

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.

From the Commissioner



I am pleased to share with you that Governor Lamont's nomination of me to serve as the Commissioner of the Department of Correction has been ratified. Last week, on April 12, the State Senate voted unanimously (36-0) to approve my nomination and officially confirm me as the Commissioner. I am truly humbled and grateful to Governor Lamont and the state legislators for their faith in me.

I am also grateful to all of you - the staff of this great agency - for your continued commitment, hard work and dedication to the achievement of our shared goals.

Speaking of achieving goals, as announced back in January of this year, the plan to close the Willard building has been carried out, and as of April 1, the facility was officially closed.

Once again, I owe a debt of gratitude to all the staff members that worked diligently to make this closure possible.

I am proud to say that as in the case of both the Northern and Radgowski facilities closings, all three of these complex operations were executed seamlessly. From the correctional staff at the facility, to our human resource partners, as well as our union leaders - everyone, once again, stepped up to the plate to see this mission through to completion.

What gives me the most pleasure with regards to the three facility closures, is that there have been no layoffs associated with any of them.

Know that I do not take the disruption that these closures have had on our staff members' personal lives lightly. Change is not easy, but the reality is, it is sometimes necessary.

As the population count has stabilized over the last year, it is my hope that there will not be a need for any additional facility closures in the near future. Once again, thank you again for your dedication and commitment to the mission of this agency - I appreciate it more than you can know.

It is through your efforts and vigilance that we can provide a safer environment not only for the individuals under our care, but for the staff, and for the citizens in the community as well. I look forward to working together with all of you moving forward, and I am excited for what the future holds. As always, take care of yourselves and each other, and stay safe.

February 1, 2023

through

April 20, 2023

Distributed bimonthly

to 5,500 staff

and via the Internet

throughout Connecticut

and the nation

by the

Department of Correction

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A Healing Hound

The Department's K9 Unit has its first ever therapy/comfort dog

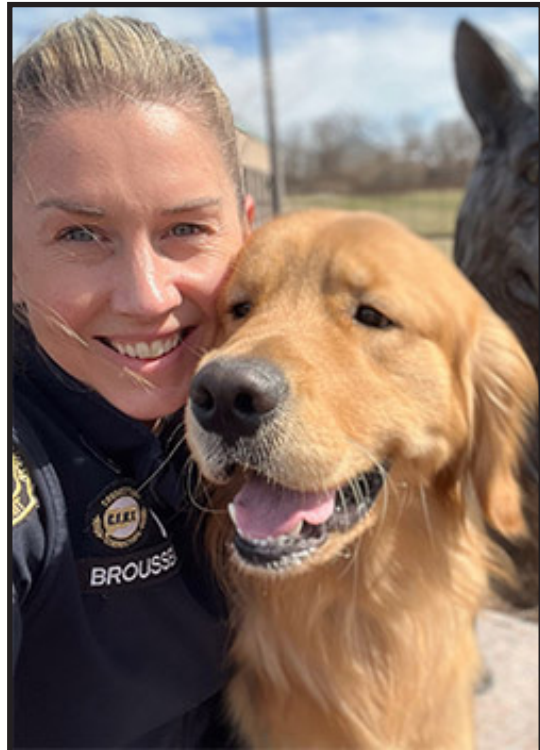
Words like adorable, cute and cuddly are not usually associated with the dogs of the Department of Correction's K9 Unit. That is until now, since the K9 Unit has its very own comfort/therapy dog named Semper Fi.

K9 Semper (as he is affectionately called) is a one-and-a-half year old Golden Retriever, and was donated to the DoC by Powder Hill Goldens in Lebanon, Connecticut. K9 Officer Kristen Brosseau was selected to be Semper's handler, and the team is the midst of attending class together to obtain their therapy/comfort dog certification through the Connecticut State Police's K9 Training Academy. They will graduate from the program on April, 22.

In addition to the State Police training, K9 handler Brosseau and Semper graduated from the DoC's Critical Incident Stress Response Team (CISRT) Basic Training Class on March 24, 2023. Semper's primary role for the agency will be to support overall employee wellness, as well as providing an additional resource for CISRT when they respond to facilities.

The K9 team has already begun meeting some staff members at the agency's facilities as part of their training. Not surprisingly, Semper is very social and has a huge personality - eager to meet as many people as he can. He has already brought so much joy to those who have been lucky enough to meet him.

Aside from meeting staff throughout the department, the K9 team has also participated in a community college career fair, and an elementary school K9 Unit demonstration.



K9 Officer Kristen Brosseau and Semper

Research has shown that there are many benefits associated with therapy dogs. The simple act of petting can result in the reduction of stress hormones (cortisol) and increase attachment responses that trigger oxytocin – a hormone that increases trust in humans. Some clinical trials have shown that therapy dogs may reduce a patient's perceptions of pain.

Additionally, research has shown that therapy dog also enjoys doing the work it was trained to do. At the end of the day, it is a win-win-win situation for the K9 handler, the K9, and for the staff who get to interact with Semper.



K9 Semper with Correction Officer Timothy Pitts



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An Uplifting Experience

Thanks to her willingness to go above and beyond in her duties as a Human Resources Generalist II, Joana Reis was able to fly high above the Department of Correction's facilities as part of the Connecticut Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve Program's (ESGR) Boss Lift Event.

The event, held on April 7, 2023, gave civilians who had been nominated for the opportunity the chance to see what Army and Air National Guard members do during drills and annual training. The event was comprised of a full day of activities, which included tours of the C-130 Hercules, the aircraft engine shop and training facilities, a military working dog demonstration, and highlighted by a flight on a Chinook helicopter.



Human Resources Generalist 3, Joana Reis got a close-up look of a UH-60 Blackhawk helicopter.

ESGR, a Department of Defense office, was established in 1972 to promote cooperation and understanding between Reserve Component Service members and their civilian employers and to assist in the resolution of conflicts arising from an employee's military commitment.

Ms. Reis was selected to participate in the event after being nominated by Correctional Lieutenant Marcos Batista, who is a Sargent First Class with the Connecticut National Guard. Back in 2021, Batista was deployed to Africa, he was also in the process of trying to purchase a home, and he needed various work-related documents to complete the application.

Because he was having difficulty obtaining the information across continents, the bank actually suspended the home buying process.

Even though she was no longer his human resources representative, the first person Batista thought of reaching out to for help was Reis. After explaining the issue to her, Reis willingly took on the task of gathering the necessary documents and forwarding them to the bank.

"I am not the only one that she has extended this type of service," wrote Batista in nominating Reis for the award. "I just want to bring her efforts to light and show my appreciation for her dedication to her job, and the exemplary service she provides to veterans in the department."

In addition to the Boss Lift event, Lieutenant Batista also nominated Reis for the Patriot Award, which recognizes supervisors and bosses nominated by a Guardsman or Reservist employee for support provided directly to the nominator.

ESGR has served our country for more than 50 years, fostering a culture in which employers support and value the military service of members of the National Guard and Reserve in the United States. These citizen warriors could not defend and protect us at home and abroad without the continued promise of meaningful civilian employment for themselves and their families.

As for Human Resources Generalist 3, Reis, it was a day she will not soon forget, highlighted by an aerial view of the MacDougall- Walker facility where she had worked for four years. Ultimately, she was happy to have provided a service to someone who serves our country and protects our freedoms.



The view from the back of a Chinook Helicopter.

Corrigan's Opioid Treatment Program Accredited

45 out of 45 Standards Met

The Opioid Treatment Program Accreditation and Standards Committee of the National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC), during its meeting on February 10, 2023, voted to continue to accredit the Opioid Treatment Program of the Corrigan Correctional Center for its compliance with NCCHC's Standards for Opioid Treatment Programs in Correctional Facilities.



Corrigan's Warden, Robert Martin was notified of the good news via a letter dated February 13, from the NCCHC's Vice President of Accreditation, Amy Panagopoulos. They also received a separate certificate of accreditation to commemorate the accomplishment.

The NCCHC is dedicated to improving the health services in prisons, jails, and juvenile confinement facilities. Incorporated in 1983, its roots are in the early 1970s as a project of the American Medical Association. NCCHC is federally approved to provide standards and accreditation for opioid treatment programs (OTP) in correctional facilities; accordingly, it has developed standards that represent its requirements for management of such programs.

The NCCHC's onsite review for initial accreditation of the Corrigan facility's OTP was conducted on January 12-13, 2023. Of the 45 standards that were applicable to this Corrigan facility, all 45 (100%) were found to be in compliance.

In their report following the review, the accreditors commended the facility staff for their professional conduct, assistance, and candor during the course of our review.

It is anticipated that the next scheduled on-site survey of the program will occur sometime after July 12, 2025. Based on the rules and regulations of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the facility's accreditation is valid until February 28, 2026.

Congratulations to Warden Martin, the health services and all the staff members of the Corrigan Correctional Center.

Around the Cell Block

WASHINGTON — Democrats in the State Senate appear to be fast-tracking a bill that would allow the Department of Corrections to stockpile and distribute 30,000 doses of the abortion pill Mifepristone in advance of a controversial Texas decision to lift FDA approval.

ALABAMA - For years, the Alabama Department of Corrections has been under a federal lawsuit to increase correctional staff, but it is at an all-time low. One member of Alabama's Legislature suggested training inmates so when released; they can become correctional officers themselves.

SOUTH CAROLINA - Two Berkeley County men are facing charges after officials say they attempted to bring contraband to inmates in Lee County. Authorities found the two men near the Lee Correctional Institution with four pounds of tobacco connected to a drone.

**Total CT DOC
Supervised
Population**

**on
April 20, 2023**

13,104

**On April 20, 2022
the population was
12,989**

State Police Citations

Not one, not two, but three Department of Correction staff members were recognized during the recent Connecticut State Police Awards Ceremony held at the State Police Training Academy in Meriden.

During the ceremony - in front of their peers, the three were recognized for their willingness to assist the State Police as well as their fellow citizens.

A Lifesaving Award was presented to Licensed Practical Nurse Robert Bonetti for his role in attempting to save the life of a driver on Interstate 91 on Feb. 4, 2022. Bonetti, who has spent the last 18-years working at the MacDougall-Walker Correctional Institution, immediately pulled over to find a limousine driver who had lost consciousness, was not breathing, and had no pulse. Without hesitating Bonetti jumped in to assist the Troopers, who had already removed the driver from the vehicle and laid him on the highway.

Bodycam footage showed the crew out on the highway performing CPR on the patient in the pouring rain. Once the Emergency Medical Services (EMS) team arrived, Bonetti and the Troopers continued to assist. A pulse was soon detected in the ambulance, though the driver was still not breathing on his own.

A Unit Citation award was also presented to the Security Division's Correction Officer James Peracchio in recognition of his efforts to help solve a case in which a vehicle, three shotguns and federal law enforcement credentials were stolen out of Cheshire back in 2021.

Another Unit Citation award was given to Parole Officer Kendall Howlett for her efforts to reduce crime in the City of Hartford during 2020.

All three individuals are excellent examples of the importance of various agencies working together to enhance public safety. Congratulations to all on their well-deserved awards.



State Police Award Winners (L-R): LPN Robert Bonetti, Parole Officer Kendall Howlett, and Correction Officer James Peracchio.

Moss Group Visit

The Moss Group, a criminal justice and public safety consulting firm, visited several of the department's facilities on April 4-6.

The purpose of their visit was to collect information in order to provide guidance for best practices for correctional academies, and eventually share the promising practices they observed.

While here, the Moss Group consultants toured the following facilities: Maloney Center for Training and Staff Development, Cheshire Correctional Institution, Cybulski Correctional Institution, York Correctional Institution, Central Office (Human Resources, Fiscal, External Affairs), and Parole and Community Services.

In addition to touring the facilities, the consultants also interviewed various individuals at each site.

Recovery Advocate of the Year

Congratulations to the Department of Correction Addiction Treatment Unit's Director, Sandra Violette for receiving the 2023 Michael Askew Recovery Advocate of the Year Award.

The annual award is given by the Connecticut Community for Addiction Recovery (CCAR). Founded in 1998, CCAR initially focused solely on advocacy for the recovery community, and evolved into also providing recovery support services.

Michael Askew was a devoted member of the CCAR staff and, until his retirement in 2021, served as Director of Recovery Advocacy. Michael dedicated his entire career to the recovery community. A true recovery advocacy warrior, Michael received countless awards and distinguished honors in recognition of his work. An incredible beacon of hope and a true inspiration to anyone he met, Michael would often say his role with CCAR was an opportunity to, "give back what was so freely given to him."

To honor his legacy, CCAR created the Michael Askew Recovery Advocate of the Year Award, awarded annually to one carefully considered individual whose efforts have helped inspire, organize, unify, and strengthen the recovery community throughout the year.



Brian McManus, a Program Manager for CCAR, works closely with the Department of Correction's Addiction Treatment Unit staff, nominated Director Violette for the award.

In nominating Director Violette, Mr. McManus wrote:

Sandra Violette has been a strong Advocate for the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated population struggling with substance use disorders. Under her leadership, the Connecticut Department of Correction has expanded its use of Medications for opioid use disorder (MOUDS), implemented recovery coaches both in the facilities and as part of the re-entry process, and has made Narcan distribution a priority to individuals being released from DOC facilities. She has also recently started a program that provides support to the families of returning citizens

by providing them access to a care coordinator and Narcan training. Sandra Violette is a person of action that when she sees an area of need she does her best to address that need and implement solutions and supports. She is a solution driven advocate for individuals in the cycle of substance use and incarceration. She has also previously served on the board of the Connecticut Council on Problem Gambling.

The award was presented to Director Violette during the CCAR's annual meeting on February 10, 2023, at the organization's new Recovery Community Center in Waterbury.

Please join the Director of Health Services, Robert Richeson, Commissioner Quiros, and the entire Executive Team in congratulating Addiction Treatment Unit Director Sandra Violette on receiving this well-deserved award.

Taking the Plunge

Three staff members from the Hartford Correctional Center braved the icy waters of Crystal Lake in Middletown on Saturday, February 25, 2023, as part of a fundraiser for Special Olympics Connecticut. In the midst of a winter that had been very mild, the trio of Correction Officer Jermaine Pienkowski, Lieutenant Casey Ramos and Correction Officer Pedro Rodriguez were unfortunate enough to take the plunge on one of the few days that it actually snowed. Undeterred, the three braved the cold, and were none the worse for wear.

Thanks in part to the efforts of the Hartford Correctional Center's crew; the Middletown Penguin Plunge raised more than \$41,000 for Special Olympic of Connecticut.

The annual Penguin Plunge events across the state provide financial support for Special Olympics Connecticut, which provides year-round sports training and competitions for over 10,000 athletes of all ages with intellectual disabilities and Unified Sports partners - their teammates without disabilities. Through the joy of sport, the Special Olympics movement transforms lives and communities throughout the state and in 172 countries around the world by promoting good health and fitness and inspiring inclusion and respect for all people, on and off the playing field.



L-R: Correction Officer Jermaine Pienkowski, Lieutenant Casey Ramos & Correction Officer Pedro Rodriguez.

A Fathers' Day of Sorts



L- R: Counselor Supervisors Mercilla Roach, and Adrienne Kerwin, Director Elisha Chornoby, Deputy Warden Brian D. Moore, and Counselor Supervisor Melissa Santiago.

Once again, the Department of Correction was well represented at the annual New England Fathering Conference, held on March 10, 2023, in Newport Rhode Island. The agency has been involved with the conference since its inception, and currently holds multiple positions on the Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative as well.

Established in 1999, the Connecticut Fatherhood Initiative is a statewide collaborative effort focused on improving fathers' ability to be fully and positively involved in the lives of their children. This year, Director Elisha Chornoby, Counselor Supervisor Adrienne Kerwin, Counselor Supervisor Mercilla Roach, Counselor Supervisor Melissa Santiago and Deputy Warden Brian D. Moore had the honor of representing the department. They participated in a round table discussion, fielding questions related to the DoC's programming, and re-entry initiatives, as well as

efforts to connect incarcerated fathers with their children. The conference was a success and the participants left with renewed motivation to expand the department's participation in supporting the Fatherhood Initiative.

HR Super Team Member Achievement Award Recipients

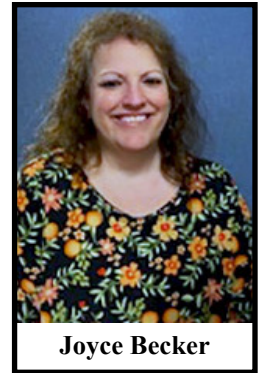
April – June, 2023

Joyce Becker, HR Generalist 2

Joyce ensures the utmost professionalism in every process. She is a hard worker, who is detailed, fair, compassionate, and very thoughtful and ensures there is integrity and objectivity throughout her processes.

Joyce inspires a team mentality and handles a high volume of issues and does it all with compassion and consistency.

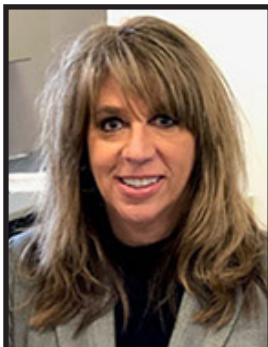
Joyce is a phenomenal communicator and is always available to discuss any concerns. She is always happy to problem-solve and provide feedback. Additionally, she takes it to the next level to educate herself and the staff member on any situation that may arise. Joyce goes above and beyond countless times with no hesitation.



Joyce Becker

January – March 2023

Michelle Mendocha, Administrative Assistant



Michelle Mendocha

Michelle has exemplified herself as an effective team player, communicator, and bridge-builder and as an employee of hardworking, high moral character. She works a dual role to support the Human Resources Department, as well as, the Employee Assistant Unit. She is a highly engaging professional, well liked and well respected. She treats others with respect and professionalism. She has demonstrated drive, passion and enthusiasm in her work. Michelle has involved herself with DoC initiatives to further support, engage DoC staff, and has become a well-rounded employee. She responds to work emails, calls and requests at all hours and days (including nights and weekends). She is thorough and is critical thinking. She has helped to promote a solid collaborative partnership and relationship between two distinct yet related units. She goes above and beyond.

October – December 2022

Lindsey MacDonald, HR Generalist 2

Lindsey made herself available to mentor new employees by providing training and useful tips so they may work efficiently and effectively. She continues to be an essential resource to the new hires and exemplifies what it means to be a team player.

Lindsey is always available to assist her coworkers. She makes herself available to her facilities and coworkers at any time needed, no matter how late or early in the day. If you need to talk through a matter she is always there to listen and support you.

She consistently tries to do the right thing for her facilities and co-workers.

Lindsey is a pleasure to work with.



Lindsey MacDonald