

Correctional Newsfront

The official newsletter of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections, including the state prisons, reentry services, community corrections and parole supervision



2020 News ~ July to September

Week of September 28, 2020...

Corrections Employee Wins Governor's Award For Excellence

Governor Tom Wolf honored Department of Corrections (DOC) Community Based Corrections Program Director Daniel McIntyre with the Governor's Award for Excellence on Sept. 30 for his work in three key areas: virtual reality, use of GPS on State Drug Treatment individuals and creation of community corrections center employment counselors.

The award recognizes commonwealth employees for exemplary job performance or service that reflects initiative, leadership, innovation and increased efficiency. McIntyre is one of 49 state employees from nine agencies to be honored by Governor Tom Wolf at today's virtual awards presentation.

"Danny is a dynamic life-long corrections professional who uses his skills to make corrections, parole and reentry better for everyone involved, including citizens of this commonwealth," said DOC Secretary John Wetzel.

McIntyre was nominated for the award by his supervisor, Deputy Secretary for Reentry Kelly Evans, who described McIntyre as an energetic employee who works to solve issues and improve procedures and efficiencies.

"Director McIntyre is one of the hardest working people I know," said Deputy Evans, who went on to explain, "Danny leads by example and is an inspiration to all



who come into contact with him. He is known for his high energy and positive outlook, and he makes it a point to make everyone feel important and valued. Through Danny's leadership, numerous programs have been created that assist reentrants with their successful reentry, which ultimately helps to keep our communities safe."

Virtual Reality (VR)

McIntyre started the virtual reality (VR) initiative to help ease the stress of reentry for juvenile lifers (inmates under the age of 18 at the time they committed their crimes) who were returning to a world that didn't exist when they were incarcerated due to their lengthy sentences. The idea was to show them community corrections centers (CCCs) and surrounding areas, via VR technology, to ease their anxiety regarding their impending release into a modern world after decades in prison. With the success of the juvenile lifer VR initiative, VR's potential quickly became apparent to McIntyre as he expanded VR to work with mentally ill and hospice inmates, as well as to deliver staff training. With VR, mentally ill inmates are rewarded or calmed by virtually going to the beach or other activities that appeal to them. By virtue of McIntyre's leadership with these initiatives, employees now are being trained by being virtually immersed in situations like inmate fights, assaults on staff and other emergency situations.

Use of GPS on State Drug Treatment (SDT) Inmates

Another one of McIntyre's innovations is the use of global positioning systems (GPS) on State Drug Treatment inmates residing at community corrections centers (CCCs). He developed this initiative to reduce dependence on CCC and state prison beds for returning SDT inmates with low-level violations. In fact, utilizing GPS as a sanctioning option for such individuals has reduced the need for CCC and SCI beds for short-term sanctions. Additionally, the enormous cost savings realized by the DOC as a result of this initiative allows for the expansion of the successful SDT program by giving individuals an alternative rehabilitative sanction in the community.

Creation of CCC Employment Counselors

As it became apparent that employment for CCC residents was key to successful reentry into society and preventing a backlog in the SCIs, McIntyre tackled this issue head on. The result was the creation of specialized CCC employment counselors. These counselors have formed relationships with local businesses to directly place reentrants in full-time, self-sustaining employment. This program has realized a statewide 12 percent increase in CCC resident employment since January 2019. When getting to work emerged as a barrier for a significant percentage of CCC residents, McIntyre used transport teams to assist reentrants with getting to and from their place of employment.

In addition to McIntyre's recognition as an award recipient, DOC Workforce Development Specialist Dorenda Hamarlund who, for the last several years, has played a major role in reentry and workforce development, was selected as an award finalist.

"Dorenda works tirelessly to educate employers on the benefits of hiring reentrants and to connect those employers with our reentrants who are eager to work, she has been a huge asset to our department," Evans said.

Visit the DOC's podcast page to hear about her efforts to assist inmates with reentry.

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Agent Goes Above and Beyond for Reentrant

During Community Reentry Parole Agent Amy Ramiza's initial reentry orientation contact, she was asked for help by a recently released reentrant. The reentrant explained he only had the DOC clothes he was released in and was struggling with food insecurity. The reentrant's agent of record was able to get him in touch with local social services for help but unfortunately most had extensive waiting lists.



Ramiza immediately began to call local organizations that serve people in need of basic daily living supplies. West End Christian Community Center provided non-perishable food items along with clothing, hygiene products and basic need items. American Rescue Workers provided vouchers for a winter coat, clothing, small appliances and furniture. Due to the reentrant's lack of transportation, Agent Ramiza picked up the items from the donating agencies and delivered them to the reentrant. In the upcoming week, Agent Ramiza is working with The American Rescue Workers in securing a microwave and mini refrigerator for this reentrant.



Ramiza will continue to work with the reentrant on securing employment and any other reentry needs while the reentrant is under supervision in the Williamsport District.

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Huntingdon Hosts First Virtual Reentry and Career Fair

Education staff at SCI Huntingdon recently hosted a Virtual Reentry/Career Fair in collaboration with the Department of Corrections' Reentry Office. Nearly 30 soon-to-be-released inmates participated in a day of virtual presentations with employers and service providers.

"Even with the added challenges presented by COVID-19, preparing incarcerated individuals for reentry is at the forefront of what we do," Corrections Secretary John Wetzel said. "This was a fantastic event that helped provide important information to individuals preparing to leave our facilities and reenter the community."

Each state prison normally hosts a Reentry/Career Fair for inmates who are within 12 months of reentry to allow them to meet employers and financial and housing institutions. Due to COVID-19 mitigation efforts, all 2020 fairs had to be canceled.

The DOC's Reentry Office worked with officials throughout the DOC to create a virtual version of the fair, and they chose to pilot it at Huntingdon. The education team at Huntingdon, led by Principal Kammy Laird, were instrumental in making this a reality.

"This fair is a testament to the creativity and determination of our employees," Wetzel said. "Our reentry staff knows the importance of these events, and rather than just let COVID-19 ruin this valuable opportunity for those in our facilities, they sought a solution.

"The individuals that participated are more likely to find success thanks to this virtual event."

Inmates were chosen based on their anticipated reentry dates and completion of reentry programming. They were assigned to classrooms based on their cohorts and continued to practice social distancing.

Organizations submitted videos for the inmates to watch ahead of the event before hosting a morning and afternoon virtual session with live presentations. Participants included Liberty Ministries, Flagger Force, Triangle Tech, PHFA, PACE, Veteran Services, White Deer Run, Small Business Administration and the Pennsylvania departments of Aging and Banking.



For security purposes, inmates could see and hear the presenters, while the presenters could not hear or see the inmates. Following the presentations, Huntingdon education staff typed questions on behalf of the inmates to directly ask the presenters for more information during a question-and-answer session.

After positive feedback from presenters and inmates alike, the DOC is now exploring the viability of a state-wide event to be held in December for all Pennsylvania state prisons.

"This project was only possible thanks to the collaboration between our reentry team, SCI Huntingdon's Education Department, our IT team and our community partners," Wetzal said. "After such a successful inaugural event, we're excited about the possibilities and hope to have more information on a state-wide event very soon."

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QBC Grads Report with Success

Reentrant Robert D. (Dec. 2019 Quehanna Boot Camp graduate) recently contacted Principal Kevin Fortuna and provided the following update:

While at QBC, Robert completed the Certified Fiber Installer Program with Matt McCullough. Immediately upon release, he obtained employment in his field (he said there are many opportunities in this field).

He has advanced to the next level and attained "Technical Certification." With this certification, he is now able to work with fiber and low-voltage installation. He is currently enrolled in the B.S. IT program at Purdue University via online studies.

As a result of obtaining gainful employment and making sound financial decisions, he has raised his credit score from 520 to 720.

He expressed he is extremely grateful for everything QBC offered him. He reports that parole has been very supportive and cooperative.

A week later, reentrant Joshua D. (Sep. 2020 Boot Camp graduate) called in to let the QBC team know that he is doing well. He was able to obtain a job at a warehouse through a temp agency. He plans to finish his GED and will be working through Harrisburg Area Community College to accomplish this goal.

He appreciates everything the facility has done for him. He especially thanks his primary drill instructors, Cleaver and Millard.

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Waymart Mental Health Unit Hosts Luau

The first annual Luau at the SCI Waymart Mental Health Unit was a huge success thanks to all the patients and staff who contributed their ideas and time in putting it together. It was not only a great team building opportunity for patients but for the staff as well.

The patients had a big hand in the planning of the event. Levels 3 and 4 made the decorations, signs and games and gave ideas for what they thought a good Luau should have. They created an ocean wall mural, a free-standing palm tree, palm trees that hung from the ceiling and palm tree limbo. They also painted a large tiki, made a tiki toss game, a shark game, tape-the-tail-on-the-monkey, lanterns, leis and more.

Level 1 and 2 inmates participated as well with in-cell activities (Hawaiian trivia, word searches, etc.), festive music and crafts.

The process of preparing for the event was just as much fun as the event itself creating many opportunities of sharing and laughing. Participants talked about many things including the meaning of tikis and totem poles and what are some things that guide and protect them in life. A big hit at the party was the Hawaiian obstacle course, which was lots of fun for patients and staff.



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Waymart Holds BBQ for Employee Appreciation Day

SCI Waymart celebrated Employee Appreciation Day Sept. 1 and again on Sept. 17.

Staff volunteers served hamburgers, hot dogs, macaroni salad, pasta salad with condiments and choice of tomato, lettuce, onion and cheese. The Employees Association donated ice cream sandwiches the prior week for the employees to enjoy.

Food was available for all three shifts.



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Waymart Begins SECA Campaign with Hoagie Sale

SCI Waymart's State Employee Combined Appeal team kicked off the campaign with a hoagie, chip and soda sale for two days covering all three shifts. Next up is a Cinco de SECA Taco dinner sale followed by free-ice-cream-for-all as a thank you to Waymart's awesome "blended family."



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Seminary Students Continue Work at Waymart Through Zoom

St. Tikhon's Theological Seminary students have been coming to SCI Waymart for 33 years, beginning in 1987 when the institution was Farview State Hospital. More recently, St. Tikhon's students enrolled in the post-graduate course "Field Education Placement" have been providing support services in Waymart's mental health units.

Under the tutelage of their instructor, Father John Kowalczyk, who is also a contract Chaplain at Waymart, these second-year students/interns provide counseling, support and spirituality to inmates with severe mental illness.

Earlier this year when COVID-19 struck, there was some doubt as to whether the program would continue due to the students being unable to enter into the institution. After several meetings between Seminary and Waymart staff, a plan was developed to allow the course to continue by providing "virtual counseling" through the use of Zoom. Currently there are 15 students participating in the 2020 fall/winter semester, and there will be 15 students also participating in the 2021 winter/spring semester who will "virtually" meet with the inmates. The students from their classroom at the school will provide services to inmates who will be on their housing units thanks to Zoom.



Pictured are the students during an orientation at St. Tikhon's Theological Seminary with their instructor and Waymart staff. Pictured from left: Father John Kowalczyk, CCPM David Gorman, Deputy Superintendent for Centralized Services Joseph Grillo and Father Joseph Kolakowski.

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Mahanoy Kicks Off SECA Campaign with Food, Raffles

SCI Mahanoy kicked off their 2020 SECA Campaign the week of Sept. 14-18. Staff participated in a cookout, basket raffles, a bake sale and a 50/50 raffle. Several other events are also planned over the next several weeks. Mahanoy's SECA Coordinators would like to thank all staff who have participated and donated thus far. SCI Mahanoy United!



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Chester Opens New Center for Elderly Inmates

SCI Chester opened the DOC's first Life Enhancement Program Center for senior inmates. This first-of-its-kind center is designed to provide inmates older than 50 years with senior-specific programming and treatment with inmates their own age.

The program was designed through a collaboration between the Pennsylvania Department of Aging and DOC William Penn Fellow Ebony Johnson, who specializes in gerontology and has spent her tenure working with elderly inmates.

The LEPC will offer volunteers from the community—when the prisons open up for volunteers again—or within the DOC to educate participants in age-related topics, including medical, employment and housing for senior citizens. It will also offer a quiet area for senior inmates to get away from the noise of the housing units, as well as designated recreation time for activities with peers their own age.

The LEPC will also offer fresh plants, fish and a tranquil zone for those who just want to sit and relax, as well as an area for playing cards and games or working on arts and crafts with fellow senior inmates.

The DOC considers inmates 50 years or older elderly, and Chester currently has more than 180 elderly inmates—approximately 18 percent of its population. Nearly 25 percent of the overall DOC population is 50 or older.

While SCI Chester is the first prison to offer an LEPC, the goal is to make this program available throughout the DOC to benefit senior inmates. Offering programs such as this can help encourage and motivate senior inmates, who can positively affect their younger peers and the DOC staff.

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Chester Collects Donations to Support Wesley House, Senior Center

During the summer, staff at SCI Chester participated in a back-to-school drive which collected more than 50 backpacks and 20 Kindle Fires. The purpose of this was to raise money and supplies for the Wesley House.

The Wesley House is a homeless shelter for single women or families. The shelter has 17 rooms for guests and is typically at full capacity of 70 people on any given day. It serves an average of 240 individuals (75 households) per year. Wesley House has a state-of-the-art computer training room for clients to improve their computer skills, search for employment and secure permanent housing. Financial literacy (Money Smarts) classes are offered as well as the Catholic Social Services Out of Poverty Program, enrichment classes, nutrition classes, medical assessments through Horizon House, respite care for needy children and toys during the holiday season. Staff raised \$320 and donated bags of clothing.

Chester also raised \$500 to be donated to the City of Chester Senior Center. Chester's Care Management's staff connects low-income elderly to support services such as assistance with bathing, installation of stair glides and resources for light chores. Over 1,700 homebound older persons are served annually.



Pictured: SCI Chester Activities Manager Rob Rolle and Sheilletta Corporal, Wesley House Coordinator

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Albion's 2020 Graduation Recognition Day

On Sept. 16, SCI Albion celebrated a Graduation Recognition Day. This year, 51 graduates earned their diplomas and/or certifications.

Due to the pandemic, Albion was unable to have the usual annual graduation ceremony; however, the staff still wanted to recognize graduates in a special way.



Graduates were invited to the chapel by cohort to receive their original GED, Commonwealth Secondary Diplomas and/or vocational certificates. The keynote speaker this year was Michael Gent, DCE curriculum coordinator. The Activities Department recorded Gent's graduation speech, and it will be played over the dedicated channel.

The graduates were welcomed by the education staff, administration and Gent. With help from the education staff, inmate employment, activities, and the chapel, graduates were congratulated as they received their diplomas or certificates. All of them received a tassel, a treat to take back to their unit and had their picture taken with their diploma/certificate so they may send a picture home to their family to share this important milestone.

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Huntingdon's RTU completes a Walk-a-Thon

Have you ever gone for a walk to just calm down? Have you ever needed to do something else, to focus on something else, to avoid getting overwhelmed with life's challenges? Some people use walking as a way to stay healthy or as part of their daily routine to decompress. Something as simple as walking can help anyone maintain a sense of calm and help them get through a difficult time.

2020 has been a year of difficult times, mostly due to the pandemic. In April and May, the pandemic hit especially hard at SCI Huntingdon. To ensure the safety of staff and inmates, the facility had to undergo enhanced quarantine measures. Staff were restricted to their offices, not allowed to even go down the hall. Inmates were in their cells, with everything being brought to them. It was a very stressful time. After several weeks, the facility was able to start slowly opening up. With opening up, though, both staff and inmates had new stressors. The "new normal" was not what they were used to. Corrections is built on a routine. It's that routine that helps inmates and staff get through stressful times. Routine is especially important to a particular group of inmates and staff: those diagnosed with and those who assist the Severely Mentally Ill (SMI). The Residential Treatment Unit at SCI Huntingdon houses nothing but those who are SMI.

When Huntingdon started to open up, the staff struggled with getting the residents into the new normal routine. The stress levels of all involved skyrocketed as the restrictions imposed by this contagious disease completely and utterly worked against the therapeutic atmosphere that the unit is meant to create. The staff had to come up with a way to energize their population while also trying to expend some of this built up stress. The new normal restricted movement—even interactions between residents on the same unit had to be limited. Then the staff had an idea. It was something they had actually done before and had received a lot of participation doing: a walking challenge. They would allow inmates to walk laps around their yard for a predetermined amount of time, then would keep track of the laps over the course of a month. The challenge would be to exceed a certain distance (number of laps) over the period of four weeks and, if they did, all the participants would get a prize. During the last walking challenge, the residents were able to complete 125 and 1/4 miles, so the “Deputy’s Challenge” set that as the goal: 125 miles, for this newly-named Walk-a-thon.

The desire to participate and work off some stress was greater than the staff expected. The feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Over the four weeks, with most of the participants not even interacting with each other, they completed over 3,000 laps for a total 189.125 miles. The residents enjoyed the challenge and were able to focus on something else for a short period of time each week. Though these are unprecedented times, there are some simple ways in which we can combat the negative effects—like simply going for a walk.

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Waymart Sells Tacos for SECA

On Sept. 23 and 24, SCI Waymart employees were able to buy a taco lunch to support the State Employee Combined Appeal (SECA).

Employees could choose their shell and toppings and let the SECA team serve them. They could purchase two tacos, rice, a drink and dessert for \$5.

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Scandinavian Prison Projects Inmates Learn Food Safety

SCI Chester food service staff conducted the first "ServSafe Food Protection Manager Certification" with inmates in the Scandinavian Prison Project. The National Restaurant Association's ServSafe Food Safety training program is widely recognized and respected in the food service industry. Corrections Food Safety Instructors (CFSI) M. Miller and K. Miller are instructors/proctors for ServSafe. CFSI V. Andriyevskiy assisted in the class giving examples from previous food service experiences and the importance of keeping food safe. This first class was a great experience and the students did a fantastic job! The next class is scheduled for October.



Currently the Scandinavian Prison Project only has six inmates due to the project being delayed by COVID-19. They will do their own cooking on the unit, so this training is to educate them on food safety.

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AROUND THE CENTERS...

TLC Honors Sober Awareness Day

To celebrate Sober Awareness Day, Transitional Living Center (TLC) in Williamsport invited former reentrants to speak to the current reentrants and share their stories.

Some of the former reentrants now work with local non-profits, including one at a domestic violence shelter and another at a homeless shelter. They attributed their success in part to the staff at TLC. The reentrants also enjoyed a cookout that was prepared by the staff.



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York Reentrants Clean Local Gardens

York Community Corrections Center reentrants continue to volunteer with landscaping, gardening and harvesting, with the latest stop at the nearby Cottage Hill Gardens.



There are 17 gardens currently operating, most of which are located on previously vacant lots owned by the City of York. Garden and grounds maintenance is provided exclusively by groups of volunteers and managed in partnership with York County Food Alliance and KeepYorkBeautiful. Visiting and/or volunteering at the gardens is truly an educational experience and a great way to give back to the local community!

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Reentrant Writes Thank-You Letter to Renewal

Check out this letter from a reentrant thanking Renewal Inc. and its Workforce Development program for helping her start her reentry strong:



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IN THE NEWS...

Three Approaches to Opioid Use Disorder Treatment in State Departments of Corrections

By Jodi Man and Eliza Mette, National Academy for State Health Policy

<https://www.nashp.org/three-approaches-to-opioid-use-disorder-treatment-in-state-departments-of-corrections/>

As drug overdose fatalities continue to rise and incarceration rates remain high nationwide despite recent declines, states are increasingly developing opportunities for incarcerated individuals to access evidence-based opioid use disorder (OUD) treatment in state prison facilities.

While the forced abstinence during incarceration can temporarily pause substance use itself, providing comprehensive treatment that includes medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD) during incarceration is shown to result in better treatment engagement as well as long-term recovery upon re-entry. Providing this kind of treatment during incarceration represents a shift in criminal justice approaches to substance use disorders (SUD), one that relies on partnerships between state agencies and providers, as well as the adoption of an understanding of OUD as a chronic-yet-treatable disorder with effective medical interventions.

Any discussion of this shift toward reframing people with OUD as individuals in need of Treatment – including those incarcerated as a result of their substance use – must also recognize that racial bias across systems affects sentencing policies. While Black people use illicit drugs at similar or lower rates than the rest of the population, they are incarcerated at over five times the rate of White people. Black Americans have also been disproportionately affected by recent increases in overdose fatality due to synthetic opioids, underscoring inequitable systemic responses to prevention, treatment, and recovery for Black individuals with OUD. The incarceration-based treatment approaches emerging today stand in stark contrast to the policy response to the crack-cocaine epidemic and subsequent sentencing guidelines of the previous generation that saw millions of Americans, approximately 80 percent of whom were Black men, incarcerated without a similar focus on treatment.

Policymakers are currently charting a different course by offering evidence-based treatment that is initiated alongside incarceration, recognizing that systems can work together to support people with SUD. These programs represent an opportunity to address both the SUD that may be at the root of criminalized behavior, and the racial disparities in sentencing that foster health disparities.

Developing programs that emphasize treatment instead of incarceration ultimately requires not just a shift in perspective about the nature of SUD, but also the will of leadership to implement new policies and clinical practices – and the funding to do

so. The National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP) talked to leaders from three states – Kentucky, Maine, and Pennsylvania – about their approaches to SUD treatment within their state prison populations and how these approaches are evolving...

Full story: <https://www.nashp.org/three-approaches-to-opioid-use-disorder-treatment-in-state-departments-of-corrections/>

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Certified Peer Specialists in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections

By DOC Mental Health Advocate Lynn Patrone

<https://www.prainc.com/gains-certified-peer-specialists-pennsylvania/>

The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PADOC) leadership is dedicated to returning individuals to their community doing better than they were when they entered prison. In the August 2017 GAINS e-newsletter, I shared about the PADOC's Certified Peer Support (CPS) Program, which trains individuals incarcerated in Pennsylvania prisons to become certified peer support specialists. Because we have made an investment in the skills we expect of a certified peer specialist and because of the impact they have on the people incarcerated in our correctional facilities, we are proud to share the growth of the CPS program.

In May 2019, the PADOC received two innovation awards from the Addiction Policy Forum for our innovative work around improving the lives of the incarcerated people under our care. The Addiction Policy Forum is a nationwide 501(c)(3) dedicated to "eliminating addiction as a major health problem." This was the first time a department of corrections received not one but two awards from the organization. The awards were granted for our very own CPS program and for the PADOC Medication-Assisted Treatment program. In recognition of the invaluable support provided to people with co-occurring disorders by CPS, PADOC received an Addiction Policy Forum 2019 Innovation Now Award.

CPS CERTIFICATIONS

The CPS program has been made successful through the implementation of various initiatives, such as peer-led support groups. One such group uses the Wellness Recovery Action Plan (WRAP®) approach, developed by the Copeland Center and well known to the mental health advocacy community. Over the past 18 months, through a collaborative approach with state correctional institution (SCI) leadership, we trained and mentored over 88 CPSs as WRAP® facilitators. Every SCI now has its own WRAP® facilitators.

This initiative set the groundwork for the newly certified facilitators to bring an evidence-based wellness program to the entire population of people who are incarcerated. As WRAP® facilitators, the CPSs are leading seminars on a routine basis. In fact, the first group certified had a waiting list of over 125 individuals eager to attend a seminar. Not only does this initiative benefit those currently

incarcerated in the PADO, but it also offers the CPSs who reenter the community an additional certification that will enhance their employability.

The PADO has collaborated with the Pennsylvania Department of Human Services' Office of Mental Health & Substance Abuse Services to ensure that DOC CPSs are afforded the same credentialing as CPSs in the community. This is yet another example of how we value the program and the people in it, and of our commitment to promoting their employability upon returning to the community.

CPS EVENTS

Many of the CPSs have used their unique skills to create mental health awareness campaigns inside the prisons. CPSs have also organized events featuring external speakers and put on original stage plays. CPSs write the scripts, leveraging talents such as singing, dancing, drama, and art, while ensuring the play conveys a message of hope, responsibility, and holistic wellness.

The CPSs' dedication and support for mental health bring hope in prison, which extends into the community. CPSs have facilitated many fundraisers that provide donations to mental health organizations. This is a testament to the passion they have not only for mental wellness but for making positive prosocial changes in their own lives by helping others.

SUICIDE PREVENTION AWARENESS

CPSs are trained in suicide prevention and are called upon to support individuals who may be in crisis or at risk of going into crisis. CPS events have included walks focusing on suicide prevention and awareness behind the walls of a prison. Dedicated CPSs have replicated what communities do to promote awareness, walking with their peers around the grounds of the prison and bringing their efforts to their housing units by talking about the importance of suicide prevention. We often receive reports from security staff and treatment staff about CPSs who have been able to intervene and assist in a situation that was beginning to escalate. Supplementing the treatment team's work with CPS support has been very beneficial and helps to achieve positive outcomes. Not only is the CPS able to share the lived experience of a person approaching crisis, he or she can relate to their status as being incarcerated and gain trust and provide support where staff may not be able.

ANIMAL-ASSISTED THERAPY

Another unique feature—SCI Chester has a CPS dog! The dog is an official part of the CPS team and participates in peer support offerings when appropriate. SCI Chester has realized such results from having a CPS dog that other SCIs are now vying to get one too. SCI Waymart will be recruiting two dogs to offer therapeutic benefits, supporting SCI Waymart's work as a certified inpatient mental health hospital for individuals under custody who meet the commitment criteria.

ON THE HORIZON

What's next for the DOC CPSs? As we continue to expand and improve in the innovative and alternative wellness options we provide to individuals, select SCIs

will be identifying CPSs to become certified as yoga instructors. Once certified as instructors, CPSs will be able to teach yoga classes and improve the quality of life for all involved. Stay tuned for further advancements in the PADOCC CPS program!

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Week of September 14, 2020...

Mahanoy Welcomes New DAWGS

Eight new pups we received at SCI Mahanoy on Aug. 28 to join the DAWGS Prison Program. These dogs were rescued from a shelter in the south and were brought to Mahanoy. They have been paired with a trainer who will teach them basic obedience commands in preparation for adoption.



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Quehanna Boot Camp Holds First Graduation Since Pre-COVID-19

By Melissa Billotte, Superintendent's Assistant

Usually on a Quehanna Boot Camp graduation day, there is a sense of excitement in the air. Inmate families and guests begin arriving around 12 p.m. in anticipation of the graduation ceremony commencing at 12:30.



There is great fanfare as all the platoons march into the PT Grinder (gymnasium) with the graduating platoon marching in last. The graduating platoon then demonstrates to their families some of the military component they have learned by executing drills and sometimes even performing physical training exercises.



The graduates are called up to a receiving line of executive staff and their unit team where they receive their graduation certificate. As they make their way down the line, they shake hands with all staff while their families are cheering in the background.

Fast forward to COVID-19 and the need for the wearing of masks and no outside visitors: While there is still a sense of excitement in the air, there is no fanfare—only the male graduating platoon marches into the PT Grinder and stands at attention. Gone are the inmate families here for support. Gone is the performing of drills for their families to appreciate their hard work and effort. Everyone is wearing a mask and there is no shaking of hands.



Due to COVID-19, the male and female graduating platoons had to be separated to not mix cohorts. Consequently, the female graduation was held immediately following the male graduation but was conducted outside their housing unit.





While the pomp and circumstance was missing from the graduation ceremonies, there was still a sense of pride and accomplishment for having completed the program.

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Waymart Paws for a Cause Update

All three labs (Zyla, Zee and Zeeta) in SCI Waymart's Paws for a Cause dog program were moved from G-2 to a temporary location on D-1. The facility is patiently awaiting for New Hope Assistance Dogs to get a new litter of puppies.

When this happens, the girls at Waymart now will go back with New Hope and continue their advanced training. They will then be placed with a child with special needs or a veteran.



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Dallas Supports St. Vincent DePaul Kitchen with Donation

SCI Dallas was proud to present a check for \$809 to St. Vincent DePaul Kitchen.

The kitchen, run by St. Vincent DePaul's organization, serves meals to veterans and others in need of help throughout the Wilkes-Barre and Scranton area.

Dallas' Administration would like to thank the Activities Department who organized the fundraiser. This fundraiser consisted of a cheesecake sale to inmates. The proceeds from the fundraiser will help St. Vincent DePaul continue to serve the Wilkes-Barre community during the COVID-19 pandemic.



Pictured from left: Stacy Miller, deputy superintendent for centralized services; Joshua Kline, corrections activities specialist; Jeff Locey, corrections activities specialist; Mike Ciamciotta, St. Vincent DePaul Kitchen Representative; and Kevin Ransom, superintendent.

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Inmates Reflect on COVID in Essay Contest at Waymart

SCI Waymart's Education Department sponsored an essay contest in order to promote writing skills and reflection during this challenging time. The contest's theme was, "COVID in Corrections: Unexpected Peace in a Pandemic."

The essays needed to contain specifics about how participation in programming, employment, and/or education during incarceration would enable the writer to promote peace in his community as a reentrant. All were invited to participate. Prizes of commissary credit were awarded to the winners.

Twenty-two inmates from 16 housing units participated. Entries were judged by the guidance counselor, librarian, RLA teacher, business teacher and principal. Many of the essays complimented the Waymart staff for promoting safety and calmness during this uncertain time. One of the winning essays noted that COVID actually increased the bond between him and his loved ones as each party could understand how each other were feeling from COVID restrictions.

Many others noted that having no COVID cases amongst the inmates here provided a great sense of comfort to loved ones at home. Entrants that were CPS workers attributed the skills learned during their training to their ability to establish internal peace and promote it on their housing units and eventually in their outside communities. Another contest will be held before the end of the year.

The following is the winning essay:

1st Place Essay Contest #3

COVID in corrections, Unexpected peace in a pandemic
During the initial onset of the Covid-19 outbreak and the consequential lockdown of the Pennsylvania prison system I was being housed on Waymart's therapeutic community block. Due to a respiratory disease I have to take nebulizer treatments, and to reduce inmate movement during this pandemic all inmates receiving nebulizer treatments were moved to L-1.
Moving to L-1 was extremely frustrating because I was engaging in activities on the therapeutic community block that were designed to help me grow as a person on an intellectual and emotional level and these activities are not available on L-1. However as the old saying goes; "when God closes a door, he opens a window." The reason that I say this is, because I was moved to L-1 I ended up being presented with an opportunity to be blessed with a position as a black tutor. Being a black tutor has allowed me to assist my fellow inmates on their path to educational advancement. Doing this has allowed me to get out of my comfort zone and grow as an individual.
Being housed on L-1 has also put me in contact with staff members and inmates who are currently assisting me in obtaining a position in the Certified

2

Peer Specialist program, which would allow me to assist even more people in the Waymart facility while earning a certificate that I can utilize upon my release, to secure a position in a drug and alcohol dual-diagnosis treatment facility.
I believe that a number of the things that I have mentioned in the previous paragraphs have been major contributors to the peaceful state that Waymart has been in during this lockdown. Please, allow me to elaborate. First of all, a large percentage of the inmate population here at Waymart have either completed or are in the process of trying to complete some form of correctional programming. The lessons and information that are obtained during correctional programming when utilized appropriately help to assist individuals deal with change, uncomfortable situations, peer pressure, and most negative influences that we may encounter on our journey through life. So in short; these programs that most of us have been doing have helped us to grow emotionally as well as intellectually and have in turn prepared us for not only this lockdown but also for the pandemic itself.
Then there is also the fact that the

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administration here at Waymart have provided the inmates with several ways to remain in touch with loved ones, such as weekly video visits, free phone calls, and free e-mails. The education department has also made it possible to continue individual educational advancement during the lockdown. Last but not least, all blocks were given Playstation 4 gaming systems to provide inmates with an additional source of entertainment that also acts as an excellent replacement for competitive interaction between inmates in a safe and monitored environment. Not to mention the fact that Waymart has remained almost Covid-19 free during this pandemic. This gives inmates a sense of safety and security during these troubling times, which in turn helps to maintain a peaceful environment.

During the lockdown I have had plenty of time to think about how I can utilize all that I have learned during my incarceration. While at Waymart I have been taking I.C.D.L computer classes which teach people how to be proficient in Microsoft Office. These skills can be used in most office settings and will surely prove to be invaluable as I re-enter the work-force.

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I have also adapted a sober way of living during my incarceration and I intend to fully immerse myself into drug and alcohol recovery and rehabilitation upon my release. My goal is to use my life experiences and all that I have learned about sobriety, recovery, and rehabilitation to help others suffering with the disease of addiction to recover and eventually lead a life of sobriety.

When I am released I intend to return to school to study psychology with a focus on human behavior. A degree in this field would help to aid me in my quest to become a drug and alcohol counselor at a dual-diagnosis drug and alcohol rehabilitation facility.

This is my long-term goal; to be able to use all of the negativity, turmoil, and hard lessons from the first half of my life to help others and provide myself some stability, happiness, and purpose as I live out the second half of my life.

I look at my time in prison as a much needed and necessary intervention. I am quite certain that had I not been incarcerated I would have died without ever realizing and reaching my full potential!

Robert H

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Laurel Highlands Observes Patriots Day

On Sept. 11, staff at SCI Laurel Highlands enjoyed donuts and cookies as they observed and honored Patriots Day during their State Employees Combined Appeal (SECA) 2020 Kickoff.



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Camp Hill Staff Support Local Animal Rescue

Over the last few weeks, the staff at SCI Camp Hill collected a sizeable donation of items for the Speranza Animal Rescue.

The non-profit organization primarily focuses its efforts on rescuing pitbulls. However, it has expanded over the years to provide sanctuary to animals including zebras and a camel named Sir Camelot.

A special thanks to everyone who donated to this organization and who assisted with this effort, especially Psychological Services Specialist Danielle Tedesco who organized the event.



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PCI, Wernersville CCC Earn Perfect Scores from ACA

Congratulations to Pennsylvania Correctional Industries and Wernersville Community Corrections Center for being fully accredited by the American Correctional Association (ACA) following their panel hearings on Sept. 9. Each scored 100 percent on their mandatory and non-mandatory standards during the compliance audits which occurred in February 2020.

Facility representatives participated in their ACA panel hearings via Microsoft teams and responded to questions posed by a four panel member of commissioners. Commissioners are select, high-ranking DOC officials from across the country who

ultimately determine whether a facility is awarded accreditation, for the first time, or reaccreditation.

Commissioners were overly complimentary about information contained in both Visiting Committee Reports (VCRs). They especially liked the photographs of murals at Wernersville and believe the facility's social services and reentry services are "top notch." The commissioners also spoke highly of PCI's report and noted the cleanliness of the sites toured by the auditors - SCI Huntingdon, SCI Mahanoy and SCI Frackville, and the "fantastic way to partner with the community" through laundry services provided to Veterans Administration facilities, jails and local hospitals.

Most remarkable is PCI's efforts and how they were instrumental in the state's efforts to mitigate COVID-19 as it made 750,000 face masks and 29,000 gowns for the DOC, county jails and other state agencies.



Also, as reported by Chief of Standards Audits and Accreditation Carole Mattis, PCI and Wernersville's were the first facilities to date to have compliance audits conducted in PowerDMS, an electronic file system. With only weeks between roll-out of the system and actual implementation, compliance managers successfully managed their pre-loaded Assessments by uploading secondary documentation, labeling it accordingly, and ensuring that auditors were able to conduct audits without incident in the system during their onsite visits.

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Albion Inmate Organization Donates to Food Pantry

SCI Albion inmate organization ANIVO has donated \$450 to the Albion Northwestern Food Pantry.

This money was raised by the inmate organization through a baked goods sale and will help provide meals to local families in need during this difficult time. ANIVO received a "Thank You" from the Food Pantry for their generosity.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

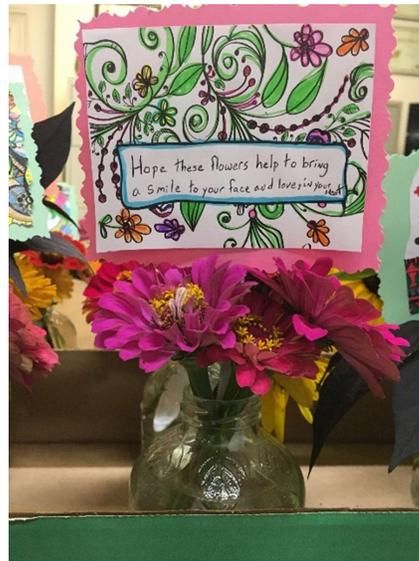
Around the Centers...

York Reentrants Grow Flowers, Make Cards for Seniors

In late June, 2020 York CCC reentrants planted a garden of zinnias to harvest for Autumn House, a local nursing home. While the zinnias were growing, reentrants and staff made cards to attach to the bouquets.

On Sept. 2, reentrants assembled the bouquets and attached the homemade cards so that they could be delivered to the residents of Autumn House on Sept. 3.

Reentrants expressed how they can relate to the individuals residing at nursing homes who are still following strict COVID-19 isolation guidelines. They hope that the bouquets and cards bring smiles to their faces and brighten their days!



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Reentrants Support Glendale High School Football Team

Reentrants from Tomorrows Hope wanted to give back to the community for those impacted by COVID-19 by providing a snack bag to the Glendale High School football team.

With the PIAA permitting the boys to play and the confusion around playing, the residents at Tomorrows Hope were trying to make it a little easier on the boys. Tomorrows Hope provided the items for the reentrants to package.

Each player received a Gatorade, bottle of water, granola bars, Slim Jims, Rice Krispy treats and fruit. The snack bags were delivered to the team by Office Manager Kristen Jasper.



The team was very appreciative and thanked the guys for their effort.

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Wernersville Reentrants Clean Local Cemetery

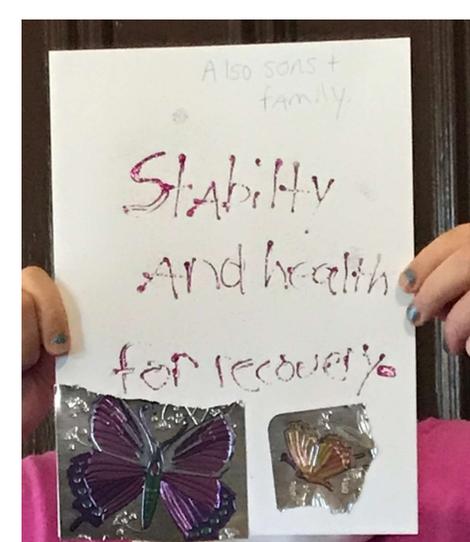
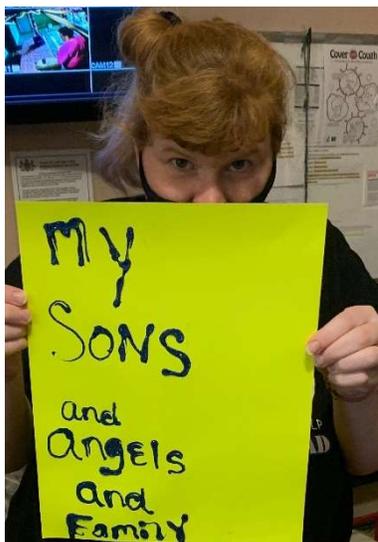
On Sept. 9, reentrants from the Wernersville Community Corrections Center volunteered to help with the weekly maintenance of the Fix-Gerber-Bitting Cemetery in Reading. The reentrants were eager to help and look forward to future opportunities to volunteer.



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Reentrants Share Their Reasons for Recovery

For National Recovery Month, Transitional Living Center reentrants celebrated by sharing their reasons to recover:



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IN THE NEWS...

ADAPPT participants resume community service activities over the summer

Source: <https://www.georeentry.com/adappt-participants-resume-community-service-activities-over-summer/>

Community service is a key element of treatment at the Alcohol & Drug Addiction Parole & Probation Treatment program, or ADAPPT. After months without outside service activities, program participants at the residential reentry center in Reading, Pennsylvania were finally able to spend time on a new project: cleaning up the grounds of the local College Manor Pool.



The ADAPPT program has reintroduced its community service element as Pennsylvania's Stay at Home order enters its next phase of reopening. Now, state regulations allow ADAPPT participants to perform community service off-campus if precautions are taken to ensure a safe and infection-free environment.

From June 13 to July 3, participants and staff at the center run by GEO Reentry Services reported to the pool where their task was to freshen up the facility and surrounding areas. Program participants arrived on-site early in the morning accompanied by staff to engage in cleanup while following CDC, GEO Reentry and Pennsylvania Department of Corrections guidelines for PPE use and safe social distancing.

"Our participants worked hard doing landscape maintenance and cleaning detail, demonstrating nothing less than professional organizational skills," said ADAPPT Deputy Director Dawn Martin. "For our residents, community service and giving back is a true labor of love. We are so proud of the job they did and the conduct they displayed."

ADAPPT provides evidence-based programming to individuals referred from the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole to address the causes of criminal behavior and reduce recidivism. GEO Reentry residential reentry programs are designed to prepare participants to

transition back into society with the necessary skills to support a productive lifestyle.

At ADAPPT, community service activities supplement participants' cognitive behavioral therapy and skills classes with opportunities to serve less fortunate community members. ADAPPT works in partnership with the City of Reading so program participants can volunteer at city clean-ups, snow removals and local church events.

[Read more about GEO Reentry's approach to residential reentry.](#)

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Week of August 31, 2020...

Muncy Counselor Earns Award from Bloomsburg University

By Terri Fazio, DOC Education Director

Dean James S. Brown of the College of Liberal Arts at Bloomsburg University has announced that Cathy Pickett from SCI Muncy is the recipient of this year's Dean's Salute to Excellence Award. Pickett has been recognized as one of the University's first partners in delivering college-level instruction to incarcerated students. Brown said Pickett's patient and passionate commitment to this program has been key to the success of the Certificate in Rehabilitative Justice program at the University thus making her the perfect candidate for this year's award.



The Dean's Salute to Excellence Award was established in 1998 and recognizes distinction in the areas of teaching and professional responsibilities, scholarship, and service. Since that time, the college has recognized select individuals each year for their achievements, with selection of faculty based on performance reviews.

Cathy is a graduate of Lycoming College and Bucknell University and has served as the Education Guidance Counselor at SCI Muncy since Nov. 2006. Prior to her "time in jail," Cathy worked as a School Psychologist at North Central STU and as an ABE/GED Teacher at the Clinton County Correctional Facility. She has served as a past adjunct instructor at PA College of Technology and as a past mental health service provider. Cathy enjoys helping to provide statewide Victim Awareness Education training to colleagues and serves as a member of Muncy's Hostage Negotiations Team. She is a member of Oval United Methodist Church and is a weekly volunteer at Clear Vision Treatment Services. Cathy lives in the Loganton area with her husband, Ed. She is the proud "Air Force Mom" of Sterling Pickett.

When questioned about the challenges of being a correctional educator, Cathy writes, "Many adult learners lack an interest in education that most of us take for granted. Their desire to learn or be part of a classroom is nonexistent. Their past attempts at academic success were crushed years prior, by adults who did not believe in their ability or who felt they were unworthy of the time and energy required to help them learn. Getting them to trust in themselves is often an uphill climb. I want to work with instructional staff to spark within our students a hunger for lifelong learning. My desire is deeper than the immediate goals of getting a diploma or a vocational certificate. I certainly celebrate these successes, but I want their experience in the classroom to be a spring board for years of learning. I want to help students cultivate an enthusiasm for learning so that they can bloom into efficacious learners."

Cathy believes that growing successful lifelong learners is certainly possible. She states, "We need to work together to motivate students. We should celebrate where they are on the continuum of learning and allow them to share their expertise so they can gain knowledge from one another. We should develop within them an appreciation for differences in opinions and beliefs and take proactive measures so they feel genuinely welcomed in the classroom setting. We also need to teach them to appropriately advocate for themselves and how to view failures as learning opportunities."

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Houtzdale Builds Dog Houses for DIU K9s

The Drug Interdiction K9 Unit and Captain Scott Cronauer would like to thank SCI Houtzdale's Superintendent Barry Smith and his maintenance department for building custom dog houses for the K9 Unit.

This was a huge cost savings for the DOC. A vendor cost of a dog house is up to \$800 each, but by providing material to SCI Houtzdale's maintenance department and having them build to specifications, the cost was well under \$200.

The structure of the dog house is extremely sturdy and well-insulated inside for the safety of the K9s. Current K9 handlers with older dog houses will be replaced with these awesome custom build models.



Again, the K9 handler's and K9s on the unit thank SCI Houtzdale's maintenance department.

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Waymart Captain Burke Retires After 25 Years

Congratulations to Captain Joseph Burke on his well-deserved retirement after 25 years of service.

His professionalism and leadership have positively impacted not only SCI Waymart but the Department of Corrections and the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania as a whole. If Captain Burke navigates his retirement as he navigated his career, there is no doubt that it will be adventurous and fruitful. Best of luck, Joe, we wish you well!

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Waymart's Grillo, Gorman Visit Monastery

SCI Waymart's Deputy Superintendent for Centralized Services Joseph Grillo and Classification and Program Manager David Gorman recently visited St. Tikhon's Monastery. The purpose of the visit was to plan for virtual learning for interns from the seminary for the Continuing Pastoral Education Program.



Pictured: Dr. Paul J. Witek, director of academic affairs; V. Rev. John Parker, seminary dean and chief operating officer; Joseph Grillo, DSCS; Fr. John Kowalczyk, SCI Waymart contract chaplain and director of field education at St. Tikhon's; and David Gorman, CCPM.

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Mahanoy Holds Bake Sale to Support Colleague

On Aug. 19, staff at SCI Mahanoy held a bake sale to benefit a fellow employee, Carol Pannulla. The participation and generosity of staff was overwhelming! All money raised was presented to Pannulla to help defray the cost of medical treatment and travel expenses she is currently incurring. Pannulla is very thankful to all staff for their kindness and support.

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Waymart Welcomes New Pup to Work on FTC

Meet Buddy, a pup who was brought to SCI Waymart to be trained for support for the Forensic Treatment Center (FTC) blocks.

Buddy is being trained by inmates with the help of a professional trainer. Due to COVID-19, his trainer has not been able to come in to do the training with him and his handlers, so he is currently housed with his handlers for the time being. However, Buddy does go over to work in the FTC every chance he gets.



Once fully trained, he will become a permanent therapy dog in the FTC.

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Frackville Welcomes New Pups Escaping Hurricane Laura

After traveling 20 hours straight from Louisiana, the newest members of the SCI Frackville pack arrived at their new home on Aug. 28.

The dogs are from Villalobos Recue in New Orleans, home to the TV show *Pit Bull and Parolees* on Animal Planet. They were racing Hurricane Laura before it hit the south, and they will now be trained in obedience skills to become more adoptable.

Meet the new pack members:





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Around the Centers...

Philadelphia Reentrants Help Clean City

Philadelphia CCC#2 partnered with the Philadelphia More Beautiful Committee (PMBC) in order to assist in their efforts to keep the city of Philadelphia clean.

To establish additional community service options for the reentrants housed at CCC#2 in Philadelphia, Counselor Ryanne Piorko reached out to PMBC to see if the reentrants could help the organization.

In August 2020, the PMBC accepted CCC#2's assistance. CCC#2 was established as a "Block Captain," and the center was assigned to help maintain several locations throughout the city. PMBC provide CCC#2 with the necessary equipment as well as safety t-shirts for the reentrants to wear while performing community service.



The areas assigned to CCC#2 include the Mander Playground at 33rd and Diamond Street, a small, heavily-littered park at 28th and Diamond streets, a short bridge on 2800 block of Ridge Avenue, the 2900 block of Diamond Street and the 2100 block of N. 25th street.

In August 2020, Counselor Piorko and Center Monitor Acicle supervised the first clean-up assignment by taking four reentrants to pull overgrown weeds and pick up litter at 2100 block of 25th Street. The first clean-up project was a success! CCC#2 will continue to assist BPMC with their efforts to keep the City of Philadelphia clean.

The PMBC Story

For more than 70 years, the Philadelphia More Beautiful Committee has helped bring positive change to neighborhoods throughout the city. Through the network of dedicated Block Captains, it works to organize events, provide support, and empower residents to come together for a more beautiful Philadelphia.

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Selimovic Named BCC Employee of Quarter

Congrats to Edin Selimovic from Erie Community Corrections Center for being named the BCC Employee of the Quarter.



Pictured from left: RD Richardson, Director Wenerowicz, Edin Selimovic, Director Harmon, and Lt. Snyder.

"I would like to extend my appreciation to all BCC staff for what you do on a daily basis during these difficult times," Bureau of Community Corrections Director Michael Wenerowicz said. "I have been blown away during my site visits by how well your facilities run and what staff are doing to keep things our facilities safe."

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York Reentrants Volunteer at Community Garden

York Community Corrections Center reentrants volunteered to pick produce at Cottage Hill Gardens in the City of York on Aug. 30. The urban gardens are dedicated to growing healthy food and healthy lifestyles in the local community. Visiting the gardens is an educational and informative experience.



The gardens contain a wide variety of fruits, vegetables, flowers and native plants that are mostly maintained by community volunteers. York CCC reentrants were rewarded for their efforts with an array of freshly picked fruits and vegetables.

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Week of August 10, 2020...

Smithfield Welcomes Sgt. Back from Deployment

Major A. Grove presented Sgt. Craig Yoder with a plaque of appreciation from SCI Smithfield staff to recognize Yoder's deployment with the 420th Engineer Company Route Clearance from Indiana, Pennsylvania.

Yoder, who is in the U.S. Army Reserves, was deployed to Bagram Airfield (BAF), Afghanistan. He left on military orders to help the unit prep prior for deployment in November 2019.



The 420th Engineer Company (CLR) left in January to Fort Bliss, TX. Once their training was complete for Operation Sentinel, they flew to Kuwait, Camp Arifjan, where they awaited further clearance to enter Afghanistan.

Sgt. Yoder returned from duty June 2020. Thank you, Sgt. Yoder, for your service to our country!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Huntingdon Puppy Pack Welcomes Fitz

Meet Fitz, the newest member of the SCI Huntingdon puppy program! This pup will work with the inmate handlers and Canine Partners for Life to become a service dog.



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Waymart Staff Raise Money for Masks for Kids

SCI Waymart's Community Support Committee sponsored a "Mask for Kids" fundraiser.

Staff donated money to help pay for children/teenager-sized masks. These were specifically made for better protection against possible exposure to COVID-19. The masks were made from a variety of patterns with soft ear loops. The masks will be distributed based on need as determined by local social services agencies.



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Trio of Tragedies Hit Smithfield

SCI Smithfield recently lost Corrections Officer Justin McCalips, who passed away unexpectedly at home on July 21. Justin began his career with the Department of Corrections on April 6, 2015, until his EOW on July 21, 2020, at 28 years of age.

Anyone who knew Justin (or saw him!) knew he had a passion for powerlifting. In the midst of the grief for one of our own and in usual DOC fashion where staff come together, staff wanted to do something to help his family and to honor his memory. The Wellness Committee coordinated and sponsored a charity event entitled "Lift Off for Justin." The monies thereof would be donated to Justin's family. The event involved participants acquiring sponsors to donate monies for each pound they lifted, as well as from straight donations.

There were 11 participants in the event, and in all \$3,600 was collected. The SCI Smithfield Wellness Committee presented the monies to fellow corrections officers and (more importantly)



Top: Lt. Jonathan Peck. Bottom left: Lt. Charles Crum. Bottom right: CO Justin McCalips.

Justin's best friends, N. Smith and J. Dodson. They presented the donation to his parents on behalf of our staff. This event was a huge success and plans are underway for this to become a yearly scholarship event.

The loss of Justin was the latest of recent losses to the Smithfield family and news heard too often in recent days and weeks.

Smithfield also lost Lt. Charles Crum, 48, on June 21.

Lt. Crum served the department from June 11, 1972 to EOW June 21, 2020, which sadly was Father's Day.

Smithfield also lost retired Lt. Jonathan Peck at the age of 44 on May 20 following a long and courageous battle with a serious illness. Lt. Peck served the department from September 25, 2000 to April 29, 2016. He came to work faithfully throughout his illness and retired to spend his final years with his family. Monetary contributions were also collected for their families.

All three honorably served their country.

These back-to-back-to-back losses of three employees, who all were similar in spirit, have rocked the staff and facility. They were not "just" employees. They were very good friends to many and part of the Smithfield family.

When staff were asked to describe in their own words these three staff members words such as kind, giving, generous, good friend, hard-working, "overall good dudes," honest, God-loving, funny, and family-oriented were some of the words used. Their loss will be felt for a very long time.

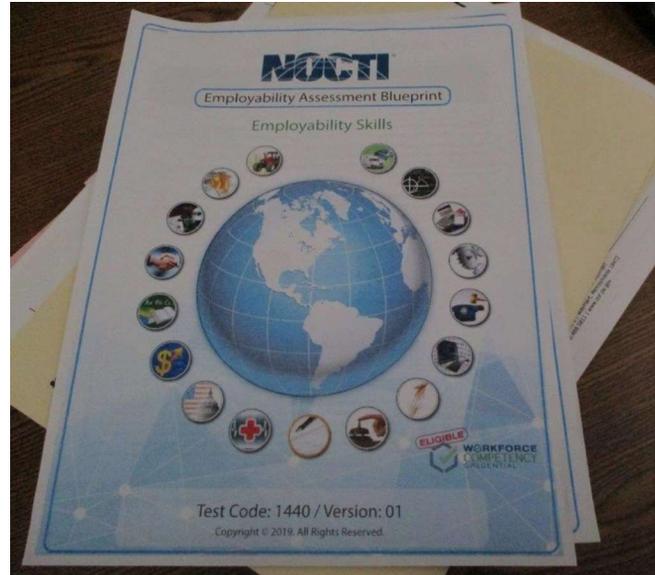
During this time, Smithfield has started a radio check for our fallen staff on the date of his or her funeral. They left their footprint in the hearts of many who knew and worked with them and they will all be sadly missed.

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Waymart Teacher Adapts Curriculum, Offers New Opportunities

"Action and adaptability create opportunity." - Garrison Wynn (author, consultant and motivational speaker)

Wynn's quote summarizes SCI Waymart's Business Education Teacher Mary Beth Pasqualicchio's philosophy of teaching and learning. She constantly seeks opportunities for her students. When she was unable to deliver keyboarding and other hands-on instruction to her students during the COVID-19 lockdown, she found another course that would allow them to acquire a national credential and workforce skills. The curriculum of this course can be delivered exclusively through "Packet Education."



Possessing this NOCTI credential will benefit students as reentrants. At the conclusion of the course, students will take a two-hour written exam. The students pay for this assessment with cash slips.

Thanks to Pasqualicchio's initiative, NOCTI Employability Skills is being taught to more than 20 students. This course covers:

- Applied Academic Skills
- Critical Thinking Skills
- Resource Management and Systems Thinking
- Information Use
- Communication Skills
- Technology Use
- Interpersonal Skills
- Personal Qualities

NOTCI is a provider of industry-based credentials and partner industry certifications for career and technical education programs across the U.S.

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Mercer Welcomes New Pups

SCI Mercer works with the Guardian Angels Medical Service Dogs to train service pups for veterans right here in PA.

Check out this recent update from Mercer for more about the newest members of their pack:

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Guardian Angels
Medical Service Dogs, Inc.

Current additions to the GAMSD Program

Yesterday went really smooth bringing the new 4 dogs into the program. They will need about a week or two to adjust to their environment, but they are going to be awesome.

All of the dogs are permitted to accompany their handler any where that he is permitted to go.



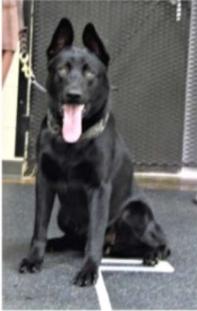
Tor: He is the youngest and the tallest of all of the dogs. Tor had a good first night. He is shielding automatically and displays good focuses on his handler.



Cadet: is shy around people, high energy and had a good first night. He is a really sweet dog.



Charley is brothers with Brock, Semper, and Stanley. He is vocal and shy round people. Charley was a little reactive to unknown noises, but had a good first night.



Stanley is brothers with Brock, Semper, and Charley. He had a restless first night and was reactive to unknown noises, but did well. You will recognize Stanley by his yellow eyes.

Around the Centers...

York CCC Reentrants Continue Service to Community

Reentrants from York Community Corrections Center continued to serve the local community in a variety of ways.

Prior to COVID-19 lockdown measures, York CCC reentrants donated needed items to the YWCA Domestic Violence Shelter and the local SPCA. This month, they were finally able to deliver those donations!



Reentrants also volunteered to unload trucks at The Well, a local food and clothing pantry. They have committed to continue supporting this much-needed resource which has benefited the local community in times of need.



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Commuted Lifer Shares Lessons with Football Team

Johnstown Community Corrections Center commuted lifer David Moore spoke to the Johnstown High School varsity football team about the importance of staying out of trouble.

Center Director Matthew Helsel was able to arrange the event through Football Coach Bruce Jordan. Unfortunately, due to the COVID-19 protocol at the school, Director Helsel was not able to attend.

Attendees said Moore's speech was "awesome," and they would like him to come back and speak to the team again.

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York Reentrants Clean Local Pool

York Community Corrections Center reentrants helped out with pulling weeds and landscaping at YMCA's Graham Aquatic Center in York.

The Aquatic Center is a 33,000-square foot facility with both indoor and outdoor swimming areas. The facility is open to members of the YMCA and the local community.

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Week of July 27, 2020...

Several Children of PA DOC Employees Receive Susan M. Hunter Scholarships

Harrisburg, PA – The Correctional Leadership Association (CLA), which formerly was called the Association of State Correctional Administrators (ASCA), has awarded college scholarships to students of correctional employees. Ninety-seven Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (PA DOC) employees submitted applications. Four PA DOC applicants received \$1,500 scholarships, and one received \$750.



Karlee Wells – daughter of SCI Forest Corrections Officer 2 Theodore Wells, who has been employed at the prison for seven years -
- received a \$1,500 scholarship. She will attend Waynesburg University studying pre-law.



Isabella Nagy – daughter of SCI Houtzdale Business/Technology Teacher Melissa Nagy, who has been employed at the prison for one year – received a \$1,500 scholarship. Isabella will enter her sophomore year at Pennsylvania Highlands Community College, where she majors in psychology.

Sofia Dinardi – daughter of Joe Dinardi, a 24-year veteran DOC employee serving as a corrections counselor 2 at SCI Huntingdon – received \$1,500. Sofia is a 2020 graduate of Huntingdon Area High School and will be attending the main campus of Penn State University in the fall to pursue a degree in nursing. Her goal is to obtain a graduate degree as a nurse practitioner with a specialty in endocrinology. Sofia is pictured with her mother, Sandy, and her father, Joe.



Morgan Robinette -- daughter of SCI Rockview Clerical Supervisor Jennifer (far left) and Plumbing Tradesman Instructor Eric Robinette (far right) -- received \$750 toward her biochemistry studies at Eastern University/Templeton Honors College. In 2019, Morgan received a \$1,500 Susan M. Hunter Scholarship. Morgan and her parents are joined by SCI Rockview Superintendent Mark Garman (picture was taken in 2019 at that year's scholarship presentation).



Ryan Yachere – son of SCI Somerset Corrections Officer 2 Rickie Yachere, who has been employed at the prison for 24 years -- received \$1,500. Ryan will enter his sophomore year at Liberty University, where he majors in religious studies.

Susan M. Hunter was the former chief of the prisons division of the National Institute of Corrections. She died in 2003. Hunter was a tremendous influence in the field of corrections, according to ASCA officials. She was a seasoned

administrator, a mentor to many corrections professionals, and an advocate for change. The scholarship was named in Hunter's honor as a lasting tribute to her commitment, insight, energy and enthusiasm for the field of corrections.

Scholarships are awarded to the son or daughter of a corrections employee in the amount of \$1,000 for undergraduate studies and \$1,500 for graduate studies and \$750 for individuals who in a prior year had received either a \$1,000 or \$1,500 scholarship. The student must be enrolled full-time and graduate students' field of study must be corrections or criminal justice at an accredited two-year or four-year college or university, or an accredited graduate program.

The Association of State Correctional Administrators formed in 1970 and is dedicated to improving correctional services and practices by promoting and facilitating the exchange of ideas and philosophies at the top administrative level of correctional planning and policy-making. Individuals can learn more about ASCA and this scholarship by visiting www.asca.net.

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Cosmetology Reopening at Waymart

Inmates at SCI Waymart have been waiting four long months for a haircut, and on July 16 they got some good news: the cosmetology school reopened.

This reopening was the collaboration of extensive planning and intensive cleaning. Administration, medical, purchasing, education, laundry, safety and security all played key roles in developing a plan of action that was safe, effective and manageable.



Prior to doing haircutting, the cosmetologists were quarantined. Once the quarantine was lifted, they received orientation on the new haircutting, personal protective equipment and sanitation procedures that would be implemented. Cosmetology Instructor Tami McCollum and Correctional Healthcare Administrator Desiree Hartman did a phenomenal job instructing the cosmetologists, janitor and teacher aides.

Waymart is fortunate to have zero cases of COVID-19 with inmates, and staff and inmates there are determined to keep that number at zero.

When departments work together, everyone wins!

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Dallas Welcomes Former Retreat Employees to the Team

On July 13, SCI Dallas was honored to have many former SCI Retreat employees join the team. The first day, Dallas staff held registration and COVID screening for the incoming Retreat staff. This was followed by a welcoming presentation by the administration and staff introductions. The new Dallas staff were broken into teams and went on a two-day tour of the facility. Special meals were prepared and served throughout the entire week, to include a BBQ where Superintendent Ransom, Deputy Cronauer, Deputy Miller, Major Eyer, and Major Bohinski helped prepare and serve all staff.



SCI Dallas is very appreciative of the Retreat employees who joined the team. We are proud to have everyone on board!



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Houtzdale Welcomes Five New Pups, Brings Pack Total to Eight for First Time

For the first time since the RUFF program began at SCI Houtzdale, inmates are in the process of training eight dogs at once. This is the most that Houtzdale has had inside the institution at one time.

In June, Houtzdale staff and inmates said goodbye to Harper, Keller and Lincoln as they moved into the next phase of their training through United Disabilities Services. On the same day, the program welcomed five new pups.

Harry, Kosmo and Ian are Labrador Retrievers, Kagney is a Labradoodle and Archie is a Standard Poodle. So far, the dogs are adjusting well to their new environment.

The handlers and dogs continue to handle all of the uncertainties well. They are taking advantage of the extra training time but also the extra playtime.

Recently, Houtzdale was informed that two of its former dogs (Henry and Kirby) have been placed with prospective clients and are on their way to becoming service dog graduates.

RUFF stands for Relying Upon Furry Friends; when the program started, a contest was held amongst the inmates to come up with a name.



Top: Harper

Left: Keller

Above: Lincoln



Top row from left: Kosmo, Archie and Harry

Bottom row from left: Ian

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Frackville Welcomes Former Retreat Staff

On July 16, SCI Frackville held a picnic to welcome new employees from SCI Retreat.



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Recognition for the Work of a Community Reentry Parole Agent

By Parole Manager Annette Pannebaker

Community Reentry Parole Agents (CRPAs) conduct a new release orientation with every reentrant returning to the community. During the orientation they provide information, guidance and most importantly listen to the reentrants needs and problems facing them.

Agent Mike Corson from the Altoona District Office, while speaking with a reentrant, discovered the reentrant's wheelchair was broken. He also did not have a bedside toilet and wished he had some dumbbells to exercise with while being confined in his home.

Hearing all of this, Corson found an agency (Johns Way Medical Equipment Ministry) that could help him with a wheelchair, dumbbells and other supplies to make his life easier. But the reentrant could not get them because he could not drive.



Corson asked for permission to drive his car, pick up the chair and other supplies and deliver them to the reentrant.

This is the soul of what a CRPA does besides running groups and other services. It is about going above and beyond to give reentrants what they need to be

successful in the community. Maybe this is the first time someone cared enough to go that extra mile. This could be the first time that someone listened, and found a solution to his problem.

During COVID-19 it was even riskier, but Corson did it because it's what a CRPA does, and he knew it would help the reentrant be more comfortable and happy at home. Job well done, Agent Corson!

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Frackville Welcomes New Pups to Pack

SCI Frackville received its first group of dogs since COVID-19 started. The dogs are from a shelter in Alabama. Staff and inmates are excited to have some new pups in the pack!

Frackville offers the DAWGS Prison Program, where dogs come from high-kill shelters in the south and receive basic obedience skills and are adopted.



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Dallas Donates \$1,300 to Food Pantry

The administration at SCI Dallas would like to thank the activities department and the Lifers Association, who organized and held a pretzel sale for inmates.

The sale raised \$1,341.70, which was donated to the Back Mountain Food Pantry. The proceeds from this sale will be used to help stem the effects of COVID-19 throughout the community.



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Spotlight on Mercer's Puppy Program

SCI Mercer runs the Guardian Angels Medical Service Dogs program, which trains pups to be service dogs for Pennsylvania veterans. Take a look at this update on the program recently sent to Mercer staff:

The four handlers passed their Master's class earlier this month and once their dog is paired in October/November, they will be certified as Medical Service Dog Trainers. Seven new handlers have passed their basics class and are working towards the experience needed to take the Master's course.

The current dogs are doing great. They still have some issues and we are working through them. It's hard to believe, but they are still puppies in the adolescence stage of life. They will not start to mature for another 4 to 6 months.



(Pictured left to right: Rooney, Semper Fi, TJ, Rockey)

The program received four more dogs. Three out of the four are black German Shepherds, and all are different ages.

New Guardian Angel Dogs:

Tor: confident, good dog to dog, immature, silly, but great potential.

Stanley: A Pittsburgh Penguin pup, around 13 months old, submissive, dog to dog good, licker, very sweet, has trouble with down/stays.

Charlie: 14 months, Brock and Semper Fi's brother, great with basic mobility, needs to build on it, was babied, needs strong correction and direction.

Cadet: babied, needs help with follow through, corrections.

GAMSD SPOTLIGHT:

Rooney: Rooney is a 4-year-old German Shepherd that entered the program on June 11. He needed help with socialization and desensitization to everyday objects that he has never seen before. Rooney has progress well in the last six weeks and will remain in the program until October.

He is named after the Rooney's, so you may see him on the field one day.

"Arriving here at SCI Mercer as a fully trained Guardian Angel, Rooney immediately began demonstrating his ability as a medical service dog. With his alerts, his shielding, his playfulness, and his tender lovingness, Rooney holds the bar high as to what's expected of a GAMSD when managing the effects of PTSD. He certainly has positively impacted the life of his handler(s) and will most certainly will do the same for his upcoming recipient. Continue to do great things, Rooney!! We bid you a farewell and good luck."-GAMSD Handler



"Although Rooney has only been in our lives for a short period of time, he has certainly fit in well with our small family. Rooney is and intelligent, loving, and energetic dog, who has shown me just what it means to be a true Guardian Angel's Service Dog. I have no doubt in my mind that Rooney's recipient will be over joyed to have him in his life. Good Luck, Rooney, in all your adventures and may you continue to help and save lives." -GAMSD Handler

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Laurel Highlands Golf Committee Awards Scholarships

The SCI Laurel Highlands Golf Committee has again awarded two \$500 scholarships to two very deserving candidates for the upcoming college 2020 school year.

This year's recipients are Brandon Shaffer, a 2020 graduate from Chestnut Ridge Senior High School, and Ally Weimer, a 2020 graduate from Somerset Area Senior High School.

Brandon Shaffer is the son of Sergeant David Shaffer and has been accepted to Penn State Altoona majoring in mathematics with a concentration in actuarial science. He plans to be the first college graduate in his family.

Ally Weimer is the daughter of Parole Agent Laura Weimer and has been accepted to Indiana University of Pennsylvania and is majoring in nursing and minor in Spanish.



Pictured from right: Michael Maga, Donna Platt, David Shaffer, Brandon Shaffer, Ally Weimer, Laura Weimer and Lisha Albright. (Absent from the picture is golf committee member, Brian Karwatsky)

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Dallas Staff Hold Hoagie Sale to Benefit St. Francis Commons

Staff members at SCI Dallas hosted a hoagie sale within the facility with the proceeds benefiting the St. Francis Commons, which houses veterans, and the St. Francis Kitchen. The donation will be used within the community and help St. Francis continue to provide must-needed assistance to those they serve.



SCI Dallas Parole Agent Mary Ritsick-Bonawits is shown here presenting the check to Ryan Pollock, programs supervisor for St. Francis.

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Around the Centers...

Reentrants Help Clean Local YMCA

York Community Corrections Center reentrants volunteered to help the local neighborhood YMCA clean up a property recently. Due to COVID-19, there were only seven reentrants in-house, but they all volunteered and did an amazing job!

Craig Wolf, director of community development at the YMCA, has other projects in the pipeline, including cleaning up outside a local aquatic center and clearing ground for a community park adjacent to the York CCC. The reentrants are eager to help out again in any way they can.





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Reentrants Clean, Paint Education Foundation Sign

Several of Tomorrow's Hope residents volunteered their time to clear brush and repaint the Glendale Education Foundation sign. This is a yearly project for Tomorrow's Hope.

The Glendale Education Foundation provides many scholarships for the students at the Glendale junior and senior high school. This project is just another great way for Tomorrow's Hope to help those in the local community.



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Wernersville Staff Save Unresponsive Reentrant

On July 25, there was a medical emergency in Wernersville Community Corrections Center's Building 18 where a reentrant was found unresponsive in the computer lab.

Wernersville staff immediately went into action and saved this reentrant's life.

"Each one of you contributed something to the medical emergency whether it was making the phone call to 911, bringing the AED and other necessary items to your coworkers, covering a building by yourself or giving CPR," wrote Wernersville Director Anne Barton. "All of these pieces were important."

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Week of July 13, 2020...

Scranton Reentrants Support Salvation Army

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been tough to physically get out and complete community service projects.

But that didn't stop the Scranton Community Corrections Center reentrants that were furloughed, who decided to donate \$600 worth of clothes to the Salvation Army! It's inspirational to see that even during a pandemic, reentrants rallied around the community.



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Chester Employees Enjoy Food Truck Friday

For the last two months, SCI Chester's Employees Recreation Association (CERA) has been coordinating "Food Truck Friday" for staff. Every week a different food truck (shout-out to "Cottons On the Go" and "Innovative Catering") comes and provides staff an alternative meal at a reasonable rate. Staff love the different options that are available to them and always look forward to seeing what is coming the following week.



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BINGO Boosts Morale at Chester

The SCI Chester activity staff have really been thinking outside the box to promote staff morale due to COVID. On June 15, BINGO was being called in the gym and staff on various shifts showed up. There were multiple winners who received small food prizes as well as bragging rights!



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Quehanna Grads Report Back with Success

After graduating from Quehanna Boot Camp on June 3, a pair of reentrants have already checked in to share some good news.

One reentrant called in on June 25 and said that he is now working at a barber shop and is doing great. He wanted to wish everyone at QBC good luck.

The second called in on July 2 to thank Mr. McCullough for helping him receive his masonry certification. He got a job in the field and July 1 was his first day.

Congrats and great work to these two for finding success so quickly after graduation!

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Fireside Chats at Laurel Highlands Provide Insight, Fun for Staff and Inmates

SCI Laurel Highlands has been hosting weekly Fireside Chats with interesting topics and conversations—and a little friendly competition for fun.

The Fireside Chats are held weekly hosted by Deputy Superintendent Robert Snyder and cohosted by a pair of inmates. Each week there are special guests who speak on a variety of topics, as well as a foul-shooting competition with soda at stake.

At a recent chat, Canine Partners 4 Life was highlighted with a panel discussion and training demonstrations. One of the pups, Gunny, even assisted Unit Manager Rebecca Witt with the foul-shooting competition.

For two months now, these chats have provided a light-hearted and enjoyable part of the week for everyone at Laurel Highlands. The chats are recorded and streamed on the inmate channel for inmates to watch.

In addition to the special topics and guests, Snyder answers questions from the housing units regarding these ever-changing times. Questions can be institutional or big picture, whatever inmates want to ask.

Arguably the most fun activity is the foul-shooting competition. The concept is that there is a specific housing unit chosen every week randomly. The staff member will be shooting for that housing unit, which has been given a number to decide whether the staff member (who does not know the number) will successfully shoot more than or less than the amount. Twenty shots total are attempted, and if the housing unit is correct in their guess, they are awarded with soda.

Of course, ideas and suggestions are welcome. For instance, Witt shot for GA unit. After all was said and done, GA knew that the assigned number that she was to make was four. The population decided that Witt would shoot "over" 4. GA inmates were awarded soda as Witt successfully made 8 shots.

Last week's Fireside Chat special guest/topic is Certified Peer Specialists and their supervisor Susan Shoff, and the foul shooter is PSS Christine Mancini.

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