



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 want to address a topic that is of paramount importance to me – your safety.

It is true that the potential for danger is a daily reality within a correctional setting and is always present, but let me be clear; violence towards staff is not acceptable and will not be tolerated.

Let me further assure you that the recent uptick in assaults on staff are not being taken lightly, and steps have been taken to minimize the risks and improve the overall safety of the correctional environment.

To that end, a committee has been formed, led by Deputy Commissioner William Mulligan, for the purposes of reviewing the department's restrictive housing policies, with the underlying goal of increasing staff safety.

We are also in the process of hiring an independent, external criminal justice consulting group, which will also assess the agency's current programs to identify ways of maintaining the highest standards of safety for our staff.

When it comes to safety we must all do our part. Staying vigilant and supporting one another is critical in any line of work, it is even more important within a correctional setting. Vigilance and being supportive promotes a sense of unity and collective strength.

As always, thank you for your dedication to this agency.

Your selfless efforts in carrying out the department's critical mission of public safety is a tribute to our honorable profession.

I promise to do everything in my power to make sure each one of you return home safely after each shift to your loved ones.

Please stay vigilant, and safe.

Respectfully,

Angel Quiros
Commissioner

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through
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31st K9 Olympics

The Last Tango for Captain Trifone and his K9 Partner

The 31st Annual Connecticut K9 Olympics, which took place on Saturday, September 16, was dedicated to the Department of Correction's K9 Unit's leader, Captain Josh Trifone.

Captain Trifone competed for the final time- after 21 years of service - with his K9 Partner Tango before their retirement on October 1, 2023.

The team of Trifone and Tango won first place overall in 2017, and 2019 before making the decision to take a backseat on competing, so Captain Trifone could focus his attentions on running and organizing the event. He has been at the heart of the event for several years now, and has implemented changes to make it better every year. The K9 Olympics Community will truly miss him.

Correctional Enterprises Manager Ray Munore kicked off the event by performing a stirring rendition of the national anthem. The anthem was followed by a moment of silence to honor Detective Robert "Bobby" Garten of the Hartford Police Department, who died after his cruiser was struck by a car speeding through a red light while evading a traffic stop earlier this month.



Captain Josh Trifone and K9 Tango competing in their last K9 Olympics.



**DoC K9 Olympic Winners (L-R):
CO JP Smith, CO James Hensley, Capt. Josh Trifone,
CO Jared Suprenant, and CO Sean Kelly**

Of the total 33 K9 teams that had registered, 29 teams ended up competing in the K9 Olympics, which saw record crowds this year. Correctional Food Service Supervisors cooked 1,000 hot dogs and hamburgers for spectators to purchase and enjoy. Commemorative T-Shirts were all sold-out.

The department's Correctional Emergency Response Team (CERT) was on hand, assisting with the heavy traffic flow and parking which ultimately went to overflow lots. The agency's District 1 maintenance staff members assisted with prepping the competition fields, ensuring all the obstacles were safe for the K9s to navigate. The festivities were truly a collaborative effort that ultimately led to the K9 Unit being able to raise more than \$11,000 for local charities.

The DoC K9 Unit did not disappoint, garnering five out of the seven top awards, including:

2nd Place Overall - Correction Officer Sean Kelly & K9 Knauss

3rd Place Overall - Correction Officer Jared Surprenant & K9 Grim

1st Place Obstacles - Correction Officer James Hensley & K9 Khaos

1st Place Obedience - Captain Josh Trifone & K9 Tango

1st Place Criminal Apprehension - Officer JP Smith & K9 Arrow

Thank you to everyone who attended, and to everyone who helped in making the event a huge success - a truly fitting sendoff for Captain Trifone and K9 Tango.

An Empowering Experience

The Annual Women in Corrections Conference – a must attend event

With the motto of, “I can, I will, I must,” more than 300 of the Department of Corrections female employees took part in the third annual Women In Corrections Leadership Summit held August 17 and 18, at the Maloney Center for Training and Staff Development.

Each year, the goal of the event is to identify, empower and prepare women of the Connecticut Department of Correction for roles in leadership throughout the Agency.

Once again, the two-day event featured an impressive array of guest speakers including several of the State’s political leaders, such as Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz, State Representative Robyn Porter, State Senator Heather Summers, and Chief Public Defender Tashaun Brown-Lewis. Other speakers included some of the Department’s own, such as Commissioner Angel Quiros, Deputy Commissioner Sharonda Carlos, Equal



The Women in Corrections Leadership Executive Committee
Photo Credit: Alyssa Ashley



Retired Deputy Warden Yadira Otero is introduced at the conference.
Photo Credit: Alyssa Ashley

Employment Opportunity Director Holly Quackenbush Darin, K9 Handler Kristen Brousseau, as well as retired Deputy Warden Yadira Otero. Additionally, author and Life Coach Kim De-Young gave an insightful presentation about the importance of intentional decision-making.

One of the particular poignant presentations was when retired Deputy Warden Otero spoke candidly about her battle with breast cancer. It was a true source of inspiration to see her at the conference - happy and healthy.

In addition to the insightful and thought provoking presentations, the event provided plenty of opportunities for the participants to network, share ideas, catch up with old friends and to make some new ones.

The attendees were able to share their unique experiences and reassure each other that everyone faces challenges in their day to day work, and that you are not alone in dealing with them.

A special thank you to all those who worked tirelessly to ensure that this year’s Women in Corrections Leadership Summit was such a memorable and impactful experience. By all accounts, the summit was a resounding success, and plans are already underway for an even better conference next year.

Parole & Community Services Staff Appreciation & Awards Day

The Division of Parole and Community Services (P&CS) held its annual Staff Appreciation Day and Awards Ceremony at the Maloney Center for Training and Staff Development on July 21, 2023. The event, held in conjuncture with the observance of National Parole Appreciation Week, marked a return to “normal,” as the traditional annual event had not been held – thanks to the pandemic - since 2019.

The Department’s Honor Guard added an air of pageantry to the ceremony with the posting of the colors, along with a beautiful rendition of the national anthem, sung by Parole’s own Michele Jones – who works as a Secretary II for the P&CS Deputy Directors.

**The 2023 Parole and Community Services
Award Recipients**

Parole Officer of the Year: Parole Officer **Jose Cartagena**
 Director’s Award: Counselor Supervisor **Nicole Grimaldi**
 Dana Laudati Award: Parole Officer **Michael Winakor**
 Leadership Award: Parole Supervisor **Brian Plourd**
 Employee of the Year: Secretary II **Kim Karas**
 Meritorious Service Award: Parole Officers **Jen Schepp,**
Erica Richardson, Megan DeVylder and **Anthony DelPaine**
 Professional Partners: External-**POST Staff,** Internal-**MCTSD Staff**
 Good Vibes Award: Parole Officer **William Ludovico**
 First One In Award: Parole Officer **Marvin Flores**

Once everyone was settled in, Norwich Parole Office Supervisor Christopher Sullivan took to the podium to thank the members of the awards committee for their hard work, dedication and commitment to recognize and appreciate their co-workers. He also, acknowledged PC&S Director Rhianna Gingras for her ongoing support and encouragement of the Division’s staff. Parole Supervisor Sullivan also thank the PC&S staff as well, for their participation in the various fundraisers conducted throughout the year. Last, but not least, he also thanked the Honor Guard for their participation in opening and closing the ceremony. Director Gingras offered opening remarks and followed by Commissioner Quiros, who address the Parole staff as well.

Thank you again to everyone who helped make the day possible, and to those who were being celebrated, the hardworking men and women of the Parole and Community Services Division.

Around the Cell Block

CALIFORNIA - The new zero-bail policy took effect in L.A. County on October 1, 2023 despite the objections of many law enforcement and civic leaders. The policy allows some criminal suspects accused of non-violent or non-serious crimes to be cited and released when they would have previously been held on bond.

FLORIDA — The Florida Department of Corrections plans to allocate \$1 million to a new program that will make a small number of phone calls free for people serving time in prison who display good behavior. Starting in October, incarcerated people who do not receive a disciplinary report for three months will be eligible to make a free 15-minute phone call as part of a pilot program.

INDIANA – Civil rights advocates are suing Indiana’s Department of Corrections over the state’s law, past in April, prohibiting gender-affirming surgery for inmates.

**Total CT DOC
Supervised
Population
on
October 12, 2023
13,214
On October 12, 2022
the population was
13,071**

Meet the Director

This is the first of a series of profiles of DoC administrators to include directors, wardens and others.

Meet David Santiago, Director of Religious Services

What is your background with the DoC?

I was hired in 2014 as a Protestant Chaplain. I began my career at Hartford CC. I have also worked at Brooklyn CI, Robinson CI, Cheshire CI, and New Haven CC.

What did you do prior to joining DoC?

Prior to coming to the DOC as a chaplain, I was serving as pastor to a local congregation. I continue to do that today in addition to working for the DOC. I've been at the church for 25 years.

Briefly explain your current duties/responsibilities?

My duties and responsibilities correspond to four areas:
Supervision of Religious Programming across the State
Administrative Function shaped by legal parameters (State and Federal Law), procedural parameters (adherence to administrative directives), organizational parameters (efficient systems/processes) and clinical parameters (ethical, psychological, sociological and theological considerations).

Leadership, which includes a visionary adaptation of operations to address significant changing circumstances.

Development, which aims to better align operations with the Unit Mission Statement.

What do you think most people don't realize about your job/role?

Most people do not realize that the vast majority of the work of the Director of Religious Services is grounded more on State and Federal Law than "religion." In almost every situation my first question is: "Can the department get sued over this?"

What is your biggest challenge as Director?

Out of necessity, the Religious Services Unit will have to negotiate major changes in its immediate future. Successful and sustainable change requires leadership that has earned the trust and confidence of stakeholders. Accumulating trust credits requires time. Having just started, I don't assume I have earned the required trust yet. My biggest challenge is earning more trust in short period of time.

What is your favorite aspect of being the Director/what do you like most about your job?

I equate being the Director of Religious Service to being the Pastor of the Agency. As the Pastor of the Agency, I can reach out and encourage whomever I want, and not need a reason to do so. To be clear, I did that work as a chaplain in my assigned facilities. Now, the entire State is my facility. That's what I like most about my job.

What is the primary thing you would like to accomplish as Director?

I am a champion of staff wellness. I fully support the Agency's three-prong approach of mind, body, and spirit. The spirit component of the initiative corresponds to the Unit's mandate to "offer trauma-informed presence grounded in dignity" to all staff. Facilitating that across the Agency is my primary goal.



**Director of Religious Services
David Santiago**

HITEC Training

A group of correctional officers, counselors, nurses and other frontline workers, attended an all-day Health Improvement Through Employee Control (HITEC) Facilitator Training at the UCONN Health Center in Farmington on July 10, 2023. A total of 15 staff members participated in the training, which was led by retired Captain Wayne Cole, and Matthew Brennan, HITEC Project Manager from UConn Health's Department of Occupational and Environmental Medicine.



York CI's HITEC Design Team Facilitators include (L-R): Jeff Picardi, Tasha Young, Lisa Hodges, and Kendra Clark.

HITEC is a collaborative program between the UCONN Health and the DoC administration, correctional staff, and their bargaining units. The newly trained facilitators will lead design teams of front-line workers in the HITEC Healthy Workplace Participatory Program (HWPP). The HWPP utilizes a seven-step process to find solutions to improve the health and well-being of DoC personnel. The training participants reviewed the status of the program within DoC; the national attention the program received from the U.S. Surgeon General; and the emphasis on bottom-up principles to identify and address workplace health, safety, and well-being problems.

Participants broke into groups to take part in role-play activities in order to practice the skills required to lead

facility, regional, and union-based Design Teams of eight to ten 8-10 employees. Past CT DoC Design Teams have focused on workforce concerns related to such areas as mental health, stress, nutrition, sleep, work/family conflict, and fitness.

Each attendee will utilize the facilitation skills they learned in this training to guide their respective Design Teams. The current teams within the DoC are: the Correctional Supervisors Council Teams (CSEA), representing all CSC union members; the regional 391 Ambassador Design Team, representing facilities in the north; a Health Services Unit team, based at York Correctional Institution; and facility-based teams at Manson Youth and York facilities. Feedback from those who completed the training was positive. Some attendees described how the new skills will help them beyond facilitating Design Teams. "From today's training, I can use this to improve my organizational and communication skills," said one of the attendees. Another person said that the training is helpful in, "day-to-day operations with coworkers and implementing the new knowledge to educate, encourage, and motivate staff to positively contribute to change."



The 391 Ambassador Design Team (L-R): Stan Sudduth, Sherine Bailey, Ivette Dalina-Figueroa, Ashley Collins, Quinton Mingga, LaRoyal Williams, Carissa Stepanian, Keith Lohmann and Nicholas Boudreau.

Another person said that the training is helpful in, "day-to-day operations with coworkers and implementing the new knowledge to educate, encourage, and motivate staff to positively contribute to change."

Meet the Director continued

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Who has been the biggest source of inspiration in your life?

The biggest source of inspiration in my life are the memories of people who used their lives in service to others. For example, my grandfather served people as a pastor for 70 years. His is an example worth remembering and imitating.

What is one thing about you few people know?

Although I engage in public speaking for a living, I have a speech impediment that sometimes I can't control.

What do you do to maintain a healthy work/life balance?

I've struggled with maintaining a healthy work/life for the last 25 years. I can't seem to get it right, but I keep trying. I am introducing some much needed focus for my next 25 years, in hope that I do better in this area. I'm specializing in doing three things: leading, communicating, and creating. If it doesn't fall under one of those three things, I'm not doing it.

Do you have any hobbies?

I am a Latin percussionist. I have access to a music studio. When I am stressed, I lock myself in, play salsa music very loudly and pick up the bass, get on the bongo, piano, congas or timbales.

What one word would you use to describe yourself?

Uplifter. That's what I'm striving to become more and more. Success for me is helping the vast majority of people I meet to reach their full potential. Instead of a desire to become a hero, I want to become a hero-maker.

What are your plans for when you retire?

I'm going to write a few books when I retire. I'm going to need a hut near the beach, a new laptop, and a steady flow of Pina Coladas.

If you could have dinner with three famous people from history, who would they be?

Abraham, because I want his take on what it means to go on a journey without a map. Lincoln, because I want to know the secret behind his perseverance. And Rev. Dr. King, because I want him to talk to me about unflinching bravery.

What is your favorite book or movie?

I'm into movies like The Equalizer and John Wick.

If you could have one superhero power, what would it be and why?

I would love to be able to fly. "Mounting up with wings like eagles" is associated with strength renewal.

Anything else you would like to add?

I earned a BA in Pastoral Ministries from Evangel University; a Masters of Divinity from Yale University; a Doctorate of Ministry degree from Hartford International University. I trained as a Pastoral Clinician through an ACPE fulltime internship and a yearlong residency at Hartford Hospital. I am a U.S. Army veteran. I read a book on leadership every week. My favorite treat is spending time with my wife.



Supervising Chaplain
David Santiago - the Uplifter

“Fowl” Play at York CI

Not once, but twice, in the last few months, staff members of the York Correctional Institution have come to the aid of a bird in distress.

The first occurrence took place in late April when Lieutenant Sarah Maltz received a report of an injured seagull on the grounds of the facility. General Maintenance Officers (GMO) Ricky Snide and Travis Morin (who has previous experience rescuing wildlife in distress) took the time and patience to gently capture the gull, put him in a box, and transfer him to the Waterford Country School Animal Rehabilitation program.



GMO Travis Morin tends to an injured seagull.

Staff from the rehabilitation program contacted the facility to provide an update on the seagulls health. They said the seagull had an old wound, which had become infected. They also reported that the gull was a “feisty one” and was enjoying his new digs along with two other injured seagulls. The bird was eating, drinking, and attempting to fly - all good signs according to the rehabilitation experts. The staff at York fully anticipate a full recovery, and once released the rehabilitated seagull will return to the Niantic facility to assist with daily trash removal.

The second bird encounter took place in August when Correction Officer Michael Lathrop observed a homing pigeon on the York compound, and quickly recognized that the bird had lost its way and faced imminent danger due to the numerous birds of prey in the area. Officer Lathrop was aware that homing pigeons are bred and trained specifically to fly long distances, but are not equipped to survive in the wild. Officer Lathrop was able to easily capture the pigeon,



Correction Officer Michael Lathrop with a bird in hand.

as they are accustomed to being handled by humans, and placed it safely in a box. He proceeded to Warden Trina Sexton’s office with the “21” to discuss what needed to be done to ensure its safety. While Warden Sexton was attempting to locate the owner of the bird from information found on a band on the pigeon’s leg, Lt. Maltz and C.O. Lathrop made sure the bird received food and water. They were able to contact the owner, however, he was not immediately able to make the trip from Massachusetts to Connecticut. So officer Lathrop agreed to foster the pigeon in the interim. The pigeon’s owner traveled from Fall River, MA to Niantic on August 5, to meet with officer Lathrop and reunite with his wayward racing bird. A happy ending indeed, and a lesson for us all to follow the lead of the exemplary staff members of the York Correctional Institution – to demonstrate care and compassion, and go that extra mile for an impaired or wayward being.



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