Board - demonstrated how many compassionate, kind and generous people work in our agency.

But the story doesn't stop there.

Secretary Wetzel threw down a challenge to the field inviting them to participate and help children in their respective communities.

Immediately, state prison and community corrections centers staffers across the state jumped on the opportunity. Even residents and inmates asked if they could help in anyway with the project.

Regional collection efforts are still continuing, but so far the reports have been equally enthusiastic.

From Allegheny to Berks, Clearfield to Cumberland, Luzerne to Erie, Huntingdon and Westmoreland counties - local foster care agencies across the state have already received dozens and dozens of donations from our staff members, receiving them with heartfelt gratitude for the thoughtfulness and support of the children.

### Camp Hill's Collection...



SCI Camp Hill employees collected 35 suitcases, 22 duffel bags and 11 back packs which they donated to the Bair Foundation, a foster care agency in Harrisburg.

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### **SCI Mercer Celebrates 40 Years of Operation July 10, 2018**

On July 5, 1978, the State Regional Correctional Facility (now a State Correctional Institution) at Mercer opened for operations as a regional correctional facility to serve 14 northwestern Pennsylvania counties and was designed to house short-term male offenders. On July 5, 2018, SCI Mercer held a ceremony to mark the 40th anniversary of its opening with a presentation of an institutional flag by Superintendent Melinda Adams to Mercer's Honor Guard.



On July 10, 2018, a ceremony was held to celebrate the anniversary. Honored guests included guest speakers Senator Michele Brooks and retired Superintendent Edward Brennan, and State Representatives Tedd C. Nesbit, Parke Wentling and Mark Longiitti. Approximately 145 staff and 44 retirees attended (9 of which were day one employees), along with Western Regional Deputy Secretary Trevor Wingard and Superintendents Lee Estock, Mike Clark and Jamey Luther.

Each attendee and staff member were presented with a 40th anniversary pin provided for the event by Mercer's employee association.



The ceremony was opened with remarks from Deputy Superintendent William Woods. Deputy Woods led staff in a moment of silence in remembrance of Sgt. Baserman. Facility Chaplaincy Program Director Rev. Joseph Kosarek delivered the invocation. The Honor Guard presented the colors, including presentation of the new SCI Mercer flag to the facility. VSU Social Worker Erica Lynn sang the National Anthem.



Superintendent's Assistant Andrea Shiock presented the time capsule (pictured at left), which was on display during the ceremony. The time capsule was designed and crafted by Maintenance Foreman Steve Croy and the display case by Maintenance Foreman Donald Fleck. Both did an outstanding job with materials on hand. The capsule will be filled with memorabilia from the past 40 years and donated items from retirees who attended the ceremony. The capsule will then be sealed and is to be opened at the facility's 60th anniversary in 2038.

Superintendent Melinda Adams introduced guest speaker, Senator Michele Brooks. Those in attendance welcomed Senator Brooks with rousing applause. Senator Brooks stated that she was grateful for what Mercer does to protect the communities and that she recognizes the sacrifices made by staff. Brooks stated that "Mercer is celebrating 40 years of success, hard work, efficiencies in an institution that sets Mercer above many across the state; 40 years of commitment and dedication." She spoke of corrections losing an officer, about the dangers faced every single day, and that Harrisburg is looking at what can be done to support the mission and the families. To say thank you and show gratitude for what Mercer does daily, Senator Brooks and the Representatives proudly presented a citation from both the Senate and the House of Representatives of Pennsylvania, recognizing and applauding the job that SCI Mercer has done for 40 years.



**Pictured, from left to right, are: Representatives Longietti, Wentling and Nesbit, Superintendent Adams and Senator Brooks.**

Supt. Adams then introduced retired Superintendent Edward Brennan, who served 31 years with the Department of Corrections and was SCI Mercer's first deputy superintendent for treatment. Mr. Brennan read a letter submitted by Mercer's first superintendent, Charles Zimmerman, who could not attend the ceremony. Supt. Zimmerman spoke of the training the original staff completed, where all 101 staff went through basic training together and were housed in one motel exclusively occupied by the class, which had no hot water and no television. He states that this unique beginning helped develop the "team" that opened SRCF Mercer, having shared television deprivation, cold shower misery, physical training and classroom experiences together. In his letter Zimmerman stated, "When we began Mercer, we emphasized our desire to be good neighbors with the community. We were blessed to have the support and cooperation of Judge Acker and Judge Stranahan. Judge Stranahan especially took an active role in our early beginnings and pushed hard for our education program. In recognition of his efforts, we dedicated the Stranahan Building."



**Edward Brennan speaks at the anniversary ceremony.**

Mr. Brennan spoke about the differences in corrections in 1978 and now. He stated that in 1978, the department was called the Bureau of Correction and was under the Department of Justice. At that time, there were approximately 8,000 inmates as opposed to the approximately 47,000 in 2018. Brennan then recognized some of the day-one staff of Mercer who went on to be superintendents and deputy superintendents, including Harry Wilson, Ray Sobina, Paul Stowitzky, Joe Desuta, Robert Freeman, himself and Ray Snider. Mr. Brennan closed by stating, "You are in a noble profession. You are peacekeepers. You are in the bottom line, you are individuals who make society work, you are out of sight/out of mind and do not really get the respect you deserve. But you have a noble profession and you should be proud of what you are doing."

Ms. Shiock then recognized the 93 day-one staff by reading each name that appears on the 1978 dedication plaque and asked those in attendance to stand when their name was called. Each day one staff in attendance was presented a certificate.

The ceremony concluded with closing remarks by Supt. Adams, the benediction by Rev. Kosarek and the retiring of the colors by the Honor Guard.

Music was provided prior to and after the ceremony by Mercer musicians: guitar-John Chapman, Corrections Officer 1; lead guitar-Robert Cook, Electrician; drums-Brian Cook, Electronics; and bass guitar-Steven Soliwoda, Psychological Services Specialist. Each musician took turns performing vocals.

Refreshments provided by the committee were enjoyed by all and included cupcakes, cookies, lemonade, and tea.

The 40th anniversary committee thanks all who were involved in making this celebration a success.



**The committee included: Stella Bell, Food Service Instructor; Amanda Bistransin, Clerk Typist 3; Lesleyann Como, Drug & Alcohol Treatment Specialist; Shane Dady, Deputy for CS; Richelle Edmonds, Clerk Typist 2; Juliann Engstrom, Employment Coordinator; Lynne Hines, Purchasing Agent 2; Crystal Hoffman, Clerk Typist 2; Shelby Miller, Psychological Services Specialist; Vernice Phillips, Training Lieutenant; Andrea Shiock, Superintendent's Assistant; Kirsten Yates, Food Service Instructor. Missing are Lt. Phillips and Stella Bell.**

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## Attorney General Reentry Council Visits Pine Grove

Charla Plaines, the reentry coordinator for the PA Attorney General's Reentry Council, along with other Office of Attorney General staff visited SCI Pine Grove on July 23, to conduct a presentation about statewide community reentry services as well as addressing barriers, (i.e. housing and employment) faced by reentrants.



They were accompanied by Friends Rehabilitation Services based out of Philadelphia. Eighty inmates attended the program, which was spearheaded by Reentry Parole Agent Dana Brahim.

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## Fayette Holds Inmate Job Fair

On July 18, SCI Fayette's Education Department held their annual Job Fair. The focus of this years' job fair was related to reentry services that deal with employment opportunities, education, financial aid, probation guidelines, housing and outside mental health resources, just to name a few.



Outside guests included the following organizations: Renewal, INC., A. Philip Randolph Institute, GEO Group, Dads Matter, Private Industry Council, CareerLink, Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, PA Department of Banking and Securities, Community College of Allegheny County, TTEC, Triangle Tech, Foundation of HOPE, and the Allstate Career School. Also attending the event were representatives from the Bureau of Community Corrections, a Parole ASCRA Agent and the DOC's statewide veterans' coordinator.

After the morning session, School Principal Edward Bohna led the outside guests on a tour of the facility. After the tour, the afternoon session was held. More than 200 inmates – who were within 12 months of their minimum and/or maximum release dates -- attended the fair. Following presentations, the inmates had the opportunity to speak with vendors on a one-on-one basis. In addition to networking, the inmates left the job fair with a folder of informative hand-outs to aide them in their return home after incarceration.

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## Reentrant Addresses Inmates

Henry Wimbush, a reentrant who was sentenced to 20 to 40 years for robbery and is presently on parole, recently spoke to inmates at SCI Camp Hill about his previous experiences. His presentation focused on establishing a foundation for the future while incarcerated. Wimbush spoke about ways to maintain a positive outlook while living behind bars. His presentation was a collaborative effort between him and Becky MacDicken from the PA Department of Banking and Securities. During the presentation, he conveyed the necessity of investing in your emotional wellbeing as well as your financial future. Wimbush indicated both are necessary for a successful future.



The inmates in the prison's Transitional Housing Unit expressed their pleasant surprise after hearing from someone who could truly relate to their experiences. Several inmates reported they felt the sincerity of Wimbush's testimony and the sincere hope he had to offer. Prison officials hope he will be able to return to speak to more inmates in the future, including inmates in the prison's therapeutic communities.

For more information on Wimbush and his organization, visit <http://www.recoveryinstituteinc.com/about-us.html>

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## C.O.V.E.R. Committee Holds Pizza Fundraiser at SCI Mercer

On July 3, SCI Mercer's C.O.V.E.R. Committee hosted a pizza fundraiser at the facility for all shifts. Pizza combos could be purchased by staff for \$5, which included two pieces of pizza, a bag of chips and a drink. Approximately 75 employees participated in the fundraiser. Proceeds from this event will be utilized to support future C.O.V.E.R. events at SCI Mercer.



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## Coal Township Names EOQs

Accounting Assistant Kelley Park and Clerk Typist Robin Klinger were recently recognized as Employees of the Quarter (EOQs) for the Second Quarter of 2018.

Kelley and Robin were nominated by housing unit staff. The nomination noted the tremendous workload and responsibility these two ladies have. In addition to their inmate accounting daily duties, Kelley and Robin are instrumental when it comes to inmate organization sales, processing several hundred cash slips every month. Recently, a Lifeline sale had to be cancelled due to a vendor's inability to deliver products. The inmates were refunded their money the same day. The quick response by Kelley and Robin made the cancellation of the sale easier for unit and security staff who otherwise would have been bombarded with complaints about refunds, etc. The timely, efficient and often behind the scenes work that they do makes everyone's job a little easier. This work is vital in keeping day to day operations running smoothly. Staff noted that it would be difficult to replace Kelley and Robin!

Congratulations on a job well done!



**Superintendent Thomas McGinley presented Robin Klinger with the award. Kelley Park was unavailable for photo.**

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# Laurel Highlands Holds “Day of Responsibility 2018”

By Dana Benn, Drug & Alcohol Treatment Specialist 2

SCI Laurel Highlands held its annual Day of Responsibility on July 18. The Day of Responsibility is a time for staff and inmates alike to reflect on the consequences of our choices and the “ripple effect” that those consequences have on those around us. The hope is that by taking the time for such reflection, we can learn to take the time to think about the choices that we make, so that our “ripple effect” is positive, instead of negative.

This year, 67 inmates and 28 staff were in attendance and had the opportunity to hear a variety of speakers. Superintendent Jamey Luther started the day with a welcome speech, followed by a representative from the Office of Victim Advocate, who gave a presentation on the Inmate Apology Bank.

Jeff Porter told his life story and talked about how taking responsibility for himself and his actions changed his life. His message of hope resonated with those who listened to him speak.

Shannon Myers followed Mr. Porter and challenged the audience to strive for the “blessings” in life, and not to be stuck “halfway,” which causes complacency and leads to regression vs. progression.



Mr. and Mrs. Sweitzer finished the speaker portion of the day. They spoke about the tragic loss of their son, Zach, to a drunk driver, on Thanksgiving morning in 2008. They spoke about how their lives were forever changed, forgiveness for the driver, and the hope and comfort that they received by allowing Zach to become an organ donor.

The day was completed through a series of three multi-media presentations, which were followed by a time of questions and sharing.



We would like to take the time to thank our speakers, those who attended and those who worked to make this day a reality. We can't wait for next year!

**Inmate dog handlers/trainers participated in the Day of Responsibility, and wherever they go, so do the dogs they are training. Here, Sunny and Vida, listen intently to the various presenters.**

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## SCI Mercer C.O.V.E.R. Helps Out at Donut Dash

On July 21, members of SCI Mercer's C.O.V.E.R. team assisted the Grove City Police Department at their annual Donut Dash 5k run. The Donut Dash helps to raise funds for needs in the Grove City community.

Mercer C.O.V.E.R. members helped with registration of the runners at the event and, in addition, talked to the police officers about what C.O.V.E.R. is and learned what needs these officers may have regarding resources available to them.

Deputy Superintendent William Woods ran in the event, and members supported the cause by purchasing additional T-shirts.

SCI Mercer is currently planning another C.O.V.E.R. event to be held at the facility in September entitled, "Live a Meaningful Life." The Grove City Police Department plans to send officers to the event, so they may learn more about the C.O.V.E.R. program for their own staff.



Pictured, left to right, are: ABE Teacher Andrew McLaughlin, LPM Kathleen Kocherzat and Deputy Superintendent for Facilities Management William Woods.

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## Erie CCC Highlighted

As part of the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the DOC's Bureau of Community Corrections, media was invited to the Erie Community Corrections Center for a tour.

JET24 attended the tour, and you can view their coverage here:

<https://www.yourerie.com/news/local-news/erie-community-corrections-facility-gives-tour-to-show-day-to-day-operations/1307960720>

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## Blood Drive Held!

On June 1, SCI Fayette sponsored a blood drive for the local chapter of the American Red Cross. SCI Fayette sponsors at least two blood drives every year for the American Red Cross.



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## Raising Awareness of C.O.V.E.R.

In June, the C.O.V.E.R. committee at SCI Mercer designed and posted five signs like the one shown at the right throughout the administration building to raise awareness of C.O.V.E.R. and to get staff thinking. Mercer's C.O.V.E.R. group held a "Go Green with HOPE" workshop during Mental Health awareness month in May and is preparing for another workshop in September for Suicide Prevention awareness month. Both events are focused on bringing hope to staff and helping staff feel empowered and encouraged.



Pictured, left to right, are C.O.V.E.R. team members Ed Whitman, Counselor 2; William Woods, DSFM; Kathleen Kocherzat, LPM; Andrew McLaughlin, ABE Teacher; Melissa Filer, Training Coordinator; Christina Shaffer, CEVA.

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Week of July 16...

## The End of an Era

On July 15, 2018, the last inmate was moved out of SCI Graterford and placed on a bus to make the quarter-mile trip to his new home at SCI Phoenix.



At 5:42 p.m., SCI Graterford was officially closed after serving the commonwealth since 1929.

In last week's newsletter we explained and showed you how the inmates were process and prepared for the move. In this issue we will show you – through pictures - everything else that the move involved.



**The Command Center at SCI Phoenix.**

**The Command Center at SCI Graterford.**



From around 12:20 p.m. on July 11, officials began moving higher-risk inmates in small groups. Capital case (death row) inmates, parole violators and those under special observation were the first to move from Graterford to Phoenix.



**Left: Capital case inmates arrive at Phoenix. Right: Capital case inmates being escorted to their new housing unit.**

At the end of the first day of the move, 185 inmates had been successfully relocated.

July 12, 2018, day two of the move, continued with both prisons being locked down and being fed in their cells.

Each day inmates are being provided with a bag breakfast, bag lunch and hot dinner. An evening snack bag also is provided.

Those meals, and meals for employees, were made by employees.

Usually the prison has MANY inmate workers, including those working in the kitchen. When a facility is locked down, staff takes the place of inmate kitchen workers and makes food for inmates and staff.

Here are some images of staff preparing meals on 7-13-2018:



At the end of the second day, the inmate population at SCI Phoenix had risen to 815.



**LEFT: SCI Graterford E Block**

**BELOW: A housing unit at SCI Phoenix.**



By the end of day three – July 13, 2018 -- the inmate population at SCI Phoenix was 1,437.



**LEFT: Inmates moving to T Unit.**

Day four – July 14 – ended with SCI Phoenix having an inmate population of 2,063. Throughout the entire operation, inmate property was searched by x-ray, physically by staff and air scanned by drug detection K9s.



Day five, July 15, 2018, continued, as the operation was running like a well-oiled machine.

**RIGHT: Staff and inmates on D Unit.**



At 2 p.m. on July 15, Phoenix officials took over operational control of the Outside Service Unit from SCI Graterford. The OSU houses inmates who work on outside details, such as the community work program crews. It also houses inmates who train service dogs.

Eventually, on July 15, the last busload of inmates left SCI Graterford heading for SCI Phoenix.



At 5:42 p.m. on July 15, 2018, SCI Graterford was closed and no longer housed inmates.

At a staff meeting on July 17, 2018, Secretary Wetzel thanked everyone for their support of SCI Graterford and SCI Phoenix.

"It was a complicated and risky operation, and it was carried out with excellence," Wetzel said. He thanked Executive Deputy Secretary Tabb Bickell and Security Chief Major Kenneth Goodman, along with the employees from Graterford/Phoenix and others from throughout the DOC who helped with the successful transition.

The DOC's work does not end here. Officials plan to continue to assist Phoenix as it ramps up into full operation.

Finally, on July 16, 2018, officials began removing photos of those employees who were killed by inmates – a sad part of Graterford’s history.



### **SCI Graterford Employees Killed by Inmates**

**Corrections Food Service - Instructor Stephen P. Ary; Sr.** - was fatally stabbed on September 16, 1973. Mr. Ary was working in the kitchen area of SCI Graterford where several inmates assaulted him.

**Food Service Instructor Edward L. Boyer** - was assaulted by an inmate on June 5, 1977, in the dining area of SCI Graterford. Mr. Boyer died from a blow to the head.

**Corrections Officer 4 Felix Mokyctic** - was assaulted on March 20, 1979 by a single inmate in the corridor of SCI Graterford. Captain Mokyctic died of multiple blows to the head with a baseball bat.



SCI Graterford Honor Guard Officer Jeremy Reimert had the honor of removing pictures of Graterford’s fallen officers. He treated each with the respect they deserved.

Also on July 16, 2018, the flags that had been flying over SCI Graterford were retired by Officers Jeremy Reimert and Basil Varian.



While SCI Graterford no longer houses inmates, and while SCI Phoenix is now operational, this is not the end of our work. DOC officials now focus on assisting SCI Phoenix officials as they begin using a state-of-the-art facility.



**And the sun sets on the State Correctional Institution (SCI) at Graterford ~ 1929 - 2018**

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## **Questions and Answers with Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal**

### **What makes SCI Graterford so special?**

It represents, truly, the history of the Department of Corrections. It represents all of the good pieces and all of the bad. It represents lessons learned that we have imparted to SCI Phoenix, as well as the other facilities. It represents a caring community. It has one of the largest volunteer communities that we have, and that represents that it truly is social it's not just about corrections. We can't operate in a silo, but we need to incorporate all of the aspects of an individual's life in order for successful reentry to occur.

**How does SCI Phoenix represent the PA Department of Corrections commitment to staff?**

Oftentimes it's shared that staff do time right along with the inmates doing time. So, when you look at providing a decent workspace or a space that will allow for wellness for staff or air conditioning for staff and for the inmate population it represents that we care about the individual we care about the individuals who are staff members and the individuals who are the incarcerated population. I think it really demonstrates that we are not in it for just a fiscal responsibility, but that we are in it for responsibility to make sure that we provide all of the resources necessary for our staff to have the opportunity to do their job the best that they can do it.

**What makes the staff at SCI Graterford so special?**

Superintendent Ferguson and her team at SCI Phoenix have just been phenomenal. I believe that it really demonstrates what you can do when you have the right people in the right places. That you can bring out the best in people, that you can bring out the best in situations and that you can optimize everything that needs to be optimized. I think that Superintendent Ferguson brings that, she brings that leadership and she brings the ability to hold people accountable, but it's accountability that is not just for those individuals who she supervises or interacts with but is a self-accountability, a personal accountability, because she doesn't settle for anything less. She raises the bar, and some would say that she is the bar for others to be measured by based on what she brings to the table. Talk about humility, talk about someone who is humble in her service to others, that's Superintendent Ferguson, and I'm sure that we'll see not only that attitude displayed by her but also that attitude displayed by staff who work for her as well as the inmate population.

**How does SCI Phoenix reflect Governor Wolf's commitment to public safety?**

Governor Wolf's commitment to public safety is evident in the opportunity that is there for SCI Phoenix. I believe that it takes into consideration staff safety. It takes into consideration inmate safety, but most importantly I believe it takes into consideration public safety, and that's an investment of financial resources, it's an investment of personnel resources to make sure that it is a state-of-the-art facility that is a leader for the country -- one that can be modeled after -- and one that will demonstrate how corrections in 2018 and beyond is done. I believe that that demonstrates how committed Governor Wolf is to making sure that the space that is provided is one that recognizes the importance of safety and security for staff and for inmates.

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# It's Pretrial, Probation and Parole Supervision Week!

July 15 – 21, 2018, has been proclaimed Pretrial, Probation and Parole Supervision Week in Pennsylvania.

The proclamation says:

*WHEREAS, all Pennsylvanians deserve opportunities to live healthy, safe, and purposeful lives, and community supervision is an essential part of Pennsylvania's justice system; and*

*WHEREAS, corrections professionals such as pretrial, probation, and parole officers uphold the law with dignity, while recognizing the right of the public to be safe-guarded from criminal activity. Their proven practices and effective supervision provide an opportunity for successful reintegration; and*

*WHEREAS, corrections professionals provide both supervision and counseling to reentrants and operate to uphold the law and safeguard the public from criminal activity during transition from incarceration to the community; and*

*WHEREAS, pretrial, probation and parole officers/agents work toward changing lives by working with reentrants to help them find solutions to problems and to help them live a safe, healthy and productive life; and*

*WHEREAS, corrections professionals are responsible for supervising adult reentrants, while serving, supporting, and protecting victims, as well as providing appropriate advocacy and resources for reentrants; and*

*WHEREAS, pretrial, probation and parole officers/agents work collaboratively with local law enforcement, treatment providers, social service agencies and a variety of other programs, groups and individuals involved with reentry; and*

*WHEREAS, Pennsylvania's pretrial, probation, and parole officer/agents are on the front line of efforts to reduce recidivism and prevent future crime. "Pretrial, Probation and Parole Supervision Week" is a time to recognize and celebrate the dedicated and caring individuals in the community who work tirelessly to make neighborhoods safer and more vibrant places to live and raise families and work to give reentrants a second chance to be productive members of society.*

*THEREFORE, I, Tom Wolf, Governor of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, do hereby proclaim the week of July 15-21, 2018, as PRETRIAL, PROBATION AND PAROLE SUPERVISION WEEK in Pennsylvania and encourage all citizens to honor these corrections professionals and to recognize their crucial roles in the criminal justice system and their achievements toward safer communities.*

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## Employees Recognized

As part of "Pretrial, Probation and Parole Supervision Week," DOC officials recognized several employees at an awards ceremony on July 16. Presenting awards to, and pictured with, recipients is Executive Deputy Secretary for Community Corrections and Reentry George Little.

### Michael M. Haduck Award

***Joseph Aquino, Parole Agent 2***  
Allentown District Office



#### Michael M. Haduck Award

In cooperation with the Pennsylvania American Legion, the board established a Parole Agent of the Year Award in 1971. In 1997, this award was renamed the Michael M. Haduck Award. Michael Haduck died October 17, 1983, from injuries he received during the foot pursuit of a parole violator in the city of Wilkes-Barre. He died as he lived, with honor and courage, serving the community he was sworn to protect. This award recognizes the outstanding performance of a Field Parole Agent employed by the Board.

Agent Aquino's commonwealth service began on January 2, 2007, as corrections officer at SCI Graterford before transferring to the Board of Probation and Parole as a parole agent in 2013. This award is in recognition of heroic actions taken on April 18, 2018, when a parolee engaged in the use of methamphetamines barricaded himself into a bathroom, claiming to be in possession of a firearm, and requesting that law enforcement kill him. Agent Aquino was able to patiently coax the individual out of the bathroom without any shots being fired and went above and beyond his regular duties on this day by being a safe, reliable, empathetic and solid person for that parolee to rely upon. His emotional tenacity, tactical safety, situational awareness and leadership provided for an outcome without injuries and to allow the parolee to live another day.

## John D. Perkis Award

### ***Adam Kusnerick, Parole Agent 2***

Williamsport District Office



Agent Kusnerick has been a parole agent with the Williamsport District Office since September 2016, and is being recognized for saving the life of a parolee. During a routine home visit on December 22, 2017, the parolee was found unconscious with glassine baggies lying next to him. Agent Kusnerick immediately called 911, administered one dose of Narcan and began CPR. After approximately 10 minutes of chest compressions and rescue breathing, the parolee became responsive. These quick actions prevented the death of the parolee.

#### **John D. Perkis Award**

This award was established in memory of Parole Agent John W. Perkis, who demonstrated courageous and significant service to the board despite extraordinary odds. His courageous battle was lost to cancer on December 4, 1975, approximately one year after he began employment with the board. His service with the board was short lived, but his remarkable endurance is remembered through the establishment of this award. The purpose of this award is to recognize an employee whose performance demonstrates courageous and significant service to the board and/or the community.

### ***Robert Roland (retired) and Larry Smith Jr., Parole Agent 2***

Harrisburg District Office

Robert Roland has been a parole agent since January 1996, and Larry Smith Jr.'s career began in July 1993 as a corrections counselor before transferring to the board as a parole agent in 1996. He recently retired on June 23, 2018.

This award is in recognition of their heroic actions on January 18, 2018, during a warrant service detail with the U.S. Marshals Task Force in Harrisburg. At the time of this detail, a fugitive ambushed the team and fired shots at task force members. This incident resulted in the death of Deputy U.S. Marshal Christopher D. Hill. Without hesitation, they put their lives on the line by instantly rendering first aid to the injured and then seconds later, pursuing the armed fugitive on foot until he was located and subdued. Throughout and following this incident, they maintained a calm and professional demeanor. Their brave actions prevented further injury/death

to other members of the task force and maintained the safety of responding law enforcement members, emergency personnel, neighbors and the public.



**Robert Roland, (left); and Kirk Loos (right), Larry Smith's supervisor, accepting on his behalf.**



## **Vicki D. Weisel Award**

***Nicole Wilson, Parole Agent 2***  
SCI Waymart



### **Vicki D. Weisel Award**

This award was established in memory of Vicki D. Weisel, a former parole agent and parole supervisor, for her pioneering work in the parole counseling of inmates in state and county correctional institutions. Ms. Weisel's service with the board ended with her retirement on October 13, 1995. Her perseverance in the performance of her work, despite the long-term debilitating illness that eventually took her life, shall be long remembered. This award recognizes the outstanding performance of an institutional parole agent employed by the board.

Agent Wilson's commonwealth service began on December 10, 2007, as a parole agent in the Scranton District Office, prior to being reassigned to SCI Retreat and SCI Waymart in 2011. This award is in recognition of her work on the Enhanced Reentry Program; volunteering to assist other institutions when needed; revamping the parole violator information sharing

process by making it accessible to both corrections and parole staff; participating on the CAPTOR/DHS application testing team; serving on an MOU committee, operational process committee, and innovation committee. Agent Wilson also submitted a proposal for an automated inmate savings account program, which was accepted and will be piloted. She completed these projects while maintaining a full caseload and regular parole agent responsibilities, and exemplifies the characteristics of an outstanding institutional parole agent.

## Employee of the Year

An employee's behavior must demonstrate personal integrity and loyalty to the board, with regard to policy and procedure. The employee must also have achieved one or more of the following during the award year: performance of assigned duties or projects with special effort; superior performance of assignments or projects with minimal supervision; performance of additional job responsibilities while maintaining normal duties due to circumstances beyond the employee's control; willing acceptance and performance of assigned tasks without the need for close supervision and consistent adherence to policies and procedures; development of a solution to a significant problem facing the board; initiation of a new program or procedure that significantly improves the efficiency and/or effectiveness of an operation or work function; participation in the development of technical methods or procedures that increased and/or improved productivity, service, safety, and/or produced savings for the Commonwealth; handling of an emergency situation in a manner that showed good judgment and concern for the well-being and safety of the employee and others.

## Employee of the Year – Professional 1

### Melissia Snelbaker Telecommunications Coordinator

Office Services

Ms. Snelbaker began her commonwealth career with the Office of Administration as a limited-term clerk typist in February 2008 prior to transferring to the board in the Office Services Division later that same year as a clerk typist 1. She quickly was promoted to a clerk typist 2, clerk typist 3 and telecommunications coordinator. She has been instrumental in ensuring that all staff have the appropriate equipment and that those items are in superb working order. This award is in recognition of her ability to quickly and independently troubleshoot technical issues, which allows staff to carry out their duties in an efficient manner.



## Employee of the Year – Professional 2

### Antionette Porter, Parole Supervisor (retired)

Retired Parole Supervisor Antoinette Porter worked for the Philadelphia District Office, Allentown District Office and Chester District Office as a parole agent and parole supervisor from November 18, 2002, until March 30, 2018. A just-released parolee arrived at the incorrect location in 17-degree weather with minimal clothing. Most non-essential transportation services were inoperable due to the inclement weather conditions. As a result, the parolee had no way to get where he needed to be. Supervisor Porter coordinated transportation with a parole agent and got him safely to the appropriate community corrections center that was more than 50 miles away. Without her swift action, the parolee would have been left vulnerable in an unfamiliar location with no resources or shelter. Her selflessness has been an asset to the board.



## Employee of the Year – Officials/Administrators

### Louis Narvaez, Director

Eastern Regional Office

Director Narvaez has only been with the board since April 2017; however, his short period of service thus far has been exceptional. Since then, he has chaired the APPA host committee for the 2018 Annual APPA Conference and has been instrumental in the coordination of Project Safe Return for Philadelphia through collaboration with the City of Philadelphia. Additionally, he has helped redesign and oversees Project Safe Neighborhood in conjunction with the US Attorney's Office and chairs the consolidation committee for sentinel events. He effectively worked with the Bureau of Community Corrections to improve programming and centers throughout the region and provides mentorship and a clear and cohesive direction for eastern region management staff.



**Eastern District Director Michelle Rivera accepted the award on Narvaez's behalf.**

## Group Achievement Awards

### Public/Employee Safety

***John Beech, David Bole,  
Patrick Hudock and Douglas Miller***

Greensburg General Unit

The Group Achievement Awards were established to recognize an outstanding accomplishment that was made through the coordination of many individual efforts.

On April 18, 2018, several parole agents from the Pittsburgh District Office conducted an authorized search of a parolee's residence and immediately detected a strong odor of marijuana. After detaining the parolee and the home provider, the team found drug paraphernalia and a large amount of marijuana. Upon contacting the local police and obtaining a search warrant, more than nine pounds of marijuana, \$1,530 in currency, a handgun, a shotgun and additional drug paraphernalia were seized and removed from the home and community and resulted in various criminal charges being filed.

### Special Project

***Robert Belfanti, Gregory Brunner, Janet Collins,  
Vincent Lapinski, Michael Manuel, John Mitchell  
and Robert Sheridan***

Technology Training Team

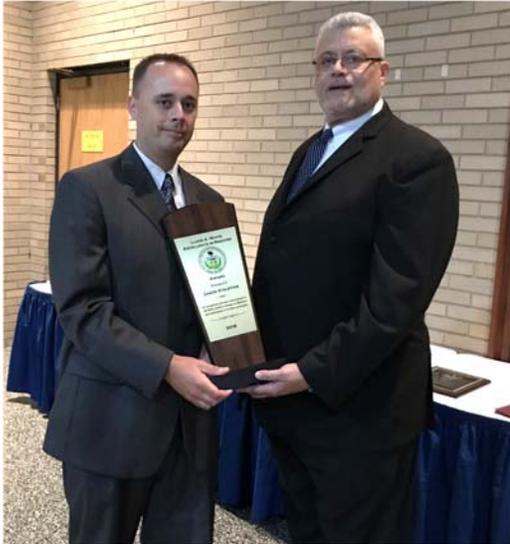


This team consisted of parole agents and an administrative officer 1 who worked diligently to create a technology training that aided field services staff working towards increased mobility. They acted as subject matter experts in their assigned regions by troubleshooting technology issues and assisting staff with learning tips and tricks on their mobile phones and tablets. Their dedication, leadership and commitment to this important statewide project attributed to its success.

# Lloyd A. White Award

***Jason Stauffer, Parole Manager 2***

Office of Reentry and Quality Assurance



## Lloyd A. White Award

This award is established in memory of former Chairman and Board Member Lloyd A. White, a man of great humility and wisdom who never forgot in his interactions with offenders that he was dealing with human beings. His legacy is a life devoted to helping people change their lives. He firmly believed in second chances, of helping ex-offenders on their journey to successfully reenter society, while never forgetting public safety or the victims of crime. This award is for an employee whose actions or achievements exemplify these beliefs.

Jason Stauffer has worked in several areas of the board beginning in the Bureau of Human Resources on April 28, 2008, as an HR analyst 2. He has worked as an executive assistant and parole manager since June 20, 2009, and has been the project lead for the implementation of Effective Practices in Community Supervision (EPICS) since 2016. During this time, Stauffer has managed the delivery of initial EPICS training for both new and existing staff. In 2017, Stauffer directed the efforts of agency EPICS trainers, ensuring all field staff received their initial three-day EPICS training. These events, taking place over several months, provided field parole agents with the basic skill sets necessary for further development of intervention techniques critical to effectuating positive reentrant change. This training continues, as he coordinates the delivery of the five required booster sessions for existing staff, covering topics such as the behavior chain, cognitive restructuring and cost benefit analysis of risky behaviors, while at the same time, directing efforts aimed at parole supervisor development of coding and coaching proficiencies. Concurrently, Stauffer also ensures these booster sessions are provided to new parole agents who have recently completed basic training, with coding and coaching support provided by reentry bureau managers. His steadfast dedication to evidence based practices, specifically the deployment of EPICS within the board, are clearly manifest and reflect positively, not only upon himself, but also on this agency as promoters of solid, research driven supervision practices aimed at lowering individual reentrant recidivism and making our communities safer.

**Congratulations to award recipients and nominees!**

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## Restorative Justice “Think Tank”

The “Think Tank” group at SCI Albion focuses on restorative justice by researching various methods, discussing the best ways to apply it and by incorporating this into every instance of community engagement. The Think Tank group is composed of inmates and staff who want to make a difference in the community.

On July 12, the Think Tank group held a videoconference with juveniles on probation in Erie, Pa., to share their experiences and provide support. Eight juveniles voluntarily attended this videoconference to speak with Think Tank group members. The commentary involved discussion on education, role models, goals, support systems and the bleak reality of incarceration in order to help break the stigma of popularized prison culture.

In making small connections like these, the Think Tank group hopes to continue to promote change in the community while representing the voices behind the walls and making meaningful impacts as a whole.



The Think Tank inmates at SCI Albion connect by videoconferencing equipment to juveniles in Erie, Pa.

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## Tours of Community Corrections Centers

July marks the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the DOC's Bureau of Community Corrections. As such, Pittsburgh, Erie, York and Scranton CCCs have scheduled media tours of their facilities. So far, Pittsburgh CCC was visited by the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, and WJET/JET 24 visits the Erie CCC. Stay tuned for coverage!

Watch TV coverage of the Erie CCC Tour here:

<https://www.yourerie.com/news/local-news/erie-community-corrections-facility-gives-tour-to-show-day-to-day-operations/1307960720>

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### **"High in Plain Sight"**

An awesome week of training with Jermaine "Tall Cop" Galloway took place July 9 – 13. Specifically, the training was held at West Chester University on the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>; East Pennsboro Area High School on July 12<sup>th</sup> and at Robert Morris University on the 13<sup>th</sup>.

Nearly 400 state prison, community corrections and parole employees, along with 300 local and state law enforcement, treatment providers, educators and administrators from all over Pennsylvania attended the training.

This training, which provides attendees with the ability, knowledge and confidence to help prevent and identify who is abusing drugs, covers alcohol and drug clothing, alcoholic energy drinks, alcohol and drug concealment methods and containers, drug paraphernalia, drug related music and groups, logos and much more. There also is a hands-on component to allow attendees to become familiar with items.

DOC officials plan to bring Galloway back for future trainings. We appreciate the partnership with Community Corrections Association of PA (CCAPA) for helping to provide this speaker.

### ***What Attendees Had To Say...***

- I was at your training in Pittsburgh and I just wanted to tell you how much I appreciate what you do! There were about 12 from my facility there. I work in the DOC (7yrs) and also part time in drug/alcohol as a counselor (14yrs). Typically, when I attend trainings the information is stale, old, and/or far removed from what we need to know. I am a manager at a prison and I made the suggestion that your training be mandatory for all of our staff. My main goal every day is to keep our staff safe so they can go home to their families every day. The insight you provided will assist in achieving that goal. The trends and information you provided can keep us safer in our daily interactions. I will be attending more of your trainings in PA. We discussed it the entire 2-hour car ride home! Keep up the fantastic work you do!

- The training was some of the best I've been too...thanks for your help....stay safe
- I attended your training at East Pennsboro High School last week and know that most officers in my department would benefit from this training. This was probably one of the best trainings I have been to and really appreciate you taking time to come here and teach us what you know.



**Pictured, from left to right, are: George Little, Executive Deputy Secretary for Community Corrections and Reentry for the Department of Corrections; John Bucher, Principal of East Pennsboro Area High School; Shirley Moore Smeal, Executive Deputy Secretary for the Department of Corrections; Matthew Miller, President of Community Corrections Association of PA; Daniel McIntyre, Director for the DOC's Bureau of Community Corrections.**

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## Scranton CCC Donates Food

In June 2018, the Scranton Community Corrections Center (CCC) donated \$800 worth of non-perishable food items to the Scranton Progressive Center.

Counselor Kenny Jordan is shown with members of the center.



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## Waymart Donates to Soup Kitchen

Facility Chaplaincy Program Director Rabbi Kolakowski donated vegetables from SCI Waymart's Therapeutic Garden to St. Francis of Assisi Soup Kitchen.

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## **Suitcase Collection Becomes Worthy Challenge**

By Janet Kelley, Special Assistant to Secretary Wetzel

Children in foster care move, on average, three or four times a year, with nothing but a garbage bag to carry all their worldly belongings.

We can't control much of that sad scenario, but the one thing we could do is at least give them a suitcase. And we did - in abundance.

It started with a simple request to the staff at Central Office and the Riverfront Office Center, to collect items we could give to Dauphin County children and youth agencies and local foster care services.

The response was overwhelming. In the first week, we had piles of suitcases, duffel bags and backpacks at every donation point. The suitcases kept coming and, by the third week and the end of the project, the pile had become a mountain.

From classic luggage to camouflage, Sesame Street to Spiderman, there were many, many variations on the theme – all of which we hope will make a child's life just a little better. There were also many heartfelt messages of support from staff members.

Once again, as always, state employees – including the DOC and its community corrections and parole supervision staff, the PA Board of Probation and Parole, Board of Pardons, Office of Victim Advocate and Sex Offender Assessment Board – demonstrated how many compassionate, kind and generous people work in our agency.

But the story doesn't stop there.

Secretary Wetzel threw down a challenge to the field inviting them to participate and help children in their respective communities.

Immediately, state prison and community corrections centers staffers across the state jumped on the opportunity. Even residents and inmates asked if they could help in anyway with the project.

Regional collection efforts are still continuing, but so far the reports have been equally enthusiastic.

From Allegheny to Berks, Clearfield to Cumberland, Luzerne to Erie, Huntingdon and Westmoreland counties – local foster care agencies across the state have already received dozens and dozens of donations from our staff members, receiving them with heartfelt gratitude for the thoughtfulness and support of the children.

(See photos provided on the next several pages)

## Quehanna Boot Camp:



Once Superintendent Natoli shared the “Suitcase for Kids” project information with the Quehanna Boot Camp staff, there was an immediate outpouring of suitcases, duffel bags and backpacks. Many staff members commented that it is heartbreaking to know that there are children out there who have nothing to call their own. In one week, approximately 50 items were collected and will be donated to the Children’s Aid Society in Clearfield.

**Pittsburgh Community Corrections Center** employees collected more than 50 bags for children in foster care in Allegheny and Westmoreland Counties:



**Wernersville CCC:**



**DOC Central Office:**



Smithfield's Collection:



Philadelphia CCC #2:



**Erie CCC's Collection:**



*EDITOR'S NOTE: We are sorry if we missed any photos. We are extremely proud of our staff for stepping up to assist with this exceptional cause that was spearheaded by Special Assistant to the Secretary and Inmate Family Relations Coordinator Janet Kelley.*

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**Forest Names EOM**

SCI Forest Superintendent Michael Overmyer is pleased to announce that Corrections Officer 1 J. Hagadone has been named Employee of the Month for July 2018.

Officer Hagadone was nominated by his peers for being a model of professionalism in corrections. His persistent attitude, dedication and uncanny ability to identify individual inmates has led to numerous drug/weapon finds. He has provided the Security Office with information needed to stop the introduction of contraband and prevent incidents that would have disrupted the orderly operation of the facility and the safety of both staff and inmate.

**Way to go, Officer Hagadone!**

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## Coal Township Officer is an Artist

# 'Art is Freedom' show set to open Thursday



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The work of Shamokin artist Russell Henz will be on display at the Fine Art Gallery in Shamokin starting Thursday.

SHAMOKIN — The first exhibit of the summer season opens with a reception at 6:30 p.m. Thursday at the Northumberland County Council for the Arts and Humanities' (NCCA) Fine Art Gallery.

"Art is Freedom" will feature works by Shamokin artist and veteran Russell Henz. On display through Aug. 3 will be 50 works in several mediums, including oil, acrylic and airbrush paintings. Henz's impressive range includes everything from realistic landscapes and portraits to abstract acrylic pourings. Subjects include local sites, exotic animals, patriotic subjects and expansive seasonal scenery.

The event is free and the public is invited to meet the artist, enjoy light refreshments and view or purchase artwork.

The gallery is located at the Northumberland County Arts Center, 2 E. Arch St. There is free parking at the rear of the building. Visitors should use the lower handicapped entrance and follow the signs.

Regular gallery hours are 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Friday. Those interested in purchasing artwork after the reception can contact the artist directly at 570-933-0506 or [irishman79@verizon.net](mailto:irishman79@verizon.net).

For more information about the gallery or to get involved as a volunteer, contact director Lisa Welch Knecht by email [lisawelchknecht@gmail.com](mailto:lisawelchknecht@gmail.com).

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## A View of Tomorrow

With virtual reality, juvenile lifers practice for a world they may experience

By Nicole Lewis

This article was originally published by [The Marshall Project](#), an independent nonprofit news organization covering the U.S. criminal justice system. Sign up for their [newsletter](#), or follow The Marshall Project on [Facebook](#) or [Twitter](#).

The first time Danny Peters, 55, walked around Community Correction Center II, a halfway house in Philadelphia, he felt he'd been there before.

"It was like déjà vu," he said.

Until then, he had only seen it in a virtual reality video while serving a mandatory life sentence at Graterford prison, a state correctional facility outside Philadelphia. At the time, he had been incarcerated since 1980, when he was just 17 years old.

In 2012, the Supreme Court decided that mandatory life without parole sentences for juveniles were unconstitutional. And in 2016, the court made the decision retroactive, making nearly 2,000 juvenile lifers eligible for resentencing and for parole.

Suddenly, corrections officials in many states had to figure out what to do with inmates they never expected to have a life beyond the prison walls. In Pennsylvania, prison officials turned to virtual reality. Soon after, Colorado followed suit, creating a three-year virtual reality-based re-entry program for former juvenile lifers. Now, several other states as well as the federal Bureau of Prisons are interested in VR's rehabilitative potential.

Research shows that virtual reality can be a useful therapeutic tool, helping people [overcome post-traumatic stress](#), anxiety and phobias. In some cases, virtual reality programming has even been shown to promote empathy. Proponents of VR in prison hope that it can help prepare juvenile lifers for life after decades behind bars. Critics caution that VR is a crutch, and can't replace intensive programs that address inmates' social-emotional development.

Danny McIntyre, the deputy director for security and training in Pennsylvania, had seen VR headsets promoted at corrections conventions. Virtual reality equipment now costs a fraction of what it did 10 years ago, and many companies have eyed the corrections industry as a new market. When Graterford prison needed a way to help juvenile lifers transition, McIntyre started thinking: Could VR be helpful here? Pennsylvania has the largest number of juvenile lifers: more than 500 in total.

"Could VR help inmates prepare to be in a large crowd?" he wondered. "Could we prepare them to do everyday common things? Things that we take for granted. Things they haven't done in their entire lifetime."

Ultimately, McIntyre settled on helping inmates deal with the anxiety of freedom by creating a 360-degree video of the state's halfway houses. It cost the DOC \$3,500 to film all of the centers, and the 24 headsets it uses run less than \$500 apiece.

When Peters first toured his halfway house using the headset, he found it so disorienting he couldn't stand up. The headset covered his eyes, and his viewpoint changed as he turned his head to look around.

"It was kind of like vertigo," he said. "Even after using [the headset] sitting down, the feeling takes about two hours to wear off. But you actually feel like you are walking through the halfway house, and they explain everything to you."

In 2016, the Colorado legislature passed a bill to create a specialized program for juvenile lifers who were now eligible for parole. Inmates petition the DOC to participate after they have served 20 to 25 years of their sentence. Melissa Smith, programs coordinator for the prison, asked inmates what they wanted to learn.

"Right now we have 32 lessons," she said. "From how to cook a hotdog in the microwave to how to do laundry. How to self-scan at the checkout. How to walk on a busy street. How to use an ATM card."

Smith hired with a VR company based in New York, [Nsena VR](#), to develop the interactive videos. The DOC received \$20,000 from the state to run the program, and it cost \$180,000 to buy equipment and make the video modules. The videos play in a headset, and inmates use controllers that double as virtual hands to complete tasks. The graphics aren't photorealistic, but they are real enough to evoke strong reactions from the user.

"We had one gentleman who did the grocery store video," Smith said. "When he took the headset off, he had tears streaming down his face, and the first thing out of his mouth was, 'What else in the world has changed?'"

In addition to using virtual reality, the inmates take classes, learning new skills before trying them in VR. To manage their emotions during the virtual simulations, the inmates work with a social worker and participate in biofeedback sessions, which help them overcome uncomfortable physical reactions to stress.

"We really try to create an environment to work through skills, concepts and emotions, so they can adapt to situations they've never faced before," Smith said. "We learn by trial and error, so this is about giving the inmates opportunities to be in new situations and find positive ways to interact within society."

So far none of Colorado's 48 juvenile lifers has been released, and Smith says it's too soon to say how well the experimental program works. It is still in its first year, and inmates must complete all three years to be eligible for parole. Still, Colorado's VR work has garnered interest from several other states, as well as the BOP. Smith says officials in Florida, Oklahoma and Virginia have expressed interest in using VR programming for prisoners who have spent several decades behind bars.

A BOP spokesperson says the department actively monitors new technologies such as VR, but does not currently use VR in reentry programming.

The Alaska DOC is planning on implementing VR sessions to help offenders cope with the state's long and dark winters. The DOC has joined with a Colorado-based research organization, National Mental Health Innovation Center, to informally study the pilot program. Matt Vogl, president of the center, says he is optimistic that VR will be beneficial to inmates, citing existing research.

"We have to try new things and try them aggressively," Vogl said. "I don't think tech will solve all the problems, and there are a lot of unanswered questions, but if we can put one more tool in the tool box, we might as well."

As the promise of VR spreads, critics assert that prisons are looking for a relatively inexpensive tech solution to a social problem. How well VR works to rehabilitate inmates is unknown since these programs are the first of their kind. Nancy Wolfe, a professor at Rutgers University whose research focuses on mental health issues and the justice system, says the challenges can be worse for people who enter prison as teenagers and leave as adults.

"You don't realize how much the brain has gone dormant when you put people in an artificial environment that constrains their choices and limits their sensory information," she said.

Inmates' schedules are highly regulated, with correctional officers dictating what they can wear and when to eat, shower, or work. Juvenile lifers enter prison at the same time their brains are starting to [develop important cognitive functions](#) such as emotional-regulation and decision making. Adjusting to life in the outside world, with the sheer number of daily decisions they will have to make, can be difficult after decades without practice.

Peters, who was the first in Pennsylvania to experience VR and the first juvenile lifer in the state to earn his release, remembers feeling paralyzed over the thought of doing mundane tasks prior to his parole.

"I had never paid a bill in my life, so when I knew I was getting ready to leave, all the sudden I was thinking, 'I have to pay rent. I need a phone. I have to pay my electric bill and buy gas and clothes,' " he said. "I felt an anxiety in my stomach that I never felt before."

Many juvenile lifers are already at a cognitive disadvantage before entering prison. [A 2012 survey](#) of more than 1,500 juvenile lifers conducted by The Sentencing Project found that 71 percent experienced domestic and community violence, a rate six times higher than the general population. Research shows that trauma and toxic stress is damaging to the brain, hampering cognition, attention and impulse control.

"These are the kids that experienced neglect and maltreatment that led to criminal behavior at 13 years old in the first place," Wolfe said.

However, in the right environments, the brain can be rewired. Wolfe argues inmates would be better served by having more contact with supportive role models who can help walk them through anxiety-producing tasks while mirroring positive ways to cope with the frustration of everyday life. But these kinds of programs are largely absent from prisons, and are more expensive and time consuming.

Prison officials in Colorado and Pennsylvania hope that VR can help jumpstart the process, ensuring that juvenile lifers successfully return to society. But Peters cautions that a virtual scenario is no replacement for real life.

"Nothing can prepare you," Peters said, who now works as a general contractor in the Philadelphia area. "It is worse than a culture shock. I liken it to taking me to a foreign country, leaving me there, and having to learn everything all over again in a new language."

This picture is not part of the reprinted article:



**Bureau of Community Corrections Director Danny McIntyre adjusts a virtual reality unit on a juvenile lifer who is trying it for the first time.**

NOTE: While this article calls McIntyre "the deputy director for security and training in Pennsylvania," he now is the director of the DOC's Bureau of Community Corrections.

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Most often we ask of community volunteers to come to our institutions and help us with speaking to inmates, doing volunteer work and/or augmenting our inmate programs. April Kemp, Founder of Marley's Mission, has spoken at many SCI's that I have worked at (and more) for Crime Victim's Week, Impact of Crime classes and Days of Responsibilities. The story that April shares is amazing, touching and impactful on all who hear it.

Marley's Mission ([www.marleysmission.com](http://www.marleysmission.com)) is a non-profit organization that provides equine-based therapy free of charge to children, and their families, who have experienced trauma. They also partnered in 2015 with Equines for Freedom to provide care to military veterans who have struggled with Post Traumatic Stress ([equinesforfreedom.org](http://equinesforfreedom.org)).

I met April on Easter Sunday in 2012, when I answered a Facebook post from Marley's Mission asking if anyone knew how to do some simple plumbing. My spouse and I had heard about Marley's Mission because of the story that played out in the news about how her then 5-year-old daughter had been brutally attacked in their own home by a stranger. We knew we had to help. The "simple plumbing" turned into two months on weekends where we spent working on installing a hot water heater, new sinks and faucets to their humble beginnings in an old sheep barn in Wayne County.

Marley's Mission now is on a beautiful farm in Lackawanna County, and April recently invited me to the final day of their Hands over Hooves summer camp on Friday July 13. The experience was remarkable, and I was reminded how wonderful it feels to volunteer and to be involved with wonderful people like April who have done so much to help others in need.

The need is great to help these children who have been traumatized, and since 2010 Marley's Mission has helped 714 clients free of charge ([http://www.marleysmission.com/pdf/hoofprints\\_2018.pdf](http://www.marleysmission.com/pdf/hoofprints_2018.pdf)).

I am confident that in communities surrounding our SCI's and parole offices, there are similar organizations that help children, veterans, families, etc.

As a superintendent, I would say, hands down, that my volunteering at Marley's Mission and friendship with April has made me a better corrections professional. Giving back and helping out feels great and promotes a wonderful partnership with the programs and organizations that help.

I would challenge, that if you have not done so already, consider getting involved, volunteering and visiting the places in your communities that provide speaking engagements and volunteer efforts in our facilities.

Blessings, Kathy Brittain

(Superintendent, SCI Frackville)



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## Albion Holds “Day of Responsibility”

On June 18, SCI Albion held a “Day of Responsibility,” which allows inmate discussion for the need of personal responsibility and accountability for past, present and future actions. It also provides the opportunity to explore the impact of crime on



communities and encourage incarcerated individuals/community members to live a more responsible life and have hope for the future.

Superintendent Michael Clark addressed the participants on the importance of making good choices and the reality that our facility is a community that the inmates and staff coexist in.

Guest speakers included former inmate Michael Outlaw who is now the community liaison for the Mayor of Erie; John Hartnett, recovery service navigator for Crawford County Community Care Network; Deborah Borza, board member of the September 11th National Memorial Trail; and SCI Albion’s own, Michael Danch, vocational teacher.

A special “Thank You” was given to ANIVO (Albion New Inmate Visionary Organization) for their donation of beverages and muffins; the prison’s Dietary Department for providing lunch; and the administration and staff for their assistance.



**Albion’s newest resident listens to speakers during the Day of Responsibility.**

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## Reentry Family Feud

Six teams of five players competed in the first-ever SCI Pine Grove Reentry Family Feud Tournament. Transitional Housing Unit and Reentry Services Office participants were responsible for building and naming their families and bringing them to the “Feud” on Friday, July 13. Each competition consisted of five reentry related questions developed by staff. “The Legos” beat five other teams and has been crowned the current Family Feud champs.



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## Rockview Tests New Form of Fuel

Earlier this week, SCI Rockview conducted a test run of biofuel cubes in its #3 coal boiler. The biofuel cubes are made of paper, wax cardboard and poly -- are recycled materials. They are pressed into cubes and can be run through the coal handling system and boilers the same as coal. Two previous trials were conducted with all trials being approved by DEP.

The purpose of the testing was to determine if the existing system at SCI Rockview could use the biofuel cubes to produce steam. The boiler used for the testing was installed in 1955 and has been using bituminous coal to produce steam. During the last 60 years the boiler has had repairs made to the tubes and grates, but is essentially the same boiler that was originally installed. During the testing the boiler was operated the same as it would be with coal.

SCI Rockview employees were able to get the boiler running on biofuel and were able to maintain the entire steam load for the institution running only the #3 boiler on biofuel for a period of 24 hours. The staff at the boiler plant did an excellent job testing an innovative product that may help reduce waste going to the landfills in the future.

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Week of July 9...

## **SCI Phoenix Searched**

As DOC officials prepared to move inmates and staff from SCI Graterford to SCI Phoenix, a search of Phoenix began on July 9. As officials transition Phoenix from a construction site to a fully-operational prison, such searches are a necessity to ensure all tools or items that could be used as weapons or implements of escape are removed. This type of search is nothing new to corrections. After every prisons' construction is completed, searches like this were held to ensure the safety and security of the prison and its employees and inmates.

The DOC sent several Corrections Emergency Response Teams from other state prisons to Phoenix to conduct the thorough, multi-day search.

Secretary John Wetzel said that, in addition to searching the prison, officials also are performing a variety of training scenarios. Doing so allows staff from Graterford to become familiar with the new prison.

"This is a perfect time to 'pressure test' the facility," Wetzel said.

On the same day that the search began – July 9, 2018 – SCI Phoenix went into full prison operation mode and essentially began operation, albeit without any inmates.

Up next is the transition.

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## **Transition from Graterford to Phoenix Underway**

At 9:15 a.m. on July 11, 2018, Department of Corrections officials locked down SCI Graterford to begin the relocation of employees and inmates from SCI Graterford to SCI Phoenix. DOC officials plan to move several hundred inmates each day, and they will continue the transition for however long it takes to complete the operation.

"Employees and inmates have been waiting patiently for this move to take place," said Corrections Secretary John Wetzel. "We are aware of the anxiety that this move has caused everyone, and we have worked diligently to plan for every aspect and to ensure that the transition is smooth for everyone involved."

Over the next several days, officials will move 2,648 inmates one-quarter mile from Graterford to Phoenix by vehicle. To ensure a safe move, the entire prison property is off limits to everyone. Visits have been cancelled.

This complex, high-security transition – involving hundreds of employees from throughout the DOC – has been planned for more than a year.

As the transition takes place inmates at Graterford will remain locked down. After the move to Phoenix, inmates will be permitted some out-of-cell privileges such as phone calls, showers and indoor recreation.

At both prisons, inmates are being fed in their cells. Inmates are fed a bag breakfast, bag lunch and a hot dinner. They also are provided a snack enhanced bag at dinner.

Here's the menu:

| Form DC-179<br>Subject to Change When Necessary)                                                                                                           |                                                                                                                                                                         | COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA<br>Department of Corrections                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                            |                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                            |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| INSTITUTION: SCI-Graterford                                                                                                                                |                                                                                                                                                                         | POPULATION: 2600                                                                                                                                             |                                                                                                                                                                              | TRANSITION MENU <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>                                                                                                        |                                                                                                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                            |
| DAY 1-8                                                                                                                                                    | DAY 2-9                                                                                                                                                                 | DAY 3-10                                                                                                                                                     | DAY 4                                                                                                                                                                        | DAY 5                                                                                                                                                      | DAY 6                                                                                                                                                        | DAY 7                                                                                                                                                      |
| Breakfast Pastry<br>Fruit Juice 6 oz.<br>Dry Cereal 2 packs<br>Bread or Toast 2 sl.<br>Margarine 2 Tsp.<br>Milk 8 oz.(D)<br>Coffee pkt.<br>Sugar 2 pkt.    | Breakfast Pastry<br>Fruit Juice 6 oz.<br>Dry Cereal 2 packs<br>Bread or Toast 2 sl.<br>Margarine 2 Tsp.<br>Milk 8 oz.(D)<br>Coffee pkt.<br>Sugar 2 pkt.                 | Breakfast Pastry<br>Fruit Juice 6 oz.<br>Dry Cereal 2 packs<br>Bread or Toast 2 sl.<br>Margarine 2 Tsp.<br>Milk 8 oz.(D)<br>Coffee pkt.<br>Sugar 2 pkt.      | Breakfast Pastry<br>Fruit Juice 6 oz.<br>Dry Cereal 2 packs<br>Bread or Toast 2 sl.<br>Margarine 2 Tsp.<br>Milk 8 oz.(D)<br>Coffee pkt.<br>Sugar 2 pkt.                      | Breakfast Pastry<br>Fruit Juice 6 oz.<br>Dry Cereal 2 packs<br>Bread or Toast 2 sl.<br>Margarine 2 Tsp.<br>Milk 8 oz.(D)<br>Coffee pkt.<br>Sugar 2 pkt.    | Breakfast Pastry<br>Fruit Juice 6 oz.<br>Dry Cereal 2 packs<br>Bread or Toast 2 sl.<br>Margarine 2 Tsp.<br>Milk 8 oz.(D)<br>Coffee pkt.<br>Sugar 2 pkt.      | Breakfast Pastry<br>Fruit Juice 6 oz.<br>Dry Cereal 2 packs<br>Bread or Toast 2 sl.<br>Margarine 2 Tsp.<br>Milk 8 oz.(D)<br>Coffee pkt.<br>Sugar 2 pkt.    |
| Peanut butter 2 pkt.<br>Jelly 4 pkt.<br>Potato Chips 1 pkt.<br>Bread 4 slice<br>Fresh Fruit 1 each<br>Margarine 2 tsp.<br>Pudding 1 each<br>Beverage 8 oz. | Salami & Cheese Sandwich<br>Cheese Sandwich AP<br>Potato Chips 1 pkt.<br>Bread 2 slice<br>Fresh Fruit 1 each<br>Mustard/Mayo 2 pkt.<br>Cookies 1 pkt.<br>Beverage 8 oz. | Hard Cooked Eggs 2 each<br>Pretzels 1 pkt.<br>Bread 2 slice<br>Fresh Fruit 1 each<br>Mayo 2 pkt.<br>Pudding 1 each<br>Salt & Pepper 2 each<br>Beverage 8 oz. | Salami & Swiss Sandwich<br>Swiss Cheese Sandwich AP<br>Potato Chips 1 pkt.<br>Bread 2 slice<br>Fresh Fruit 1 each<br>Mustard/Mayo 2 pkt.<br>Cookies 1 pkt.<br>Beverage 8 oz. | Peanut butter 2 pkt.<br>Jelly 4 pkt.<br>Potato Chips 1 pkt.<br>Bread 4 slice<br>Fresh Fruit 1 each<br>Margarine 2 tsp.<br>Pudding 1 each<br>Beverage 8 oz. | Hard Cooked Eggs 2 each<br>Pretzels 1 pkt.<br>Bread 2 slice<br>Fresh Fruit 1 each<br>Mayo 2 pkt.<br>Pudding 1 each<br>Salt & Pepper 2 each<br>Beverage 8 oz. | Peanut butter 2 pkt.<br>Jelly 4 pkt.<br>Potato Chips 1 pkt.<br>Bread 4 slice<br>Fresh Fruit 1 each<br>Margarine 2 tsp.<br>Pudding 1 each<br>Beverage 8 oz. |
| TV DINNER POULTRY<br>Cookies 1 packet<br>Fresh Fruit 1 each<br>Bread 2 slice<br>Margarine 2 tsp.<br>Beverage 8 oz.<br>Salt & Pepper 2 each                 | TV DINNER BEEF<br>Cookies 1 packet<br>Fresh Fruit 1 each<br>Bread 2 slice<br>Margarine 2 tsp.<br>Beverage 8 oz.<br>Salt & Pepper 2 each                                 | TV DINNER POULTRY<br>Cookies 1 packet<br>Fresh Fruit 1 each<br>Bread 2 slice<br>Margarine 2 tsp.<br>Beverage 8 oz.<br>Salt & Pepper 2 each                   | TV DINNER BEEF<br>Cookies 1 packet<br>Fresh Fruit 1 each<br>Bread 2 slice<br>Margarine 2 tsp.<br>Beverage 8 oz.<br>Salt & Pepper 2 each                                      | TV DINNER POULTRY<br>Cookies 1 packet<br>Fresh Fruit 1 each<br>Bread 2 slice<br>Margarine 2 tsp.<br>Beverage 8 oz.<br>Salt & Pepper 2 each                 | TV DINNER BEEF<br>Cookies 1 packet<br>Fresh Fruit 1 each<br>Bread 2 slice<br>Margarine 2 tsp.<br>Beverage 8 oz.<br>Salt & Pepper 2 each                      | TV DINNER POULTRY<br>Cookies 1 packet<br>Fresh Fruit 1 each<br>Bread 2 slice<br>Margarine 2 tsp.<br>Beverage 8 oz.<br>Salt & Pepper 2 each                 |
| Food Service Manager 2:                                                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                              | (B) Beef (F) Fowl<br>(AP) Alternate Protein<br>(P) Pork (Egg) (D) Dairy/Milk                                                                                                 |                                                                                                                                                            | Superintendent's Approval:                                                                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                            |

### How the move works:

Inmates and their property are taken to outgoing processing areas. Inmates are shown that their electronic property, such as TVs, are working properly at the time of the move. The inmates then are taken to be searched and restrained and then are placed on the transport vehicle.



Property stations in the main corridor at SCI Graterford.



An inmate and his property moving through the property stations.



An empty property bin.



An inmate leaving a housing unit.



An inmate going through the metal detector.



An inmate being air scanned by a drug-detection K9.



Restraints being placed on inmates.



An inmate getting on the bus.

Upon arrival at Phoenix, the inmates are shown that their electronics work. The inmates are placed in their cells and their property is given to them shortly thereafter.

As of the writing of this article, the move was continuing into day three, with the inmate population of SCI Phoenix being 815.

The DOC is updating a special page on its website where everyone is encouraged to follow along. There is a link on the front page of [www.cor.pa.gov](http://www.cor.pa.gov).

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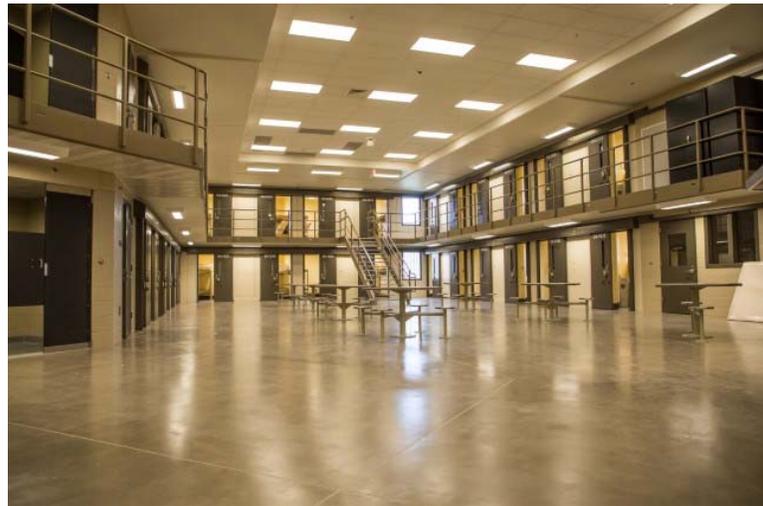
## Comments from Secretary Wetzel

Earlier today, Secretary Wetzel was interviewed by Reading Eagle reporter Holly Herman. Here are some key points they discussed:

The move is on schedule and we expect to be finished by early next week.

There have been no major issues.

Feedback from the inmates is that they are pleased with the environment – air conditioning is something they didn't have at Graterford, and the prison is brighter.



**Left: E Block at SCI Graterford.**

**Above: A housing unit at SCI Phoenix.**

Wetzel said staff is going a great job communicating with inmates – as this is a significant change for them too. They have provided the menu and FAQs for inmates via the inmate TV channel.

Wetzel said, “Our focus is on keeping the buses rolling. We started slow due to the fact that we moved the higher-risk inmates first, but now we are moving general population inmates, so we should see the pace increase.”

Wetzel said staff has been doing a great job, and he especially mentioned Superintendent Tammy Ferguson; the DOC's head of security Major Ken Goodman, who's been leading this entire planning and implementation since day one; and Executive Deputy Secretary for Institutional Operations Tabb Bickell.

“This has been a combination of our outstanding folks doing a great job,” Wetzel said.

When asked about any issues Wetzal said, "We've had minimal issues with contraband – almost none so far. Staff did a great job over the past several months helping inmates to reduce their property."

When asked about the delay in opening that other reporters seemed to focus on Wetzal said, "People have no idea the amount of planning and timing that went into this move. Timing was about when it would be convenient for everyone involved and to avoid the July 4<sup>th</sup> holiday vacation season and other major events happening in that area that would have tied up hotel rooms we needed to house the 250 to 300 extra DOC staffers that have come to the prisons to assist with the move. There's no sense looking back. Two years from now, no one's going to care that we didn't open the prison by June 30, 2018."

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## Pretrial, Probation and Parole Supervision Week

July 15-21, 2018, has been proclaimed Pretrial, Probation and Parole Supervision Week by Gov. Tom Wolf.

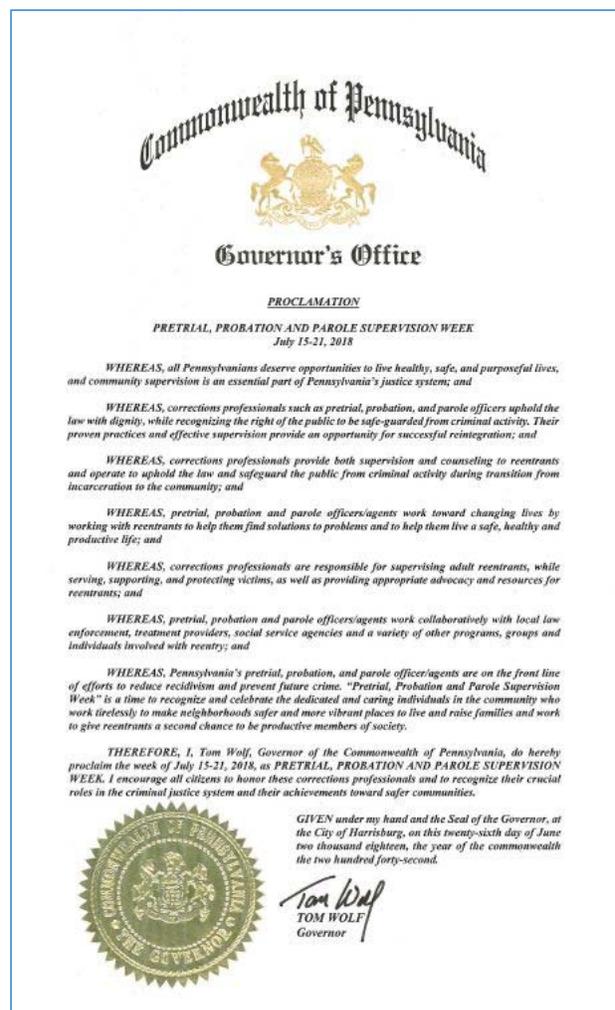
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## Corrections Certifies Inmates as Wellness Facilitators

*First-of-its-kind training aimed at addressing effects of trauma in prisons*

The DOC recently announced that it has provided advanced training to a select group of inmate Certified Peer Specialists (CPSs) to help address mental health issues and reduce the incidence of violence in prisons. The DOC training is believed to be the first of its kind in the country.

Among the 500 inmate CPSs who provide counseling to other inmates suffering with mental health issues, 17 have been certified as Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP©) facilitators, a program provided by Vermont-based Copeland Center for Wellness and Recovery.



WRAP is an evidenced-based tool that helps individuals address distressing feelings through a personally developed response. The goal is to certify all CPSs in the state's 25 prisons as WRAP facilitators.

"It is ground breaking to have state prison inmates as certified facilitators who will now be able to facilitate WRAP sessions with other inmates," Lynn Patrone, Department of Corrections mental health advocate said. "When individuals develop their own WRAP, they are able to maintain continual wellness and address feelings or symptoms that may cause distress."

The goal of the program is to use one's WRAP to maintain wellness every day. This tool offers a structured plan to address distressing feelings, anxiety and life issues to prevent a person from experiencing a crisis.

In addition, 39 DOC staff members have received WRAP facilitator certification to assist co-workers in maintaining positive mental health while working in a stressful environment.

The training is part of DOC's system-wide effort to reduce stress levels in prisons that can lead to misconducts and violence, amid a growing number of inmates facing serious mental illness. **About 8 percent** (corrected from 31 percent) of the prison population has been diagnosed with serious mental illness.

Copeland Center for Wellness & Recovery's values-based training and technical assistance supports efforts to ensure holistic wellness tools are available to promote mental wellness for everyone who lives and works behind prison walls and fences.

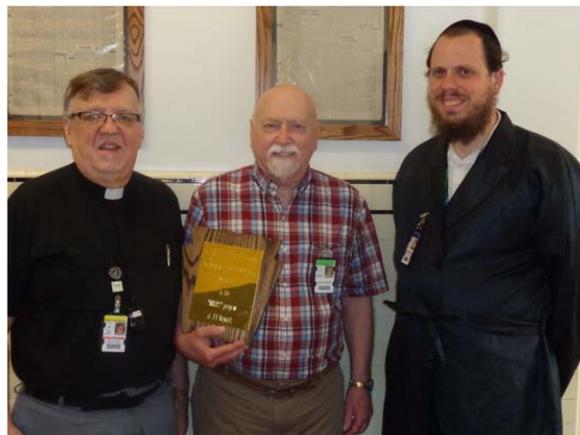
"This training opportunity also increases inmates' employment skills and enhances their marketability in the community workforce," Patrone added.

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## **Santoro Honored Volunteer Service at SCI Waymart**

Pat Santoro, a retired licensed psychologist and one of the founders of the "Wheats Bereavement" Program at SCI Waymart, was recently honored with a plaque presentation by Classification and Program Manager Joseph Grillo for his more than 17 years of dedication to this monthly program.

Santoro worked together with Chaplain Rev. John Kowalczyk to help inmates process bereavement in an atmosphere of positive reinforcement to foster healing and understanding. Both spiritual and psychological dynamics were presented to



**Pictured, from left to right, are: Chaplain Rev. John Kowalczyk, Pat Santoro and Facility Chaplaincy Program Director Rabbi Joseph Kolakowski.**

inmates in this two-hour program to provide them with a tool to help manage the many stressors in their lives. It is the wish of Pat Santoro that this program continues to be one of many tools afforded to the inmates at SCI Waymart. A process has already begun to find a volunteer to continue the excellent legacy established by Pat Santoro so many years ago.

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## **CIT Training Update**

According to Unit Manager Rhonda Tomcavage, who serves as the Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training program manager, as of the end of the second quarter of 2018, 1,824 employees have been trained in CIT.

“KUDOS to each of them for their continued commitment to the program and for helping to spread the word throughout the commonwealth on the importance of mental health awareness,” Tomcavage said.

What is CIT?

Crisis Intervention is a front-line response to mental illness that can be used by all classifications of corrections employees. The training provides tools, strategies and techniques that will allow these employees to work together to implement comprehensive services for inmates with mental illness.

Pennsylvania DOC’s five-day training reinforces skills taught previously to employees during basic training and on-the-job training. It also provides them with a better understanding of mental illness and ways to deescalate situations that could become quickly volatile if not handled appropriately.

The training uses role playing, videos and lectures to educate employees about:

- the history of mental illness over the centuries;
- problems encountered with the mentally ill in prisons;
- an overview of medications used to treat mental illness and possible side effects;
- communication skills to prevent, intervene and deescalate situations;
- strategic plans for working with those with mental illness as well as their family members and advocates;
- a review of the DOC’s use of certified peer specialists; and
- an overview of community reentry issues faced by the mentally ill.

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## Inmate Community Service

Inmate work crews from SCIs Retreat and Dallas help clean up an abandoned cemetery in Nanticoke.

<https://bit.ly/2maBwWm>

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## MacDicken Recognized for Financial Education Work

PA Department of Banking and Securities outreach specialist Becky MacDicken received a certificate of appreciation from Bureau of Community Corrections Director Dan McIntyre for her work providing financial education basics to inmates and reentrants to help facilitate successful reentry.

MacDicken, who has taught workshops and webinars for all 25 state institutions and five state-run community corrections centers, was recognized for her "tireless efforts" to assist with the reentry of these individuals. The courses cover the basics of banking and credit. MacDicken also has conducted financial education classes for DOC staff.



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# Happy Anniversary SCI Mercer!

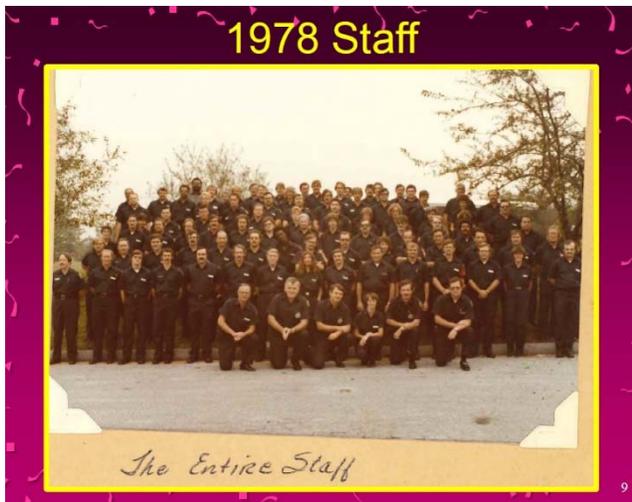
July 10, 2018, marks the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of SCI Mercer.

On Thursday, July 5, 1978, the State Regional Correctional Facility (SRCF) at Mercer began operations.

On July 5, 2018, SCI Mercer held its opening ceremony to kick off the 40th Anniversary Celebration.

Superintendent Melinda Adams presented the Honor Guard with the facility's first institutional flag. The Honor Guard will take the flag to all future events as part of their presentation of colors.

**Flag Presentation Ceremony  
July 5, 2018**



**Right: 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Celebration Planning Committee.**



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## Happy Anniversary, SCI Somerset!

When the DOC opens several prisons in the same year, they all will celebrate anniversaries around the same time. SCI Somerset just celebrated its 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary this week, and staff did so by sealing a time capsule filed with various things from around the institution. The plan is for it to be opened at the 50th anniversary.

Prison administrators invited back to the prison its first superintendent – Ray Sobina, who held that position for 12 years -- to speak at the celebration. In addition, staff held a special luncheon for the staff and retirees.



**Left: SCI Somerset's first superintendent, Ray Sobina, addresses attendees of the prison's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration.**



**Right: Deputy Superintendent Craig Wadsworth shows the time capsule to attendees. It is set to be opened in 25 years at the prison's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary.**

**Below: SCI Somerset retirees who attended the ceremony.**



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## Harrisburg CCC Continues to Build Relationships

Melissa Shiffler of The RASE Project was a guest at the Harrisburg Community Corrections Center's (CCC) June staff meeting. State Intermediate Punishment Coordinator Lisa Reilly and Contract Facility Coordinator Amelia Dryden were in attendance.

Shiffler provided valuable information to staff regarding The RASE Project and its plan for those in need of recovery. She shared detailed information about Vivitrol, Buprenorphine, Suboxone and Subutex. She explained The RASE Project's evaluation process. The RASE Project staff and Harrisburg CCC staff agreed to improve communications regarding reentrant participation in the Project.



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Week of July 2...

## **Graterford Officers Thwart Escape Attempt**

At approximately 11:30 p.m. on June 28, officers at the State Correctional Institution at Graterford thwarted an escape attempt by a lone inmate.

At the 9 p.m. inmate count, officials determined that one inmate was missing. A search within the perimeter ensued, resulting in his apprehension at 11:30 p.m. At no time was the prison's perimeter breached, and the public was not at risk.

The inmate, who is serving a lengthy sentence for third degree murder, failed to return to his cell following regular cell block exercise/activity time. Preliminary information indicates that he got out of the block by breaking a window and then climbed onto a roof. From there he accessed the power plant, which is located within the perimeter, and is where he was apprehended by officers.

"Graterford staff acted appropriately and did a great job of apprehending the inmate," said Corrections Secretary John Wetzel. "We have a system of checks and balances in place, and that system worked. As soon as he was discovered missing during one of our many inmate counts, staff took appropriate steps and apprehended him within the secure perimeter."

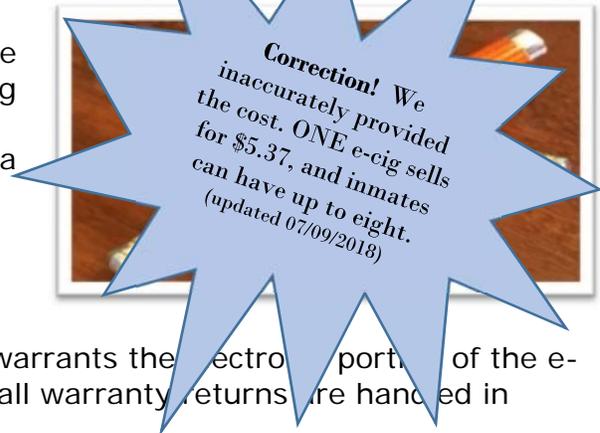
Superintendent Tammy Ferguson and her staff have put together an interim plan to enhance security in the intervening period prior to the move to SCI Phoenix; however, officials will not discuss the specifics of those enhancements due to the sensitivity of that information.

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## Electronic Cigarettes Approved for Inmate Use

On June 25, the DOC began allowing inmates throughout the DOC to purchase a pre-approved style of disposable electronic cigarettes (e-cigs) through the commissary. This applies ONLY to SCIs that currently allow tobacco use. So, inmates at Chester, Pine Grove and Quehanna are not permitted to purchase e-cigs. And SCI Graterford transitioned into a tobacco-free facility earlier this year with the goal of having SCI Phoenix never be a facility that allowed tobacco use.

The e-cigs are available in menthol and regular flavors and deliver 18 mg of nicotine in a single unit that will provide the smoking equivalent of a pack-and-a-half of tobacco cigarettes. Inmates can purchase e-cigs at a cost of \$5.37, plus tax, for a pack of eight. Use of the e-cigs are permitted in designated outside areas only.



The DOC's commissary system is run by Pennsylvania Correctional Industries, who warrants the electronic portion of the e-cig only. E-cigarette delivery, disposal and all warranty returns are handled in accordance with institutional procedure.

Since March 2018, employees have been permitted to possess and use up to two disposable e-cigs in outside designated areas of the institutions. The e-cigs must be kept in the employee's possession and must be discarded off grounds of the prison.

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## FAST Agents Carry Narcan

In July 2017 the directive was given that all parole agents are required to carry Narcan. The decision to require agents to carry Narcan was made due to the increase in opioid overdoses throughout the country and the increase in warnings to law enforcement regarding contact with fentanyl during searches and evidence collection. In October 2017 all field parole agents were provided with two doses of Narcan.

Some parole agents work as part of a Fugitive Apprehension Strike Team (FAST) in conjunction with the US Marshals and other various law enforcement agencies who may or may not have Narcan available to them. Shortly after the field agents received their Narcan an incident occurred in which a FAST team member encountered a substance and needed Narcan administered, the parole agent was the only member of the team equipped with Narcan.

Because of this incident, DOC officials worked to provide full-time FAST agents with four doses each of Narcan. Our agents will be equipped to administer Narcan to anyone who needs it.

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## Body Scanner Being Tested at Coal Township

After successful use at the Wernersville Community Corrections Center, DOC officials now are testing a similar body scanner unit at SCI Coal Township. At the prison, any inmate coming to the prison from the outside – either by parole violation or from the county – and all inmates coming back from the visiting room will be scanned by the body scanner. The scanner uses small doses of x-ray technology to see items hidden on or in a body. After the pilot is concluded and after test results are reviewed, it is the DOC's plan to install body scanners at all state prisons.

As previously reported in the January 22, 2018, issue of "Correctional Newsfront":

### **Corrections Demonstrates Body Scanner, Unveils Steps to Improve Security, Safety and Reduce Drug Usage at Wernersville Community Corrections Center** *Body Scanner Pilot Part of Governor Wolf's Opioid Disaster Declaration Initiatives*

The DOC has undertaken a sweeping overhaul of its Wernersville Community Correctional Center (CCC) in Berks County to improve security, public safety, operational efficiency and reentrant support. The initiatives were announced at an event today at the facility.

DOC personnel were joined by Acting Secretary of Health and Physician General Dr. Rachel Levine and Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency Director Rick Flinn. Both Levine and Flinn head up the recently formed Opioid Operational Command Center,

established in response to Governor Tom Wolf's January 10 opioid disaster declaration.



Since last month the DOC has installed a full body scanner to detect contraband, increased the use of drug-detecting K-9s and reduced the number of residential buildings.

The changes are designed to limit the introduction of contraband in the facility, reduce drug use and better manage the reentrant population.

**Here, the scanner shows a screwdriver hidden in an individual's pants/shoe.**



Governor Wolf's disaster declaration authorizes emergency purchasing under Section 516 of the Procurement Code to allow for an emergency, no-bid contract to expand the advanced body scanner pilot program at Wernersville should results prove to be positive there.

The body scanner, similar to the device used in airports, reveals any manner of contraband that may be on a person. It is being piloted for three months after which time DOC will determine whether or not to purchase the machine.

"Pennsylvania continues to have some of the highest overdose death rates in the United States," Acting Health Secretary and Physician General Dr. Rachel Levine said. "Continuing the advanced body scanner pilot program is one tool in our toolbox to ensuring that our families, our loved ones and our communities get help to reverse the effects this crisis has on the commonwealth."

Other changes include the reduction of the number of beds at the facility from about 400 to 230 today, and the closure of one residential unit. This has reduced the area needed to be searched by K-9 units by 50,000 square feet.

Reentry programming and job training efforts will be expanded to include additional job and housing readiness workshops. The in-house training will reduce the need for contracting with outside agencies to provide the same classes.

In addition, Wernersville will be able to offer some workshops that are currently unavailable in Berks County, including cognitive behavioral intervention, family reunification, alcohol and drug support and education and peer support services.

“By consolidating the buildings and increasing security and program enhancements, Wernersville will be able to offer more positive reentry support, individualized case management and centralized services to reentrants,” said Corrections Secretary John Wetzel. “The goal is to better address addiction issues, reduce drug usage and increase safety and security for the reentrants, the staff, and the community.”

Under the new entry process, Building 30 is designated the “reception” point for all new arrivals who meet first with an assessment counselor. They then receive a standard orientation, including a meeting and evaluation with a counselor and assistance with social service needs, such as obtaining necessary identification and Medical Assistance. The reentrants are then provided a detailed action plan to follow.

The assessment counselors evaluate the reentrant’s parole conditions and history and make appropriate referrals to reentry services and/or on-site workshops or groups before the reentrant transitions to a group home.

During the reception phase, all reentrants with substance use disorder participate in an educational workshop on the benefits of medication-assisted treatment (MAT).

Other changes to the facility include:

- Increased drug training for staff
- Increased transportation for reentrants to work sites and medical appointments
- Providing all meals on site reducing need for outside travel
- Additional security cameras

The third former residential building will be used for staff and reentrant training workshops.

Wernersville CCC, which occupies buildings on the former Wernersville State Hospital property, is one of the largest community corrections centers in Pennsylvania, helping roughly 1,000 individuals return to the community each year. The majority of residents at the center are from Berks or the surrounding counties. Last year residents of the facility provided more than 20,000 hours of community service to local governments, non-profit groups and churches.

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## In the Right Place at the Right Time

On June 28, SCI Somerset officials recognized Mike Shaffer for a noble act of kindness. Mike, who is a welding trades instructor, was late leaving work the afternoon of April 24, 2018, when on his way home in a hard rainstorm he witnessed an automobile accident on Route 219 North. Erin Vest, 19 of Fairhope, Pa., was heading to UPJ to visit her boyfriend when the accident happened.



Mike said he knew it was bad when he went over to her car and she was not responsive. He tried to make her comfortable and stayed with her until emergency personnel arrived. Mike later visited with Erin in the hospital, but she was still in a coma at the time, so he was only able to meet her family. Today at the presentation was the first time Erin, the daughter of Peggy and Scott Sherer, met Mike in person. Erin suffered a severe head injury in the accident, but her recovery is coming along very well. She plans to attend college next fall. Erin and her family are just very thankful for Mike's compassion and help that fateful day.

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## Saying Farewell to Trained Dogs

On June 12, 2018, the TAILS handlers, along with staff and administration, prepared to say farewell to the North, Polar, Packer and Kato. The dogs have completed their initial basic training here at Pine Grove and will be returning to United Disabilities Services for their secondary training. A special lunch was provided to the handlers as a thank you for their hard work with the dogs, and Ms. Mary Jalongo was also in attendance. Jalongo sponsored Polar and North this round and also works with the inmates in taking the dog certification program offered through the Indiana University of Pennsylvania.



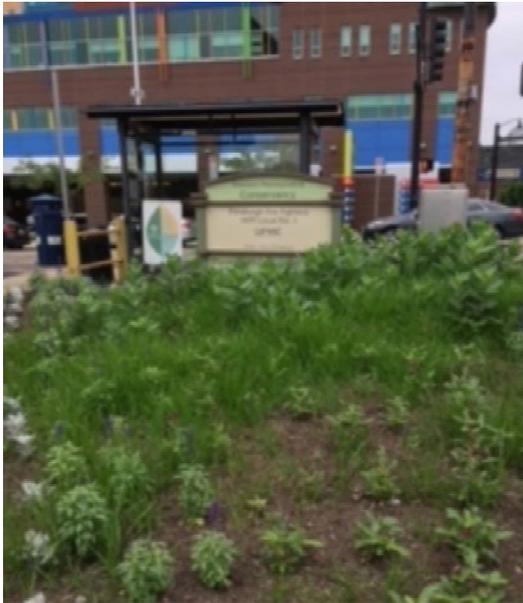
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## **PCCC Beautifies Allegheny County Garden #WorkingtheLand**

Reentrants and staff at the Pittsburgh Community Corrections Center (PCCC) worked with the Western Pennsylvania Conservancy in June 2018 to maintain the community flower garden at Penn and Friendship near UPMC Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. PCCC will maintain the garden for the remainder of the 2018 season.

The Western Pennsylvania Conservancy, which was established in 1932, protects and restores exceptional places to provide the region with clean water and healthy forests and natural areas. It has over 130 gardens throughout Western Pennsylvania. The gardens bring beauty, character and charm to the region while creating green spaces and natural storm water solutions. The conservancy manages approximately 13,000 acres of land in Allegheny and surrounding counties.

**Before**



**During**



**After**



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## Networking to Bridge the Gap

Annette Pannebaker, Michael Corson, Dana Brahim, Stephanie Ackley and Tim Ross came together at the Parole District Office in Altoona last Monday in an effort to work as a team to improve transitional opportunities and help bridge the employment gap between incarceration and the community for reentrants. In an on-going collaboration, Annette and Michael invited reentry staff from SCI Pine Grove and SCI Laurel Highlands to attend employment classes and an employer presentation for parolees/reentrants. Reentrants from Jefferson, Clearfield, Indiana, Cambria, Blair, Huntingdon, Mifflin, Somerset, Bedford and Fulton counties were invited to participate.

The result was that staff employed inside the prisons got to see the kind of information local employers share with and require from reentrants and the reentrant's response to the potential employers. Staff also were able to increase their knowledge base of employers and employment needs in the communities served by the district office. Conversely, in-house staff were able to share information and contacts they had with ASCRA agents and reentrants.

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## PPS Holds Convener's Conference

On June 30, Secretary John Wetzel and Health Care Systems Advocate Kimberlee Drum were presenters for the PA Prison Society's annual Convener's Conference.



Secretary Wetzel provided legislative updates and other DOC initiatives, and Drum provided relevant DOC health care updates and spoke briefly about the grievance processes. Drum also provided demographic updates about two subsets of vulnerable population -- the aging and mentally ill - - as well as, re-entrant



planning and policy.

The conference was facilitated by PPS Board of Directors President Tom Innes, and Executive Director Shubik Richards provided welcome and opening remarks. Other agenda items included: Families Against Mandatory Minimums; compassionate release; PA Institutional Law Project; Board of Probation & Parole; sex offender panel and chapter sharing from Allegheny, Philadelphia and Centre counties.

Learn more about the PA Prison Society, whose mission is "to advocate for humane prisons and a rational approach to criminal justice," at [www.prisonersociety.org](http://www.prisonersociety.org).

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## Former DOC Employee Hikes the Appalachian Trail

Scott McKenzie, who retired in 2012 as 2-10 shift commander/lieutenant from the Quehanna Boot Camp, is on his second hike along the Appalachian Trail. He started 119 days ago – on March 10, 2018 -- in Georgia.

We were able to communicate with him through Facebook Messenger earlier this week.

He said he has been dealing with 95+ degrees and high humidity and only was able to do about 10 miles a day during the hot days. He usually averages about 20 miles a day. On the day we communicated with him, he said he would stay in a Rutland hostel, where he would shower, launder items and relax in air conditioning until the next day.

During our conversation he said that he's "going from Georgia to Maine, which is a 2,190.9-mile trip through 14 states."

Scott first hiked the trail in 2015. He said his interest was sparked after reading "A Walk in the Woods" by Bill Bryson.

"At that time, in 2015, I knew very little about the trail, and this time I know what's coming up, which can be a blessing or a curse," he said.

When asked for facts that he thought non-hikers would find interesting, Scott said, "We don't have to hunt, fish, trap or forage for our food. We resupply in towns along the way that we can walk to or hitch hike into."

Having started this trip on March 10, Scott expects to finish by August 10. That's FIVE MONTHS!!

What's next for Scott once this hike is over? He says perhaps a trip to hike the El Camino in Spain.

If you would like to follow Scott on his hiking journey, he said you are more than welcome to friend him on Facebook (Scott McKenzie), where he posts daily hiking updates.

### About the Appalachian Trail

(copied from Wikipedia)

The Appalachian National Scenic Trail, generally known as the Appalachian Trail or simply the A.T., is a marked hiking trail in the Eastern United States extending between Springer Mountain in Georgia and Mount Katahdin in Maine. The trail is estimated around 2,200 miles long, though the exact length changes over time as parts are modified or rerouted. The Appalachian Trail Conservancy reports that the Appalachian Trail is the longest hiking-only trail in the world. More than two million people are said to take a hike on part of the trail at least once each year.



**Scott McKenzie talks about the oppressive heat on day 115 of his hike along the Appalachian Trail.**



It passes through 14 states: Georgia, North Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, West Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York, Connecticut, Massachusetts, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine.

Thru-hikers attempt to hike the trail in its entirety in a single season. More than 2,700 people thru-hiked the trail in 2014 and many books, documentaries, websites, and fan organizations are dedicated to the pursuit. Some hike from one end to the other, then turn around and thru-hike the trail the other way, known as a "yo-yo".

Most hikers carry a lightweight tent, tent hammock or tarp. The trail has more than 250 shelters and campsites available for hikers. The shelters, sometimes called lean-tos (in Maine, Massachusetts, and Connecticut), huts (in Shenandoah National Park), or Adirondack shelters, are generally open, three-walled structures with a wooden floor, although some shelters are much more complex in structure. Shelters are usually spaced a day's

hike or less apart, most often near a water source (which may be dry) and with a privy. They generally have spaces for tent sites in the vicinity as the shelters may be full.

In addition to official shelters, many people offer their homes, places of business, or inns to accommodate AT hikers. One example is the Little Lyford Pond camps maintained by the Appalachian Mountain Club. Inns are more common in sections of the trail that coincide with national parks, most notably Virginia's Shenandoah National Park.

Trail hikers who attempt to complete the entire trail in a single season are called "thru-hikers"; those who traverse the trail during a series of separate trips are known as "section-hikers". Rugged terrain, weather extremes, illness, injury, and the time and effort required make thru-hiking difficult to accomplish. Statistics from 2014 estimate that around 2,700 hikers attempted to thru-hike the trail.

A thru-hike generally requires five to seven months, although some have done it in three months, and several trail runners have completed the trail in less time. Trail runners typically tackle the AT with automobile support teams, without backpacks, and without camping in the woods.

The fastest known times for self-supported attempts (meaning no vehicle or crew support, implying carrying a heavy backpack) are Joe McConaughy, who completed the trail northbound, on August 31, 2017, in 45 days, 12 hours and 15 minutes. Heather Anderson completed the trail, southbound, on September 24, 2015, in 54 days, 7 hours and 48 minutes.

The oldest person to hike the entire Appalachian Trail was 82-year-old Dale "Grey Beard" Sanders, October 26, 2017.

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## SCI Laurel Highlands donates to Women's Help Center

In honor of Sexual Assault Awareness, SCI Laurel Highlands recently held a drive to collect supplies for the Women's Help Center of Johnstown, Pa. The generous employees of the prison collected clothing, baby supplies, toys, cleaning supplies and general household items. The items were delivered to The Women's Help Center by staff from Laurel Highlands. Thank you, Laurel Highlands employees, for your generosity to those in need!



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## Immigrant Heritage Month

DOC's Pedro J. Gratacos (left) is visited by Acting Secretary of State Robert Torres at the 2018 Immigrant Heritage Month Celebration that was held in Harrisburg last week.



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## Pittsburgh CCC Reentrant Honored

On May 2, 2018, staff and volunteers of the Third Presbyterian Church's Days for Girls (DfG) Program honored Pittsburgh Community Corrections Center (CCC) reentrant Heather Lee for her dedication to the DfG program. Lee began volunteering for Days for Girls in May 2017. Since that time Lee completed over 500 hours of community service for the organization, volunteering at the church only one day per week! Lee was instrumental in sewing and packing hygiene kits, which are distributed internationally. In addition, Lee gained hands on seamstress experience. On her last day of volunteer service, the Third Presbyterian Church's Days for Girls Program coordinators and volunteers presented Lee with a quilt and Pittsburgh CCC staff presented Lee with a certificate for her accomplishment.

Days for Girls is an international organization that provides washable menstrual hygiene solutions and health education to girls in underprivileged countries. Days for Girls is committed to supporting a girl throughout her entire lifecycle, from providing her with a DfG kit, to teaching her health education, to offering training for her when she grows older so that she can produce DfG kits and support hygiene in her community.



**Pictured, from left to right, are: Third Presbyterian Church Pastor Karie Charlton, PCCC Correction Counselor 2 Tara Marhefka, DfG Volunteer Coordinator Constance Pearson, Heather Lee and PCCC Center Director Richard Dotson.**

**At right: Heather Lee with her quilt and Third Presbyterian Church Staff.**



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