

Correctional Newsfront

The official newsletter of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections



2014 News

Week of December 29...

Review of SCI Fayette Environmental/Medical Allegations

(Dec. 31) -- After a comprehensive review following complaints of dangerous environmental conditions at the State Correctional Institution (SCI) at Fayette, the Department of Corrections has found no credible evidence of any unsafe environmental conditions at the facility or of any abnormalities with regard to the safety and health of inmates at the prison.

The Department was made aware of reports alleging that unsafe levels of coal waste in the vicinity of SCI Fayette were connected to purported medical problems for inmates at the facility. The Department takes concerns regarding the safety and welfare of its inmates very seriously. As a result, the Department initiated environmental tests and medical reviews to examine the conditions at the prison.

The Department found no evidence of any unsafe environmental conditions or any related medical issues.

Initial complaints contained conclusory allegations that coal waste in the vicinity of SCI Fayette had contaminated the environment. In response, the Department commissioned independent tests of its water supply to be performed in August 2014. Analysts concluded that the water met all drinking water standards and guidelines; there was no determination of any chemical concentrations that would cause adverse health conditions.

In addition, the Department appointed a medical review team to examine medical records and data to identify any irregularities for residents of SCI Fayette. Studies comparing the facility to other state institutions clearly confirmed no significant difference in the number and types of health issues

"Our review found no scientific data to support claims of any unsafe environmental conditions or any related medical issues to exist at SCI Fayette."

--DOC Secretary John Wetzel

raised by residents at SCI Fayette when compared to other Pennsylvania prisons. The medical review team examined the medical records of individual inmates who complained of symptoms at the facility, as well as their subsequent treatment. The team found that in many of these cases, the individuals' symptoms were treated and resolved by medical personnel after a single sick call visit.

The Department reviewed rates of cancer at SCI Fayette and found no irregular results. The Department's Bureau of Health Care Services maintains an extensive database of all current cancer patients in state prison facilities. SCI Fayette has a cancer rate of 11 cancer patients per 1,000 inmates. Compared to the other state prison institutions, SCI Fayette's rate falls exactly in the middle.

The Bureau of Health Care Services also maintains a database on all mortalities within the state institutions. For the period 2010-2013, the statewide average number of cancer deaths per 1,000 inmates was 1.09. SCI Fayette had 1.34 cancer deaths per 1,000 inmates, ranking it seventh in the state behind Laurel Highlands, Smithfield, Waymart, Graterford, Pittsburgh and Rockview.

A more detailed analysis of the 11 cancer deaths at SCI Fayette from 2010 to 2013, revealed that four were transferred to SCI Fayette after they had been diagnosed with cancer at other institutions. Two patients were diagnosed with lung cancer while at SCI Fayette during this four-year time frame.

The Department also reviewed whether there was an increased incidence of respiratory diseases at SCI Fayette by reviewing the administration of pulmonary medications ordered at the prison. For the period of 2010-2013, the Department found that SCI Fayette's administration of pulmonary medications was in the middle or slightly lower than that of other institutions.

This finding is corroborated by a review of inmates enrolled in Pulmonary Chronic Care Clinic. Inmates who have chronic respiratory diseases are followed every six months in the Pulmonary Chronic Care Clinic. A review of the number of patients per 1,000 currently being clinically followed places SCI Fayette right in the middle of state correctional institutions.

Finally, the Department reviewed the administration of gastrointestinal medications ordered from 2010 to 2013 at SCI Fayette and found the prison to be ranked in the middle of the total number of state facilities.

In conclusion, by all of the measures reviewed, the Department has found no scientific data to support claims of any unsafe environmental conditions or any related medical issues to exist at SCI Fayette.

Although the Department is satisfied with its internal review, it has also submitted the matter to the Pennsylvania Department of Health for additional review.

(The rest of this page is intentionally blank.)

Week of December 22...

Houtzdale Inmates Give Back to Society

On behalf of the prison's inmate organization, "Journey for Change," SCI Houtzdale Major Barrows and Unit Manager Reese presented a check for \$1,980 to Judy Sinclair of the Philipsburg YMCA. The inmates donated the funds so 150 turkeys could be provided to needy families this holiday season.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Gifts for Less-Fortunate Children

SCI Houtzdale employees "adopted" 50 less-fortunate children this year as part of the Clearfield YMCA's Angel Tree Program.

In these pictures, employees wrap and prepare the presents...



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Santa visits SCI Greene Canine Partner's for Life Program

On Dec. 16, a visit with Santa was coordinated for the dogs at SCI Greene who are part of the Canine Partner's for Life Program. The dogs work and train together daily, so this was a nice holiday treat. Each of the five dogs received a toy gift and, as you can see, Santa received a lot of love.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Cambridge Springs Employees Share Their Charitable/Holiday Giving

Christmas Cards for Addie



A story out of Salt Lake City prompted action within the confines of SCI Cambridge Springs. Six-year-old Addie Lynn Fausett of Fountain Green, Utah, has an undiagnosed illness which has stopped her growth since she was the age of three. Doctors have given her less than a year to live. Addie's grandmother started a campaign for her granddaughter to receive Christmas cards from around the globe to cheer her throughout the holidays. Addie now receives hundreds of Christmas cards daily. Several offenders used their artistic touches creating homemade Christmas cards for little Addie in an effort to add to her happiness this Christmas.

WarmUpAmerica! Charity

SCI Cambridge Springs inmates selected WarmUpAmerica! as their community service project this Christmas. This non-profit organization donates knitted or crocheted blankets, Afghans, hats, scarves and more to people in need in an effort to spread warmth and caring across the nation. Several individually knitted/crocheted squares were shipped from SCI Cambridge Springs to WarmUpAmerica! so that more warm blankets can be made for the needy.



Salvation Army Bell Ringing

SCI Cambridge Springs' administrative staff and department heads participated in the Salvation Army Bell Ringing within the local Cambridge Springs Community on Dec. 12, 2014. A total of \$118 was collected throughout the course of the day. This community project is something that employees enjoy participating in each year, providing benefit to the Salvation Army and the good work that they do.



Superintendent Torma & Deputy Hall



Amy Boylan & Dave Wescott



Dr. Richard Learn & Robyn Sye

Create for Kids Project

Similar to the WarmUpAmerica! objectives, SCI Cambridge Springs has partnered up with the Lions Club in a program known as the "Create for Kids Project." This is another community project in which SCI Cambridge Springs inmates use their creative skills to benefit members in various outside communities. The women make sweaters, hats, scarves and lap blankets throughout the year, and the local Lions Club distributes the finished items as the needs arise at the community level. The Lions Club also provides the yarn to the inmates to complete these projects. It is a win-win project for all involved and has been going on since 2008.



Karen Faivre (Lions Club Member) &
Mr. Morley (SCI CBS Activities Specialist)

Angel Tree Project – Christmas 2014



SCI Cambridge Springs has teamed up with the Cambridge Springs Helping Hands Organization for nearly the past 10 years to provide Christmas gifts for children in the local community. Helping Hands works with the local elementary school, receiving names of families that are in need of assistance. The children's wish lists are passed on to our facility and many employees generously purchase gifts. Employees look forward to this project every year and enjoy the opportunity to make a child smile on Christmas morning. We have heard many wonderful, touching stories of appreciation from the Helping Hands Organization, who distributes the gifts to the families. Our facility was fortunate enough to assist 14 local families with a grand total of 46 kids this 2014 Christmas season.

Donations for Crawford County Center for Family Services



A corrections officer from SCI Cambridge Springs donated 20 toiletries gift bags to the Crawford County Center for Family Services.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The Giving Continues

Employees at SCI Pine Grove recently collected toys for the Marine Corps Toys For Tots Campaign. They will be distributed to children in the Indiana County area.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Huntingdon Employees Donate to CHOP

SCI Huntingdon's Morale Committee sponsored a toy drive to benefit the Children's Hospital of Pittsburgh. Over 500 items were donated by prison employees. The staff at the hospital were thrilled with the donations which will benefit the children who have to be in the hospital over Christmas.

Sarah Meidel, coordinator for the donation program at CHOP said, "I can tell you the generosity of your staff will definitely brighten up the holidays for our patients and their families."



Pictured along with the donations are Morale Committee members Kim Hawn, Crystal Loy, Jeff Mayers and Dave Morningstar and Joe Bauer from CHOP.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



On Dec. 18, 2014, residents and employees from ADAPPT participated in the City of Reading's beautification project involving city parks.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Sharing Dinner and Fellowship

On Dec. 23, Sharon Community Corrections Center residents and employees enjoyed dinner and fellowship. A favorite are always the wings from Quaker Steak and Lube.

Pictured are Clerk Typist (and organizer) Cathy Byerly and Center Director Joel Murray, along with a few residents.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of Dec. 15...

Optical Lab Success!

Pennsylvania Correctional Industries' Optical Lab at SCI Cambridge Springs was recently highlighted in the Winter 2014 newsletter by the National Correctional Industries Association. To view this newsletter (and the article highlighting PCI on page 28), visit www.nationalcia.org

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



Riverside CCC Employees, Residents Donate Toys

Throughout the months of November and December 2014, the employees and residents of Riverside Community Correction Center donated enough toys to fill two Toys For Tots boxes. The residents really seemed to get behind the community service project, as some of them spent up to \$80 on toys. This was another successful donation collection as contributions continue to pour in.



Pictured here are Corrections Counselor 2 Dan Coulehan and Corrections Counselor 32 Michael Hutchison

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Central Office Employees Donate Too!

Department of Corrections Central Office employees, whose offices are located in Mechanicsburg, recently collected and donated more than 242 pounds of canned good and dry goods to the Central Pennsylvania Food Bank!

And most recently, Central Office employees donated more than 120 toys to the Marine Corps Toys For Tots Campaign.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

THE NEWS-ITEM, SHAMOKIN, PA

LOCAL



SUBMITTED PHOTO

'Secret Santas' at SCI-Coal Township

SCI-Coal Township PRIDE M/C chapter members and prison human resources assistant Grace Plaseczny are shown with some of the gifts collected by prison staff for the Northumberland County Children and Youth Christmas Gift Program. PRIDE presented a monetary donation. Also shown are, from left, Mark Zamboni, Mike Batluk, Mark Kilmer and Robble Schell. Prison employees have participated in the "Secret Santa" program for 18 years.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Ugly Sweaters Abound!

SCI Graterford jumped on the band wagon this holiday season to hold its first Ugly Sweater Contest.

Contestants were invited to show off their apparel for a photo opp. The pictures were anonymously displayed in the institution lobby where everyone was asked to vote on their choice of "Ugliest," "Just Too Pretty" and "Still Pretty Ugly." The winners were announced and presented with ribbons to add to those sweaters (along with bragging rights?).



The winner of the Ugliest Sweater was Masonry Trades Instructor Brian Garman (curiously the winner of the "Just Too Pretty" sweater, too...). The winner of the "Still Pretty Ugly" sweater was Corrections Counselor 2 Juanita Wilcox, (her sweater lit up).

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Forest Employees have "Ugly" Sweaters Too

Fashion Forward Forest started three weeks ago with a few staff showing off their "Ugly." Each Friday the sweaters got more and more "ugly." The EA is judging today and will be putting out the winner at the end of the day.

Back row: B. Hollis, M. Say and M. Stitt. Center row: S. Rittenhouse, J. Wilson, V. Gotwalt, L. Best, P. Weinstein, M. Johnston. Kneeling: J. Lindenmuth and K. Rhoads-Lorigan.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Decorating SCI Huntingdon

SCI Huntingdon's Robbie Dell and three of his nursery detail inmates began planning Christmas decorations for the institution last summer. Several areas received his special treatment including the prison's front gate and the newly-built brick and ironwork columns at the entrance of the institution. The decorations were planned with a Victorian theme in mind to honor SCI Huntingdon's 125th anniversary. Pictured is the fireplace in the superintendent's office and other areas.

Almost all the materials used in creating the decorations were found on the institution's grounds.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

DOC Training Academy ~ Angel Tree Project

One of the best gifts you could give to someone during the holiday season is hope! The 7th Annual Training Academy Angel Tree Project was a huge success! On Tuesday, Dec. 16, 2014, the counseling office at Bear Creek Elementary School in Elizabethtown received gifts donated by Academy employees. The counseling office was able to identify several families with young children that legitimately needed our help during this Christmas season.

In addition, Academy employees collected \$600 in gift cards for their charitable donation to West Shore Friends. In return, West Shore Friends was able to provide an outfit and a coat/shoes for the 28 little girls and boys. We are confident these children will be very happy when they open up their presents Christmas morning! Take a look at the picture (below), and you will understand the magnitude of generosity that will reach these children this year!



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Visiting Veterans

On Dec. 12, 2014, SCI Smithfield employees and their families visited with veterans at the Hollidaysburg Veteran's Home to spread some holiday cheer. Gift bags of items donated by staff were handed out to the residents. Staff and their families enjoyed spending time visiting with residents. Santa also made a special visit that evening.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Retreat Donates to Salvation Army

SCI Retreat's Empowerment Committee and employees donated Christmas gifts to the local Salvation Army representative to help local children in need.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



SCI Greene Employees Donate to Local Food Bank

On Dec. 16, SCI Greene employees donated \$772 to Maribeth Coote, executive director of the Corner Cupboard Food Bank.

The prison's Empowerment Committee designed a lottery ticket wreath in an effort to raise money for the food bank located in Greene County. SCI Greene employee Angela Novak donated a beautifully handcrafted holiday wreath in which a collection of lottery tickets (donated by the SCI Greene Employees Association) were affixed. Tickets were raffled off and the money collected was donated to the food bank. The winner of the wreath was Corrections Officer Byrne.

According to Ms. Coote, the Corner Cupboard Food Bank cares for 800 – 1,000 families per month and for every dollar donated, they are able to purchase approximately \$5 worth of food. Although the food bank is established here locally, Ms. Coote said they have 11 food pantries within the surrounding communities to assist with their efforts. She expressed her sincere appreciation to the prison staff and stressed the importance of community support.



Pictured (L-R) is Executive Director Maribeth Coote and SCI Greene's Empowerment Committee Co-Chair Courtney Orndoff.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Benner Employees' Angel Tree Project

SCI Benner Township employees participated in the Angel Tree Project, which provided 72 children from Cambria and Mifflin County CYS with items that were identified on their wish lists. The Angel Tree Project is organized by the Human Resource Department.

"The Angel Tree Project offers the staff at SCI Benner Township an opportunity to 'Pay it Forward,'" said Superintendent Tammy Ferguson. "This year, at the request of many of our staff, the Human Resource Department expanded the project to include children who reside in Cambria County. Our staff recognizes that there are countless children in our host and home communities who are affected by circumstances that are beyond their control. There is no greater joy than extending blessings to others in need and into the homes and hearts of others."



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Graterford CAREs

By Louis Mumenthaler

SCI Graterford employees have once again heeded the call to assist those in need. The Empowerment Committee's Community Outreach Program partnered with CAREinc., a non-profit organization which provides many services to Reading area residents in need, thereby changing their lives. Graterford will specifically focus on the requests for children.



The generous Graterford employees had donated school supplies to enhance learning for the new school year. They also collected hats, scarves, gloves and socks for the children to ensure their warmth during the winter months.

The endeavor to impact children's lives is possible due to the kind and giving spirit of all of Graterford. The Empowerment Committee and the executive staff would like to extend their sincere gratitude to one and all.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Somerset Employees Donate to CPL

On Dec. 12, SCI Somerset employees donated \$500 to Darlene Sullivan, executive director of Canine Partners for Life (CPL). In a few months, the facility will begin its first service dog puppy training program with CPL. The prison's Staff Appreciation Team members raised the money during the prison's employee golf outing, which was held earlier in the fall.



Pictured, from left to right, are: SAT member Kim Shumaker; CPL Executive Director Darlene Sullivan; and SAT members Cori Schmucker and Heidi Sroka. The Ladies were joined by "Cal," who is Darlene's service dog.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Secretary Wetzel Shares DOC's Mental Health System Improvements

Wetzel Joins National Leaders Urging a Reduction in the Number of Mentally Ill in U.S. Jails

Last week, Corrections Secretary John Wetzel joined officials in Washington, D.C., as the Council of State Governments Justice Center and the National Association of Counties jointly announced plans for a new wave of national efforts to reduce the number of people with mental disorders cycling through U.S. jails.

Wetzel provided closing remarks at the event, where he encouraged everyone to "step up and do the right thing" where addressing individuals and offenders with mental disorders is concerned.

"Prisons were not designed to treat individuals with mental disorders, but the courts send these offenders to us and we must do everything possible to provide them with appropriate mental health services," Wetzel said.

Planned to be launched by CSG and NACo in spring 2015 is a "Call to Action," in which county leaders commit to a concrete, multi-step planning and implementation process that is supported by state and county policymakers, behavioral health and criminal justice practitioners, and other stakeholders to help achieve measurable results.

Under Secretary Wetzel's leadership, the DOC has made significant changes and improvements to its mental health system. Some of those, which may be helpful in this "Call to Action" effort, include:

- Establishing a Psychology Office at the Central Office level;
- Delivering Crisis Intervention Team Training for certain classifications of employees and Mental Health First AID for ALL employees;
- Requiring suicide response drills aimed at improving response times and best practices of all employees;
- Continuing its work in the area of training and using select inmates as certified peer support specialists;
- Partnering and consulting with several mental health organizations to review and improve mental health policies, assess segregation policies and practices and complete a mapping of the prison's mental health system from reception to reentry;
- Augmenting its disciplinary process through specialized training, enhanced out-of-cell services for inmates and informed sanctioning practices;

- Restricting the types and lengths of disciplinary sanctions for inmates diagnosed with serious mental illnesses;
- Implementing additional clinical operations, such as suicide prevention committees, at every state prison to ensure they consist of multidisciplinary professionals;
- Enhancing requirements and procedures for clinical reviews of self-injurious behaviors, suicide attempts and completed suicides;
- Implementing recovery-based individual treatment plans;
- Developing alternatives to segregation with specialized housing units that are designed for various levels of care and security;
- Developing a centralized tracking system of all inmate self-injurious behaviors, serious suicide attempts and similar extraordinary occurrences;
- Creating appropriate diversionary bed space in its seven secure residential treatment units for offenders diagnosed with serious mental illness;
- Establishing behavior management units for individuals who are not diagnosed with a serious mental illness but require secure treatment and increased programming due to functional and other behavior impairments;
- Augmenting its contract for mental health services to include performance based incentives and penalties; and
- Enhancing its special needs psychiatric review team through the use of various types of data to improve mental health services at the systemic, institutional and individual levels.

To learn more about the new national effort, visit the Council of State Governments' website at www.csgjusticecenter.org

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of Dec. 8...

Wetzel Named to National Charles Colson Task Force on Federal Corrections

At an event held Dec. 9, 2014, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel was named as a member of the national Charles Colson Task Force on Federal Corrections. The committee members were announced today in Washington, D.C., by Task Force Chairman J.C. Watts, Jr. and Vice Chairman Alan B. Mollohan.

The task force, which will convene for five meetings in 2015, will hold its first meeting in January. In addition to the meetings, a number of roundtable discussions will be held to gather and understand the diverse perspectives and experiences of relevant stakeholders, practitioners and national experts.



Wetzel talks with Task Force Chairman J.C. Watts Jr.

"Secretary Wetzel has led Pennsylvania's successful criminal justice reform efforts and I am confident that he will bring new and innovative concepts to the task force table," Gov. Tom Corbett said. "I am pleased that a national organization is recognizing Secretary Wetzel's expertise."

As part of the nine-person, bipartisan, blue ribbon task force, Wetzel and other members are charged with addressing the challenges in the federal corrections system.

The task force will:

- Undertake a comprehensive analysis of relevant federal criminal justice data; identify factors driving the growth in prison populations; study "lessons learned" from successful state-level justice reinvestment initiatives; and evaluate current and potential criminal justice policies, including the cost-effectiveness of spending on corrections.
- Examine overcrowding in federal Bureau of Prisons (BOP) facilities and options to avert continued growth in the system population; measures to address overcrowding within facilities; violence in the system, including gang violence, and improved public safety measures; prison rehabilitation and

employment programs; and reentry programs and policies to reduce recidivism.

- Develop practical, data-driven policy options to increase public safety, improve offender accountability, reduce recidivism, and control growth of spending on corrections.

- Prepare and submit a report that contains a statement of its findings, conclusions, and recommendations to the Congress, Attorney General and President, not later than 12 months after its first meeting.

Funding for the task force was approved Jan. 17, 2014, under the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2014, and it mandated that the Department of Justice (DOJ) establish and support the operations of the task force.

The need for the task force is due to the fact that the federal prison population has grown by a factor of eight since 1980, with 214,000 prisoners at the close of fiscal year 2014. While fiscal year 2014 saw the first reduction in the federal prison population in 34 years, the consequences of the unprecedented growth that predated that decline are both far-reaching and long-lasting.

"I tasked Secretary Wetzel with improving our state corrections agency," said Gov. Corbett. "He and the hard working men and women of the Department of Corrections have made significant changes that have resulted in Pennsylvania's prison system experiencing its first reduction in its inmate population growth in more than 24 years. In addition, his use of incentive-based contract language in the area of community corrections is beginning to show a reduction in offender recidivism. It is an honor for Pennsylvania's successes to be shared at the national level."

To learn more about the task force, visit <http://www.colsontaskforce.org>

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

DOC Includes Incentive-Based Language in Medical Services Request for Proposal

(Dec. 11) – The Department of General Services recently issued a Request for Proposal (RFP) for comprehensive medical services for the Department of Corrections (DOC). Proposals for the five-year contract, which is anticipated to take effect Sept. 1, 2015, are due to DGS by 10 a.m. on Jan. 22, 2015.

Specific services include physicians, certified registered nurse practitioners, physician assistants, emergency and outpatient services, medical specialty, laboratory and other services at all 26 correctional institutions and two community corrections centers.

Language has been added to the RFP that includes incentive-based performance measures to positively impact the quality of care, to contain the cost of related services and to minimize health care cost increases during contract years.

"As good stewards of taxpayer monies, the DOC works hard to provide services that are in line with community standards and to do so in a way that is fiscally responsible," Corrections Secretary John Wetzel said. "The goal of the language added to this RFP is to ensure that the contractor maintains costs at the lowest level possible without jeopardizing quality of care."

Wetzel said the performance measure language will be monitored quarterly by the DOC and includes:

- Reducing the length of inmate hospital stays where appropriate. The average inmate hospitalization is seven days. By reducing stays, staffing costs associated with escorting inmates and guarding them during hospitalization also are reduced.

- Using over-the-counter medicines available from the inmate commissary, when appropriate, and;

- Providing a financial incentive for the vendor to employ highly credentialed physicians, retain those physicians, enhancing their expertise during employment through additional education, training and certifications.

The DOC has included performance-based measures in other contracts -- with community corrections facility vendors to reduce recidivism and a mental health contract to reduce the number of misconducts for mentally ill inmates and commitments to mental health units.

To ensure continuity of medical care, the RFP also includes an option for vendors to provide assistance to inmates for making medical appointments in their communities upon their release from prison.

"It is a matter of public safety to ensure that a released offender continues with his or her ongoing medical care after release from prison," Wetzel said. "We do all we can to provide quality medical care for inmates while they are in our system. Working to ensure their care continues by providing initial coordination as they transition home is also important for successful reentry to society."

Questions about this specific RFP should be directed to:

Jennifer L. Habowski, Issuing Officer
Department of General Services
Bureau of Procurement
Forum Place, 6th Floor, 555 Walnut Street
Harrisburg, PA 17101
jhabowski@pa.gov

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

SCI Albion Inmates Donate to Local Agencies

On Dec. 2, 2014, Superintendent Nancy Giroux, on behalf of SCI Albion inmates involved in the Albion New Inmate Visionary Organization (ANIVO), presented five agencies around Erie County with nearly \$7,000 in donations.

The inmate organization donated to the following agencies:

- \$905.07 to the Albion Volunteer Fire Department;
- \$905.07 to the Albion Food Pantry;
- \$2,000 to the Albion Food Pantry for Gifts for Kids for this Christmas season;
- \$1,500 to H.A.N.D.S. (Goodrich house for Homeless Vets);
- \$500 to the Erie County Multi-Cultural Center, and;
- \$1,000 to Big Brothers Big Sisters of Northwestern PA.

"This organization gives its inmate membership a sense of purpose, a sense of belonging to society," said one of the ANIVO inmates. "Even though we are behind fences or walls we can still contribute to those that are less fortunate. There is a sense of accomplishment knowing that you helped someone in need no matter the circumstances that you or they are in."



After the presentation, the inmates that attended and the representatives from the community organizations were able to meet and discuss a variety of other ways they could help each other through monetary donations and other services.

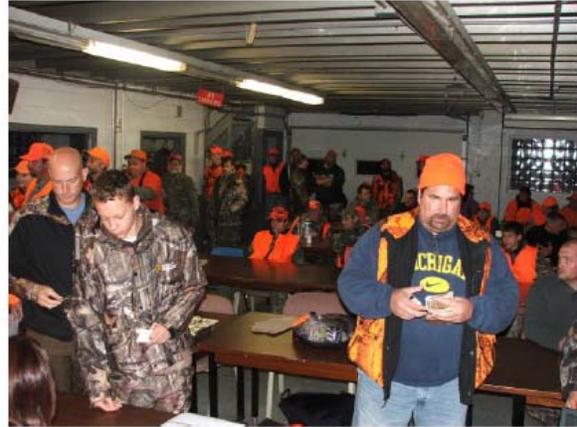
~ ~ ~ ~ ~

SCI Dallas Holds Youth and Veterans Deer Hunts

In October, SCI Dallas, in conjunction with the Pennsylvania Game Commission, conducted two antlerless deer hunts on the prison grounds for youths between the ages of 12 and 16. Through the solid efforts of SCI Dallas employees and retirees, 60 young hunters were able to harvest 40 deer.



Supt. Mahally and Captain Pall prepare for the arrival of the young hunters.



Registration

Also, on Dec. 6, 2014, a deer hunt was held to honor combat wounded veterans. In spite of the weather not cooperating, 21 of our country's finest harvested five deer from the institution grounds.



Don Jacobs, host of NEP Outdoors, Channel WNEP TV 16, did a segment about the hunts on Sept. 21, 2014, and Erik Olson from Warrior Summit Outdoors did a segment on the Veterans hunt which aired on Dec. 3, 2014, on channel WYLN-TV out of Hazleton.

Don Jacobs will do a follow up story Sunday, Dec. 14, 2014, featuring the outcome of both hunts. Eric Olson will air segment of the Veterans hunt on his show scheduled for Dec. 17, 2014.

"I would personally like to thank the countless staff, retirees and local businesses for their generous contribution of time, talents and donations," said SCI Dallas Superintendent Lawrence Mahally. "The employees who actively participated in the hunt itself by conducting drives and catering to the needs of the hunters made this a huge success."



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Huntingdon Employees Donate to Radio Station



As part of a local radio station's Christmas Wish List contest for a local family in need, SCI Huntingdon's Morale Committee - on behalf of SCI Huntingdon employees - delivered \$780 worth of local business gift cards to the station's program manager. The money to purchase the gift cards was raised through a raffle sponsored by the Morale Committee where staff could buy chances to win an iPad and a Kindle Fire HD. According to Michelle

Goss, "The radio station was very excited about our donation and knew the family that was chosen would benefit greatly from such generosity from the SCI Huntingdon staff."

Pictured, from left to right, are: Morale Committee Members Kim Hawn and Micelle Goss and HUNNY 106 Program Manager Cindy Anderson.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Annual Treasures for Children

For the holiday season, SCI Mercer employees participated in their annual Treasures for Children toy drive sponsored by The Salvation Army.

Thanks go out to everyone who participated, and an especially big thank you goes out again this year to the AFSCME Local for purchasing gifts for the children!!

Everyone's participation in this annual event brightens the lives of many less fortunate children from the Shenango Valley community.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



SCI Greene employee participates in an Emmy award winning documentary

Sister Sue Fazzini, SCI Greene's drug and alcohol treatment specialist, was one of several nuns in the Western Pennsylvania area that was featured in a documentary titled "Change of Habit" which aired in January 2014.

WQED Producer Michael Bartley, along with his videographers, visited SCI Greene and viewed multiple areas and inmate activities within the facility which added to the production of the documentary.

Bartley was honored with the 2014 Mid-Atlantic Emmy Award for the documentary.

The Emmy Award is on loan to Sister Sue at SCI Greene.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Retreat Names 'Employee of the Quarter'

Susan Waskiewicz, a registered nurse at the State Correctional Institution at Retreat, Luzerne County, has been named Employee of the Quarter.

"Susan was selected because she is held in high regards by administrative staff as well as her peers at SCI Retreat. She is a teacher, a mentor, loves to continue learning and hones her skills so she can better help others. She reflects the high quality of ethics and responsibility that any employer covets in an employee and represents what a professional caregiver should be," SCI Retreat Superintendent Theresa DelBalso said of today's announcement.

Waskiewicz began her career as a registered nurse at SCI Retreat in October 2012.

Waskiewicz will receive a letter of recognition and a certificate for being selected as the employee of the quarter. She also will receive a gift certificate from the employee's association and will have use of a preferred parking space at the prison.

Waskiewicz's selection will make her eligible to be nominated for the Department of Corrections' Outstanding Performance Award.

Pictured (left to right) are: Deputy Superintendent Kathy Brittain, Susan Waskiewicz and Superintendent Theresa DelBalso.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Hosting the Chamber of Commerce

In August, SCI Coal Township hosted its first Chamber of Commerce luncheon. The chamber rotates its meetings from business to business to allow its members to become familiar with the various businesses in the area.

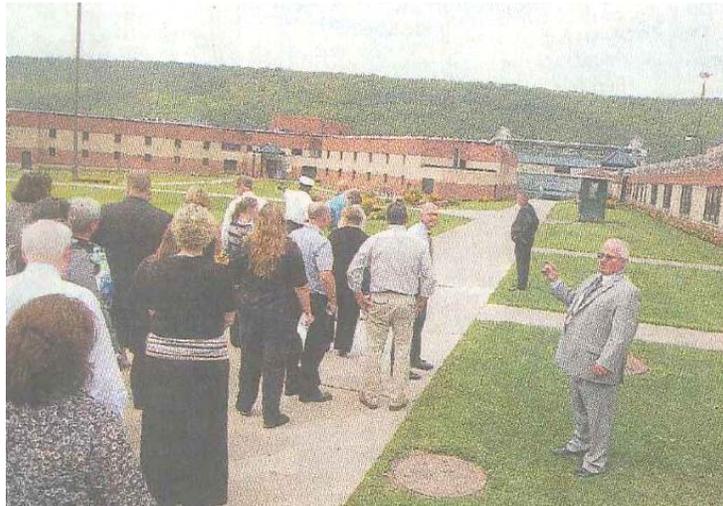
Overseeing the preparation and serving of the luncheon were Food Service Instructors Steven Gregory and Patricia Santor.

SCI Coal Township Superintendent Vincent

Mooney, along with other prison officials, provided chamber members with a guided tour of the prison – chapel, school and gymnasium. Superintendent Mooney also provided the group with an overview of the various programs offered to inmates, such as GED classes and vocational education, including HVAC and CADD.

Guest speakers at the luncheon were Senator John Gordner and Representative Kurt Masser.

Here is a picture from the Shamokin News Item:



ANDY HEINTZELMAN/Staff Photo

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



Week of Dec. 1...

DOC's New Transportation Hub – Open Almost One Year

In February 2014, the DOC began operation of a centrally-located inmate transportation hub at SCI Benner Township, Centre County. Prior to that, the DOC's hub had been located at SCI Smithfield in Huntingdon County.

The new hub, which processed 152 inmates on its first day of operation, is the transfer point for all state prisons, except for Muncy and Cambridge Springs.

Since its opening, to date, the hub has processed some 11,900 inmates who were being transferred from one state prison to another.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Update on DOC's Therapeutic Communities

As of December 2014, there were 2,032 DOC inmates participating in Alcohol and Other Drug (AOD) therapeutic community (TC) treatment.

The DOC operates 48 TCs, including two dual-diagnosis TCs (one for women and one for men), an Hispanic TC and one for young adult offenders.

The TC concept has been used by the DOC for more than 20 years. The DOC has at least one TC in every state prison. Previously the program was six weeks long, it was reduced to four months, without changing the positive outcome of the program and allowing more inmates to participate, in January 2012.

To be eligible for the TC program, inmates must be of medium- to high-risk to reoffend and have drug and/or alcohol dependence issues. The risk level is assessed during intake into the DOC using the Risk-Screen Tool, and the AOD need is assessed using the Texas Christian University Drug Screen II. Following assessment and program determination, inmates are placed on the TC waiting list and entered into the program based on their earliest release date.

In addition to DOC-run TC programs, Gaudenzia Inc. provides TC contracted services at SCI Chester (six TCs) and SCI Pittsburgh (five TCs).

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Department of Corrections Lowering Inmate Phone Call Costs with New Provider

Phone rates are one of the lowest costs for in-state calls in the country.

(Nov. 26) – Beginning in the late evening hours of Sunday, Dec. 7, 2014, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections inmate phones will begin being switched over to a new provider – Securus Technologies headquartered in Dallas, Texas. The DOC expects that all state prisons will be migrated to the new system by early morning on Wednesday, Dec. 10, 2014.

"All inmate phone call costs are now only .059 per minute, plus applicable taxes. This is a significant reduction – one of the lowest costs for in-state calls in the country," Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel said. "Previously the cost to inmates and their families was just over .20 per minute. The reduction in the phone rate will go a long way to keep inmates connected to their families and friends, which is an important part of the reentry process – a strong support system."

Officials notified inmates and staff of the upcoming change. During the change period, inmates only will be able to make collect and prepay (family and friends prepaid account) calls. The contract with Securus Technologies is for five years.

"We wanted to share this news with everyone in advance of the switch-over so families and friends can work with the old company, Global Tel*Link, to obtain a

refund, if warranted, and so they can set up new accounts with Securus," Wetzel said.

Family and friends can contact Securus Technologies by phone at 800-844-6591; by e-mail at customer_service@correctionalbillingservice.com or via the Internet at <https://securustech.net/friends>. Global Tel*Link refund directions are available on the DOC's website at www.cor.pa.gov. Select "Inmates" and then "Telephones."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

From Acting Superintendent to Superintendent

Two individuals who had been serving as acting superintendents at their respective facilities have formally been named superintendents.

James Eckard II has been named superintendent of SCI Huntingdon. He replaces Tabb Bickell, who was appointed regional deputy secretary at the DOC's Central Office.

"James has been instrumental in a variety of leadership positions including corrections emergency response team leader and squad leader of corrections rifle specialist team. He will use his leadership skills and policy knowledge to the betterment of SCI Huntingdon," said Secretary Wetzel.

As superintendent of SCI Huntingdon, Eckard is responsible for more than 600 staff and approximately 2,100 inmates.



Eckard began his corrections career at SCI Cresson in 1987 as a corrections officer trainee. He progressed through the ranks from corrections officer, sergeant and lieutenant earning the rank of captain in 1999.

Eckard was promoted to major of the guard at SCI Smithfield in 2005. At the same facility in 2008, he was named deputy superintendent for facilities management. In December 2009, Eckard moved to SCI Huntingdon as deputy superintendent for facilities management.

In 2011, Eckard provided guidance on the transition team at SCI Pittsburgh, serving as deputy superintendent for facilities management. He then returned to SCI Huntingdon.

Eckard earned his associates degree in criminology from Mount Aloysius College.



After having served as acting superintendent of the State Correctional Institution at Benner Township since December 2013, **Tammy Ferguson** was formally named superintendent in August.

“Tammy uses a no-nonsense style of leadership. Through the capable and skilled leadership of Superintendent Ferguson, the facility will continue to move forward in a positive direction,” said Secretary of Corrections John Wetzel.

As superintendent of SCI Benner Township, Ferguson is responsible for more than 550 staff and approximately 2,000 inmates.

Ferguson began her career at SCI Smithfield in 1995 as a corrections officer. She moved progressively up the ranks. In April 2003, she earned sergeant stripes. Remaining at SCI Smithfield, Ferguson was promoted to

lieutenant in 2005, and three years later she was named captain.

In May 2009, Ferguson transitioned to Central Office as a central region inspection captain. She remained at Central Office and was promoted to chief of security, overseeing all aspects of security for the entire Department of Corrections.

Transitioning to SCI Rockview in 2012, Ferguson was named deputy superintendent for centralized services. When SCI Benner Township opened, she moved to the neighboring facility in the same capacity.

Ferguson has served in the United States Air Force and Pennsylvania Air National Guard.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of Nov. 24...

TEDxMuncyStatePrison

On Friday, Nov. 21, DOC officials and the State Correctional Institution at Muncy hosted the first-ever TEDx event to be held at a women's prison in the United States. Emceed by DOC Secretary John Wetzel, the event's theme was "Tapestry Threads," suggesting that we all come from different backgrounds and experiences, but that together we create something unique, stronger and sometimes beautiful.

And that certainly was the case during the event where unique, strong and beautiful messages were shared with the audience members that consisted of inmates, family and friends of inmates, DOC officials and invited dignitaries, including Pennsylvania's First Lady, Susan Corbett.

Speakers and acts included:

Inmates from a prison program called "House of Hope," which helps inmates who have been victims of domestic violence. The women spoke about things that went on "behind closed doors."

Pennsylvania's Victim Advocate Jennifer Storm, who shared her journey of addiction and how she overcame it.



Inmate Tameka Flowers talked about her childhood and sexual abuse at a young age and how that translated into her involvement with sex, drugs and alcohol.



Piper Kerman, author of "Orange is the New Black: My Year in a Women's Prison," spoke about her experiences in both college and prison and how each impacted her life. Kerman believes that education is a way to transform prisoners, in addition to reducing recidivism.

"Let's stop wasting human potential and provide higher education to inmates," Kerman said.

Inmate Tamika Sheppard spoke about how drug use affected her family and children.

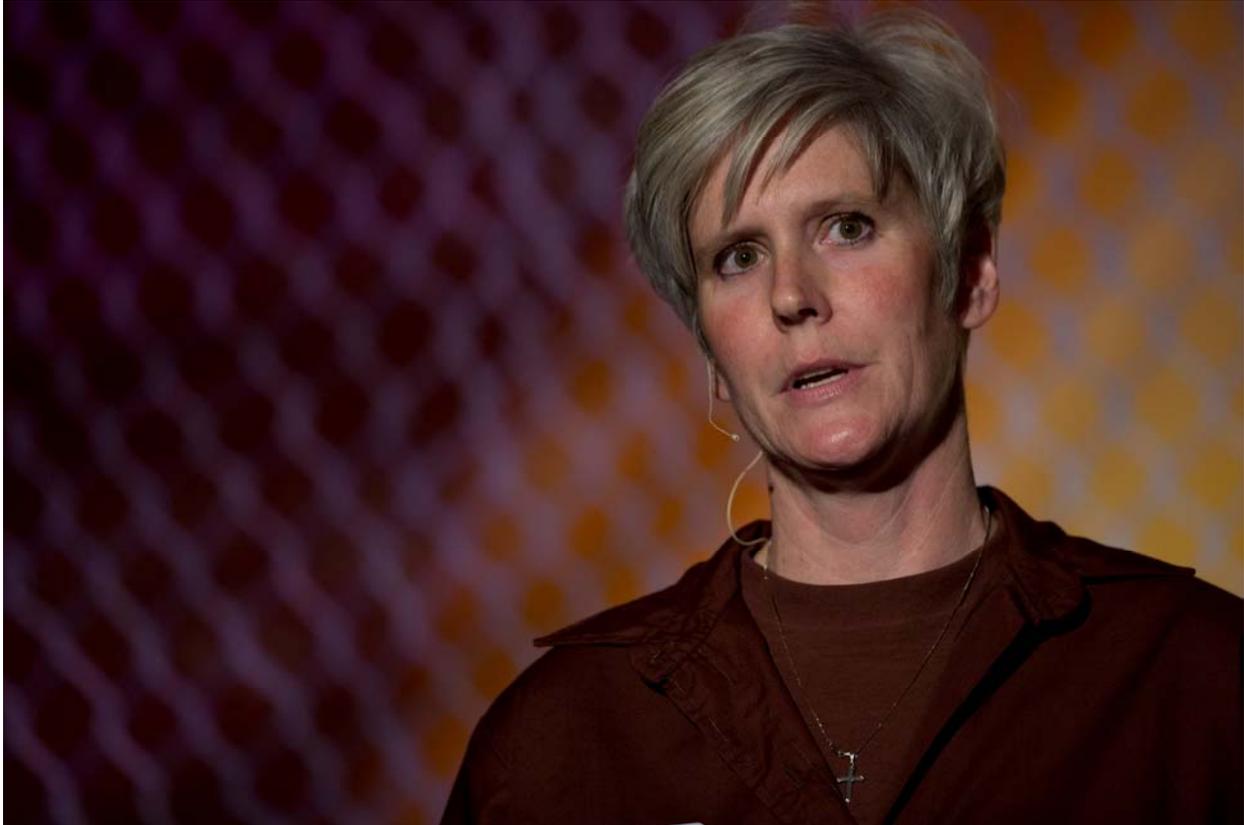
A musical performance by the inmate band B.L. Shirelle provided insight into the wrong direction people can take and about getting your life back on track.

Muncy Corrections Officer Amelia McPeck spoke about how personal problems were affecting her personal and professional life and how she overcame the negativity.



Deb Sahd, assistant to DOC Secretary John Wetzel, performed an original song "Tattooed."

The afternoon sessions began with inmate musical group, "Naomi Blount and Friends. Prior to receiving her life sentence, Blount – at the young age of 18 – was an aspiring singer who had a contract with a recording label.



Inmate Heather Lavelle spoke about living a life with purpose while in prison by attending groups, workshops and meetings. She also spoke about forgiveness... the forgiveness she received from her victim's family and finally from herself.

Inmates and friends, who entered the system at a very young age, Tina Brosius and Melisa McManus spoke about their experiences and how they grew up in prison.

Cheryl Pullins, an internationally acclaimed certified coach, an Amazon bestselling author and award-winning speaker, spoke about her challenging childhood and how she overcame those challenges. She discussed how we all are connected through a common thread.

Inmate Tiffany Williams shared her story and hopes through word and song. She talked about how her mistakes affected her and her children, but how that in the end, she is just a woman.

DOC's Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal spoke about her experiences working at SCI Muncy and how Muncy inmates are someone's friend, mother and sister. She said Muncy taught her that people make mistakes that should not determine who they are, and how one defeat need not be the final defeat.



Judge Renee Cardwell Hughes and leader of the American Red Cross, spoke to the group about making good decisions.

The event closed with the performance by the Inmate Lady Lifers, who sang about what it's like to do a life sentence, "Doing Life Without Parole."

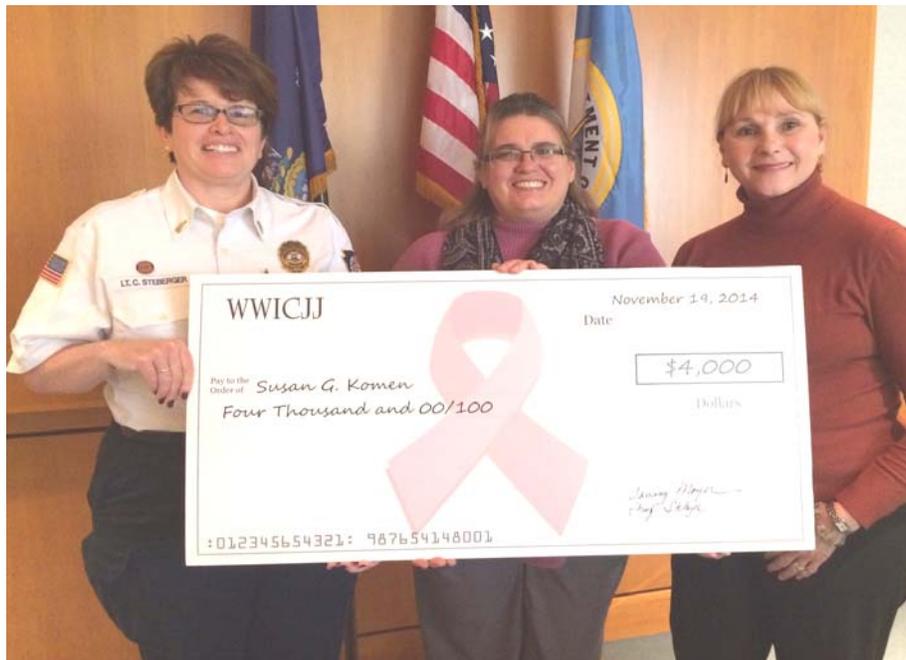
(The newsletter continues on the next page.)

Week of Nov. 17...

WWICJJ Donation

On Nov. 19, officials presented a \$4,000 check to Dolly Woody, executive director of the Susan G. Komen Northeastern Pennsylvania Affiliate. The funds were raised during a recent national conference of the Women Working in Corrections and Juvenile Justice held in Pittsburgh, where committee members held a silent auction to raise funds for the charity. More than 50 donated items, ranging from wooden items to baskets, were bid upon by conference attendees. All funds raised by the auction were donated to this charity. Woody said she has a very small staff and that a large majority of donations goes toward research, education and training. She said that during tough economic times, donations can dwindle. So, she was very appreciative of this donation. The conference's silent auction was coordinated by Cheryl Steberger and Tammy Moyer, both employees of the Lancaster County Prison.

Pictured are: Cheryl Steberger and Tammy Moyer (Lancaster County Prison and silent auction committee members) and Dolly Woody, executive director of the Susan G. Komen Northeastern Pennsylvania Affiliate.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Somerset's 1st Annual Chili Cook-Off



SCI Somerset held its 1st Annual Chili Cook-Off on Nov. 19, and was sponsored by the prison's Empowerment Committee. There were 10 participant entries and many, many "taste-testers." Prizes were awarded for the top three, which were voted on by staff who paid a fee to partake.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Pine Grove Holds Full Scale Exercise



Just like all of PA's SCIs are required to do, SCI Pine Grove, which is located in Indiana County, held a full scale exercise on Nov. 19. The exercise scenario involved an explosion/fire

in the warehouse. PSP, local fire departments and EMS were on site for the exercise.

Exercises are important because they allow staff to practice managing an emergency so they are prepared and confident should one arise. Including local emergency responders also is important, because it allows those individuals to become familiar with the corrections employees they will work with and with the facility to which they will respond.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

SCI Benner Township Employees, Inmates Participate in Freedom Walk

SCI Benner Township Superintendent Ferguson today announced that on Nov. 12, 2014, the prison held a Freedom Walk to raise money for the Disabled American Veterans (DAV). The walk was open to all SCI Benner Township employees and inmates who have served in the Armed Forces. One hundred percent of the more than \$892.91 donations received at the walk, and funds raised through special sales to the inmate population, were donated to the DAV.

"The sacrifice of servicemen and servicewomen currently enlisted in the Armed Forces and the sacrifices and commitment of our American veterans is recognized, not just on Veteran's Day, but every day," Superintendent Ferguson said. "The price of freedom is never free."

The Department of Corrections has a considerable number of employees who are currently enlisted in the Armed Forces or have served our great country. In addition, many inmates also have served for our freedom.

"That recognition, regardless of their current status of incarceration, has not gone unnoticed," Superintendent Ferguson continued. "The Pennsylvania Department of Corrections has re-forged a commitment to identify veteran's resources to these individuals, both during incarceration and for reentry. This event is one way that our inmate veterans have elected to give back and how our employees are supportive of these efforts."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

(The newsletter continues on the next page.)

Week of Nov. 10...

CCC Residents Volunteer to Plant Trees

On Nov. 1, 2014, nine Riverside Community Corrections Center (CCC) residents and two center employees helped another dozen volunteers plant approximately 25 evergreen trees along Chateau St. on Pittsburgh's North Side.

The attached pictures show the process that went into planting the trees. As you can see, the Riverside CCC residents not only worked as a team, but helped the other volunteers with much of the heavy lifting and manual labor.

It was an extremely fun and productive day as many of the community volunteers commented on how hard the Riverside CCC residents worked. Riverside CCC will continue to strive in its efforts to help the community whenever possible. This was another example of how residents participate in a pro-social community activity while showcasing their talents and work ethic.



Before



During



The finished product.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

2014 Veteran's Day Ceremony Held

On Nov. 12, 2014 SCI Pine Grove officials held a program honoring their veterans. Corrections Counselor 2 J. Michael Weaver, veteran outreach director for the Western PA Chapter of Red-White and Blue, coordinated the event. Guest speaker was MSgt. Sean Simler, retired USAF, who is currently the administrator for the VA Community Based Outpatient Clinic in Indiana which opened on September 29th.

MSgt. Simler entered the Air Force in August 1990, graduating from Basic Military Training School in October and Healthcare Administration School in December 1990. His first assignment was Eglin Air Force Base in Fort Walton Beach, Florida. During his tenure at Eglin, he deployed to Wright Patterson Air Force Base, Ohio, to start up the Persian Gulf Illness Program. Also, while assigned to Eglin, he deployed to the 4404th Wing in Dhahran, Saudi Arabia, in support of Operation Southern Watch. His other assignments included RAF Upwood in the United



Kingdom, Keesler Air Force Base in Biloxi, Mississippi, Wright Patterson Air Force Base in Dayton Ohio, and Joint Base Pearl Harbor/Hickman in Hawaii. MSgt. Simler served two tours with the 86th Combat Support Hospital in Baghdad, Iraq in support of Operation Iraqi Freedom and two tours with the 455th Air Expeditionary Wing, Bagram Airfield, Afghanistan. His final duty station with the U.S. Air Force, Pacific Forces Headquarters in Hawaii, where he was in charge of force support and deployments. While on assignment in Hawaii, he planned and coordinated Pacific Angel Humanitarian missions in 11 Asian countries. He deployed

alongside of over 300 US medics to issue humanitarian supplies to over 45,000 citizens. He also supported operations in response of the Super Typhoon in the Philippines and the Tsunami in Japan. He retired from the United States Air Force on September 1, 2014.



MSgt. Simler's major awards and decorations include:

Meritorious Service Medal with oak leaf cluster
Joint Service Commendation Medal
Air Force Commendation Medal with two oak leaf clusters
Air Force Achievement Medal
Organizational Excellence Award
National Defense Service Medal
Humanitarian Service Medal
Southwest Asia Service Medal with bronze start
Global War on Terrorism Service Medal
Air Force Longevity Service Medal with four oak leaf clusters
Air Force Training Ribbon

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

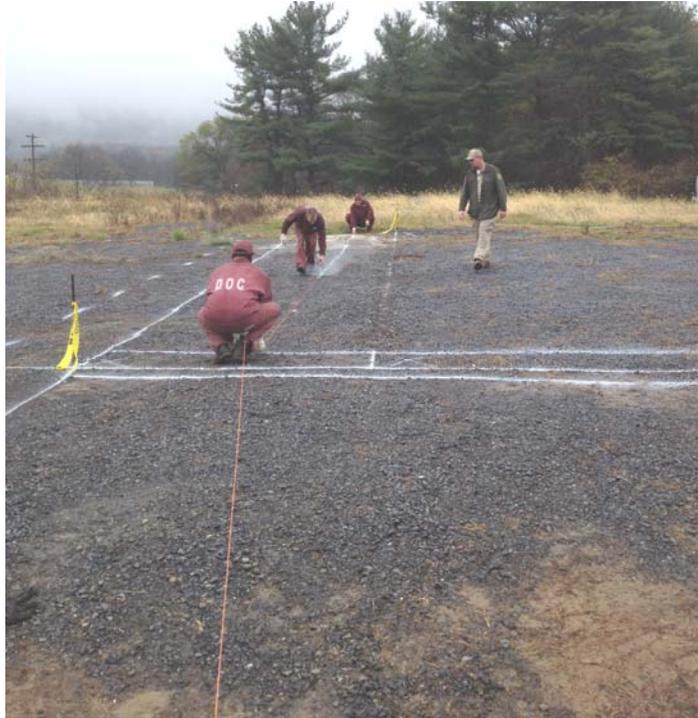
(The newsletter continues on the next page.)

Relocation of the DIU Training Academy

The DOC's Drug Interdiction Unit (DIU) Training Academy is moving from the Quehanna Boot Camp to SCI Rockview in order to have it in a more centralized location. Doing so allows for an abundance of training areas in close proximity to the new academy and provides a reduction in travel and lodging costs incurred by the K9 handlers.

When finished, the state-of-the-art indoor/outdoor kennel will house up to 27 dogs. It also will include isolation kennels, a grooming/utility area, a veterinary office and a storage area for food and another storage area for cleaning supplies.

Modular units used by Hensel Phelps during the construction of SCI Benner Township will be renovated for use as the DIU offices and classroom space. All work is being done by SCI Rockview maintenance staff and inmate labor.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

A Message from a Certified Peer Support Specialist

Hope in the Face of Death – CPS James F., SCI Camp Hill

Recovery is the highest priority to Peer Support Specialists as well to those we serve. This was never truer for me then when I had the pleasure to sit with Rick B.

When I first met Rick in the Infirmary, he was bedridden, had difficulty breathing, and slept most of the time. When awake, he needed help eating, using the bathroom, getting cleaned up, and with other basic needs. "He is dying....cirrhosis of the liver", I was told. "And he doesn't have much time left. There is no hope". No hope? I could not accept that there was no hope for him. As my CPS colleagues and I sat with him, we did see hope.

Within the first month, Rick was able to talk much better and began to share with us as we helped him with his daily needs. At times he would get mad, frustrated, and even yell, "I don't want you here! Get out of my face....just let me die!" But when we said, "No!" and showed the belief we had in him, he soon felt that he did, indeed, have hope.

Over the next three months, Rick experienced some physical recovery, but more importantly, he experienced emotional recovery, (and so did I). From bedridden to only in bed to sleep at night, Rick found empowerment toward recovery. He was talking more, eating more on his own, and needing less help with his daily needs. He was happier now and looked forward to another day.

I remember the day that one of the graduated dogs from SCI Camp Hill's H.O.P.E. Program came to visit. Rick was so happy, laughing as he watched the dog perform tricks for him. He was able to pet the dog, and even have the dog do tricks for a treat from his hand. How fitting it was that Rick was experiencing his own HOPE Program!

By the fifth month, Rick was talking up a storm, eating all on his own, and started walking with a walker to the bathroom, up and down the hallways, and even in the yard! Through his recovery, he even managed to attend Church on Sundays. Within his spiritual recovery, Rick made amends with himself and others, He had found peace.

I spent six months with Rick, peer on peer, recovery on recovery, and hope on hope. After attending what would be his last church service and shouting out, "Yes we are brother!" to the question "Are we here to praise the Lord?" Rick slept peacefully. The following Wednesday, July 9th, 2014, after two days of laborious breathing, in an unresponsive state with no lucid intervals, Rick died.

As a CPS sharing in Rick's recovery, I too found recovery in my life. You see....There is always Hope!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

What is a Certified Peer Support Specialist?

Every Pennsylvania State Correctional Institution has trained select inmates as Certified Peer Support Specialists (CPS). In fact, more than 300 inmates system wide are now providing peer support and counseling services to the DOC inmate population, covering a variety of issues, including mental health issues.

In order to become a CPS, inmates have to meet specific criteria, including having had mental health treatment at some point in their lives.



These inmates receive an 80-hour training aimed at developing peer support skills for the purposes of augmenting staff service with active listening skills and support of other inmates. Continuing education is an important part of the program. Inmates meet regularly with the program coordinators to continue to hone their skills, share experiences and discuss new ideas and concepts.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Thanks!

Donald E. Stief, president of Aulenbach's Cemetery Company in Reading, Pa., recently wrote to the Wernersville Community Corrections Center:

"The Board of Directors of Aulenbauch's Cemetery Company wishes to thank WCCC and the gentlemen you provided to work at the Cemetery.

During the season, they performed the following tasks:

- Repaired and erected over 100 tombstones*
- Helped replaced 1,300 veteran's markers over the 34 acres of the Cemetery*
- Painted walls on maintenance building and storage garages*
- Cleaned and serviced mowing equipment*

-Shredded and chipped tree limbs

-Sawed and removed fallen trees

-Removed weeds the size of trees

The Cemetery operates on a very small budget. If we did not have help from the gentlemen you sent, many of these tasks would have remained undone.

We found the gentlemen were very courteous and performed the work we assigned without hesitation. It was a pleasure to work with them and look forward to have them work at the Cemetery next season."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Dress Down for Bundle Up

On Oct. 29, 2014, Riverside CCC/BCC Region 3 and SCI Pittsburgh employees participated in "Dress Down for Bundle Up," an event sponsored by WTAE-TV Pittsburgh and The Salvation Army. Non-uniformed staff were permitted to "dress down" in casual clothing for a donation of \$5. A total of \$128 was donated by Department of Corrections employees. All proceeds went directly to Project Bundle Up. Donations of winter coats, gloves, scarves, hats and boots were also collected. The donated winter accessories will be taken to local Salvation Army Centers, where they will benefit the elderly and children of Pittsburgh. Riverside CCC residents donated most of the winter accessories, giving back to their community by helping those in need.

Oct. 29, 2014, also served as a day to acknowledge October as Domestic Violence Awareness Month. Riverside CCC residents and staff decorated Riverside CCC's lobby with personalized Purple Ribbons. The Purple Ribbons serve as a reminder for the hope, strength and faith needed to put an end to domestic violence. Purple Ribbon pens, candy, bracelets and stickers were also available to promote the cause. Two Pittsburgh Penguins hockey tickets were raffled, with all proceeds going to a local domestic violence shelter. Raffle ticket sales generated \$280 for the Women's Center and Shelter of Greater Pittsburgh.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

(The newsletter continues on the next page.)

Week of Nov. 3...

Summary of Change for DOC Mental Health Services

The delivery of Mental Health services in the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections is changing. After a period of internal and organizational reflection, the Department of Corrections has promulgated many systemic changes to the ways mental health services are provided to state inmates. The Central Office Psychology Department has become the *Psychology Office* and has augmented the organizational structure with the addition of three Regional Licensed Psychologist Managers (LPMs) and a Mental Health Program Manager. The Regional LPMs serve as Central Office liaisons with the State Correctional Institutions and oversee the delivery of mental health services in their respective regions, while the Mental Health Program Manager is primarily responsible for the tracking and identification of trending of mental health related critical incidents throughout the Department of Corrections.

With regard to mental health services, the Department of Corrections recognized the need for system wide training initiatives. Consequently, the Department of Corrections commenced the delivery of the *Crisis Intervention Team Training* for certain classifications of employees and *Mental Health First Aid* training for ALL employees. As of the end of 2013, the Department of Corrections trained more than 300 employees in the CITT model. The Department of Corrections is scheduled to have all DOC staff trained in *Mental Health First Aid* by the end of fiscal year 2014. Currently, more than 61% of all Department of Corrections employees have been trained in *Mental Health First Aid*. The unveiling of the mental health training initiatives to all Department of Corrections employees is only the beginning of Pennsylvania's strategy to change the culture of the seventh largest state correctional system in the United States (BJS, 2014). The Department of Corrections recognizes that every employee in the state correctional system is responsible for suicide prevention efforts. Consequently, newly implemented Suicide Response Drills are occurring intermittently at every State Correctional Institution in Pennsylvania. These drills are aimed at improving response times and best practices of all employees to these critical incidents. In addition to the training provided for DOC employees, all Pennsylvania State Correctional Institutions have trained select inmates as Certified Peer Specialists (CPS). These inmates receive an 80-hour training aimed at developing peer support skills for the purposes of augmenting staff service with active listening skills and support of other inmates.

The Department of Corrections has committed to many additional culture-change initiatives that involve the fortification of relationships with community mental health and criminal justice experts. The Department of

Corrections has received assistance from the National Alliance of Mental Illness (NAMI) with regard to reviewing and improving mental health related policies. Similarly, the Department of Corrections has partnered with the *VERA Institute of Justice* to assess Department of Corrections' segregation policies and practices by participating in VERA's *Segregation Reduction Project*. Pennsylvania is only the fifth state to collaborate with VERA for a *Segregation Reduction Project*. Our goal is to facilitate the efficacious use of these correctional tools and emphasize their use only under exigent circumstances with seriously mentally ill inmates. The collaboration with the VERA Institute of Justice will also facilitate the ongoing systemic reduction of inmates confined in segregation. The Department of Corrections also recently consulted with the *Pennsylvania Mental Health and Justice Center of Excellence* to complete a sequential intercept mapping of the correctional mental health system, from reception to reentry. This system wide mapping assisted the Department of Corrections with the identification of gaps in the mental health procedures and ultimately enhanced the placement, identification, treatment planning, and reentry of inmates with mental illness to the community. To this end, the Department of Corrections has refined the definition of serious mental illness with the intent of enabling improved tracking and identification of inmates involved with the departmental disciplinary process.

The departmental disciplinary process, as it relates to inmates with mental illness and serious mental illness, has also been greatly augmented. Our hearing examiners received a specialized training on the amendments and new provisions to the disciplinary process by the Licensed Psychologist Director, the Department of Corrections' Office of Chief Counsel, and the Supervising Hearing Examiner at Central Office. These provisions include enhanced out-of-cell services for inmates in segregation as well as informed sanctioning practices for inmates with mental illnesses and serious mental illnesses. Additionally, the Department of Corrections eliminated self-injurious behaviors, self-mutilation, other forms of self-injury, and behaviors associated with these sentinel events from the list of rule violations that could lead to segregation or other types of informal sanctions. The Department of Corrections implemented this change despite the fact that a recent national survey of American state prison systems revealed that more than 60% of state systems still consider inmate self-injury a rule violation and permit the disciplinary sanctioning of punishment for such inmate behaviors (Appelbaum, Savageau, Trestman, Metzner, & Baillargeon, 2011). Furthermore, the Department of Corrections implemented restrictions on the types and lengths of disciplinary sanctions for inmates diagnosed with serious mental illnesses. Similarly, the Department of Corrections recently implemented the strategic placement of preliminary psychological evaluations of inmates prior to placement in segregation.

Recent research illustrated that only 55% of state prison systems are conducting these preliminary psychological evaluations prior to segregation placement (Butler, Johnson, & Griffin, 2014).

The Department of Corrections has also concentrated significant efforts on improving, developing, and implementing additional clinical operations. For example, Suicide Prevention Committees consisting of multidisciplinary professionals have been established at every State Correctional Institute. The committees meet monthly, review critical incidents, recommend policy changes, and evaluate facility processes and procedures as they relate to suicide prevention. Additionally, the Department of Corrections has drastically enhanced the requirements and procedures for clinical reviews of self-injurious behaviors, suicide attempts, and completed suicides. One highlight of these changes is the requirement that a Licensed Psychologist Manager or other clinically trained employee chair the meeting and prepare the clinical review. Other monumental changes recently executed include the implementation of Recovery-Based Individual Treatment Plans and the development of specialized housing units utilized as alternatives to segregation that are specifically designed for various levels of care and security. At a systemic level, the Department of Corrections has also developed a centralized tracking system of all inmate self-injurious behaviors, serious suicide attempts, and similar extraordinary occurrences. Many states have yet to develop such centralized tracking systems that facilitate the identification of self-injurious trends among entire state correctional populations (Appelbaum et al., 2011). Similarly, all female inmates that enter the DOC will receive a trauma screening and provided continuity of care services within our system.

Many of these initiatives and additional services require a constant re-evaluation of staffing as well. The Department of Corrections has continued to enhance service planning by placing offenders diagnosed with serious mental illnesses at a limited number of sites and by creating appropriate diversionary bed space in our seven Secure Residential Treatment Units (SRTUs). These units vary in size from eight beds to an anticipated high of 60 beds at SCI-Rockview. Behavioral Management Units (BMUs) have also been established for individuals who are not diagnosed with a serious mental illness but require secure treatment due to functional and other behavioral impairments. State Correctional Institutions operating these specialized units or offering increased programming for seriously mentally ill offenders will require an increase in both clinical staffing (e.g., Psychiatrists and appropriately licensed and credentialed mental health staff) and security staff to provide escorts out of cell programs and activities.

Finally, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections has augmented other

centralized oversight mechanisms aimed at improving the delivery of mental health services. In December of 2013, the DOC awarded MHM Services, Inc., a contract for mental health services that included performance based incentives and penalties. Other centralized oversight changes include the enhancement and augmentation of the Central Office Special Needs Psychiatric Review Team. This monthly interdisciplinary meeting of Central Office department heads provides oversight of the state's mental health program, use of segregation and other security practices, and trending of suicide prevention efforts. This committee reviews specialized referrals, security trends, segregation oversight, all self-injurious behaviors, mental health commitments, and challenging inmate cases. This committee collects and reviews various types of data for the purposes of generating action items to facilitate the improvement of the delivery of mental health services at the systemic, institutional, and individual levels. Without reservation, the Department of Corrections has established a commitment to enhance the mental health system. Considering the systemic changes to mental health policies, procedures, and training initiatives, this evolution clearly represents a time of culture change for Pennsylvania. Under the direction of Secretary John E. Wetzel, the Department of Corrections is dedicated to executing this transformation as *one team*. The Department of Corrections is proud of the reputation as a leader in corrections and will continue to embody positive change, especially with the delivery of mental health services.

References

- Appelbaum, K. L., Savageau, J. A., Trestman, R. L., Metzner, J. L., & Baillargeon, J. (2011). A national survey of self-injurious behavior in American prisons. *Psychiatric Services*, 62(3), 285–290. Retrieved from <http://www.ps.psychiatryonline.org>
- Bureau of Justice Statistics. (2014). Prisoners in 2013. Retrieved from <http://www.bjs.gov>
- Butler, H.D., Johnson, W.W., & Griffin O.H. (2014). The treatment of the mentally ill in supermax facilities: An evaluation of state supermax policies. *Criminal Justice and Behavior*, 41(11), 1338-1353. doi: 10.1177/0093854814535082

(The newsletter continues on the next page.)

DOC - California DOC Visit PA DOC Nov 2014



Several officials from the California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation recently visited Pennsylvania and toured SCIs Camp Hill, Benner Township and Rockview. The tours focused on mental health procedures, drug interdiction and the use of segregation.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Certificate of Appreciation Presented to Graterford

Recently, representatives from a local food bank distributor presented SCI Graterford employees with a certificate of appreciation for their contribution to the food pantry.

Through the coordination of Harvest Now, SCI Graterford was able to produce nearly 27,500 pounds of corn for Philabundance, a distribution center for food banks in five southeastern Pennsylvania counties and four New Jersey counties. The food banks provide food to 900,000 food insecure residents.



Harvest Now is an organization that initially began lobbying churches to provide food for local food banks, and Brooks Sumberg worked to include prisons in this effort. Because of that, 21 prisons along the east coast have participated in this program.

SCI Graterford Labor Foreman (and the man responsible for coordinating the planting and harvesting of the corn at the prison) Jonathan Sterner said that his biggest challenge is the deer population. "If it were not for the fencing around approximately 4.2 acres, we wouldn't have had any corn at all," he said.

Superintendent Michael Wenerowicz and Sterner look forward to continuing their work with Harvest Now and Philabundance.

Pictured are, from left: Monika Crosby, Americor Vista; Brooks Sumberg, Harvest Now; Lisa Hodaël, Philabundance; Jonathan Sterner, SCI Graterford labor foreman; and SCI Graterford Superintendent Michael Wenerowicz.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Mahanoy Celebrates National Recovery Month

In September, SCI Mahanoy's therapeutic community (TC) celebrated National Recovery Month. In its 25th year, Recovery Month promotes the benefits of prevention, treatment and recovery for mental health and substance abuse disorders. It encourages people to speak openly about mental health and substance use disorders and the reality of recovery. It also promotes ways individuals can recognize behavioral health issues and reach out for help. Recovery month spreads the positive message that behavioral health is essential to overall health, that prevention works, treatment is effective and people can and do recover.

SCI Mahanoy employees came up with fun activities for the inmates to participate in which included poster/poetry contests, a talent show and a memoriam tree. The tree was donned by current members of the TC along with inmates who are participating in the prison's recovery unit. The idea of the memoriam tree was for individuals who have lost family members, friends or someone close to them due to addiction. Inmates used a leaf to place on the tree as a way of remembrance. Written on leaves were individual names or a brief saying for the individuals they wanted to remember. The tree will remain on the TC for future TC members to utilize in their treatment efforts.



Week of October 27...

WERNERSVILLE COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS CENTER EMPLOYEES OF THE QUARTER

Corrections Maintenance Repairmen Jeff Gilfillan and Barry Mihalik have been selected as Wernersville Community Corrections Center's Employees of the Quarter. They have been instrumental in helping Wernersville succeed in passing all of their inspections, mainly their first ACA Accreditation. This year alone they have completed 720 (and counting) work orders. They can be found fixing anything from a broken file cabinet to repairing a pipe leak!



JEFF GILFILLAN 4th Quarter - 2014

MR Gilfillan has been employed by the DOC since January 2009 and started his career as a Community Corrections Monitor before becoming a Maintenance Repairman.

BARRY MIHALIK 3rd Quarter - 2014

MR Mihalik started his career in the DOC working at SCI – Graterford. Lucky for us, he was transferred to Wernersville where he has been since July of 2011.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Laurel Highlands Holds Inmate Job Fair



On Oct. 29, 2014, SCI Laurel Highlands' Reentry Specialist Rebecca Witt, in conjunction with the prison's Education Department headed by Principal Anne Marie Swanlek, hosted the 2014 Laurel Highlands Job/Career Fair. Collectively, there were eight community agencies from Somerset, Allegheny and Cambria counties represented offering job-related workshops and information at vendor stations. Among those visiting the institution that day were Johnstown Community Corrections Center, Good Will

Industries of Conemaugh Valley, Boyer Financial Planning, Labor and Industry Disabled Veterans Outreach Program, CareerLink, Community Action, Twin Lakes Center for Rehabilitation and Geo Reentry Services. Additionally, two of the prison's educational employees -- Melinda Fello and Matt Stavros -- also offered workshops.

"It was a great event that offered a lot of very relevant information to our inmates who are preparing to eventually enter OR reenter the workforce. It was shame that the entire inmate population couldn't have participated as it really was an opportunity to gather pertinent information designed to assist in securing employment that otherwise would not have been available to them," said Reentry Specialist and Job Fair coordinator Rebecca Witt.

The professionals whom presented workshops unanimously agreed that they were received very well and were positively inundated with questions from the inmates.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

SCI Somerset's Appreciation Team – What is it?

The employees at the State Correctional Institution at Somerset are fortunate to have an organization whose mission is to show appreciation to the staff. The Somerset Appreciation Team (SAT) is comprised of a small group of employee volunteers who have taken on the goal of encouragement, fun and something a little extra for those who work at the state prison. Working at a prison can be a difficult and often stressful job, so employee morale is especially key.

This year the SAT committee organized an Easter party for the children of staff and will offer a kid's Christmas party in December. Their support has provided special lunches, prizes and an end-of-the-year Christmas party for employees and their spouses. All of the funds come from fundraisers done by this committee and

donations. Superintendent Trevor Wingard says it is important to have such an organization to encourage staff and make the facility a better place to work.

Recently the SAT committee volunteers, along with the prison's Empowerment Committee -- another valuable employee organization -- provided pizza, cake and ice tea to staff during the change of shift. This isn't any easy feat with so many employees, working different shifts at a 24-hour facility.



This fall, SAT organized a golf outing to benefit "Canine Partners for Life," an organization that works with the prison's administration and inmates to train service dogs for those who need this type of companionship. Many times inmates and employees at prisons train these dogs for up to two years so that they can do their much-needed work. The fundraiser was a success with 68 participants, and a

generous amount of money was raised for this worthy cause.

In the past the SAT has participated with Relay for Life, the Polar Bear Plunge, Junior Achievement Bowl-a-thon, a supply drive for the Holidaysburg Veterans Home, as well as one for the Somerset County Humane Society. They look forward to participating in the Daily American Challenge this coming year.

SCI Somerset is a medium-security state prison which has approximately 600 staff members and 2,300 inmates. The Department of Corrections is a major employer in Somerset County with both SCI Somerset and SCI Laurel Highlands being located within the county.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

(The newsletter continues on the next page.)

What is a Residential Treatment Unit?

A Residential Treatment Unit (RTU) is a housing area designated for those inmates with a serious mental illness that require a higher level of residential care and services as they cannot be managed on an outpatient basis.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

What is a Special Needs Unit?

A Special Needs Unit (SNU) is a housing area or group of cells designed to provide a safe and secure setting with specialized treatment services for inmates identified as being unable to function safely in a general population housing unit due to vulnerabilities not related to mental illness. Examples include, but are not limited to, physical challenges, victimization potential, etc. Other populations that can be housed in/on the SNU without causing negative consequences to the SNU population are inmate peer assistants and those transitioning into or out of the SNU.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Faith Leaders Tour SCI Greene

On Oct. 16, a delegation of faith leaders from the PA Community of Churches met with Secretary Wetzel and toured SCI Greene to obtain information about long-term solitary confinement and to further educate members of the National Religious Campaign Against Torture.



L to R: DSFM Zaken; Rev Sandy Strauss; Amanda Gross; Superintendent Gilmore; DSCS Dialesandro; Scilla Wahrhaftig; Secretary Wetzel; Linda Lance Hill; PPS Member William Lockard; PPS Director John Hargreaves; Rev Ron Stief; Paul Lubold

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Another Group of FIDOS Dogs Arrive



Another group of FIDOS candidates arrived at SCI Coal Township this week. FIDOS stands for Fostering & Improving Dog Obedience and Survival. The program began earlier this year with the goal of helping dogs become more adoptable through Brierwood Boarding Kennels and Cattery in Pottsville.

This successful program has resulted in 10 adoptions. Pictured here is the third round of dogs being brought to the prison from Brierwood Kennel.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Day of Responsibility

In September, SCI Smithfield held its second annual Day of Responsibility, which is a day-long event that provides speakers for inmates to help them take responsibility for their actions. Many other state prisons hold this event at their facilities each year.

At Smithfield, the director of Victim Services Karen Laird spoke about what it is like to be a victim. Several inmate speakers discussed how inmates can "pay it forward," which was the theme of the day's event. One spoke about how being a peer support specialist allows him to give back to the inmates at the prison; another inmate discussed his personal journey to responsible behavior. The dog training program also demonstrated their "click and treat" method of dog training.



Lunch provided an opportunity for small groups to discuss the day's speakers. After lunch, an interactive presentation on domestic violence was provided by Jean Collins, executive director of Huntingdon House. The final speaker of the day was a former offender who shared her story of the challenges of remaining clean and sober after incarceration.

The event ended with the Smithfield Inmate Organization donating \$250 each to Canine Partners for Life, the Huntingdon House and to the book bag program sponsored through Child of Dreams.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Harvest Count is In!



For the past few years several of our state prisons have grown crops to benefit themselves, local/neighboring prisons and organizations like Harvest Now. Harvest Now's Director Brooks Sumberg recently provided information on the amount of corn provided to them by SCIs Graterford and Huntingdon. Graterford donated 27,498 pounds of corn, and SCI Huntingdon provided 3,550 pounds of corn.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

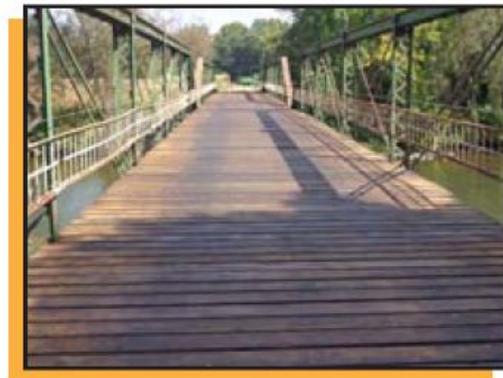
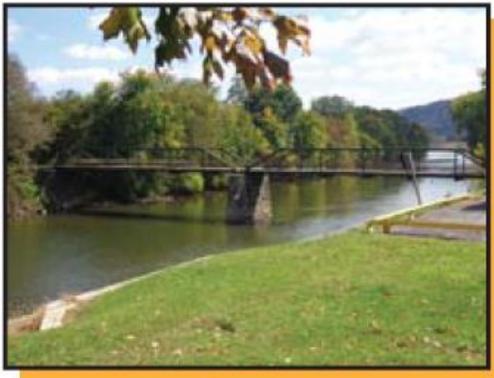
Dogs and Bears, Oh My!

On Oct. 21, SCI Pine Grove employees took the prisons service dogs-in-training to a fundraiser that is held annually by the United Disabilities Services. Held in Hershey, the UDS does a calendar with the Hershey Bears Hockey Team. Staff trainers Tammy Delosh, CO Marsh and Tara Marhefka took pups, Solomon, Deora, Milton and Somerset to the photo shoot. The dogs will appear in the calendar, but the month is not yet known.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Bridge Restoration Project Underway

SCI Huntingdon's Maintenance Department is in the process of refurbishing the island bridge. The deck, consisting of 4x12 support beams with 3x8 deck boards acquired through SCI Rockview, has been completed. Painting and railing repairs will be completed shortly.



The bridge was opened in 1905 during the term of Superintendent Patton. It provided access to the fertile ground on Cyprus Island that was needed for the prison's farming operation. Constructed in the open or "pony" truss design, it is light weight and very strong.

Each of the two sections are just over 100 feet long, supported in the middle of the river with a stone pier. Bridges of this design were common throughout the country with many still in service.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Lighting Project Underway



The second restoration project underway at SCI Huntingdon involves the street lights located along Pike Street and the circle in front of the prison. The period lights appear in the oldest pictures of SCI Huntingdon. After SCI Smithfield opened, the increased traffic made the lights vulnerable in their original location just inches off of the curb. One by one they were taken out by errant drivers. Renovations to the inside of the sidewalk presents a much more difficult target and allows them to light the walks as they have for more than 100 years.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Honor Guard Presents Funds to Charity

SCI Pittsburgh's Honor Guard recently donated a check to the Susan G. Komen Foundation. The money was raised at a recent national corrections conference where the Honor Guard sold t-shirts to benefit the charity.

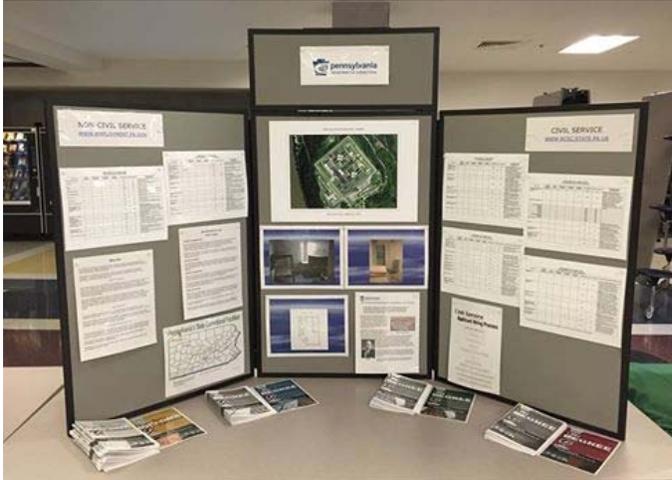


~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of October 17...

Career Fair

Recently SCI Fayette employees participated in a career fair at Connellsville Area Senior High School.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of October 20...

Johnstown CCC Resident Volunteers at Local Church

Pastor Terry Knipple recently sent a letter to the Johnstown Community Corrections Center:

"Thank you for allowing one of your residents to volunteer at our church this past month. The United Methodist Human Services has been in the process of moving their offices from First United Methodist Church to our building. This has been a daunting project and has required a lot of work. Your resident has worked diligently, often putting in 10 hour days, to make sure that the offices were painted and ready for the UMHS to move in. His work has been excellent and his willingness to help has been exemplary. We appreciate his help and hope that his spending so much time here at the church and volunteering on Johnstown United Methodist Parish (JUMP) Inc. construction projects has not caused you or him any trouble."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

PCI's Optical Lab Program Works

Recently Tony Rentz, Pennsylvania Correctional Industries optical lab factory supervisor at SCI Cambridge Springs, received a call from a very large optical wholesale lab in western Pennsylvania. This lab already has hired three former inmates who, while in prison, received their American Board of Opticianry (ABO) certification. During this call, the lab was inquiring about another inmate who soon

will be released from prison. Rentz was told that the former inmates they hired were able to stop into their lab and produce orders right off the bat. The lab said that whatever the prison is doing, should be continued.

Rentz and the inmate's counselor are setting up a phone interview with the lab, and Rentz will sit in on the call to help better prepare the other inmates for future employment interviews.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Mercer Holds Inmate Walk/Run-A-Thon

SCI Mercer hosted the prison's second annual Inmate Walk/Run-A-Thon on Oct. 13, 2014. Inmates walked and/or ran nearly 4,000 laps, and they raised \$1,077 for The Arc of Mercer County.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Inmates Donate \$1,000 to Domestic Violence Services

SCI Fayette held its annual Inmate Runathon on Oct. 7, 2014.

Nearly 200 inmates participated in the event that raised \$1,000 for the designated charity of Domestic Violence Services of Southwestern PA, which was selected by the inmates and the committee coordinating the event.

Seventeen inmates completed the entire 26.25 miles.

According to SCI Fayette's Superintendent Brian Coleman, "This event allows inmates the chance to give back to the community."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of October 13...

Mercer Holds Regional Empowerment Symposium

On Oct. 9, 2014, SCI Mercer hosted the Northwest Regional Empowerment Symposium in conjunction with SCIs Albion, Cambridge Springs and Forest, along with the Erie and Sharon CCCs. Committee Chairperson Greg Giddens welcomed 137 participants to the regional symposium, which was entitled "DOC-Palooza 2014 – Celebrating Our Employees." The day's events included a variety of workshops which provided staff opportunities for new and unique experiences to grow, to develop their professionalism and to enhance their environment. Attendees could also choose to tour the Mercer County Courthouse and the Mercer County Jail. Participants enjoyed all of the seminars and found them to be most fulfilling.

As participants arrived they were greeted with live music in the lobby performed by Officer John Chapman and in the chapel performed by Electrical Trades Instructor Robert Cook. Artwork created by staff was displayed in the lobby. The opening session, Fish! Philosophy – Be There, Play, Make Their Day, and Choose Your Attitude, was presented in the chapel by William Joel Murray, Sharon CCC Director. SCI Mercer's Dietary Department, under the direction of Food Service Manager

Dennis Sansotta, provided refreshments throughout the day and a buffet luncheon. Staff also brought in their favorite dish to share. Fresh-squeezed lemonade was provided compliments of the Morale Committee. The colors were presented by SCI Mercer's Honor Guard during the opening and closing of the symposium. Lisa Lopez from SCI Forest went home with a Windows Surface.

The 2014 Northwest Regional Empowerment Symposium Committee would like to thank everyone for their participation in this year's event. A special thank you is extended to the seminar presenters for their time and effort toward making this a successful Regional Symposium.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Coal Township's Employee of the Quarter

SCI Coal Township congratulates Heather Yoder, records specialist 2, on her nomination and selection as Employee of the Quarter.

Heather was nominated by several of her coworkers and supervisors for this quarter's EoQ. Heather began her employment as a records specialist 1 at SCI Coal Township in January 2007 and promoted to specialist 2 in March 2008. She is commended for her commitment and dedication to the institution and to the Records Office over the past years and especially during this last few months. "Heather is a professional employee and despite the increased workload in the Inmate Records Office in the recent months, she has accepted the additional duties willingly and she does accurate work."



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Career-Re-entry Fair



Recently, all 513 State Intermediate Punishment and Boot Camp inmates at the Quehanna Motivational Boot Camp participated in a Career/Re-Entry Fair, which was held in the facility gymnasium. The purpose of the event was to help the offenders establish connections so their return to society is successful. Participating agencies included: PA Careerlink, Triangle Tech, Clearfield County Career and Technology Center (CCCTC), Penn State Cooperative Extension, FiberOptic.com, National Center for

Construction Education and Research (NCCER), Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), Veteran's Affairs, and Bureau of Community Corrections.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Huntingdon's Annual Retirees' Breakfast



The annual SCI Huntingdon retirees' breakfast was held October 10, 2014, at the institution in the gymnasium. More than 60 retirees attended, along with SCI Huntingdon staff. Pictured, from left to right, are DSFM Lonnie Oliver, Major Dan Myers, retiree Wayne Mateer, RDS Tabb Bickell, CCPM Morris Houser, retiree Harold Hockenberry, Supt. James Eckard, retiree Bob Snare and retiree Dan Cooper. Mr. Mateer retired in 1986 as the CI manager with 31 years of service, Mr. Hockenberry retired in 1980 as a

food service instructor with 12 years of service, Mr. Snare retired in 1993 as a budget analyst with 30 years of service, and Mr. Cooper retired in 2007 as major of the guard with 27 years of service.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Center Residents Donate to Less Fortunate

During the month of September, Riverside CCC staff and residents donated enough undergarments, pillows, school supplies, shirts and socks, to name a few of the items, to fill two large boxes for the Light of Life Homeless shelter on Pittsburgh's North Side. This was one of our more popular donation drives, as the residents of Riverside CCC seemed to really gravitate towards helping those less fortunate. It was an extremely successful event as all of our donation drives have been. Riverside CCC will continue to offer their support to the Light of Life Homeless Shelter and to the city of Pittsburgh. We will ensure that those who have taken for so many years continue to give back their time and effort to a greater cause. Thank you to all who donated and continue to support and promote our donation drives and community service events.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of September 29...

Inmates Participate in Bloomsburg Fair Contest

SCI Dallas Horticulture Class instructor April Gromel said that three of her students placed at the Bloomsburg Fair in the creative design category.



Second Place



Third Place



Fourth Place

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Inmate Graduation Held

SCI Dallas held its 33rd Annual Inmate Graduation ceremony on Sept. 30. Forty-three inmates were recognized for their accomplishments. Twenty-one received their GEDs, and five inmates received the Commonwealth Secondary Diploma. Two inmates achieved a 3,000 score on their GED test, giving them honorable mention. Twenty-seven inmates earned vocational honors. Speaking at the graduation were Superintendent Lawrence Mahally, Deputy Superintendent Norm Demming, School Principal Ann Marie Chiampi and Elizabeth Hnylanski, who works for the DOC's Bureau of Correction Education.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of September 22...

Fingerprinting Local Kids



Recently, SCI Waymart Records Specialist Alice Emmett and Sgt. C. Coolican, fingerprinted students at the Robert D. Wilson Elementary School. The fingerprints and personal identification data are resources used by law enforcement agencies when searching for or identifying missing children.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Sweet Corn

SCI Huntingdon planted 10 acres of sweet corn this past spring, and the warm, wet summer provided an abundant yield. The prison's outside inmate workers and the community work crews picked corn for several weeks. Numerous meals were provided to staff and inmates at the prison. Additionally, corn was provided to SCIs Houtzdale, Mahanoy and Smithfield. Corn also was provided to the Huntingdon Soup Kitchen, several retirement homes and to the Harvest Now program. Plans are underway to do the same next year.

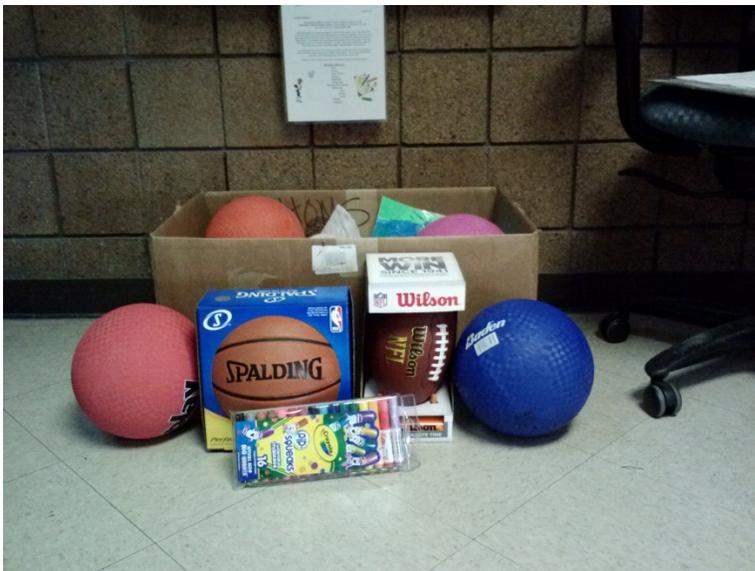


~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Riverside CCC Donations

In August, Riverside Community Corrections Center staff and residents donated two boxes of school supplies -- folders, paper, markers, crayons, colored pencils, pencils, backpacks, rulers and much more -- to the Calvary Methodist Church, where they were then distributed to six City of Pittsburgh schools for use by underprivileged children.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



Riverside CCC Donates to Youth Development Center

Over the summer, employees and residents of the Riverside Community Corrections Center collected and donated sports and art supplies to the Manchester Youth Development Center.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of September 15...

Pennsylvania's Criminal Justice Reforms Highlighted at National Meeting

(Sept. 18) – Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel joined state and local leaders from across the nation this week to participate in the Council of State Governments (CSG) Justice Center board of directors meeting.

The meeting focused on complex criminal justice policies with officials discussing the best ways to advance the latest evidence-based strategies on issues such as:

- lowering recidivism rates among people who were formerly incarcerated;
- improving law enforcement's response to people with mental disorders; and,
- reducing schools' dependence on suspension and expulsion in response to student misconduct.

"Through our efforts with the CSG Justice Center, and under the direction of Governor Tom Corbett, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections' inmate population has averaged a decline of 320 inmates per year since the passage of our Justice Reinvestment legislation in 2012 – a level not seen since the mid-1960's," Secretary Wetzel said.

Wetzel said the CSG Justice Center remains at the forefront of advancing data-driven, consensus-based approaches, which increase public safety and help to fund critical local law enforcement, county probation and parole, and victim services.

"We continue our work in this area, while sharing our experiences with other states, in an effort to help leading policymakers in their states across the U.S.," said Secretary Wetzel.

The past year has been the CSG Justice Center's busiest and most productive since its inception, working with state and local leaders on a variety of projects, including:

- working to pass justice reinvestment legislation in Idaho and Michigan while also launching new justice reinvestment projects in Alabama, Nebraska and Washington;
- collaborating with the White House to ignite a public dialogue between government officials and business leaders to address employment challenges for people with criminal records; and
- launching the organization's juvenile justice work with the release of a 50-state survey ("Measuring and Using Juvenile Recidivism Data to Inform Policy, Practice, and Resource Allocation") and a white paper (Core Principles for Reducing Recidivism and Improving Other Outcomes for Youth in the Juvenile Justice System).

In addition to reviewing the status of these respective projects, board members provided input to help shape the Justice Center's future priorities. In planning for the upcoming year, the group examined options for helping state and local leaders

undertake issues related to employment challenges for people with criminal records; reducing the prevalence of mental and substance use disorders in jails; and, improving data collection in states' juvenile justice systems.

Participants in the discussions included respected legislators, court and law enforcement officials and cabinet secretaries

"I greatly appreciate the unique perspective provided by Secretary Wetzel," said Michael D. Thompson, director of the CSG Justice Center. "We are fortunate to have the secretary as a part of the dedicated group of talented experts represented on our board."

ABOUT THE CSG JUSTICE CENTER

The Council of State Governments Justice Center is a national nonprofit organization that serves policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels from all branches of government. It provides practical, nonpartisan advice and evidence-based, consensus-driven strategies to increase public safety and strengthen communities. For more information about the Justice Center, visit www.csjjusticecenter.org.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

2014 Volunteers of the Year



Front Row (L to R): Luke Martin (HOU), James Pressley (MAH), Robyn Buseman (representing Jane Golden from GRA), Janet Wasserman (ALB), Ruthie Johnson (CAM), Shirl Comick (COA), Colette Gephart (OVA)

Middle Row: Rev. James E. White Sr. (ROC), Louis Albino (RET), Stephen Harnish (CHS), David Glessner (SMR), John R. Marley (LAU), David Postlewaite (FRS), Gary O'Bryan (SMI), John Keyes (WAM)

Back Row (L to R): Emory Giest (FRA), Arco Wasserman (ALB), Terry Cook (QUE), Richard Gallo (PNG), Rev. Nathaniel Lewis Turner (FYT), Patricia Costlow (HUN), Jeffrey Bond (BCC), Michael Sweeney (GRN), Mehmet Gurakar (PIT)

Not Pictured: John Huntt (CBS), Joyce Hazeltine (DAL), Jane Golden (GRA), Tim Perry (MER), Karen Barraco (MUN)

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Luther Named Superintendent of SCI Laurel Highlands

Secretary of Corrections John Wetzel today named Jamey Luther as superintendent at the State Correctional Institution at Laurel Highlands.

"Jamey's wide variety of correctional experience will enhance the operation of the facility. She meets challenges head on to institute change to benefit staff and inmates," said Secretary Wetzel.

As superintendent of SCI Laurel Highlands, Luther is responsible for more than 500 staff and approximately 1,500 inmates.

Luther began her corrections career in 1996 as a drug and alcohol treatment specialist 2 at the Quehanna Boot Camp, Clearfield County.

In 2000, she moved to the Johnstown Community Corrections Center as a corrections counselor 2. In the same year, she went to SCI Pine Grove as a drug and alcohol treatment supervisor. In 2006, Luther was promoted to deputy superintendent of centralized services.

The following year Luther transitioned to deputy superintendent of centralized services at SCI Cresson. With the closing of SCI Cresson, she became deputy superintendent of facilities management at SCI Laurel Highlands.

Luther is a graduate of Penn State University where she earned dual degrees: Bachelor of Science in Psychology with a minor in Business and Bachelor of Science in Recreation and Parks Management emphasis in therapeutic recreation.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Wingard Appointed Superintendent at SCI Somerset

(Sept. 16) – Secretary of Corrections John Wetzel today named Trevor Wingard as superintendent at the State Correctional Institution at Somerset. Wingard transitioned from SCI Laurel Highlands where he was superintendent. He replaced Gerald Rozum, who retired from state service.

"Trevor's leadership will propel SCI Somerset forward. He will bring his corrections knowledge and organizational skills to enhance the quality of the day-to-day operations of the facility," said Secretary Wetzel.

As superintendent of SCI Somerset, Wingard is responsible for more than 500 staff and approximately 2,300 inmates.



Wingard began his corrections career in 1994 at a corrections officer at SCI Somerset. In the following year, he became a counselor at Somerset.

In 1998, he moved to SCI Greensburg as a unit manager. He remained at the same facility where in 2008 he was named deputy superintendent for centralized services; he moved to deputy of facility management in 2010.

Wingard was acting warden of the Allegheny County Jail in Pittsburgh from June to December of 2011.

Upon his return to the DOC, Wingard was promoted to superintendent at SCI Laurel Highlands.

Wingard is graduate of Indiana University of Pennsylvania where he earned his Bachelor of Arts and Master of Arts in criminology.

Wingard also is a veteran, having served in the U.S. Air Force and Pennsylvania Air National Guard.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Bickell Named Deputy Secretary

(Sept. 16) -- Secretary of Corrections John Wetzel today named Tabb Bickell as the regional deputy secretary for the western region. He will oversee SCIs Benner Township, Cambridge Springs, Houtzdale, Huntingdon, Muncy, Pine Grove, Rockview and Smithfield and the Quehanna Boot Camp.

"Tabb has 25 years of experience with the Department of Corrections. He has progressed in his responsibilities and supervisory positions to become one of the department's top leaders and mentors," said Secretary Wetzel.

Bickell began his career in 1988 as a corrections officer at SCI Camp Hill, where he was promoted to sergeant in 1991 and to lieutenant in 1993. He was subsequently assigned to oversee the basic training program at the DOC's Elizabethtown Training Academy.

In 1996, Bickell was promoted to captain at SCI Coal Township and then major of the guard at SCI Mahanoy in 2007. Two years later, also at SCI Mahanoy, Bickell was named deputy superintendent for facility management. Bickell was named superintendent at SCI Huntingdon April 3, 2011.

Bickell has participated in and led a number of DOC training courses, completed institutional training audits, vulnerability assessments, security analyses and



security inspections. He also was instrumental in the opening of the special management unit at SCI Camp Hill.

Bickell, a native of Lebanon, also is a veteran, having served in the U.S. Coast Guard.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of September 8...

Corrections Hosts Multi-Agency K-9 Training



(Sept. 9) – Beginning today, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections officials are hosting a specialized, two-day training for 60 K-9 team members from up and down the east coast.

Co-sponsored by the North American Police Work Dog Association, the training focused on narcotics, cell phone and explosives detection, along with police work.

Held at the DOC's Training Academy, located in Elizabethtown, the 16-hour training involves trainers from Pennsylvania, Connecticut,

Massachusetts and New Hampshire.

"Our intent is to make this an annual training where we can give back to our local communities and state by providing specialized training that can improve overall public safety," said Capt. D. Scott VanGorder, who is in charge of the PA DOC's Drug Interdiction Unit.

Open to K-9 teams from the PA DOC and law enforcement teams from across Pennsylvania and corrections and law enforcement from other east coast states, the training includes search and detection of drugs, cell phones and explosives hidden in Training Academy buildings and vehicles that were towed to the academy specifically for use in the training.

"Working dogs need to train in as real of an environment as possible to help them hone their skills," VanGorder said. "The Training Academy provided an ideal location to conduct the training."

The PA DOC's Drug Interdiction Unit was begun in 1995. Since then the unit has grown to include 22 drug teams and three cell-phone detection teams. In addition to working to keep drugs and contraband out of Pennsylvania's state prisons, VanGorder has trained and assisted the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation and the New York City Department of Corrections with their policies, trainings and lesson plans where the use of K-9 teams in and around prison environments are concerned.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of September 1...

Accreditation Certificate Presented

Deputy Secretary Michael Klopotoski presents SCI Frackville staff with their accreditation certificate.



Pictured are: Deputy Supt. Kovalchik, Supt. Tritt, Deputy Secretary Klopotoski, Deputy Supt. Miller and Major Keller.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

FIDOS Program Graduates

SCI Coal Township's FIDOS first training class successfully completed this past week. Participants have already been adopted; two of which were adopted by Coal Township staff members' families (pictured below are Tito with Nick and Sadie with Aiden). Other FIDOS participants include Maggie, who was adopted by a local news station employee who plans on entering her in a therapy dog program, and, Shakespeare who was adopted by a retired person who plans on making him a snowbird by traveling to Florida during the winter (lucky dog!). New FIDOS participants have arrived to begin their six-week obedience training program. For information on adoption process you can contact Brierwood Boarding Kennel & Cattery, Pottsville, Pa.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of August 25...

2013 Susan M. Hunter Scholarship Recipients

(To learn more about this scholarship, visit <http://www.asca.net/projects/20>)

Christine Mrozek -- a three-year recipient of the Susan M. Hunter Scholarship Award, she is an honors program senior Biology Pre-Medicine major with minors in Spanish and Studio Art at Elizabethtown College. She aspires to attend medical school and specialize in surgery. She is the daughter of SCI Coal Township Plumbing Trade Instructor Ray Mrozek.

Also receiving a scholarship is Samantha Cook -- a sophomore at Misericordia University majoring in sport management -- who aspires to be the Boston Red Sox General Manager. She is the daughter of SCI Coal Township's Kevin Cook.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of August 11...

California Officers Complete PA DOC DUI Training

The training for the three CDCR officers -- Sgt. Jeremy Packard, Officer Brian Pyle and Officer Christopher Salopek -- ended this week. The officers were given a certificate of completion for attending the six-week, 240-hour technical trainers course sponsored by the PA DOC Drug Interdiction Unit.

During the six-week course, the CDCR officers trained three German short hair retrievers (Wyatt, Aldo and Pearl) which they will take back to CA with them. The

dogs will be assigned to a CA handler and used in their department drug interdiction efforts.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Donation to Local Cancer Center

Recently, officials at SCI Albion donated flowers from the prison's greenhouse to the Regional Cancer Center of Erie and vegetable plants to the local food bank. Inmates at the prison suggested the donations to the cancer center. As a result of the donation, a thank you letter from one of the patients was received:

"A few weeks ago I went to the cancer center for my regular treatment and I was really surprised by the beautiful flowers I saw. When I was told that they were for the patients to take home, I could hardly believe it.

Thank you so much for the project you did, you really raised many spirits a lot by what you did for the cancer patients in Erie. No treatment had even gone that fast for me and was as painless as on that day, because by looking at the flowers I did not feel the needle and medicine go into my body, and bringing the plant home made the usual pain and tiredness really less.

A friend who knows a lot about gardens admired it too and suggested that he should plant it in the yard where I could see it from my chair. He was right because the plant keeps growing and has already one new flower and three buds coming up.

Again, many thanks for your generosity.

-Elisabeth"

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Benner Township and Rockview Employees Participate in Blood Drive

Recently, employees from SCI Benner Township participated in a blood drive at the prison. Eleven productive units of blood were donated by employees, and 17 productive units of blood were donated by SCI Rockview employees. Each unit of blood will manufacture three lifesaving blood products. Approximately 84 lives will be saved thanks to the generosity of prison employees.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



Week of August 4...

Patriot Award

On July 2, 2014, SCI Benner Township's Lt. Kevin Grassmyer received a Patriot Award from the Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve. Lt. Grassmyer was recognized for contributing to National Security and Protecting Liberty and Freedom by Supporting Employee Participation in America's National Guard and Reserve Forces. Lt. Grassmyer was nominated by COT Saltsman for this award.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of July 28...

Center Residents Participate in Block Party



On July 19, 2014, Manchester (small neighborhood in the city of Pittsburgh) had its Community Block Party. Organized by Manchester Citizen Corporation and interns from the University of Pittsburgh, this event was created to bring together and rejuvenate the community. The event started at 12 p.m. and lasted until 9 p.m. Activities and entertainment included free food, live entertainment, a photo booth, a bounce house, pie eating contest, face painting, etc. This was the first time in many years

that the residents of Manchester were able to experience such a joyous and fun-filled day.

Although much of the credit is to be given to the organizers of this event, Riverside CCC played a vital role in the success of this event. Two Riverside CCC staff members and 12 Riverside CCC residents lent a helping hand throughout this rainy Saturday. Riverside CCC helped set-up for the event by building tents, moving tables and chairs, filling coolers, preparing food and any other task that needed to be completed. The residents of Riverside CCC were also the only ones grilling the food during the course of the day. Taking shifts, two Riverside CCC residents grilled hamburgers, hotdogs and corn. Finally, Riverside CCC staff and residents helped wrap up this successful day by helping clean up from the event.

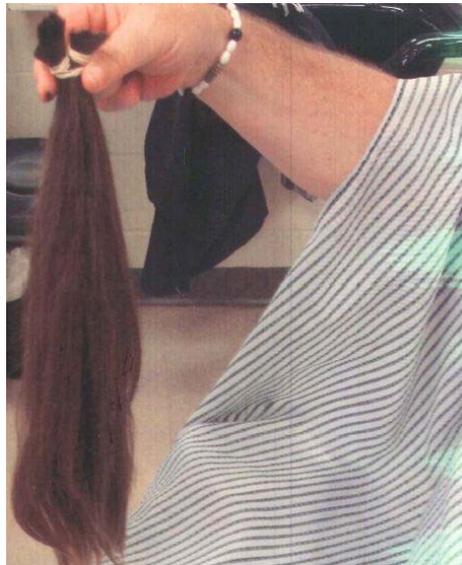
July 19, 2014, is to be noted as a day that Riverside CCC staff and residents showed the community that they are more than just a corrections center. They showed through hard work, dedication, compassion and through the kindness of their hearts that they care. They care about the community and the people in the community.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of July 21...

Locks of Love

Inmates at SCI Fayette recently participated in a Locks of Love event. Of significant note was a Native American inmate who donated his hair. He cut his pony tail in honor of his mother who died from cancer.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

OSHA Training Held

The Bureau of Correction Education recently sponsored an Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) training program through West Virginia University. Twenty vocational education teachers completed the program authorizing them to be OSHA certified trainers capable of delivering the OSHA program within our institutions. This will provide an opportunity for vocational instructors to deliver instruction which will enable inmates the opportunity to earn OSHA certification cards verifying their compliance with the Occupational Safety and Health ACT. Possession of this card aids in the employability effort of the inmate upon re-entry.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of July 14...

FIDOS Dogs Arrive at Coal Township



Dogs arrived recently at SCI Coal Township to participate in the FIDOS (Fostering & Improving Dogs Obedience & Survival) Program. Staff greeted the animals at the front entrance and escorted them to the visiting area where they were paired with previously-selected inmate dog handlers. Twelve inmates are employed as handlers and will receive weekly training sessions in order to provide training lessons to their companions for a four- to six-week obedience training program. Once the dogs complete the program they will be placed for adoption by the kennel providing the training -

Brierwood Boarding Kennel & Cattery, Pottsville, Pa.

Superintendent Vincent Mooney thanked those involved in the groundwork for FIDOS and said he was looking forward to a successful program. "This is an exciting day at Coal Township. I'm optimistic that this program will have a positive impact on the institution," he said. The superintendent quoted from a sign hanging in the

office, "Saving one dog will not change the world, but for that one dog the world will be forever changed."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

PA DOC Training CA DOC K-9 Unit

On Wednesday July 16, 2014, DOC Deputy Secretary Michael Klopotoski travelled to SCI Rockview to meet with members of the California Department of Corrections & Rehabilitation K-9 Unit. The three CDRC K-9 Unit members are participating in a six-week training program offered by Captain S. Vangorder and Lt. T. New of the Pa. DOC Drug Interdiction Unit.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Testimony before the United States House of Representatives on Crime, Terrorism, Homeland Security and Investigations on Prison Reform John Wetzel, Secretary, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections

I'm honored to have this opportunity to talk about the progress that Pennsylvania has made over the past several years in not simply reforming its corrections system, but beginning to transform its corrections system.

That transformation began with a specific goal and that goal is to reduce crime.

Every decision throughout our corrections system must keep one target in mind: that when someone leaves one of our prisons and is successfully reintegrated into the community, we've proactively impacted crime.

In order to accomplish this goal, it was essential that we established a baseline, which is the recidivism rate. However, instead of measuring recidivism by the rate at which offenders who are released return to custody

within three years, we added the component of re-arrest in consult with our goal to reduce crime. We utilized our baseline as the combination of those individuals who were both re-arrested and re-incarcerated within three years. This baseline was an important central step in, first, signaling to the system that we expect outcomes, and second, providing the foundation for the introduction of performance contracting in aspects of our operation. Additionally, through the use of GIS technology, we mapped exactly where offenders were returning, looking both at individuals and clusters of returnees. From there, we could work toward aligning our resources where they were needed.

The next finite step was to identify data in the form of research to guide every decision throughout the process. The first aspect we focused on was ensuring that we added scientific assessment, or objective risk assessment, throughout the system. Through our justice reinvestment initiative, we funded the development of a risk-based sentencing tool by the Pennsylvania Commission on Sentencing to give judges data in which to make those critical placement decisions. An assessment review of offenders was done at the front door, upon entering our system, where we found a significant amount of discretion drifting away from the research. We re-initiated risk/need responsibility principle assessments and ensured they were completed with fidelity. At the back end of our system, the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole (PBPP) assesses individuals prior to release in an effort to determine risk levels upon reentry into the community. Finally, the community corrections centers are required to assess individuals upon arrival. This has culminated into the ability to more thoroughly assess individuals throughout their journey within the Pennsylvania criminal justice system.

Historically, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) has offered a number of robust evidence-based programs available for the inmate population. However, even the most vigorous system requires objective reviews to make sure the needs of the offender are being met. Therefore, the assessment process of varying programs continues with an eye toward implementation in a manner that allows for random assignment whenever possible to provide authoritative research and the most accurate predictability of the research or the results of the research. Additionally, we really stepped out of our "kingdom," if you will, and enlisted the aid of the Department of Labor and Industry to review our vocational offerings to better ensure that an ex-offender will acquire and maintain a job based upon one of the 90 to 100 skillsets we offer to the general population.

In 2009, we commissioned research with the University of Cincinnati which found that 95 percent of the programs offered by the halfway houses resulted in offenders leaving the centers with a higher recidivism rate than offenders going directly to the street. It was clear that we had some work to do in this area. Prior to evaluating the halfway houses, we reviewed the DOC's responses, specifically what the department was doing to prepare offenders to go into either the community or a halfway house, and identify

things that were barriers to individuals being successful. We then developed an interactive resource map, to be given to offender leaving via "cloud technology," jump drive and ultimately a smart phone app, aiding them in finding resources that will aid their re-entry.

One of the more simple, yet impactful, implementations is to ensure the issuance of Department of Transportation identification cards prior to release. Prior to our administration, 20,000 individuals were released with 380 IDs; last year, we released more than 9,000 with IDs. It was as simple as developing a memorandum of understanding with the Department of Transportation and then putting an emphasis on it. The release of offenders with their IDs enables them to connect with services that are available to them more readily, thereby removing an imposing barrier.

We then looked at individuals who received positive paroling actions yet weren't released from jail. It was determined that the vast majority of those offenders did not have an approved home plan and, consequently, left them sitting in a jail cell. We tackled this problem in a couple of ways. First, we developed a housing voucher program that provides a security deposit and six months' rent for individuals who were low- to low-medium risk that lacked a home plan. When doing a cost benefit analysis on this approach, we found that at the time we were spending, on average, \$70 a day for a halfway house with 90 days as the average length of stay. In other words, we were spending about \$3,600 to put someone in a halfway house.

For low- and low-medium risk offenders in particular, that group had bad outcomes because they're lower risk. Keep in mind the risk/needs principle - low risk offenders do not need the services of a halfway house - as a matter of fact, it makes them worse. By carving this group out, we create a capacity in our halfway houses, and we also made a better investment that puts them a step close to housing permanence.

The other benefit to this approach was instead of taking our entire community corrections budget and spending it for a residential halfway house, we used a portion of this money to pay local landlords. Specifically, we put a bid out for regional housing with the intention of establishing relationships with local landlords, and by doing so, we're also investing in the infrastructure in the community.

We also did a study in 2009 on technical parole violators, individuals who came back without a new charge, but had violated some term or condition of release. We conducted focus groups with those who came back and those who didn't. The one significant difference between the group who came back and the group who didn't, was that the group who didn't return to prison had someone identified as a mentor. We then, first of all, through the justice reinvestment legislation, specifically authorized the department to contract with non-profits and faith-based community organizations, and then worked with those groups to provide mentors.

The mentoring program is structured in such a way that mentors can come into the prison two months before an individual is released and follow them for four months after they're released to provide that positive community connection. Again, this is not to supplant halfway houses or other re-entry initiatives, but to augment these services so that it's possible for an individual to be released, go to a halfway house, and have a mentor to work them through that difficult transition period.

Next, we looked at our halfway house system. And again, first we looked internally. What we found was that we were putting offenders in halfway houses that were not in their home community. As a matter of fact, in some cases, we were putting them in houses on the other side of the state. In the context of community corrections, the community piece is with a big "C." It's important that we re-engage positive community supports that are already present for offenders, or develop positive community supports for offenders going back, and it's more likely to happen if they return to their communities. As a department, we made that change internally.

The second thing we did was establish minimum standards, again driven by the data and research, things like making sure individuals were assessed to ensure that there was cognitive behavioral therapy interventions available for them in the halfway house. We established minimum standards to say every halfway house in our system will have this program.

That being said, the crown jewel of our approach was to utilize the recidivism study that we did as a baseline early on in our administration where we rebid all of the community corrections contracts with an embedded performance measure. Specifically, in every halfway house we look at the actual risk makeup of the offenders and, based on the number of participants, we identified each center as a low, medium, or high risk. This provides a baseline recidivism rate for low, medium and high centers.

We have a performance measure in the contract that's structured in a way that if the offender leaves between one standard deviation above or below the mean, or the average recidivism based on the risk of that center, the provider is in good standing with the department. If the offender leaves the center with a lower recidivism rate than the makeup of that facility - they get a 1 percent bonus. If the recidivism rate of an offender is increased when they leave the center, more than one standard deviation away from the mean, the halfway house gets one warning period and, if it happens a second time, the community corrections center loses the contract.

Again, through this study we were able to develop with some certainty a measurable six-month recidivism rate so we could get an important component through quick feedback to the centers. In the first marking period, we have had very good news. Overall, offenders going back to the halfway houses have seen a 2 percent reduction in their recidivism rate. This equates to about 58 less crimes for a quarter of a year.

Beyond that, we have had 10 centers that earned the bonus by reducing recidivism rate for offenders going through their system beyond one standard deviation from the mean. We only had one center in the warning period that saw an increase in the recidivism rate. The one thing that's very clear, and again, it's early on, is that our partners are now paying attention to recidivism and expecting outcomes.

Finally, we did a review of what leads people being violated back to the DOC. When violated on technical violations, they were spending between nine and 14 months in a state prison.

In conducting focus groups and talking to parole officers, the constant and continuous feedback received was a lack of a good continuum of services for offender placement.

In other words, if an offender started to use drugs, parole officers really didn't have the ability to get them into a rehabilitation program on a regular basis. We looked at what parole officers needed and conducted a non-residential outpatient group that included drug and alcohol treatment as well as cognitive behavioral therapy, mental health treatment, sex offender treatment and day reporting centers - these are all non-residential.

What we're suggesting is lower cost interventions that parole officers can use in lieu of bringing an offender back to a state prison. Also, if an offender needs help with treatment in the community on their way out of incarceration, we have the ability to do it.

In summation, we first established a goal of crime reduction. We were determined to use our corrections system to do exactly what we say we do, which is to correct people.

Then we established a baseline with good, honest research on recidivism.

We then inserted science by inserting objective risk assessment throughout our system. And again, we continue to use research to affirm, knowing that we're delivering our programs with fidelity.

Finally, we specifically identified barriers to success for offenders on the back end of the system and restructured our system to be consistent with the goal of a successful re-entry.

Again, thank you for this opportunity to talk about the work we've done in Pennsylvania and I hope that the Federal Bureau of Prisons can utilize some of this approach to better their system and better the outcomes for their offenders.

Thank you.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of July 7...

Exciting Partnership

The Wernersville CCC PV Center has recently undertaken an exciting community service partnership with Habitat for Humanity of Berks County. As the offenders of the Parole Violator Center are not permitted to leave the center to go into the community to perform community service, Center Director Anne McGrath and Facility Director Kerry Kerschner reached out to Habitat to find a way to include these offenders in our ongoing partnership with their organization. We were able to come up with the idea of personalizing ceramic tiles with designs drawn and painted by the offenders which will then be offered for sale in Habitat's ReStore, which helps to fund their project builds with monies from the sale of donated items. Habitat supplied the materials, Wernersville PV offenders supply the talent and ideas. It is a fantastic way for our offenders to perform community service without leaving the building and in turn allows us to strengthen our partnership with this prestigious organization.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

NCIA Webinar – Providing Great Customer Service – Features PCI Customer Service Supervisor Linda Rutz



Pennsylvania Correctional Industries Customer Service Supervisor, Linda Rutz, was tapped to speak to participants in the National Correctional Industries Association webinar, "Providing Great Customer Service - A "Must-Have" for Today's Correctional Industries" on Wednesday, June 25, 2014, to discuss best practices for providing great customer service and making it part of organizational culture.

Linda Rutz is the Customer Service Supervisor for Pennsylvania Correctional Industries (PCI) and has managed the customer service department for PCI since 2008. Prior to PCI, she worked for 21 years in the customer service section of the Book-of-the-Month Club and in the hospitality industry.

Rutz spoke during the 2 hour webinar to more than 125 participants from Correctional Industries programs around the US about her definition of great customer service, how to quantify and measure the performance of a customer service department and the part communication plays in delivering outstanding customer service.

Accompanying Rutz on the panel was Ray Meek, Chief of Marketing for the California Prison Industry Authority (CALPIA), Jose Quiaoit, Sales Manager for CALPIA and Pam Williams, CALPIA's Customer Service Manager. Together the panel brought more than 90 years of customer service experience to the discussion.

Linda Rutz has been named PCI Employee of the Quarter and is a key member of the PCI SAP development team. Linda believes in giving away a smile every day and has built her PCI Customer Service section into a mirror of her own drive for outstanding product knowledge, enthusiasm for the business and the mission of helping people and care about what she does and the impact she makes on everyone she works with every day.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Camp Cadet



On July 8, members of SCI Fayette's Corrections Emergency Response Team (CERT) participated in "Camp Cadet" at the University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg campus. The Westmoreland County Camp Cadet Association, in conjunction with the Pennsylvania State Police, strives to help youth develop a better understanding of the criminal justice system and the role of law enforcement professionals. Through the Camp Cadet program, children (ages 12 to 15) from Westmoreland County form a positive relationship with members of the Pennsylvania State Police and civilian

Board Members who serve as counselors. The "cadets" received instruction in CERT procedures, ran an obstacle course wearing CERT gear, and deployed various weapons systems used by DOC CERT.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

K-9 Training Facility



This picture shows the latest work in the transformation of a barn located at SCI Rockview into a K-9 training facility.

All of the work has been completed by inmate labor under the supervision of the SCI Rockview Armed Mounted Patrol as well as maintenance staff. The training facility is equipped with lockers, behavior shaping and odor imprinting walls and realistic training cells.

The behavior shaping walls have a steel tamper proof box in the front to conceal odor. There is also an opening below the box where the dogs reward can be delivered from a trainer that is positioned behind the wall. When the dog detects the trained odor and gives the desired response it receives its

reward. The wall teaches the dog to hunt to the source of the desired odor and that it must sit and stare or dig at the source of the odor to receive its pay.

The training resource located at SCI Rockview is an invaluable asset used by the DIU in the beginning stages of the detector dog training.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Retreat Announces Employee of the Quarter



SCI Coal Township congratulates Bryan Else, Corrections Officer 2, on his nomination and selection as Employee of the Quarter.

Sergeant Else began his employment as a CO1 at SCICT in November 1993 and promoted to Sergeant in December 2001. Sergeant Else was nominated by a coworker for his dedication to SCI Coal Township; he's a team player who can be counted on, especially in the running of two special housing units (TC & SNU). Sergeant Else was applauded for performing his job professionally and efficiently and "going beyond what he needs to do."

Please congratulate Sergeant Else on his selection as Employee of the Quarter.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

GED Graduation

SCI Muncy is pleased to announce that it has had its first inmate student pass the new 2014 Series GED. In January 2014, PA DOC Education Departments, along with GED test centers across the state, began to implement the new 2014 GED Series test. The biggest obstacle to the DOC was that the test is now computerized as opposed to the traditional paper/pencil version that inmate students have taken for the past several years. In addition, the new test is considerably harder than the previously administered test because it not only measures the students' knowledge but it also assesses their reasoning/application abilities and their ability to utilize technology. The 2014 GED Series test was developed to ensure that passers of the test were workplace and college ready. SCI Muncy, as well as all institutions, continues to work hard to adapt their curriculum to better prepare their students for success both at SCI Muncy and upon release.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The Office of Victim Advocate

The Office of the Victim Advocate (OVA) has over 30,000 crime victims registered with our office. Many victims are confused, overwhelmed and have little understanding of our State Correctional System. OVA provides important post-sentencing information to crime victims. This information can be anything from giving the victim the inmate's location, explaining their sentence to include

minimum and maximum sentence dates, answer questions about what they can and cannot do in prison and explain what programs they are scheduled to take/have taken. OVA can assist victims who are being contacted/harassed by their inmate while in state prison. Victims registered with OVA are notified when the inmate is being considered for Boot Camp and State Intermediate Punishment (SIP) and are given the opportunity to provide input into those processes. OVA has a sister office in the Board of Probation and Parole that notifies victims of the inmate's pending parole review/parole status and gives them the opportunity to provide input into the parole process.

OVA has created several programs that work in collaboration with all State Correctional Institutions.

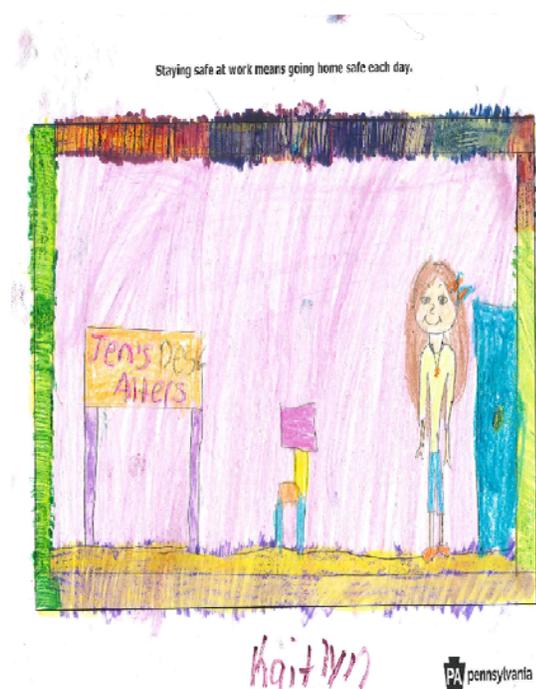
The Inmate Apology Bank is a program where inmates can send an apology letter to their victim/victims through OVA. By sending the letter directly to OVA, the inmates are not violating policy which prohibits them from contacting their victim. This is an opt-in program for crime victims and apology letters will only be provided to victims who wish to receive them.

The Victim Offender Dialogue Program (VOD) is a victim initiated program where the victim requests to meet face to face with the inmate in their case. However the inmate also has the choice to participate or not. Trained volunteer facilitators meet with both the victim and the inmate and then eventually they bring the victim and inmate together for a face to face dialogue.

The Impact of Crime Class is an interactive, education class held in state prisons. This class allows inmates to learn about the physical, emotional and financial impacts of their crimes and how it affects crime victims and the community while giving victims/survivors an arena to share their story.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Poster Contest



In recognition of National Safety Workplace Awareness month and in cooperation with the Office of Administration, children and grandchildren of SCI Benner Township employees were invited to create a poster representing what it means for their family member to work safe. The theme of the poster was "Staying safe at work means going home safe each day." This was a great opportunity for the children to express their artistic talents and reinforce the facility's continued commitment to safety in the workplace.

All submitted artwork was laminated, framed, and is permanently displayed in the staff corridor. Each child who participated in

the project was given a certificate that was provided by the Office of Administration and a \$25 gift card that was donated by the SCI Benner Township Empowerment Committee.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Patriot Award

Lieutenant Colonel William Burkhard recently presented Rockview Supervisors Captain Scott Dale and Corrections Food Service Manager Albert Winkleman with the Patriot Award in recognition of their support of military reservists. Superintendent Steven Glunt accepted the same award on behalf of Rockview management.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

The Many Faces of Mr. David Pitkins

By Christy Richers-Bejmovicz

Who is this David Pitkins? You can't miss him..... He is a statuesque man with a shuffled gait and a hearty laugh. He wears a broad smile, often dons a University of Pittsburgh ball cap, is quick to extend a handshake, and is a captivating storyteller. His many quotes, references to history and literature, and talks about life in general all have a purpose and a moral - like chicken soup for the soul.

Mr. Pitkins' career and life have been about SERVICE – Service to staff, inmates, and the general public. With 41 years in corrections, he is considered a renowned leader and subject matter expert in his field. He began his career as an advisor / counselor at Rustburg Camp in southern Virginia. He also served as an administrative chaplain at Lycoming County Prison prior to graduating from college in Washington D.C. While he was attending college he also worked as a chaplain at Lorton Correctional Facility. Mr. Pitkins' career path with the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections began in 1986 as an Administrative Chaplain at SCI

Cresson. At SCI Cresson he also served as both Deputy of Treatment and Deputy of Centralized Services. An educator at heart, he taught classes at both SCI Smithfield and SCI Huntingdon during that timeframe. Mr. Pitkins' journey led to his service at SCI Laurel Highlands and SCI Pine Grove. Following his service at SCI Pine Grove he returned to SCI Laurel Highlands and served as both Deputies for Centralized Services and Deputy for Facilities Management. A leader with a sound understanding for facility operations, Mr. Pitkins joined the transition team at SCI Somerset as the Deputy for Facilities Management for the opening of that facility. A man with vision, commitment, and a sound understanding for the mission, Mr. Pitkins returned to SCI Laurel Highlands in 2009 as Superintendent. He served in that capacity until he was named Regional Deputy Secretary for the Western Region in 2012. He retired in 2013, but his stint back to civilian life was short-timed. He was asked to return as an annuitant and would soon be called upon to assist at SCI Benner Township during a period of transitional leadership.

Performance with results, ensuring the needs of the inmates are met, consistency, and empowerment – these were the driving factors in his shared vision at SCI Benner Township. His strolls around the facility perimeter while smoking on a cigar were more than just a daily walk – they were a time for reflection.

Reflection on what has been accomplished and the work left to do. That giant white board in his conference room was filled with projects with clear deadlines. The sign attached to the board summed it all up in three simple words, "Do Not Erase." That sign contained words to some, was merely a piece of paper to others, but to Mr. Pitkins, it resonated with his vision. Fast forward 6 months - his story and the work that has been accomplished under his leadership is reflected in the larger picture, ONE VISION – ONE MISSION!

"Remind me again, I am old you know." These were the words that he has uttered to many during his time at SCI Benner Township. In contrast, anyone that has spent time with David Pitkins knows that he is a man with a keen and brilliant mind, he forgets very little. He is a philosopher, teacher, mentor, and life-long learner. An ordained minister with a background in education, he holds a master's degree in religious education and a doctorate degree in ministry of ancient Greek manuscripts.

In the midst of it all, don't forget to make a life! In his teachings, he has shared many lessons about how "corrections can consume us" if we fail to find our balance – a career balanced with a personal life that includes spirituality, quality time spent with family and friends, compassion, and making time to explore our human interests. He practices what he preaches. He is a husband, father of two, and a leader in his church and his community. He has a passion for reconstruction of early model vehicles and loves motorcycles. A man that has traveled the world, he often finds solace around the campfire at his campsite. An avid sports fan, he has a fond admiration for every sports team from Pittsburgh. When asked, "Where will you go on vacation when you finally retire?" He was quick to respond, "After this brutal winter, I want to go down south, maybe Key West, on the beach, like "Moon Doggie."

Mr. Pitkins will continue his relationship with the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections as he will continue to serve on the Statewide Leadership Committee. He is also involved in missionary work. He has done humanitarian work with projects such as Truth Connect (www.truthconnect.org) and Hold the Children (www.holdthechildren.org). His missionary work has carried him to Haiti, Mexico, and Providence Island. He is planning a future mission to Kenya in October 2014.

The life of David Pitkins reads like a novel. A diverse man, he holds respect for the same. The many faces of David Pitkins have been seen throughout his amazing journey, in both his professional and personal life. His work will go on long after his time at SCI Benner Township ends. One man - touching the human spirit of others; one life, one soul, one person, one "teaching moment", one day at a time!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of June 23...

Corrections Department and Wexford Agree to Amend Medical Services Contract Expiration Date

(June 27) – Corrections Secretary John Wetzel announced today that the Department of Corrections and Wexford Health Sources, Inc. have mutually agreed to amend the expiration date of their Medical Services Contract. Wexford is the company that provides health care services to state prison inmates. The Medical Services Contract will now expire on or before August 31, 2014.

The DOC will begin the process of identifying a successor medical vendor and will complete the transition of services to the new vendor by the current contract's expiration date. DOC and Wexford are committed to ensuring that the medical needs of inmates are provided in a timely manner and to maintain an adequate standard of care.

Wexford agreed to continue to provide services during the transition period and will work with the selected vendor to ensure continuity of care to the inmate population. At the end of the transition period the selected.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Goose Dog Program New at SCI Albion



On April 25, SCI Albion was pleased with the arrival of Steele, a blue Heeler cattle dog that had completed his training at SCI Graterford's New Leash on Life program. Steele's primary function at SCI Albion will be to reduce the geese population by being introduced to varying locations of the institution and by chasing the geese population when necessary. The prison has two trained handlers currently who are in the process of training three more inmates for

the dog handler position. The inmates directly involved in the program learn basic dog training skills, such as good canine obedience and herding techniques, which will aid them if they chose to pursue this as a career choice upon release from jail. It has been an exciting opportunity for them and has generated a lot of interest in the inmate population. Steele has been a welcomed addition to the unit and the institution as a whole.

The prison anticipates the arrival of a second goose dog in late August. Her name is Dixie, and she is Shetland/Corgi mix.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Bishop Visits Mercer

The Most Rev. Lawrence T. Persico, JCL, Bishop of the Erie Diocese, performed mass in the chapel at SCI Mercer on June 25, 2014. This was the Bishop's first visit to SCI Mercer since his appointment in 2012 and, in addition, was also the first visit by a Bishop in the last 15 years. Bishop Persico is hopeful to be back to the institution soon. More than 50 inmates attended the service and all were greatly blessed by the Bishop and the message he brought with him. Deacon Ralph DeCecco assisted with the mass as well as several inmates altar servers.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Dogs in Pennsylvania's State Prisons

The one absolutely unselfish friend that man can have in this selfish world...the one that never proves ungrateful or treacherous, is his dog... He will kiss the hand that has no food to offer; he will lick the wounds and sores that come in encounter with the roughness of the world... ~ George G Vest

Dog training has been a unique part of Pennsylvania's state prison system for the past 12 years. Whether trained by inmates or employees, all these dogs have left our prisons better prepared to be companions or co-workers.

In the process, the dogs have provided an invaluable training program for Pennsylvania's prison inmates, helping in their rehabilitation process as well. The success of these canine graduates gives the inmates a sense of pride, accomplishment and an opportunity to give something positive back to society.

The dog programs in Pennsylvania's prisons are as diverse as our state. Here, inmates rehabilitate and teach socialization skills to unwanted shelter dogs or nurture puppies to become service dogs for people with physical or emotional needs. Dogs are trained to work in the prisons, to sniff out drugs, alcohol or electronics, or helping to protect prison property by herding geese.

Each program is as unique as the people – and dogs – who are dedicated to its success.

Canine Partners for Life (www.k94life.org)

Since 2002, the Department of Corrections has been working with Canine Partners for Life (CPL), a non-profit organization based in Chester County, using inmates to nurture and train puppies during their first year of life.

The inmates lay the groundwork preparing the puppies for further, advanced training by CPL, where the dogs learn specialized skills for individuals with physical and cognitive disabilities offering greater independence and improved quality of life.

Recipients come from all walks of life and have a variety of disabilities including muscular dystrophy, multiple sclerosis, cerebral palsy, spinal cord injuries, seizure disorders, emotional needs and more.

Participating inmates also benefit from the training program, as they develop a sense of responsibility, discipline and social awareness.

Pennsylvania's first state prison to begin this program was SCI Cambridge Springs. Now, four additional prisons have similar programs, including SCIs Albion, Greene, Muncy and Smithfield.

Since the program began 12 years ago, more than 100 dogs have been trained by Pennsylvania DOC inmates. Currently, there are 20 dogs enrolled in the training program throughout the state prison system, with 44 inmates serving as primary, secondary and alternate trainers.

State prisons do not assume any direct costs associated with the program and participation is voluntary. The Inmate General Welfare Fund pays for collars and leashes, veterinary care is donated by local animal hospitals, and CPL provides grants for food expenses and excess medical bills.

SCI Albion

SCI Albion currently has six puppies in the program, Ranger, Orion, Nigel, Fuji, Boots, and Harley. With the exception of Fuji, a black standard poodle, all the dogs are yellow Labrador Retrievers. Ranger is scheduled to graduate from the program in July.

Currently, eight staff members and 10 inmate handlers are involved with the program. The inmates are all long-term offenders. The prison is also developing a pool of volunteers that will be able to provide the pups more exposure and socialization to the community.

Our most recent acquisition at SCI Albion is Steele, a 3-year-old Australian Cattle Dog mix breed. SCI Albion adopted Steele from New Leash on Life USA to help with the goose problem at the institution. Steele and his inmate handler were trained at SCI Graterford and recently returned to SCI Albion. The goose dog program has been successful at SCI Graterford and we are anxious to put Steele to work.

SCI Cambridge Springs

Five puppies, Michael, Jet, Wesley, Junius and Tana, along with 14 inmates are currently participating in the program at SCI Cambridge Springs.

Since the program began in 2002, a total of 68 inmates have participated in the program with 65 puppies.

SCI Greene

Late last month, SCI Greene received its first five yellow Labrador Retriever puppies to begin its Canine Partners for Life dog program.

Currently 11 inmates have been selected to participate as primary, secondary and alternate handlers.

SCI Muncy

This year marked the 10th anniversary for the Canine Partners for Life dog program at Muncy.

Last May, staffers and some of the dogs visited a nearby school to talk to the children about how they train the puppies and how people should act around service dogs when they are on duty.

First Lady Susan Corbett also visited with the dogs and staffers last September after speaking at SCI Muncy's graduation ceremonies.

SCI Smithfield

Last year, SCI Smithfield had five dogs begin the Canine Partners for Life program, including: Jasper, Homer, Dyson, Hoover and Kody. Jasper recently graduated from the prison program to continue onto the next phase of his training and was replaced by 8-week-old Tamu.

In addition to the inmates, a handful of very dedicated staff members volunteer to help with the program. They transport the dogs to the vet, the groomer and to neighborhood parks for some running time. On weekends, some staffers take the dogs home with them for public visits.

This past year, SCI Smithfield's dogs visited the Hollidaysburg Veterans Home and the Shirley Home for the Aged for Christmas programs for the residents as part of the Child of Dreams project.

P.A.W.S. – Pups Assisting Wounded Soldiers

SCI Forest

Inmates work with dogs from the Elk County Humane Shelter to earn the American Kennel Club's Canine Good Citizen Award with goal of having their successfully-trained dogs available for adoption through the Wags4Warriors Program.

Since the program began in 2012, six dogs have been provided to veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injuries after an eight-week training period within the prison.

Last spring, Wags4Warriors founders Jen and Frank DeLorenzo said the quality of the dog training at SCI Forest was some of the best they had seen.

TAILS – Train-Assist-Inspire-Loyal-Service

SCI Pine Grove

Inmates at SCI Pine Grove partnered with Lancaster-based non-profit United Disabilities Services this month to begin a service dog training program.

Starting with four dogs, the inmates will have 18 months to give the dogs basic training. UDS is committed to helping people with disabilities, including veterans and the aging, to lead more independent and fulfilled lives.

HOPE Dog Program (www.hopedog.org)

SCI Camp Hill

The Hounds of Prison Education (HOPE) program was started at SCI Camp Hill in 2005 through a cooperative relationship between the prison and HOPE organizer Kelly McGinley. It is sponsored by the Central Pennsylvania Animal Alliance.

The dogs, which come from shelters and are usually victims of abuse, are enrolled in the program where inmates work with the dogs teaching socialization and obedience skills, as well as helping them learn to trust humans again.

The inmates are responsible for feeding and caring for the dogs, housing them in their cells, for a period of six to 12 weeks. On a weekly basis, a professional trainer visits the prison and teaches inmates various skills to retrain the dogs in an effort to change any negative behavior issues or concerns unique to their dog.

Nearly 100 dogs have been adopted out since the program began nine years ago, when the program started with five inmates. Today, 12 inmates participate in the program.

There are no costs to the prison for the program. Everything, including food and veterinarian care, is provided by the HOPE program.

FIDOS – Fostering & Improving Dog Obedience and Survival

SCI Coal Township

Starting in June, inmates at SCI Coal Township hope to begin the canine obedience training program known as FIDOS, Fostering & Improving Dogs Obedience & Survival.

Dogs and puppies will be selected from high kill animal shelters and, after they are spayed or neutered and receive all shots and medication, will begin a four-to-six week training program with the inmates.

The goal is to help the dogs more adoptable through Brierwood Boarding Kennels and Cattery in Pottsville. The program will also provide additional inmate work assignments, teach inmates new job skills and assist them with rehabilitation.

New Leash on Life USA

SCI Graterford

This 12-week training program was begun at SCI Graterford in early 2013, designed to engage inmates in training abandoned and homeless dogs in basic obedience and socialization skills.

In addition to increasing the dogs' chances for adoption, the inmates learn to train and care for the dogs while building skills that improve their future employability for grooming and training once they are released from prison.

Some of the dogs in the program have been put to work herding and controlling the wild geese that flock on the grounds of Graterford. Other dogs have been found to have the special personality and skills to become companion dogs for veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq who may have post-traumatic stress disorder.

All the dogs in the program to date have found new homes, but the prison decided to keep two of the graduates, herding dogs, to continue the work at Graterford.

C.A.R.E – Corrections Adoptive Rescue Endeavor

SCI Mercer

Partnering with a local animal shelter since 2011, inmates at SCI Mercer learn new job skills by socializing unwanted dogs with Canine Adoptive Rescue Endeavor (CARE).

Five dogs rotate through the training program about every eight weeks. Each dog has two specially selected inmates, one primary and

one alternate handler. Once a week, a professional dog trainer comes into the prison to work with the inmates and their dogs.

Housed in their handlers' cells, the dogs are taught basic behavioral and obedience skills to make them adoptable. The inmates, in turn, also learn practical and life skills, as well as becoming certified dog handlers. The cost is funded primarily by the shelter, donations and the prison's Inmate General Welfare Fund. About 50 dogs have graduated from the program in the past two years.

SCI Mercer also had four of its dogs accepted into the Wags 4 Warriors program last September. All four dogs will be placed with a veteran with PTSD or a traumatic brain injury.

DOC's Drug Interdiction Unit

Quehanna Boot Camp

In September 2000, the DOC opened a K-9 academy at the Quehanna Boot Camp, with a purpose of producing well-trained, professional K-9 handlers. At the Clearfield County academy, K-9 handlers and dogs complete an 11-week narcotics detection course that is conducted by highly-trained, in-house trainers.

The unit was established in support of the department's goal to operate and provide drug-free facilities. Through policy implementation, intensified searches, increased training, technological advancements and facility support, the unit has enhanced the department's ability to decrease the flow of illegal drugs and contraband inside our facilities.

The K-9 units have been designed to be self-sufficient so they can be deployed to any state prison and preserve the element of surprise in their drug searches.

The DOC's K-9 Drug Interdiction Unit began in 1996 with four dogs and a \$330,700 grant from the Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency. Maryland, which has been using drug detecting K-9s in a prison setting since the early 1980s, provided free training for the dogs and their handlers.

The handlers and their K-9 partners are responsible for providing drug and cell phone detection searches for all state correctional facilities and the Bureau of Community Corrections. In addition, the unit often provides services to county and federal correctional facilities, schools and external law enforcement agencies, as well as providing educational and community presentations.

In 2006, the program began using K-9s to search visitors and visitors' vehicles for illegal drugs. The dogs are trained to sniff the air around visitors to detect illegal drugs.

In 2008, the department began training and using a dog to detect cell phone batteries and components. A second cell phone dog was added in 2009 and the third team was put into action in 2010.

Since its inception, the Drug Interdiction Unit has grown from eight drug detection K-9 handlers to a total of 22 drug detection K-9 handlers and three cell phone detection dog handlers.

During the past four years, from 2009 to 2013, the Drug Interdiction Unit searched about 18,743 cells, 11,116 common areas and 14,838 vehicles. About one-third of the drugs, including marijuana and prescription medication, were found on visitors prior to entering the prison.

SCI Rockview

Inmates and employees built a special "K-9 Training Barn," at SCI Rockview to enhance the training efforts and proficiency of the Drug Interdiction Unit detection canines. Costs were kept at a minimum by using lumber from Rockview's sawmill and other surplus materials.

The barn features a special training wall devised to build scent association and teach the dogs to give a trained response to odors. Additional areas of mock cells and rows of lockers are being added to expand the training facility.

Dog Houses

SCI Waymart

Inmates at SCI Waymart are helping shelter dogs in a different way – by giving them shelter.

Last year, seven doghouses, assembled from scrap materials, were donated to the True Friends Animal Shelter. The construction project was part of a certification course designed to help them find work after re-entering society.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of June 16...

Day of Responsibility

(June 18) - SCI Graterford held a "Day of Responsibility" - a daylong seminar to raise awareness among inmates and community members of the personal value in assuming accountability for one's actions and living responsible lives. The event challenged the inmates and outside guests to consider the impact of crime on victims, families and the community while at the same time inspiring them to assume responsibility in their everyday lives.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of June 9...

Success of Governor Corbett's Justice Reinvestment Initiative Receives National Recognition

Washington, D.C. - (June 12, 2014) - Pennsylvania Governor Tom Corbett today, along with West Virginia Governor Earl Ray Tomblin, members of the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives, was recognized by the National Reentry Resource Center for his leadership in the area of criminal justice reform.

"I am honored to be here today to share the effective work that our criminal justice officials have done and continue to do," Corbett said.

Also at today's event, the National Reentry Resource Center released results of a new report highlighting new data from a large cross-section of states showing dramatic reduction in recidivism rates. Pennsylvania, along with seven other states was highlighted in this report for reduction in the state's recidivism rate.

When Corbett took office in 2011, all state agencies were placed on a tight budget to reduce the \$4.2 billion deficit Pennsylvania faced.

"I had every agency review their operations and spending in an effort to operate more efficiently and effectively without jeopardizing customer expectation," Corbett said. "Our criminal justice system was no exception."

When Corbett took office, his administration inherited a corrections system that was growing by 1,500 inmates a year, roughly the size of one Pennsylvania prison.

Corbett called on all members of the state's criminal justice system – from legislators and district attorneys to corrections and parole experts to sentencing judges – to form a bi-partisan group to review the system and determine how it could be improved.

Guided by the Council of State Governments, Pennsylvania embarked upon a six-month process that involved meetings, offender and crime victim input, data evaluation and eventually legislation that created the Justice Reinvestment Initiative (JRI).

Justice reinvestment is a data-driven approach that ensures policymaking is based on a comprehensive analysis of criminal justice data and the latest research about what works to reduce crime.

"As a result of the many JRI initiatives, we are seeing a reduction in inmate recidivism and we are seeing a slowing in the growth rate of our inmate population," said Corbett. "These reforms are saving taxpayers' money, holding offenders accountable, making our communities safer and building a stronger Pennsylvania."

Today, Pennsylvania has approximately 200 fewer inmates than when Corbett first took office. This is significant when compared to the average annual growth rate of 1,500 inmates per year.

To see the new report from the Council of State Governments, visit their website at www.csg.org

Established by the Second Chance Act, the National Reentry Resource Center's (NRRC) mission is to advance the reentry field by disseminating information to and from policymakers, practitioners, and researchers and by promoting evidence-based principles and best practices. The NRRC is administered by the U.S. Department of Justice's Bureau of Justice Assistance and is a project of the Council of State Governments Justice Center, in cooperation with the Urban Institute, the National Association of Counties, the Association of State Correctional Administrators, the American Probation and Parole Association, and other key partner organizations. To learn more about the National Reentry Resource Center, please visit csgjusticecenter.org/nrrc.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Organizing a TEDx Event ... in Prison

(June 12) Last year, Corrections Secretary John Wetzel was asked to speak at a TEDx event inside a California prison. He refused. In typical Wetzel fashion, he simply explained that he'd rather host an event of his own.

On June 5, SCI Graterford hosted a TEDx talk – the first of its kind inside a Pennsylvania prison and only the fourth such prison event in the country.

TED, which stands for technology, entertainment and design, is a non-profit organization hosting speakers at an annual conference discussing a variety of subjects. The talks are then shared via the Internet.

A TEDx event is an independently organized program, similar to the TED conferences, but on a smaller scale focusing on local topics.

But hosting a TEDx event is not so easy a task, as the team of organizers and volunteers quickly discovered. It took a full six-months and that was apparently rushing the typical TED process.

There are rules, lots of rules. TEDx hosts must obtain a license to hold such an event, which then must be recorded, edited and posted on YouTube. There are also websites, photography and social media requirements.

"We began by asking the inmates to write an essay, 100 words or less, about an idea they would like to share with the world," said Janet Kelley, a special assistant to the secretary, assigned to organize the event. Auditions were held and, eventually, the team selected four inmates, two musicians, a singing group and one staffer/artist to perform.

Once the insiders were selected, Superintendent Marirosa Lamas took on the task of coaching the inmates, helping them refine their ideas, as well as their stage presence.

Meanwhile, the organization team turned their attention to the outside.

"Who did we want to invite from the outside? We wanted dynamic speakers with a compelling message," Kelley said. "And we wanted an outside audience who would be receptive to learning about all the good programs at Graterford."

The invitation list included local business leaders, state representatives, criminal justice experts and educators from three area colleges.

The outside speakers included two people in law enforcement, a former inmate, now director of a dog rescue program, a crime victim, now helping former offenders, the founder of Graterford's mural arts program and Wetzel.

It was the men in the prison's mural arts program that produced an incredible backdrop for the stage. The mural comprised of six panels depicting scenes of Pennsylvania with silhouettes representing the inmates looking homeward.

The event was not without snags. An outside speaker cancelled at the last minute and had to be replaced. The program had to be rearranged to accommodate the outside speakers' schedules.

"But the most rewarding part of the day was the excitement and enthusiasm in the audience – both inmates and outside guests - who rose to their feet time and time again to applaud the flawless performances and heart-felt messages of our presenters," Kelley said. "It truly was a great experience."

To learn more about the actual TEDxGraterfordStatePrison, visit the event's Facebook page [HERE](#) or visit the DOC's Twitter page [@PAStatePrisons](#)

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Parole Board: State, Local Agencies Partner to Help Offenders Beat Drug and Alcohol Addictions, Succeed in Society ~ Reentry Program Uses Key Principles of Effective Drug Courts

June 12, 2014 - Harrisburg - State and local officials today announced a partnership that will help offenders with drug and alcohol programs successfully transition from prison to their community.

"Drug and alcohol addiction and abuse are barriers for many offenders to successfully complete parole and turn their lives around," Parole Board Chairman Michael C. Potteiger said. "This partnership with Allegheny County continues the emphasis on meaningful reentry efforts under the leadership of Gov. Tom Corbett to decrease the number of offenders who return to the criminal justice system."

The partnership is a court-based Reentry Program with the PA Board of Probation and Parole and Allegheny County Court to decrease recidivism, increase public safety and reduce correctional costs.

The Reentry Program provides intensive supervision and oversight to higher risk offenders with a history of substance abuse and it does so in a unique way by having a Parole Board Member and Common Pleas Judge meet with the offender on a monthly basis in the court room.

President Judge Jeffrey A. Manning of the Fifth Judicial District stated:

"For many years, our Court has made a commitment to support the successful reintegration of offenders released from the Allegheny County Jail. This collaboration with the state completes this commitment by the incorporation of the Board of Probation and Parole in devoting the necessary resources to offenders returning from state incarceration to our community to make them better equipped to serve as productive citizens."

The program includes a case management team to provide individually tailored continuity of services for each parolee, maximizing their ability to succeed in the community. To be eligible, offenders must have been convicted in and returning to Allegheny County and have at least 18 months of parole supervision remaining on their sentence.

The Allegheny County Reentry Program will include Board Member Craig McKay, Judge Anthony Mariani, parole Board staff, county drug and alcohol case managers, mental health services and supports, and other agencies as necessary to help the offender to be successful.

The Board currently has Reentry Programs operating in Berks, Dauphin, Lackawanna and York counties. The Berks, Lackawanna and York county programs, which have been operating the longest, have a 23, 17 and 17 percent one-year recidivism rate, respectively. Of those offenders who graduate from the programs, more than 80 percent have not been recommitted since program completion.

Visit the Board of Probation and Parole online at www.pbpp.state.pa.us.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Day of Responsibility

On Monday, June 9th, SCI Laurel Highlands held its second Day of Responsibility. The event took place in the institution's chapel and was attended by nearly 100 inmates. Guest speakers included: Debra Borza, who has served on many national committees to honor the victims of Flight 93, following her daughter's passing on that dreadful flight; Richard Garland, who is a former inmate and has become a keynote speaker who addresses the need for inmates to take responsibility for their actions; Jennifer Storm, the Victim Advocate for the Commonwealth; and Nettie and Joanne, who work with MADD and the Office of Victim Advocate (OVA), and discussed the story of how a DUI driver changed their lives forever.

The institution was also pleased to welcome Karen Laird and several of her staff from OVA, who discussed the Offender Pledge and Accountability Bank Letter writing process. The day's events included group work and panel discussion, with many staff and inmates offering positive comments on how meaningful and moving this program was. This is an event the institution plans to host every year because of the meaningful interaction that occurs. Bill Mailman, the institution's classification program manager and emcee said, "This event helps so many inmates understand the impact of their crimes and the devastation they have brought to their victims. But beyond that they are offered many avenues they can take to affect positive changes for their victims and themselves."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Operation Facelift"

On Saturday, June 7, offenders from the Wernersville Community Corrections Center (WCCC) participated in Operation Facelift, coordinated by Neighborhood Housing Services (NHS) of Greater Berks County.

Operation Facelift is an annual event in which NHS focuses on a section of Reading to assist a neighborhood in removing blight and performing minor repairs to homes and community parks. This was the 25 anniversary of this project.

This is the second time that WCCC has offered their support. This year, the six offenders and Facility Director Kerry Kerschner and Clerk Typist Ann Behm assisted in cleaning up the neighborhood playground. This entailed cleaning mud off a basketball court as well as repainting the lines. They also removed brush and cleaned the area of broken glass and trash as well as scraped and repainted a pavilion.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of June 2...

Vets Caring for Vets

(June 6) SCI Dallas' inmate veterans group solicited donations from inmates housed at the prison with the intent of supporting homeless veterans. They sent a check for \$321.50 to the Wilkes-Barre VA Medical Center to be used in its Homeless Veteran Program.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

TEDx Event Held at SCI Graterford

On June 5, DOC officials held a TEDx event at SCI Graterford called "Concrete Visions," where inmates and outside speakers shared information about incarceration. Visit the Facebook page at [TEDxGraterfordStatePrison](#), or check out the tweets that were posted live as the event happened on Twitter [@PAStatePrisons](#).

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Retirees Visit Prison

SCI Coal Township recently hosted its first Annual Retiree's Breakfast. Those able to attend thanked the administration for the opportunity to be recognized and were delighted to return to the facility to visit.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Correctional Industries Delivers Custom-Made Sign

The Durham Township Municipal Building, in Bucks County, recently received a new sign. What's the significance of this to the DOC? Inmates from SCI Rockview's Correctional Industries wood furniture factory made the sign, which highlights the township's historic building.

The 4-foot by 5-foot maroon sign features gold lettering and was delivered to the township's manager after building renovations were completed.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of May 26...

Moving Memorial

SCI Coal Township's employee motorcycle club - Pride MC Coal Township -- recently escorted the replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial as it traveled through the region to a soccer field in Tharptown, Pa. More than 200 motorcyclists met the replica at Danville and escorted it to Tharptown. In addition to escorting the memorial, a number of other PRIDE MC members helped to set up and polish the wall. Facilities whose PRIDE MC members assisted were: Coal Township, Dallas, Mahanoy, Muncy and Retreat.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Pine Grove Inmates Help Transform Field

Pine Grove inmates recently helped restore Eleanor Risko ballfield in Washington Twp., Indiana Co.

According to an article in the Mainline Newspapers on May 22, 2014, the inmates carried bricks, cut down trees and made other improvements to the field.

Apparently the field had been donated to the local baseball association in the mid-1980s, but has sat unused for years. The association is now completing the work thanks to many volunteers, including Pine Grove's inmate work crew.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Successful CEA Accreditation Results for 2014

Congratulations is extended to SCI's Albion, Dallas, Huntingdon, Mahanoy, Muncy, Retreat, Rockview and Greene for their 100 percent compliance rating obtained on the Corrections Education Association (CEA) Accreditation audit.

The audit was conducted by CEA and compares Pennsylvania correction education department program delivery and practice against nationally established standards for quality correction education programming.

Accreditation certificates will be issued to each institutional school principal and will be displayed in their respective education departments. This accomplishment is a credit to the institution and the education department staff as a whole.

Special acknowledgement is extended to the corrections school principal and the CEA team, for spearheading the preparation process.

This cycle of CEA auditing is the first time state level documentation was submitted electronically to CEA national in advance of the audit. This assisted in state level documentation being reviewed and approved by CEA prior to the actual site visit by the auditor. This provided auditors more time to review program delivery at the local site and observe in greater detail offerings at each facility.

Eastern Region Division Chief Jeff Chiampi and Corrections School Principal Terri Fazio attended the CEA national conference in Cleveland, Ohio, last May and presented this auditing concept and approach to the CEA standards commission. CEA adopted this process for the Pennsylvania Correction Education audits and is considering adopting this model for all audits conducted nationally by CEA.

Congratulations to all involved in this accomplishment.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of May 19...

DOC Dedicates Veterans Service Unit

The mission of the Veterans Service Unit is to coordinate and implement programs and services that assist incarcerated veterans in making a successful transition back into the community. By placing veterans offenders in a specialized treatment setting, with their peers, and managed by veterans specific staff, this unique community can be utilized as the primary method of recovery. Veterans' established camaraderie, shared worldwide, common vernacular and culture, work to develop a sense of cohesion and peer support amongst the group.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Volunteer Banquet Held

SCI Mercer held its annual volunteer banquet last week. Guest speaker was Rev. Ulli Klemm, who serves as the DOC's program administrator for religion, volunteer and recreational services. Opening remarks were made by Superintendent Brian Thompson, who thanks the many volunteers for their continued dedication to the inmates. Volunteer Jere Donovan was selected as Volunteer of the Year. Seventeen of the prison's 36 volunteers joined staff for dinner that was prepared by Mercer's dietary staff and inmates.



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of May 12...

SCI Forest Inmates Donate \$500 to East Forest School's Sixth Grade

Inmates from the State Correctional Institution at Forest have donated \$500 to the sixth grade class at East Forest School. Hope for a Change, an inmate-run charitable organization, is dedicated to improving inmates' lives and giving back to the community. Sixth grade students from Forest Area Schools travel to Gettysburg each spring to tour the battlefield and other historic sites in the area. This year fundraising for the trip was difficult. When Hope for a Change learned of the need for additional funds, members made sure the annual trip would take place.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Adopt-A-Highway



On Tuesday, April 29, basic training class 712-A participated in Adopt-A-Highway at the training academy. The cadets volunteered their time after work for two hours. They picked up 35 bags of trash along route 230. Training sergeants D. Bonner, J. Murray, J. Williams and W. Brenneman also volunteered their time. The academy would like to thank the cadets and sergeants for their time and for making the highway look better.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Center Residents Clean City

Residents of the Scranton Community Corrections Center recently helped clean up Scranton.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~



Week of May 5 Postings...

Corrections Employee Week

Gov. Tom Corbett has proclaimed this week as Corrections Employee Week in Pennsylvania!



~ ~ ~ ~ ~

DOC NCCER Programs Accredited Through 2016

DOC vocational programs which offer NCCER certifications have been successfully accredited for the next three-year cycle. DOC officials are pleased and proud of the accomplishment program instructors demonstrated to the auditors during their visitations. The DOC's NCCER program certification process is overseen by NCCER master trainers (and DOC employees) Rich Lepley and Jeff Chiampi.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Central Office Holds Health Fair

On April 30, Central Office hosted its 2ND Annual Health Fair. Twenty-two vendors and close to 200 employees participated in the event. Free chair massages, blood pressure screening, cardio vascular risk assessments, grip strength testing and a full body motion massage were some of the interactive offerings. Local business, Juice and Grind, made fresh-to-order smoothies, and Tastefully Simple provided healthy snacking samples and food preparation ideas.

Employees were able to review their PEBTF benefits, research area services for physical therapy, Veterans benefits, hospice, the Department of Aging and more. Drayer Physical Therapy provided reusable shopping bags that allowed employees to collect the many giveaways offered by the vendors. In addition, nine lucky employees won door prizes sponsored by the participating vendors. Despite the rainy weather, the spirits of those who attended were high and dry. The best take away of all was insight to a healthier lifestyle. Thanks to all for making this event such a success.

Suggestions for Health Fair 2015 can be sent to Laurie Hilsinger lhilsinger@pa.gov.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

SECA Recognition

Last week, state officials held a SECA Recognition Event. SECA - the State Employee Combined Appeal -- provides one time each year that state employees may donate to charities. Each agency has a statewide SECA coordinator (DOC also has an assistant coordinator and facility coordinators). During the 2013 SECA Campaign, DOC employees donated \$532,887.20. The agency's goal was to raise \$517,000. Last week's event was held to recognize agencies for their work in reaching (and in our case, exceeding) their goals.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Center Residents Clean Up Reading, Pa.

On Saturday, April 26th and Sunday April 27th, 13 offenders from the Wernersville Community Corrections Center participated in the Great American Clean up by assisting the City of Reading with cleaning trash and debris from five blocks of 6th street. The project was organized by Corrections Counselor Katie Reed and Center

Director Marlana Seguin who had reached out to the city and offered the assistance of our offenders, and participation was monitored by Corrections Center Monitors Kevin Rossman and Connie Leymeister. The participants not only cleaned up the five blocks, but also returned the next morning to help set up for the recognition of the participants.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of April 28 Postings...

Corrections Employee Week

Gov. Tom Corbett has proclaimed May 4-10, 2014, as CORRECTIONS EMPLOYEE WEEK in Pennsylvania. He encourages Pennsylvanians to recognize the vital role these dedicated professionals play in ensuring the effective operation of our correctional system in the interest of public safety.

For every year since 1986, Pennsylvania governors have proclaimed the first full week in Pennsylvania "Corrections Employee Week." During this week, state prison employees will celebrate through a variety of activities.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

SCI Pine Grove Conducts Career, Education & Leisure Fair

The Reentry Services Office, Activities and Education Departments of the State Correctional Institution at Pine Grove conducted a Career, Education and Leisure Fair for inmates in the prison's gymnasium. Approximately 400 inmates received information from a host of community participants which included representatives from the following organizations:

Indiana County Careerlink

Indiana County Chamber of Commerce

Wyotech

The Newman Center

Hart Resource Technologies

Indiana County Department of Human Services

PA Prison Society

Connie Winters Pet Resort

Instructors were on hand to offer information to the inmates on vocational trades, network contacts and training opportunities. Inmates were given the opportunity to have their questions answered and to gather information to assist them in planning and in the development of long term goals for successful community re-entry.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Corrections Secretary Appoints New SCI Dallas Superintendent

Lawrence Mahally, a 28-year corrections veteran, has been appointed superintendent at the State Correctional Institution at Dallas, Luzerne County, Secretary of Corrections John E. Wetzel announced today.

"Having served a number of positions at a variety of state prisons, Larry's knowledge of prison operations will serve him well as he returns home to SCI Dallas as its leader," Wetzel said.

Mahally's appointment became effective April 3, 2014.

Mahally began his corrections career as a corrections officer at SCI Dallas in 1985. He transferred to SCI Mahanoy and was promoted to sergeant in 1993 and then was named lieutenant in 1997.

Larry transitioned to SCI Forest in 2005 as a unit manager. He promoted to captain at SCI Retreat in 2006 and then to SCI Dallas as major of the guard the following year. In 2009, he was appointed to deputy superintendent for centralized services at SCI Dallas. In 2010, he was named deputy for facility management. Larry was interim deputy superintendent for facility management at SCI Retreat in 2013.

He returned to SCI Dallas as deputy superintendent for facility management in 2014.

Mahally is a veteran of the United States Marine Corps and a graduate of James M. Coughlin High School, Wilkes-Barre.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of April 21 Postings...

Spotlight on PCI's Knitting Mill at SCI Graterford

The Pennsylvania Correctional Industries Knitting Mill at SCI Graterford consists of the Underwear and Hosiery Shops. Underwear, socks and knit caps are manufactured for standard issue and commissary sales to inmates throughout the state. More than 15,000 pounds of yarn are knit into cloth used for making garments each month.

CI teaches inmates good work ethics (such as getting up early for work) and teamwork. It gives inmates a sense of purpose and the confidence that they are capable of earning an honest living and supporting themselves without help.

The knitting mill's production will continue into the future when it is relocated to SCI Phoenix. The size of the plant will be smaller, but more efficient machinery and streamlined procedures are expected to increase output.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Women's History Month Celebrated at SCI Graterford

Approximately 80 employees attended the Women's History Month Celebration held at SCI Graterford recently, which included a covered dish luncheon, which was held in the Muster Room. Reverend Edward Neiderhiser began the luncheon with the Invocation. Guest speakers and participants alike, shared stories of women who have in-spired them to become the person they are today.

Deputy Superintendent Cynthia Link, Personnel Director Dana Williams and Captain Etta Williams spoke about women, their mothers in particular, who have inspired them to be strong, committed and to always do their best. Superintendent Michael Wenerowicz commented on the high number of women in various positions at SCI Graterford and commended them for their invaluable contributions to the institution. Deputy Superintendent George Ondrejka and Major Thomas Dohman also spoke about the positive influences of the women in their lives and at Graterford. Attendees, who spoke, shared stories honoring their mothers who may have had struggles, but persevered to guide their children with love, strength and a caring heart.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Coal Names Employee of the 1st Quarter of 2014



Corrections Officer 1 Ricky Burgos was recently named Employee of the Quarter at the State Correctional Institution at Coal Township. He was nominated by his coworkers for his dedication to the prison and for his willingness to help any staff member regardless of the time or situation. Officer Burgos applies his personal qualities to his job, his relationships with staff and inmates and is the first person to respond to aid fellow employees on a daily basis. Upon receiving the award, Officer Burgos said, "I appreciate the recognition, but it's our job to ensure that all staff go home to their families each and every day."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

"Bunny Run"

SCI Graterford employees recently participated in the "Bunny Run" by donating items for children in local hospitals. On April 19, more than 100 donated stuffed animals and small toys were delivered to Pottstown Medical Center by the prison's Licensed Practical Nurse Dennis Keim.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of April 14 Postings...

Inmate Litter Crews Will Pick Up Trash

This month and next month, citizens should see DOC inmate litter crews working along various highways picking up trash as part of the Great American Cleanup of PA. Crews from SCIs Coal Township, Mercer, Laurel Highlands and Greene will be active through early- to mid-May.

Please use caution when driving in areas where inmate crews are working.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Donations to Wayne County MH/MR

Recently, SCI Waymart's Community Support Committee distributed 30 Easter baskets to children served by Wayne County's MH/MR, Children and Youth Services and Victims Intervention programs.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

SCI Coal Township Employees Donate to Local Food Pantry



Shamokin – SCI Coal Township recently held their annual food drive to benefit Manna for the Many, located in Shamokin. Various food items were delivered to Manna on April 14th. Manna for the Many is a local food pantry established through the Shamokin Area Ministerium to serve those in need in the Shamokin/Coal Township area. Manna opened its doors in 2000 and is supported entirely by private donations and

staffed solely by volunteers.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Frackville Employees Donate to Local SPCA

Recently, SCI Frackville's Empowerment Committee held a Hoagie Day in the visiting room for staff, where employees enjoyed a made-to-order hoagie, salads, chips, soda and ice cream for a small donation. The Empowerment Committee also put a laundry cart in the Admin Lobby where staff could bring in used blankets, dog food, cat food, treats and other items. As a result of these efforts, the Empowerment Committee gave more



than 300 pounds of food and other items, plus a \$425 donation to the Hillside SPCA in Pottsville. Presenting the check on behalf of the Empowerment Committee is Capt. Dave Clemson. SCI Frackville employees always step up to help in their community, this time it was for their furry friends.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of April 7 Postings...

Principals Meeting Held

The semi-annual Corrections School Principal meeting was held recently at the Elizabethtown Training Academy. This training included information regarding the new electronic GED computerized testing, education data collection procedures, Corrections Education Audit, Adult Commonwealth Secondary Diploma information as well as a variety of other relevant education department related topics. During this meeting, recognition was given to soon to be retired Western Region Chief Larry Beatty. Training academy culinary staff offered to provide a cake in recognition of Mr. Beatty's contribution to the Bureau of Correction Education. The cake was prepared and decorated by an inmate student who had successfully completed the culinary arts program under the direction of Todd Lewis and now works in the academy culinary department under the direction and supervision of Shane Hiner. Congratulations to Chief Beatty and thanks to Director Dooley and the entire academy staff for making the training opportunity a pleasant one.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of March 24 Postings...

Corrections Secretary Appoints New SCI Greene Superintendent

Robert D. Gilmore, a 23-year corrections veteran, has been appointed superintendent at the State Correctional Institution Greene effective March 29, 2014, Secretary of Corrections John E. Wetzel announced.

"Robert has progressed through many levels of corrections' responsibilities. His experience will be invaluable as he uses his skills to empower staff and move SCI Greene forward in its mission," said Secretary Wetzel.

Gilmore began his employment with the state as a corrections officer at SCI Graterford in 1990. He transferred to SCI Albion in 1994. While at SCI Albion, he promoted to sergeant.

In 1998, he promoted to lieutenant and transferred to SCI Cambridge Springs where he served as emergency preparedness coordinator from 1999 to 2004. Gilmore intermittently served as acting captain during 2003. In December 2003, Gilmore became major of the guard.

In 2004, he returned to SCI Albion as a captain then he was appointed to major of the guard in 2007. Gilmore served as major of the guard on the transition team at SCI Pittsburgh May 2011 through August 2011. He returned to his duties at SCI Albion.

Gilmore was appointed deputy superintendent of centralized services at SCI Greene in 2012.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

SCI Forest Opens DOC's 2nd Security Threat Gang Management Unit (STGMU)

Recently, SCI Forest began receiving inmates for its new Security Threat Gang Management Unit (STGMU), which has an initial capacity for 48 inmates.

In August 2012, the DOC opened its first STGMU at SCI Greene. The special housing unit is used to house continually disruptive, violent and dangerous offenders, specifically those with gang affiliations.

"These housing units are designed for individuals who have poor prison adjustment, incurred numerous misconducts and/or known gang affiliations," DOC Secretary John Wetzel said. "These individuals often pose operational and security concerns for prison staff. The goal of this unit is to change their behavior and return them to general population as more productive and positive individuals."

The behavior modification delivered in the unit provides specific phases through which each offender must progress, thus earning increased privileges and services. Inmates begin at Phase 5, which is the most restrictive, and work toward Phase 1,

with each phase lasting a minimum of three months. There is no maximum time limit on each phase.

In the unit, each inmate will be given a treatment plan based upon his present level of functioning, recent historical information and current gang status. The plan reflects specific goals and treatments to address problematic behaviors. The inmate is reviewed every 30 days and can move backward or forward through the phases based upon his progress.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Policy and Corrections Leaders Weigh Tactics to Curb Recidivism

National Forum Brings Together 13 States Competing for “Statewide Recidivism Reduction” Grants

Washington, DC (March 27) -- Teams of policymakers—including governors’ advisors and corrections agency administrators from 13 states—will meet in Washington today to discuss strategies to improve success rates for people released from prison. The purpose of the forum is to promote peer learning as these states engage in developing strategic statewide recidivism reduction plans.

Representatives of the U.S. Department of Justice are joining the state leaders to highlight how the federal government can work in partnership with states to pursue cost-effective strategies that provide a strong return on investments in public safety. Hosted by the Bureau of Justice Assistance, this forum brings together 13 states awarded Statewide Recidivism Reduction planning grants through the Second Chance Act in fiscal year 2013: Alaska, Arkansas, Georgia, Illinois, Iowa, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, North Dakota, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Vermont and West Virginia.

The Statewide Recidivism Reduction grant program is a multi-year, multi-phased approach intended to create state centers of excellence that can serve as national models for how to effectively reduce statewide recidivism. Upon the successful completion of their plans, the 13 grantees will be eligible to compete for implementation funding of up to \$3 million to achieve their strategic and tactical recidivism reduction plans. Pending appropriations, final site selection will be announced by Sept. 30, 2014.

“The Second Chance Act has provided a means for federal, state and local governments to work together to promote public safety in our communities,” said Bureau of Justice Assistance Director Denise O’Donnell. “It is our vision that the final Statewide Recidivism Reduction grantees will become learning sites for other states desiring to implement effective recidivism reduction efforts.”

This forum builds off a national event held in December 2011 where corrections leaders and policymakers from all 50 states committed to furthering the goals of improved reentry and public safety through recidivism reduction. Discussions at today’s event will demonstrate the progress made over the past two years, as well as the need for additional investments to build the capacity of state corrections agencies to effectively bend the curve on recidivism.

"The Statewide Recidivism Reduction planning grant has provided a tremendous opportunity to bring together state leaders and build on our plan to meet the Governor's goals of reduced recidivism and improved public safety," said PA DOC Corrections Secretary John Wetzel. "During this period of limited resources, we need to make sustainable investments in the most impactful policies and programs."

At the forum, participants will also engage in learning exchanges to share successes in how strategic plans can be fulfilled and integrated into crime policy goals and priorities for the states, with or without additional federal funding.

"A Statewide Recidivism Reduction implementation grant would provide us with resources to build our agency's capacity to implement effective practices," said PADOC Executive Deputy Secretary Shirley Moore Smeal. "It also provides us leverage to advocate for executive and statutory policy changes and state funding investments that will allow us to see sustained reductions in recidivism over the long-term."

State leaders will leave the forum with clear goals and expectations for their Statewide Recidivism Reduction plans, which will be completed and submitted to the Bureau of Justice Assistance for review in early summer. The announcement of the final fiscal year 2014 sites will mark the two-year anniversary of the Statewide Recidivism Reduction grant program.

The Second Chance Act has supported state and local investments in effective reentry programs for more than five years. Signed into law on April 9, 2008, legislators designed the Second Chance Act to improve outcomes for people returning to communities from prisons and jails. This first-of-its-kind legislation authorizes federal grants to government agencies and nonprofit organizations to provide employment assistance, substance abuse treatment, housing, family programming, mentoring, victims' support and other services that can help reduce recidivism. The Second Chance Reauthorization Act of 2013 was introduced in November of last year.

Today's forum is hosted by Bureau of Justice Assistance and was planned in partnership with the Council of State Governments Justice Center, Association of State Correctional Administrators, and National Governors Association.

About The Council of State Governments Justice Center

The Council of State Governments Justice Center is a national nonprofit, nonpartisan organization that serves policymakers at the local, state, and federal levels from all branches of government. Staff provides practical, nonpartisan advice and evidence-based, consensus-driven strategies to increase public safety and strengthen communities. For more about the CSG Justice Center, please visit www.csgjusticecenter.org.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Honoring a Corrections Friend



SCI Mahanoy's Honor Guard recently traveled to Folsom State Prison as part of the Corrections Peace Officer Foundation to honor Larry Corby. Corby had worked at Folsom for more than 30 years and is a founding member of CPOF, which has assisted countless of PA DOC employees in their times of need.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Reentry Initiative

Since 2011, the DOC and PennDOT have been working together to provide inmates who are returning home with updated driver's licenses or non-driver's license photo id's. Since 2011, more than 16,000 individuals have received these items, which will help them reenter society successfully, as for many things (job interviews, housing, medical benefits) they need some form of official identification. In 2013 alone, more than 9,100 id's have been provided.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of March 17 Postings...

Wintry Wonderland?

This winter has been a tough one with lots of snow and even ice. In an effort to help local communities, residents from community corrections centers helped remove snow. In region 1 (the eastern part of the state), eight centers and more than 50 inmates provided more than 1,000 hours shoveling snow from walkways and sidewalks at churches, homeless shelters and local senior citizen centers.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

A message from Superintendent Louis S. Folino to his SCI Greene Co-Workers

I wish to express that it has been my genuine pleasure to have served you in the capacity of your Superintendent at SCI-Greene. In this way I was able to interact with many of you on a regular basis, and to facilitate for you the things necessary in order for you to do your jobs most effectively, and safely. It has been a fun and satisfying ride for me at your facility. I will truly miss the fast pace of our operations and the friendly exchanges with so many quality individuals.

It has been especially reinforcing for me to consistently receive positive feedback from numerous DOC Central Office Officials and our sister facilities personnel, concerning the professionalism of our employees, the efficiency of our operations and the well established reputation of teamwork of SCI-Greene's personnel. I have been very fortunate for nearly eleven years to have been affiliated with such a highly successful Correctional Institution. The favorable working relationships and degree of inmate compliance we enjoy today are the result of the consistent efforts and performance of the various departments, shifts, and employees working together.

I will truly miss the camaraderie with you all. Thank you for your dedicated service and your fellowship. Appreciation also for your favorable reception upon my arrival in 2003, and your cooperation and hospitality during this time.

I encourage everyone to maintain a positive outlook and to resist negativism. Continue to work together to protect the Outstanding culture you have established at SCI-Greene, which has resulted in a desirable and favorable place to work on a daily basis.

Best Wishes and Continued Success with your personal lives, careers and SCI-Greene!

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Tim Seibel Memorial "Hot Shot" Challenge

SCI Greene's Activities Department recently held the 8th Annual Tim Seibel Memorial "Hot Shot" Challenge to benefit the American Heart Association. Mr. Seibel's wife and immediate family, who were in attendance, continue to be extremely grateful for the tribute and respect received from SCI Greene staff and inmates. The staff event consisted of 20 male and female participants competing in a timed free throw and 3 point competition. The Activities Committee of Enrichment (ACE) sponsored the inmate event which consisted of 27 participants who made charitable donations as well.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Greene Begins Dog Training Program

SCI Greene, on March 26, will join other state prisons that train service dogs in partnership with Canine Partners 4 Life. On that day puppies will arrive and begin their training.

Started in 1989 by Darlene Sullivan, executive director, Canine Partners for Life is a non-profit corporation that provides certified service dogs to people with physical and cognitive disabilities. Darlene started this program in her home and has expanded the program to include a 45 acre state of the art kennel and campus that has placed over 500 dogs in 43 states.

This program has been operating in PA State institutions since 2002 when the proposal was presented to the prisons. State Correctional Institutions at Cambridge Springs, and Muncy were the first to respond. Since that time it has been expanded to Albion, Smithfield and will soon be in place at Greene.

The puppies are trained in the institution for approximately one year. After the year at the institution the dogs go on to advanced training for another year to adapt to the particular needs of a person with limited mobility. This training includes tasks such as turning on light switches, helping a person change clothes, assisting with a wheel chair, retrieving such items as a phone and similar duties that help people become more independent.

The inmates will share their cell space and their lives for the next year, 24 hours a day. The ten inmates will get together every day to participate in obedience classes. A volunteer trainer will come to the institution every week or two to provide ongoing training and evaluation. This program will instill a sense of responsibility, discipline, and social awareness for the inmates involved. This program is completely voluntary and inmate handlers will not be compensated.

Staff members will also have an opportunity to take a puppy home for a weekend visit. Before being permitted to take a dog home, the individual must go through a 4- hour training course with Canine Partners for Life. Staff volunteers are an essential part of this program, and everyone having an interest is encouraged to volunteer.

Information can be found at www.k94life.org

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Words of Wisdom from a Retiring Regional Deputy Secretary

When I started there were 7 prisons and about 7,000 inmates, and the entire Bureau of Correction employed around 2,000 staff... and John Wetzel was 9½. Fast forward 34½ years and we have 25 facilities and a motivational boot camp, 53,000 offenders and a compliment of almost 17,000 staff... and now John Wetzel is my boss. Funny how things work out!



From time to time people ask me for advice, or ask how I got where I am. So I gave that some thought and came up some of the things I've learned over the years that helped guide me from me from a young COT on the blocks @ Graterford to the 3rd floor of Central Office.

From COT to Regional Deputy Secretary in 12 easy steps; a life long journey:

Come to work; be there on time and then work when you get there.

Do the right thing regardless of who's watching.

Look for the person that the boss always goes to when they need a complicated project completed quickly and correctly, you found a mentor.

Volunteer for projects, look for training opportunities, learn policy and become

the person other staff seek out when they have questions or need an opinion.

Learn your boss's job and align yourself for advancement; then be prepared when the opportunity presents itself.

Be ready to be uncomfortable; sometimes you'll need to make tough, unpopular decisions.

Don't be satisfied with satisfactory...strive for excellence.

Each day look for the people around you that could eventually replace you and help them along toward that end. It's called mentoring.

Give the people that work for you the latitude to make mistakes without fear of reprisal, most people learn from them. Correct in private and praise in public.

Micro-managing is counterproductive and will stifle creativity and the "outside the box" thinking we need from our staff.

Expect that occasional phone call from Deb Sahd saying the Secretary wants to see you.

Love your job, give it 110% every day and when you struggle to keep up the pace...step aside.

-John K. Murray
March 18, 2014

Note: Deputy Murray's last day with the DOC is March 28.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Shout-out from a Training Participant

"I finished your two-week DOC training in Elizabethtown, Pa. It was hard for me at first and easier for others. I had to drive five hours from Beaver County but we made it there in one piece. I have been working in community corrections for 14 years at Penn Pavilion (a contracted community corrections center) and learned a lot in those 14 years. But I really learned more from your sergeants and the PowerPoint slides and DVDs that they were teaching us from. I'd like to give a special shout out to sergeants Hemminger, Kostelelac, Murray and Rodriguez. I have to admit that during the first week of training my mind was in system overload. All four sergeants clamed me down. At the end of the second week I passed and the whole class gave me a standing ovation. That will be something I will remember forever. I normally don't sweat tests that much, but I did this time. I know we are not allowed to send thank you cards or to correspond with the sergeants, but I would like to let you know that you have some fine staff working over there and I am using the skills they taught me at Penn Pavilion and am trying to be a mentor to two co-workers. Thank you again for making this happen."

-- Shift Manager Mark Williams, Penn Pavilion

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Virtual Visitation

Family and friends are the inmate's connection to the community. They offer information on the neighborhood, they give updates on family happenings and they keep the inmate up-to-date on changes that are occurring at home. Many times it is a hardship to travel to the inmate so why not 'virtually' bring the inmate to the visitor. The Department of Corrections does just that through virtual visitation.

In 2001, the DOC began offering Department of Corrections' Family Virtual Visitation Pilot Program. The pilot was funded through a federal grant awarded by Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency.

The pilot began in four locations -- SCI Cambridge Springs, SCI Coal Township, SCI Pine Grove and SCI Mahanoy. The visits were arranged in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Prison Society.

The pilot was successfully received by inmates and their visitors and continues today. Currently, the service is offered at eight SCIs -- Albion, Cambridge Springs, Coal Township, Dallas, Greene, Mahanoy, Muncy and Pine Grove.

There are three virtual visitation centers where a virtual visit can be initiated. The sites are in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh and Erie and are scheduled through ScotlandYard who holds the contract to provide this service and schedules the family and friends for visits.

The inmates work with the facility's virtual visitation facility coordinator who provides a packet of information. The relevant policy is provided which the inmate must agree to abide by.

As with a face-to-face visit, the visitor must be on the approved visitors' list and provide two forms of identification at the time of the visit. Each visit is 55 minutes in duration and costs only \$20.

Ninety percent of the inmates will be rejoining their community. It is important to maintain or reestablish the connection to their family or community support in order to facilitate reentry.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

SCI Camp Hill Staff Provides Insight to Students

SCI Camp Hill's Capt. Eichenberg and Lieutenant Davy visited the River Rock Academy Campuses in Shiremanstown and Red Lion, Pa., as well as Central Penn College Harrisburg Campus in Summerdale, PA.

The director from River Rock Academy in Red Lion said, "Captain Eichenberg and Lieutenant Davy did an excellent job presenting. They kept our students actively engaged for an hour and 45 minutes. Everyone thoroughly enjoyed the presentation that included an excellent power point which demonstrated a day in the life of a prisoner. We appreciate both for taking the time on their day off to travel to our campus and speak with our students. Thank you for supporting these presentations which have a positive impact on our students."

A professor of Criminal Justice from Central Penn College said, "I want to thank the Department of Corrections and Captain Eichenberg and Lieutenant Davy for the presentation that they gave to our Introduction to Corrections class. I particularly appreciated the way that the presentation was customized for our students. The program gave a real perspective on a day in the life of a corrections officer and the potential for a meaningful career. Captain Eichenberg and Lieutenant Davy were engaging and kept the students interest throughout the presentation. Once again thank you for all of your assistance."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Appreciation from the Governor

The SCI Huntingdon staff was presented an appreciation letter from Governor Tom Corbett on March 7, 2014, thanking them for their exceptional support of the 2013 State Employees Combined Appeal (SECA) campaign. Their contributions placed them in the "Governor's Circle" leadership level of employees who give the most – an hour or more of pay per month – to the charities participating in SECA.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of March 10 Postings...

Community Outreach

This winter, SCI Graterford's Empowerment Committee selected two local organizations to assist by collecting items identified on the agencies' wish lists.

Manna on Main Street, a food pantry and soup kitchen located in Lansdale, Pa., serves the community by providing food, fulfilling social service needs and conducting community education. The Good Samaritan Shelter provides transitional housing and supportive services to homeless men in their shelter in Phoenixville, Pa.

A total of nine large boxes of canned goods, paper products and other essentials were collected and delivered.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of March 3 Postings...

A "New Leash on Life"

In February, DOC Secretary John Wetzel attended an event in Philadelphia to speak about the DOC's plans for SCI Graterford's New Leash on Life dog training program. Dogs in the program will be trained and later provided to veterans returning from Afghanistan and Iraq who have PTSD. Officials from SCI Graterford attended the event. Here are some pictures.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Important Partnership

The DOC is making a Sesame Street ® publication entitled Little Children, Big Challenges: Incarceration available its visiting rooms. The publication is designed to support, comfort and reduce anxiety, sadness and confusion that young children may experience during the incarceration of a parent.

The Sesame Street ® program is for children age three to eight and the book is bi-lingual, English on one side and Spanish on the other side; and it gives at-home caregivers tips and strategies to communicate with children about incarceration. The books, which are provided to the DOC at no charge, will be offered free in the family/inmate visiting rooms.

<http://www.sesameworkshop.org/incarceration/>

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of Feb. 24 Postings...

K-9 Training Barn Expanded

(Feb. 27) -- For several years the DOC's Drug Interdiction Unit (DIU) has used one of the barns located off of Route 26 (on SCI Rockview's property) to train dogs. There is an area in the barn that has been renovated with training walls that are used to build scent association and teach the dogs to give a trained response to odors. The training area is now expanding and additional training walls are being installed along with mock cells and rows of lockers.

The work is being done by an inmate work detail under the watchful eye of the Armed Mounted Detail and SCI Rockview's maintenance staff. Lumber from Rockview's saw mill and surplus materials are also being used to keep costs at a minimum.

Once completed, the "K-9 Training Barn" will be transformed into a state-of-the-art training facility that will enhance the department's training abilities and proficiency of the DIU detection canines.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Shoe Drive Benefits Soles4Souls

SCI Cambridge Springs Officers Shank and Mayo and Correctional Industries Supervisor Mr. Rentz organized a shoe drive to benefit Soles4Souls. The drive kicked off on Monday, January 27th and concluded on Friday, February 21st.

Founded in 2004, Soles4Souls is a global non-profit organization dedicated to fighting the devastating impact and perpetuation of poverty. Through the distribution of shoes and clothing, the organization advances its anti-poverty mission by collecting new and used shoes and clothes from individuals, schools, faith-based institutions, civic organizations and corporate partners. They then distribute those shoes and clothes both via direct donations to people in need and by provisioning qualified micro-enterprise programs designed to create jobs in poor and disadvantaged communities. Based in Nashville, Tenn, Soles4Souls is committed to the highest standards of operating and governance, and holds a Four-Star rating with Charity Navigator.

On behalf of The PRIDE Motorcycle Club, Mr. Rentz and Officers Shank and Mayo thank everyone who donated their new and used shoes to the 2014 Soles4Souls shoe drive. This year there was an overwhelming amount of support from the employees at SCI Cambridge Springs. The original goal was to exceed last year's donation of 45 pairs of shoes, which was far surpassed with a total of 200 pairs of shoes.

The shoes were dropped off to Meeker Marshall for the Soles4Souls shoe drive. In turn, Meeker Marshall gave a \$5 gift certificate per each pair donated. They

combined the amount and gave one hundred \$10 gift certificates. Fifty certificates were given to the Soldiers & Sailors Home in Erie, and 50 certificates were given to the Liberty House in Erie. (Liberty House is a homeless shelter for veterans).

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Responds to US Department of Justice Findings Following Review of Mental Health Services

System-wide improvements, enhanced services began in 2011; Additional reforms continue

(Feb. 24) – Today, the U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) Civil Rights Division issued the findings of its investigation of the Pennsylvania prison system’s mental health services for seriously mentally ill inmates. The statewide investigation began on May 31, 2013, and stemmed from the U.S. DOJ’s investigation of mental health services at SCI Cresson. SCI Cresson closed on June 30, 2013.

Since the U.S. DOJ announced its original investigation of SCI Cresson in December 2011, Pennsylvania Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel has emphasized that, “The DOC and the U.S. DOJ are working toward the same goal – appropriate delivery of mental health services.”

The report represents only the U.S. DOJ’s conclusions and pertains to the period spanning from January 2012 through June 2013. U.S. DOJ and DOC will mutually discuss the U.S. DOJ’s findings in coming weeks.

“Because the report focuses on data gathered from January 2012 through June 2013, it does not reflect the reality of how the Pennsylvania prison system currently operates or provides services to inmates,” Wetzel said. “It also is not representative of the services and work that the DOC’s dedicated mental health and correctional staff provides.”

Since 2011, one of the priorities of DOC has been to enhance treatment for mentally ill offenders. The growth of inmate populations with mental illness has been a tremendous challenge for prison systems across the country.

Prior to the U.S. DOJ’s expanded investigation, the DOC had already begun significant improvements in the area of enhancing services for mentally ill offenders. Pennsylvania’s DOC has worked diligently to develop and implement these transformative initiatives to provide effective programs and enhanced services for the mentally ill. Many of these programs are innovations that the DOC was the first to develop and implement and they have had tremendous results:

Solitary Confinement for SMI Offenders

- The development of new treatment units and implementation of more robust misconduct diversionary procedures for inmates with SMI has resulted in a steep decline in the number of inmates with SMI who are currently housed in restricted units for disciplinary reasons. Currently, less than 150

inmates who are diagnosed as SMI are housed in restrictive housing units, down from nearly 850 inmates previously.

Vera Segregation Reduction Project

- The DOC has partnered with the nationally recognized Vera Institute of Justice. Vera's Segregation Reduction Project will examine the DOC's use of segregation for the overall inmate population and develop strategies to safely reduce the use of costly segregation through training, policy modifications and other initiatives.

Enhanced Classification and Treatment for Seriously Mentally Ill Offenders

- The DOC has updated its definition of Serious Mental Illness (SMI) to better capture and track those individuals who suffer from the most severe forms of mental illness, requiring the most treatment services. Because the new definition is diagnosis driven, it better identifies individuals in need of services and ensures that they are connected to needed resources. For those inmates who require intensive treatment, a recovery model individual treatment plan is generated – with the inmate's participation – to identify and isolate certain treatment goals that the inmate and treatment team will strive to meet together.

Certified Peer Support Specialist Program

- DOC's certified peer support specialist program has trained over 300 inmates to provide support and counseling services to other inmates on a variety of issues, including participation in mental health treatment.

Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training

- CIT training, first used to educate police officers to respond mental health issues that they encounter in the community, has been modified by the DOC into an extensive multi-day training course to provide our correctional officers with an understanding of the ways in which mental illness may affect the inmates they deal with daily, and provide them with skills to deescalate crisis situations. Trainings occur several times per year and classes typically include dozens of officers and corrections personnel. Those officers whose position within institutions put them in close contact with the mentally ill have been prioritized for this critical training. The DOC is planning to offer this training to the Pennsylvania county prisons in the future.

Mental Health First Aid Training

- The DOC will train all employees in mental health first aid by the end of fiscal year 2014. The training equips employees to understand, recognize and respond to the symptoms of mental illness.

Improved Treatment Units

- The DOC developed several new specialized units to address the different treatment needs of inmates with SMI, including Secure Residential Treatment

Units, Residential Treatment Units and Short Term Residential Treatment Units. The variety of treatment units ensures that inmates are receiving individualized care specific to their particular needs regardless of their security level. Additionally, inmates in specialized units receive – at a minimum, and often far in excess of – 20 hours of structured and unstructured programs out of their cells each week; for those inmates in general population, treatment units have even greater out-of-cell program opportunities.

MHM performance contracting

- The contract with MHM Services for inmate mental health care, includes performance-based incentives and penalties. The contract provides incentives for positive outcomes for offenders to further the DOC's goal that inmates leaving the system are better than when they entered it. The contract incentivizes treatment that reduces misconduct and mental health recommitment rates for the mentally ill. Additionally, MHM will be required to maintain or exceed an established baseline medication compliance rate.

Partnering with NAMI , Rutgers, etc.

- The DOC has partnered with various advocacy groups and leading researchers in the field of mental illness to analyze current systems and develop initiatives to improve mental health care. Partners include the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill and Rutgers University.

Development of Suicide Prevention Committees

- Each state correctional institution has instituted a Suicide Prevention Committee, which includes a multi-disciplinary team of mental health and security personnel, to review serious incidents of self-harm, attempted and completed suicides. These committees will monitor policy compliance, conduct training exercises and make recommendations for improvements to policy and procedure.

Trauma Screening

- All female inmates received at SCI Muncy will undergo a thorough trauma screening upon their reception to the institution and be connected with appropriate follow-up services.

Letter of Findings - Investigation of the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections' Use of Solitary Confinement on Prisoners with Serious Mental Illness and/or Intellectual Disabilities

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

DOC to Pilot Inmates' Use of Tablets

Remember when a tablet was defined as a number of sheets of paper fastened together at edge generally used for taking notes or writing letters? Now if you google the word "tablet" you find any number of electronic devices capable of a multitude of tasks. Many citizens use tablets in everyday life, and soon PA DOC inmates will have the opportunity to purchase and use tablets as well.

The radio has been a means of receiving information for many inmates. However, radios have many parts and pieces which can provide material for weapons and a place to conceal contraband.

To alleviate these issues, the DOC will be piloting a program at two state prisons utilizing the electronic tablets to provide the inmates with music, e-mail capability, inmate account look-up and commissary ordering.

The inmates will have the opportunity, at their own expense, to purchase the tablet in the commissary. In order to have access to music or e-mails, they will set up an account. The inmates will have access to a kiosk on the housing unit where they will connect their tablet to make their selections.

One of the advantages of technology is the capability to limit what is and isn't available on a device. The tablets will provide the inmates with a wide range of music, but the DOC will have the ability to approve what is on the list of songs the inmates can purchase and download to the tablet.

Also, when they are connected at the kiosk, inmates can receive any new e-mails and also respond to those e-mails they received. Just like answering a hand-written letter, the inmate will be able to send an e-mail to family and friends. The inmate only will be able to respond to e-mails from those individuals who have previously e-mailed them. They won't be able to initiate new e-mails to someone who has not contacted the inmate previously. The e-mails will be scanned with an automated system for words and phrases set by the DOC as concerning. In those cases, the prison's security office staff would review the e-mail and determine whether delivery of the e-mail to the inmate was in accordance with security policy and procedures.

Following the pilot program, DOC officials will review the results of the pilot. DOC officials then will fine tune the policy governing the use of such tablets throughout the DOC, educate inmates and staff about their availability and use and enter into a contract with a vendor to provide the services. At no time will taxpayer money be spent on this.

Other state DOCs that presently use tablets or similar devices include Arkansas, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, Nebraska and Virginia.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of Feb. 17 Postings...

Stanton Named DOC HR Director

Effective Feb. 16, Ty Stanton has been named director of the Department of Corrections' Bureau of Human Resources.

Having earned a bachelor of science degree in environmental health and safety management from Slippery Rock University, Stanton began his corrections career as a human resource management trainee in July 1999, having completed rotations with the Office of Administration and the Departments of Corrections and Labor & Industry. In July 2000, he worked in the DOC's Benefits Division as a human resource analyst 1. He was promoted through the ranks of human resource analysts over the next seven years, having progressively responsible duties ranging from coordinating training programs for employees, administering the employee drug and alcohol testing and workplace violence programs to representing the DOC at a variety of labor relations functions, meetings, hearings and negotiations. In April 2007, Stanton was named chief of the DOC's Labor Relations Division, where he was responsible for the overall planning, organizing and directing of DOC labor relations program.

Prior to joining the DOC, Stanton served as a health and safety consultant for a Mechanicsburg company, as a field auditor for a gas company in Pittsburgh and owned/operated a deli in Maine for three years.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of Feb. 10 Postings...

Assisting a Sister-DOC

Pennsylvania DOC's Captain D. Scott VanGorder -- head of the DOC's Drug Interdiction Unit/K-9 Academy -- recently spent two weeks in California assisting the California Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation in the training of a passive response drug detection class.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

NCIA Marketing and Sales Person of the Year

Recently, the National Correctional Industries Association (NCIA) selected PA DOC's Correctional Industries Sales and Marketing Representative Stephen Allen as the 2014 Marketing and Sales Person of the Year. He was chosen by a panel of industry professionals and the NCIA Board from a very talented and accomplished group of nominees from across the United States. The award will be formally presented at the NCIA conference in April.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Corrections U.S.A. - Medal of Valor Recipient

On Feb. 11, officials from Corrections U.S.A. announced recipients of a variety of corrections-related awards. One of the recipients of the "2014 Corrections USA Medal of Valor" is SCI Mahanoy Corrections Officer Donald Rakus.

According to Corrections U.S.A.:

On Friday September 13, 2013, at SCI Mahanoy, Officer Donald Rakus was performing the yearly tasks of physical fitness tests (PFT's) for the special teams CERT (Corrections Emergency Response Teams). Sergeant Daniel Ozlawski became non responsive. Fellow team members started calling for help. Officer Rakus immediately evaluated Sgt. Ozlawski discovering he wasn't breathing and had no pulse. Officer Rakus responded without hesitation. Officer Rakus began lifesaving CPR lasting 15 minutes until medical help arrived. Due to his professional response and training, Sgt. Ozlawski's life was saved. Officer Donald Rakus is both a Hero and a Correctional Officer. SCI Mahanoy Frackville, PA --Schuylkill County

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

DOC Transportation Hub Relocating

Effective Monday, Feb. 17, 2014, SCI Benner Township (located in Centre County) will begin serving as the central transportation hub for the Department of Corrections. Previously, SCI Smithfield served as the transportation hub. As inmates need to be moved from one state prison to another, a large number of these transports from one end of the state to another, were coordinated through Smithfield. Now, such transports will be coordinated through Benner Township, which is more centrally located. DOC officials wish to thank the administration and employees at SCI Smithfield for their work in this area.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Corrections Department Reports Slowest Growth Under Corbett Administration

(Feb. 10) -- A review of the Department of Corrections' inmate population growth by gubernatorial administration shows the smallest increase under the Corbett Administration.

For each administration the growth rate increased. While the increase continues under Gov. Corbett, it is the smallest increase since the Shapp Administration.

"This is the smallest increase for the 24 years preceding this administration," Corrections Secretary John Wetzel said. "During previous administrations, the growth averaged 1,500 inmates per year."

"We came here with a vision for corrections in Pennsylvania – not just to reform the prison system, but to transform how we respond to crime. This slowest growth in the population signals a great first step for our vision," Gov. Tom Corbett said.

"Our goal for our entire corrections system is to ensure a safer Pennsylvania both today and tomorrow. Today, by the way we operate our correctional facilities and oversee offenders in the community; and tomorrow, by reducing the future criminality of those who come through our system," Corbett said.

Upon taking office, Wetzel said that the governor set his sights on reducing corrections spending and reinvesting those funds into strategies, programs and services that make Pennsylvania's communities safer.

"Previously, Pennsylvania had been experiencing a rapid acceleration of its state prison population for several decades," Wetzel said. "In fact, the DOC's population climbed steadily to a point where it looked as though Pennsylvania was going to have to build one new state prison each year just to keep up with the growth."

"Initially, we began this administration focused on improving internal processes and improving efficiency. Then, the Justice Reinvestment Initiative passed in 2012, which began to shift policy," Wetzel said.

Wetzel said the DOC experienced a big drop in 2012. In 2013, a slight increase was experienced. While the increase was less than the drop in 2013, it was attributable to changes made to the community corrections system and to focusing on improving outcomes in that system.

"All of this leads us to being very optimistic that we are well on our way to a significant population reduction," Wetzel said.

"Instead of an early projected population growth of more than 3,500 inmates, the DOC only has experienced a growth of a total of 191 inmates between January 2011 and December 2013," Wetzel said.

"Along with changes implemented thanks to the Justice Reinvestment Initiative, fewer court commitments combined with policy changes that enable Pennsylvania to both reduce spending and increase public safety are continuing to take shape, Wetzel added.

"This is an exciting time in Pennsylvania's corrections history," Wetzel said. "We look forward to continuing our work in this area and through providing evidence-based programs that work to change offenders from being tax burdens into law-abiding tax payers."

This chart, provided by the DOC, shows the average annual inmate population increase/decrease by administration.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Culinary Program Graduation

Recently, the DOC's Training Academy held a graduation ceremony for seven inmates who recently completed a nine-week Culinary Arts program. The inmate graduates received their national ServSafe certification. Guest speaker at the graduation was Rebecca Frank, human resource manager for Harristown Enterprises, Inc. - an organization that represents the revitalization of Harrisburg and that has vested interests in the Harrisburg Hilton, Bricco, Harrisburg Property

Services, the Central Penn Conference Center and the Hilton Garden Inn at Hershey. Her speech was inspirational, uplifting and encouraging, centering on overcoming adversity.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Wernersville CCC and Habitat for Humanity

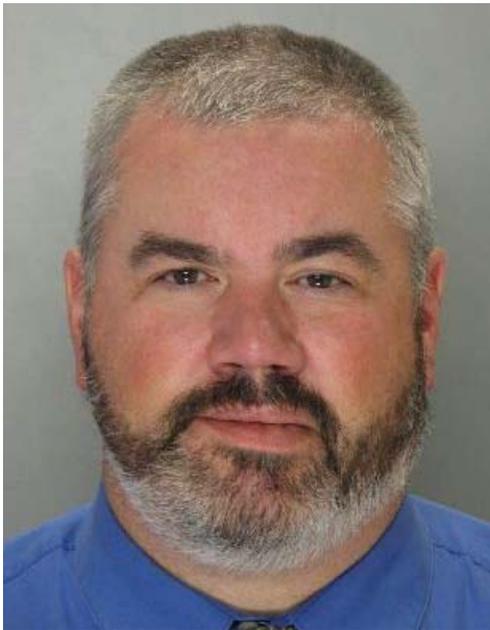
Residents continue working with Habitat for Humanity of Berks County on two projects in Reading. One on South 7th Street and another on Perkiomen Avenue, where they will do dry walling and finishing. At the Perkiomen Avenue site, residents did some final painting and cleanup work.

They also will be heavily involved in an upcoming project -- a first of its kind in the Reading area where Habitat will be doing what they call "a cluster build." The project will assist the City of Reading and the Reading Redevelopment Authority to revitalize neighborhoods and strengthen communities. Four houses will be renovated over a 16-month period. Wernersville residents will help them with much of the demolition and renovation as needed.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of Feb. 3 Postings...

Muncy Gets a New Superintendent



(Feb. 7) -- Robert L. Smith, a 23-year corrections veteran, has been appointed superintendent at the State Correctional Institution Muncy effective January 16, 2014, Secretary of Corrections John E. Wetzel announced.

"Robert's experience as an officer and his various managerial roles have provided him with a wealth of knowledge that will continue the safe and successful operation of SCI Muncy," said Secretary Wetzel.

Smith began his corrections career as a corrections officer at SCI Dallas in 1990 and transferred to SCI Coal Township in 1993. He was promoted to sergeant in 1994. Remaining at SCI Coal Township, Smith was promoted to lieutenant in 1996 and to captain in 2000. He then became a unit manager in 2005.

Smith transferred to SCI Muncy as major of the guard in 2007. He was promoted to deputy superintendent for facilities management in 2008.

Smith is a veteran of the United States Air Force serving from 1985 until 1989.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Graduation Held

Last week, 14 inmates at SCI Mercer graduated from the DOC's Certified Peer Support Specialist (CPS) program. The inmates completed a two-week, 80-hour training. The inmates had to meet specific criteria, including having had mental health treatment at some point in their lives. Now that they are certified, they may be hired to work in various areas of the prison, assisting individuals with mental health issues and providing support to those inmates. Also, these inmates must complete 18 continuing education units each year to maintain their certification.

Upon receiving his certificate, one inmate graduate shared the following poem:

The Man in the Glass

*When you get what you want in your struggle for self and the world makes
you king for a day...*

*That's when you go to the glass and you look at yourself to see what the
man has to say...*

*Although it is not your successors or friends whose judgment upon you must
pass...*

*The one whose verdict counts most in the end is the man looking back from
the glass.*

Each graduate expressed his gratitude for being selected to be a part of the Certified Peer Support Specialist program, as well as being anxious to begin helping others in his new role.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of Jan. 13 Postings...

New Chief of Clinical Services

Earlier this week Dr. Paul Noel was named the DOC's new chief of clinical services within the Bureau of Health Care Services. Dr. Noel earned a Bachelor of Science degree from the U.S. Air Force Academy in Colorado; an MD from Autonomous University of Guadalajara, Mexico; and an MBA from Liberty University, Virginia.

After graduation from family practice residency in 1986, he worked part time for SCI Greensburg. In 1994, he became the medical director at SCI Pittsburgh. During his career, he has also been medical director at SCI Somerset and SCI Greensburg. In 2005, he was named as the state medical director with our former health care vendors: PHS, Corizon and then Wexford.

Dr. Noel replaces Dr. Nicholas Scharff, who retired in December after 10 years of service.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Week of Jan. 6 Postings...

PA Department of Corrections Found To Be in Compliance with Inmate Civil Rights Following SCI Pittsburgh Review

Harrisburg - (Jan. 8) The U.S. Department of Justice (DOJ) today announced that it has completed its investigation of alleged abuse at the State Correctional Institution at Pittsburgh concluding there is insufficient evidence of any civil rights violations.

"The staff and leadership at SCI Pittsburgh, under the leadership of Department of Corrections Secretary John Wetzel, have been innovative and comprehensive in addressing the issues that were identified in the review," Governor Tom Corbett said. "This is consistent with our mission upon taking office to make Pennsylvania's correction systems safe, secure, effective and efficient for our employees and inmates."

In a letter to Corbett today, the DOJ released its findings of investigation and commended the department for thoroughly addressing the issues.

"We are pleased to report that the Department of Corrections has used the months since we opened our investigation to reform its policies and practices," the Department of Justice wrote. "Importantly, the reforms are already translating into safer prison conditions at the Pittsburgh prison and throughout the Pennsylvania prison system.

"In view of the significant reforms that have been developed in recent months - a number of which have already been implemented - we have decided to close our investigation. We greatly appreciate the cooperation of Secretary of Corrections John Wetzel and his staff have provided us throughout our investigation."

"This is a testament to the hard work, dedication and commitment of the staff at SCI Pittsburgh," Wetzel said. "In the face of adversity, they responded with the type of resolve that is representative of our organization."

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Mail for Heroes

During the recent holiday season, SCI Graterford employees, looking for a new way to share the spirit of giving, sent messages of thanks and holiday cheer to military personnel. More than 200 cards were signed and sent to soldiers through a program operated out of Maryland. Everyone hopes that the small gestures brought smiles to the faces of soldiers who couldn't be at home during the holidays.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Harrisburg CCC Residents Gave Back to the Community in 2013

The residents of the Harrisburg Community Corrections Center gave back to the community in a BIG way in 2013. They donated 33,918 items to local non-profit organizations. Here are the details...

January 2013

Coupons for Support Our Troops
6392 Coupons

February 2013

Box Tops for Education for Camp Curtin Elementary School
1501 Box Tops for Education

March 2013

Easter Basket Supplies for Homeland Center Assisted Living Center
2617 Easter Basket Supplies

April 2013

Soda Can Tabs for Ronald McDonald House
11,929 Soda Can Tabs

May 2013

Seed Packets for Green Urban Initiative
877 Seed Packets

June 2013

Personal Hygiene Items for Bethesda Mission
2090 Personal Hygiene Items

July 2013

Pairs of Socks for Shining Light Thrift Shop
659 Pairs of Socks

August 2013

Art Supplies for Jump Street
1190 Art Supplies

September 2013

School Supplies for the Scott Elementary School
1314 School Supplies

October 2013

Halloween Candy for Halloween Buckets for Gaudenzia Chambers Hill Adolescent Program
3170 Halloween Candies

November 2013
Non-perishable Food Items for Central PA Food Bank
1424 Food Items

December 2013
755 Pet Items for Harrisburg Humane Society
755 Pet Items

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Allentown CCC Residents Collect Coats

Residents of the Allentown Community Corrections Center recently held a hat/scarf/glove drive for needy children in the Lehigh Valley area. The turnout was more than expected. In all, 69 hats, 127 pairs of gloves, 9 scarfs, two pairs of socks and one winter coat were collected. Also, an additional \$100 worth of children's toys were donated. All of the items were donated to the 6th Street Shelter Program for women and children. In January, the center will collect pet food and supplies to donate to the local ASPCA.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Allentown CCC Residents Collect Toys for Tots

In November, residents of the Allentown CCC held a "Toys for Tots" drive with more than 50 toys collected. Among the toys were sports items, dolls, action figures, stuffed animals and costume jewelry. The center will host more drives in the upcoming months to benefit the Lehigh Valley.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

From the Council of State Governments Justice Center...

Pennsylvania Improves Community Corrections, Aims to Reduce Recidivism

(Jan. 7) -- By Patrick Armstrong, Policy Analyst, State Initiatives

On December 2, 2013, the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections (DOC) and the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole (PBPP) began offering a range of new reentry services to people on parole in the Commonwealth to help them succeed when returning to the community after incarceration. And thanks to partnerships with providers across Pennsylvania, the new services will soon be available in 91 different locations around the state.

The new services are the result of months of hard work by DOC and PBPP staff to overhaul their community corrections system, an effort prompted by an internal assessment in February of 2013 that revealed that some of the community-based services being provided were not only failing to reduce recidivism, but in some cases were actually increasing the likelihood of rearrest and reincarceration.[1] The internal review showed that despite an annual DOC investment of \$100 million in

residential reentry services, the state's overall recidivism rate of 60 percent indicated that these services were not having the desired impact.

The internal assessment's findings prompted state officials to restructure DOC and PBPP programs using research on what works to reduce recidivism. For example, the DOC will no longer invest only in residential services, but will instead offer a continuum of services focused on addressing individuals' risk factors.

"We are excited that our parole agents will now have an expanded set of tools to ensure people under supervision have the best chance to be successful when they return home," said Chairman of the PBPP Michael Potteiger.

DOC Secretary John Wetzel has been adamant about ensuring that the new programs reduce recidivism.

"Citizens of the Commonwealth should have every expectation of a corrections system that actually helps people correct themselves," Secretary Wetzel said. "Changes [to our system] are expected to significantly improve public safety, reduce recidivism, and lower corrections costs for the citizens of the Commonwealth in the years to come." [2]

In 2012, Governor Tom Corbett signed into law justice reinvestment legislation (Act 122), which focuses on improving supervision and increasing accountability and aims to generate savings for reinvestment into smarter corrections practices. The recent expansion of services for people on parole is an important step in achieving a key objective of Act 122—reducing recidivism.

[1]Kris

http://ccjs.umd.edu/sites/ccjs.umd.edu/files/PA%20DOC%20Recidivism%20Report%20final_0.pdf.

[2] Ibid.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Coal Township Selects Employee of the Quarter

SCI Coal Township congratulates Corrections Food Service Instructor Steven Gregory on his nomination and selection as Employee of the Quarter.

Gregory was nominated by his coworkers for his dedication to SCI Coal Township. Gregory, who volunteers locally as a fire fighter, is also a member of the FERT team. He volunteers to work many special functions and recently trained in a supervisor position. Steve is detail oriented and a conscientious employee who is an asset to the Food Service Department.

Please congratulate Mr. Gregory on his selection as Employee of the Quarter.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Psychology Office

Announced on Jan. 6, 2014, the DOC has established a Psychology Office to provide oversight for mental health and psychiatric services. Dr. Robert Marsh, chief of Psychological Services, is responsible for leading and managing this office. This organizational change separates psychology and psychiatry services from the DOC's Bureau of Health Care Services, although both offices will continue to work closely together.

The chief of psychiatry reports directly to Dr. Marsh, who reports directly to the executive deputy secretary. Dr. Marsh also supervises the DOC's mental health program manager and four regional licensed psychologist managers.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~

Eastern Regional Empowerment Symposium

In December, SCI Retreat hosted the Eastern Regional Empowerment Symposium along with SCIs Dallas and Waymart. SCI Retreat Superintendent Theresa DeIBalso welcomed the 70 corrections employees and guests to the day-long event. Deputy Secretary for the Eastern Region Michael Klopotoski welcomed everyone on behalf of the Statewide Empowerment Committee.

Pennsylvania State Police Sergeant Philip Duffy's topic was on Body Language. He showed employees how they can tell if the person they are talking to is angry or ignoring what is being said. He also discussed the difference between interrogation and interviewing where with the later, the person asking the question already knows the answers, and an interview is where questions being asked and the answers are unknown to the questioner.

SCI Chester Superintendent John C. Thomas spoke about motivation and how it relates to employees in the correctional setting. He gave the group a behavioral survey of what would be acceptable or unacceptable as a commonwealth employee, with no wrong or right answers. He also provided a handout called "Taking the Initiative," and at the end of it was an agreement form to fill out to take the initiative on any opportunities or problems that employees have knowledge of. He also presented a poem "The Cold Within" that taught employees that sharing was the right way to go in life.

SCI Retreat Lieutenant Thomas Serbin spoke about his vast knowledge of security threat groups (STGs) and how they are running rampant in prison and on the street, but that with knowledge of their signs, lingo and ways, employees can be more aware to safeguard themselves and their families. Lt. Serbin's program was so interesting that one of the comments the committee received was, "They could have listened to him speak all day!"

SCI Dallas Sergeant Richard Blaine and CO1 John Wildes demonstrated self-defense tactics and showed the group the strongest parts of bodies to use to guard and protect themselves if attacked. Officers Blaine and Wildes conduct a personal safety

awareness class at SCI Dallas that SCI Retreat employees said they would be interested in having offered at SCI Retreat.

The SCI Retreat Empowerment Committee is co-chaired by Superintendent DelBalso and Deputy Secretary for Centralized Services Kathy Brittain. Committee members include Terry Zagrosky, drug and alcohol treatment specialist; Susan Worth, clerk typist; Jeff Dengler, drug and alcohol treatment specialist supervisor; Gail Klusmeyer, clerk typist; and Vicky Leffler, unit manager. Absent from the picture: Superintendent DelBalso, Lynn Nesbitt, treatment specialist and mentoring chairperson; and Deputy Superintendent Brittain.

~ ~ ~ ~ ~