

## Our Mission

The Department of Correction shall strive to be a global leader in progressive correctional practices and partnered re-entry initiatives to support responsive evidence-based practices aligned to law-abiding and accountable behaviors. Safety and security shall be a priority component of this responsibility as it pertains to staff, victims, citizens, and offenders.

## Happy Thanksgiving

I am finding it difficult to believe that it's already Thanksgiving. With all that is going on, time seems to be flying by faster and faster.

That is why I feel it is more important than ever to stop and take stock of the many things we all have to be thankful for.

During these difficult times, it's not quite as easy to "count our blessings," but I am certain if you make the effort you will realize that we all have much to be thankful for.

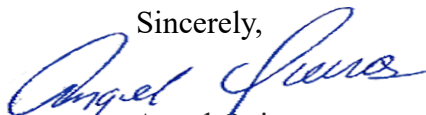
Aside from the support and love of my family, I am most grateful to all of you. The fact that you risk your own well-being to perform your duties, somehow does not surprise me, yet also simultaneously amazes me. I have said it before, and I will say it again, your efforts during the pandemic are nothing short of heroic. No matter what challenges come your way, you rise – either as individuals or collectively - to the occasion and remind everyone why the Connecticut Department of Correction is among the finest correctional agencies in the country. A special thanks to those of you who will be working this Thanksgiving – running the facilities so that the rest of us can enjoy the holiday.

Regardless of how you spend your holiday, please remember that we all have much to be thankful for and need to take more time out of our busy lives to focus on the positive things we may overlook during our daily rush to meet our many obligations.

As we enter the holiday season, I ask you all to take care of yourself physically and mentally. If you find yourself struggling during the holidays, reach out for help. The Agency has excellent resources in the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) as well as the Employee Assistance Unit (EAU). Also, if you see a colleague who is struggling, I encourage you to reach out and help them. On behalf of myself and the entire Executive Team, thank you again for everything you do. I truly appreciate your hard work and dedication, and I wish each of you a happy and healthy Thanksgiving.

Stay safe and healthy.

Sincerely,



Angel Quiros  
Commissioner

October 1, 2021  
through  
November 24, 2021

Distributed bimonthly  
to 5,500 staff  
and via the Internet  
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# The Return of the K9 Olympics

After taking a year off for safety's sake, the Connecticut Police K-9 Olympics was once again hosted by the Department of Correction on September 18, 2021. This year marked the 29<sup>th</sup> edition of the event, and the fourth time that it was held at the Officers' Beach in Enfield.



**2021 K-9 Olympics Overall Champions:  
K-9 Officer Kristen Thibault and K-9 Drobec.**  
*Photo courtesy of Sue Travers Photography*

As it has been in past years that the DOC has hosted, the event was a great success.

Not only did it draw a large number of fans and spectators, a record amount of \$14,000 was raised, which will be distributed to a variety of worthwhile charities including: Shriner's Hospital for Children; Connecticut Child Identification Program (CHIPS); and MARK-9, an organization that assists with retired K-9's medical bills.

Among the police departments and correctional organizations that participated in this year's event were: the CT Department of Correction, The MA Hampden County Sheriff's Department; the CT State Police; as well as, several municipal police K-9 Teams.

The teams competed in many on field events, including: tactical obedience, obstacles, distance obedience, and an apprehension drill.

The top finishing K-9 teams in each category were rewarded with plaques, balls and other K-9 related merchandise.

It turned out to be a great day for the hometown team, as the DOC's K-9 Officer Kristen Thibault and K-9 Drobec were crowned champions, finishing 1<sup>st</sup> Place Overall.

Additionally, K-9 Officer Jon-Paul Smith and K-9 Arrow also earned Top K-9 Team in Tactical Obedience. Congratulations to both K-9 teams, as well as all the members of the Agency's K-9 Unit.

This free event continues to be successful thanks to the collaborative efforts among the Carl Robinson facility, the District One Maintenance Office, the District Food Services Unit, the DOC's CERT Unit, the CT State Police, UConn PD, and the DOC K9 Unit.

Special thanks to: Warden Caron and the staff at Carl Robinson CI who supported the K9-Unit throughout the entirety of the event; District Manager John Deluca and the Food Services Team who coordinated all the food preparation services; Plant Facility Engineer Paul Bessette; Maintenance Supervisor Jon Goodwin and General Maintenance Officer Mike Follert of the District One Maintenance crew who put in countless hours to ensure the K-9 Olympic site was prepared and ready to go. As usual, they did not disappoint.

Thank you also to Commissioner Angel Quiros, Deputy Commissioner William Mulligan, Deputy Commissioner Sharonda Carlos and Director of Tactical Operations Ronald Cotta who continue to provide overwhelming support to the CT K9 Olympics event each and every year.

We look forward to next year's 30<sup>th</sup> Annual K-9 Olympic event being even bigger and better. Hope to see you there.



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# Two Graduations – One Pre-service Class

The Graduation of Pre-service Class 283 marked yet another example of the Department’s ability to adapt to the latest challenges presented by the on-going pandemic.

In order to observe proper social distancing and allow a family member (or loved one) to witness the graduation ceremony in person, the graduates were divided into two groups, with one graduating in the morning, while the other graduated in the afternoon. Both ceremonies were held at the Maloney Center for Training and Staff Development – in addition to being streamed live - on November 4, 2021.

Several of the participants had to perform double duty including, the members of the Executive Team, The Honor Guard and Pipe Band, Industries Supervisor Ray Monroe (singing the national anthem), and Director Chuck Williams’ words of faith.

Another Deviation from the “standard” graduation was the absence of Commissioner Quiros, who regrettably was unable to attend. Deputy Commissioner William Mulligan filled in to address, as well as swear in the group. The graduating class made up of 96 of the Department’s newest employees consisted of primarily Correction Officers. The members of Groups Bravo, Charlie, Delta, Echo, and Foxtrot participated in the morning ceremony. While Alpha, Golf, Hotel, and India group members took part in the afternoon session.

Another graduation tradition was observed twice – the presentation of awards to the outstanding members of Class 283. The recipients of the PRIDE award – given to the trainee who best represents the Department of Correction motto of PRIDE by demonstrating the values of: Professionalism, Respect, Integrity, Dignity, and Excellence – were:

- ALPHA Group: Diana Calouro, CO
- BRAVO Group: Michael Celentano, CO
- CHARLIE Group: Sarah Moyer, CO
- DELTA Group: Jasmin Jones, CO
- ECHO Group: Tayvontae Goodman, CO
- FOXTROT Group: Brandy Rivera, CO
- GOLF Group: Christian Xanvier Rivera, CO
- HOTEL Group: Matthew LaFlamme, CO
- INDIA Group: Desmond Harris, CO

The other individual honor traditionally awarded during Pre-service graduations is the Victor E. Harris - named for a deceased officer whose enthusiastic dedication and commitment to correctional education and training still lives on in the memory of DOC staff. Prior to each graduation, the Pre-Service Captain chooses an outstanding instructor who has guided the class in a special way during their training.

Due to her dedication and loyal commitment to training the Pre-Service trainees, Correction Officer Nicole Negrón was chosen as the recipient of the Victor E. Harris Jr. Outstanding Instructor Award for Class 283. Although having two ceremonies for one Pre-service Class on the same day may have seemed like (to borrow a quote from Yogi Berra), “like déjà vu all over again,” to some - it was well worth the effort in order to keep all in attendance safe, and to allow at least one family member to witness the milestone event in person.



**Deputy Commissioners Sharonda Carlos (L) and William Mulligan present a member of Pre-service Class 283 with his badge and certificate.**

# Charitable Efforts at HCC

At a meeting earlier this year, the Hartford Correctional Center’s (HCC) Quality of Work Life Committee (QWL) was discussing possible ideas for future fundraisers, when someone had the idea of raising money for breast cancer awareness. The Department had held fundraisers for breast cancer awareness in the past, such as selling the pink badges for staff to wear during the month of October. A staff member had the idea to sell pink t-shirts to staff and have all the proceeds be donated in the name of Nicole Beaulieu. Nicole worked in the Mental Health Unit at HCC and had passed away after a valiant fight with breast cancer.



**L to R: Deputy Warden Jamel Linen, Deputy Warden Devonia Long, Correctional Peace Officer Foundation’s Rich Loud, Correction Officer Robert Hetrick, Correction Officer Grace Muir, and Warden Ned McCormick.**

Mental Health staff members from the facility reached out to Nicole’s family to ask what charity that they would like the money to be given to. The family said that the Correctional Peace Officers Foundation (CPOF) had helped them with a monetary donation, and they would like to see the money go back to them.

HCC’s QWL developed a design with the Correctional Flag on the back with “Family” in silver and the Breast Cancer Awareness Ribbon on the front. HCC sold more than 80 tee-shirts and sweatshirts depicting this design.

Thanks to the generosity of its staff, HCC presented a check for \$600 on October 5, to Rich Loud of the Correctional Peace Officers Foundation in the name of Nicole Beaulieu.

# Around the Cell Block



**TENNESSEE** - The Tennessee Department of Correction (TDOC) is now offering part-time correctional officer positions to an expanded group of individuals in an effort to fill vacancies and aid in current staffing shortages. The department is seeking qualified applicants from retired law enforcement officers, current law enforcement officers seeking secondary employment, but will not shy away from direct hires with no prior experience.

**SOUTH CAROLINA** – A catapult was used to launch contraband over the fences of the Broad River Correctional Institution in Columbia South Carolina. Multiple canisters made of PVC pipe and wrapped in camouflage paper were confiscated.

**MASSACHUSETTS** - Visitors at Massachusetts state prisons will need to undergo rapid COVID- testing the MA DOC announced recently.

**Total CT DOC  
Supervised  
Population  
on  
November 24, 2021**

**12,747**

**On November 24, 2020  
the population was  
13,811**

# Trunk or Treats, DOC Style

In what appears to be an increasingly popular annual tradition, the Department of Correction hosted two separate “Trunk or Treat” events this past October.

This year marked the second annual Trunk or Treat sponsored by the Willard-Cybulski Quality of Work Life (QWL) Committee – with assistance and participation from the MacDougall-Walker, Carl Robinson, and Osborn staff. The Halloween themed event was held at the Cybulski building parking lot on October 25.

The agency wide QWL committee also hosted a Trunk or Treat event held on October 29, at the Maloney Center for Training and Staff Development.

For those unfamiliar with the concept, the idea is simple, first the participants bring their cars to a central location. The drivers and their families decorate their cars for Halloween, sometimes creating elaborate scenes out of their trunks. Then children walk from vehicle to vehicle, collecting candy the way they would during a normal trick-or-treat outing.

In preparation for the members of the agencywide QWL committee held a unique fundraising event at Fairfield Craft Ales in Stratford, CT, in which adults who donated Halloween candy received a hand-crafted ale in return. In addition to passing out candy, the Willard-Cybulski sponsored event encouraged participants to donate non-perishable food items, which in turn would be donated to the Department of Children and Families in Hartford. Safety was a top priority at the events as hand sanitizer was readily available, groups of trick- or-treaters were kept six feet apart, and masks were worn.



Lieutenant Casey Ramos as Dora the Explorer at the Training Academy Trunk or Treat.



Record Specialist Allison Ouelette (L) and Secretary Joanne McIntosh get into the spirit at the Willard-Cyulski event.

Judging from some of the elaborate costumes and creatively decorated cars, it’s hard to say who enjoyed the events more – the children or the adults. Suffice it to say, a good time was had by all.



Correctional Counselor Jilena Cichon passes out candy from her basketball themed car.

# “What’s Better about Me as a Person as a Result of Working in Corrections?”

by Gregory Morton, M.Sc.

*This article is reprinted with permission from Correctional Oasis, Volume 18, Issue 8, August, 2021*

Desert Waters’ course entitled *From Corrections Fatigue to Fulfillment*<sup>TM</sup> covers a great deal of territory. It allows staff to explore the challenges inherent to the corrections profession; it validates the difficult times that staff may have experienced on and off the job trying to handle those challenges; it gives groups the time and opportunity to ask themselves, “What are WE going to do about it?”; and it even connects our work life to our home life.

And then, late in the afternoon, it asks the question found in the title of this article: “What’s better about me as a person as a result of working in corrections?” Answers vary of course. That’s the beauty of it. But my favorite answer has come to be, “I’ve never thought to ask myself that question.” So let’s spend a few minutes and do just exactly that.

What’s better about you as a person as a result of having worked in corrections?

Are you more dependable and reliable? “Yes,” people say. “I understand the consequences of not following through or not being available when somebody needs me, because of all the times it’s happened to me.” Or, “Doing something so that people don’t trust me anymore? I can’t live with that.”

Are you grateful for the good things you have in life? “Oh boy, absolutely,” people say. “Having my freedom limited would be terrible.” “I don’t take my freedom for granted anymore.”

And how about being able to respond to problems other people want to ignore? Or being able to talk to difficult people that everyone else in your family is afraid of? A lot of those answers end up being real stories, “The neighbor’s dog got hit by a car and broke its leg. They just lost it and didn’t know what to do.” Or, “There was this time at a family picnic ....”

Are you more honest, more accountable? A lot of people say “Yes” to that. “I would much rather have someone like my boss hear from me first about what I did than from someone else. Hiding something only makes it worse. Even when it’s hard. Especially when it’s hard.” Or, “Not facing up to the mistakes I’ve made is a slippery slope. Once someone gets comfortable doing that, they can cause all kinds of damage to others and not care.”

But what is most amazing about the answers people give, regardless of what they are, is the shift in tone in the room that comes with the answers. The room becomes filled with a sense of pride and integrity, an unshakeable confidence, a reality that is both genuine and very, very strong. Most people don’t have to do what we do. Most people don’t have to adapt and overcome like we do. Most people don’t have to face the very worst in life and handle it with fortitude and courage. And then come back the next day to do it all over again. And again.

So why don’t we ask ourselves that question more frequently? We’re really good at asking the opposite – why this work has caused us to gain weight, or to be grouchy, or to get divorced, or call in sick when we’re not, or to drink too much, or only sit with our backs to the wall in public, or to not even go out in public anymore, and so on.

Ask corrections employees what they don’t like about the job or their agency or their facility or office, and get ready for a 60-minute monologue about every rock they’ve ever had in their shoe. Frankly, that question is easy to answer. In fact, too easy.

## Staying Positive - Staying the Course

Motorcycle enthusiasts from the Bridgeport Correctional Center organized a fundraising motorcycle run back in June of this year to benefit their co-worker Correction Officer William Harrington, who has courageously been battling repeated incidents of cancer. Regrettably, the ride had to be cut short due to a tragic accident and the subsequent passing of Correction Officer Edison Clarke.

In memory of Officer

Clarke and continued support of Officer Harrington some of the Bridgeport facility staff members came together on October 16 to complete the unfinished ride.

Bridgeport Correctional Center's Warden, Carolyn McClendon commends their perseverance as well as their efforts to stay positive in the face of hardship.



The "Will Power" team displays their will power to finish what they started.

## HR Super Team Member Achievement Winners



Human Resource Generalist  
Lindsey MacDonald

**For July – September, 2021**

**Lori Dempsey, Human Resources Generalist 2**

**Joana Reis, Human Resources Generalist 2**

Lori and Joana are being recognized for their tireless work on the closure of the Northern Correctional Institution, while maintaining all of their Human Resources duties at their respective facilities.

**For October – December, 2021**

**Lindsey MacDonald, Human Resources Generalist 2**

Lindsey is always available to assist her co-workers. She makes herself available to her facilities and co-workers at any time needed, no matter how late or early in the day. If you need to talk through a matter or just vent to keep your own sanity, she is always there to listen and support you. She consistently tries to do the right thing for her facilities and co-workers and will speak on their behalf.

Although, she oversees two facilities while supporting additional Central Office employees, she is always willing to assist by covering an additional facility when necessary.

Lindsey is a pleasure to work alongside.

## Kickball for a Cause

The Department of Correction’s Employee Wellness Committee hosted the first annual kickball tournament to benefit Special Olympics Connecticut on September 25, 2021.

The event was held at Bucks Hill Park in Waterbury with a total of seven teams competing for the championship trophy, as well as bragging rights. With daylight fading, the team from the Hartford Corrections Center (which included Warden Ned McCormick and Deputy Warden Devonia Long) named, “New Kicks on the Block,” emerged victorious. On behalf of all the teams who participated, The Wellness Committee was able to present a check for \$1,200 to Special Olympics Connecticut.



Hartford CC’s, “New Kicks on the Block” - Kickball Champions

## What’s Better About You? from page 6

I’ve come to believe that answering “What’s better about me as a person as a result of working in Corrections?” is the fundamental, threshold question on the path to Corrections Fulfillment. That is, it is the required first step on the path. Until we ask ourselves this question, until we each individually conduct the necessary personal assessment to determine what really is better about ourselves as a result of our career choice, we are doomed to be stuck in the cycle of Corrections Fatigue. The question, “How am I a better person?” is the doorway out.

The greater, more academic, and also more dramatic concept here is known as Posttraumatic Growth (PTG). As a culture we’ve started to spend a lot of time focusing on Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). And rightfully so. It is a devastating condition if not responded to. But PTG is as valid a psychological concept as PTSD is, and it may well have functionally opposite, neurobiological effects.

PTG is a universal phenomenon and has been well established throughout human history. The arts, specifically literature, drama and, more recently, cinema, are crowded with centuries of stories of people transforming themselves as a result of the barriers they have had to overcome. We are entertained by those stories every day. And yet, we rarely apply them to ourselves and our chosen career. We may have experienced real, direct trauma at work. It happens. We all know that. Or we may have experienced indirect trauma through reading, viewing, or just hearing and talking about traumatic events. In either case, trauma has been a part of our professional lives. And while it may have influenced us negatively, as we are, oh, so eager to tell people, our ability to overcome it has influenced us positively as well.

So, as you continue on your path to Corrections Fulfillment, it is good to frequently stop and ask yourself, “What’s better about me as a person as a result of having worked in corrections? How have I grown? How have I been transformed? What is stronger about me, smarter, tougher, more resilient?”

And once you have those answers, share them.