

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.

Correctional Employee, Nurses, and Teachers Week, May 4-10



The first week of May has been set aside for the recognition of the majority of those who work among our ranks. Based on a U.S. House of Representatives resolution in 2007, the first week in May has been designated as National Correctional Officers and Employees Week. Additionally, the week encompasses Teacher Appreciation Week and National Nurses Week.

I believe it is more important than ever to recognize the many contributions of the men and women of the Connecticut Department of Correction, who serve with distinction in an extremely challenging profession. It is my sincere hope that the observance of this week will increase the general public's awareness and appreciation for all you do on a daily basis.

You perform your duties admirably as not only correction officers, but also as parole officers, counselors, maintenance and food service staff, chaplains, teachers, nurses, support staff and supervisors.

Not only do you have to maintain safe and secure facilities, but in addition you must also feed, educate, train, as well as attend to the physical and mental health needs of those under our supervision.

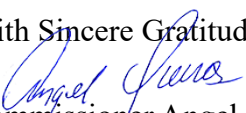
In addition, correctional staff members work cooperatively with community and religious organizations, state and local authorities, to help ensure successful reintegration into the community.

The field of corrections, especially for those who work on the front lines, is often taxing and stressful. It is important that staff address stress in a healthy manner, and utilize the excellent department resources available to them.

I would like to take this opportunity to publicly thank you all for the outstanding work that you do. Please know that your efforts are appreciated not only during this week, but all year long as well.

It is an honor to work with such an outstanding group of professionals.

With Sincere Gratitude,


Commissioner Angel Quiros

March 1, 2025
through
May 7, 2025

Distributed quarterly
to 5,500 staff
and via the Internet
throughout Connecticut
and the nation
by the
Department of Correction
24 Wolcott Hill Road
Wethersfield, CT 06109

Ned Lamont
Governor

Angel Quiros
Commissioner

Web address:
www.ct.gov/doc

Public Information
Office telephone:
(860) 692-7780
Fax: (860) 692-7783

Another Successful Women in Corrections Leadership Summit

Nearly 300 women representing a wide range of job classifications and all thirteen of the Agency's facilities attended the fourth annual Women in Corrections Leadership Summit (WICL), which was held at the Maloney Center for Training & Staff Development on March 28, 2025.

The Women in Corrections Summit was conceived with the goal to identify, empower, and prepare women in the Connecticut Department of Correction for roles in leadership throughout the agency. This year's theme was Strength, Resilience and Leadership.

Some of the speakers included Connecticut's Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz, Dr. Colette Poole-Boykin, Retired Hartford Police Department Sergeant Karla Medina, States Attorney Sharmese Walcott, Guilford Connecticut's Deputy Police Chief Martina Jakober, Therapist Phyllis DiGioia, and New Britain Mayor Erin Stewart.

The event's keynote speaker was Maria Jefferson, LPC, a nationally recognized trauma and relationship expert, who encouraged the women in attendance to embrace their resilience, amplify their leadership, and prioritize their well-being in the high-stress environment in which they work.

Another highlight of the conference was a panel of female Department of Correction employees sharing their experiences concerning the struggles they experience working in a male dominated field.

Throughout the day, speakers provided plenty of encouragement and nuggets of information that helped to motivate and inspire everyone. Yet, despite the generally uplifting theme of the event, there was also an underlying sadness due to the unfortunate passing of a beloved longtime employee, Michelle Cote, a Correctional Identification and Records Specialist, who tragically passed away

the night before the conference. She was an amazing woman who gave so much of herself not only personally, but also professionally. She left a mark with those who knew her that will not soon be forgotten.

The Women of the WICL Executive Committee, as well as subcommittee members, work tirelessly throughout the year to ensure each year's summit is one to remember. To that end various fundraisers are planned to ensure that enough money is raised to fund the event. This year the Executive Committee organized a Designer Purse Bingo in February, with more than 100 people attending, raising more than \$6,000.

Committee Chairperson, District Administrator Eulalia Garcia, along with all the WICL Committee members thank everyone for their support, and they are already looking forward to and planning for next year's Summit.



**District Administrator
Eulalia Garcia**

photo by Alyssa Ashley Photography



Attendees of the 4th Annual Women in Corrections Leadership Summit

photo by Alyssa Ashley Photography

Parole and Community Services Hold Award Ceremony

The Division of Parole & Community Services (P&CS) held its annual Awards Ceremony at the Maloney Center for Training and Staff Development on April 25, 2025.

We were graced with the melodious sound of bag pipes and the posting of colors by the Department of Correction Honor Guard, followed by a warm rendition of the National Anthem sang by Parole's own Administrative Assistant, Michele C. Jones.

Once everyone settled in after a tasty lunch provided by P&CS Quality of Worklife Committee, they were greeted by the Master of Ceremony, Parole Supervisor, Christopher Sullivan. Supervisor Sullivan began by acknowledging the QWL committee for all their hardwork and dedication, and he expressed his gratitude

to all staff for their participations in fundraising and continued support of the division's annual award ceremony.

Next to speak was Director Rhianna Gingras, who never fails to offer words of support, appreciation and encouragement to all P&CS staff for all that they do daily. Deputy Director Netasia Jones followed with examples of the courageous and selfless acts performed by parole staff members throughout the past year. Last, but certainly not least, was Deputy Commissioner, William Mulligan, who voiced his appreciation and gratitude to all P&CS staff members and to the award recipients as well.

The annual awards ceremony is a meaningful way to celebrate

P&CS staff's hard work, dedication, achievements, and it is even a chance to acknowledge those who add a little sunshine to our work lives on a daily basis.

This event would not be possible without the wonderful men and women of Parole and Community Services Division. Director Gingras and Deputy Directors Jones, and Herrick want everyone in the division to know that they appreciate you.

The 2025 P&CS Awards Winners

Director's Award – P.O. Melissa Quaranta

Leadership Award – PS Belinda Rivera

Meritorious Service Award – Parole Officers Samuel Haight, Christopher Barstow, Melissa Quaranta, Katherine McIntyre, Jessica Castillo, Lauren Bennett and Margie Rorie-Lewis

Professional Partner – The Department of Correction's K9 Unit



**Leadership Award Winner, Parole Supervisor
Belinda Rivera (L) with Secretary 2 Mikki Ealey**



**Director's Award Winner
Parole Officer Melissa Quaranta**

Parole Goes to School

As part of Read Across America Week celebration, Department of Correction Parole Officers Leigh-Anne Caruso, and Jennifer Desena were invited to the B.W. Tinker Elementary School in Waterbury as special guest readers.



Parole Officers Jennifer Desena (L) and Leigh-Anne Caruso

The pair of parole officers toured several of the classrooms taking time to speak with students as well as teachers on March 6, 2025. They also read a book to one of the school's fourth grade classes.

Read Across America Week is celebrated from March 2 to 6 — it begins on the birthday of the beloved author, Dr. Seuss. The entire month of March, in fact, is dedicated to reading. The National Education Association (N.E.A.) established Read Across America in 1998 as a year-round program to celebrate reading.

Thank you to Parole Officers Caruso and Desena for not only their work in keeping our communities safe, but also for the efforts to make a positive impact on young students.

Around the Cell Block

FRANCE - Twenty-five people were arrested in raids across France recently in response to a wave of coordinated attacks on prisons and the homes of prison officers in April. It is believed the attacks are the work of gangs who are retaliating against a new government crackdown on drug trafficking. Incidents include vehicles being set alight and two prisons being targeted by gunfire.

WEST VIRGINIA – A recent report found West Virginia's recidivism rate of 24% is lower than all but four states. West Virginia's rate is less than half that of Delaware (65%), the state with the highest rate of recidivism.

SOUTH DAKOTA - The South Dakota DOC will remain the Department of Corrections. The state's House of Representatives recently voted 55-14 to defeat a bill that would have changed the agency's name to the Department of Corrections and Rehabilitation. Concern over potential hidden costs and the bill's failure to make more than symbolic change were reasons the measure failed.

EAU toll-free phone number:
844 - 997- 4EAU
(4328)

**Total CT DOC
Supervised
Population**

on

May 7, 2025

14,139

**On May 7, 2024
the population was
13,526**

The Power Switch

by Caterina Spinaris, PhD, LPC

Reprinted with permission from Correctional Oasis

Being able to stay in control of ourselves regardless of what's happening around us is a tall order indeed. Control like that can be hard to imagine. Sure, when life is flowing smoothly, it's easy to feel like we're in charge. But when the going gets tough, even the tough begin to feel jerked around by circumstances. In this article I describe how we can remain in charge of our behavior pretty much no matter what's happening around us. This can be accomplished by managing our attitude and our perspective. I dare say that applying these truths has the power to shape our destiny more than any other force within our control

The Two Women

Each of us has a "power switch." This switch is our ability to control which way we choose to perceive, evaluate, and interpret every situation we face. In psychology books, authors write about the different ways two people can see the very same thing. To illustrate, they often reproduce an old "optical illusion" drawing that has been around for over one hundred years. "Can you see the woman?" they ask. Most people have no trouble immediately identifying a woman in the picture. But then comes some sort of trick question like: "What do you see?" Or, "Is she the bride or the mother-in-law?"

In truth, there are two women in the image. Depending upon which way a viewer looks at it—depending on the way the viewer "throws the switch"—the image can be seen as either a pretty young woman turning away or as a weathered older woman looking straight left.

Still hard to see them both? If you're stuck, you're not alone. Most people have a hard time flipping the "power switches" of their perspective back and forth. Here's a hint: The young woman's nose is the older woman's nose wart, and the young woman's necklace is the older woman's smile.

Life is a lot like "the younger woman and the older lady" perspective

test. We have to decide which way we're going to view something, which way we're going to throw our switch. Are we going to turn it OFF and be enveloped by the darkness of devastation and disaster, or are we going to throw it ON and be bathed in the light of solutions, opportunity and possibility? Due to how stress impacts our minds and bodies, our mental health and our health overall are critically dependent upon which way we throw the switch. On the one hand, we experience anxiety, despair, fear, resentment and the temptation to give up. On the other, we experience courage, perseverance, resourcefulness, hope, and the possibility of new beginnings.

How Can We Throw the Switch ON?

"But," we protest, "my situation is really bad! You have no idea how bad it really is!" I do not doubt that you may be facing tough times. Corrections work is one of the most demanding professions in the U.S. today. And we must accept the reality that life is difficult, period, as Scott Peck wrote in his best seller *The Road Less Traveled*. Yet, as my ancient Greek ancestors said, we must equally accept that there is nothing bad without some good mixed in with it, without something good that can be mined from it. The question is, are we going to look for the good?

The key to throwing the power switch ON is found in what we choose to make our focus. Do we zero in on the loss or the opportunity? On the bottle being half-empty or half full?



Which woman do you perceive?

Solar Switch

More than 15,000 solar panels are up and running across the DoC

Governor Ned Lamont, Lieutenant Governor Susan Bysiewicz, and a host of dignitaries gathered behind the Cheshire Correctional Institution, under a brilliant sunny sky, recently to officially mark the completion of seven solar installations on the grounds of Department of Correction facilities.

Standing in front of a 4,500-panel solar array located behind “Big Cheshire,” the Lt. Governor Bysiewicz officially flipped a ceremonial switch on Thursday, April 24 to signify that the solar arrays were up and running.

The projects are a collaboration between the Connecticut Department of Correction (DOC) and the Connecticut Department of Administrative Services (DAS), along with the Connecticut Green Bank and TotalEnergies, a global integrated energy company, according to the state. They were financed by the Connecticut Green Bank (a quasi-state agency) in partnership with TotalEnergies – which will own, operate, and maintain the systems for the next 25 years through a power purchase agreement executed by DAS. TotalEnergies, invested \$20 million on the solar installations, and will charge the state 7.5 cents per kilowatt-hour for electricity. Currently the average cost of commercial electricity rate in Connecticut is 24.5 cents per kilowatt-hour.

The more than 15,000 panels across all the installations will collectively deliver 8.3 megawatts of clean, renewable energy, saving the state more than \$11 million in energy costs over the lifetime of the panels. The systems will reduce carbon emissions by the equivalent of approximately 5,000 metric tons annually – the equivalent of approximately 5.4 million pounds of coal.

Chris Iwanik, director of engineering for the Department of Correction, said the portion of energy use the solar panels replace varies among facilities and depending on the time of year. He went on to say that the solar panels could supply as much as 85% to 90% of the Cheshire facility’s needs at its peak times.

The Green Bank and its private partner, TotalEnergies Renewables USA, installed solar panels on roughly 40 acres of fields, owned by the Connecticut Department of Correction, spread across half a dozen locations. In addition to reducing carbon emissions, the project is expected to reduce the energy costs to the agency by about 32%, according to the CT Green Bank.

“This is a huge win for the taxpayers of Connecticut, and we project millions of savings over the lifetime of the solar arrays,” said Department of Correction Deputy Commissioner Sharonda Carlos. “Every small step toward sustainability matters.”

Governor Lamont summed it up best when he said, “It’s greener, cleaner and more affordable.”

Congratulations to Director Chris Iwanik and the Engineer and Facilities Management team for all their hard work in helping to coordinate these large-scale installations.



Governor Ned Lamont speaks about the recently completed solar projects as Deputy Commissioner Sharonda Carlos (L) and Lt. Governor Susan Bysiewicz look on.

Perception Switch from page 5

Do we feel weary and resigned to a negative fate, or are we young at heart anticipating the possibilities of a bright future awaiting us? Do we become overwhelmed by disappointment, or do we dig in to unearth the jewels buried below the mud?

What we look for, we are likely to find sooner or later.

We have options. Someone told me that life's challenges could make us either bitter or better. The difference is in the "I" or in the "eye"—the way we see our situation.

One option is to get angry and resentful, or to become demoralized and give up. That'd be throwing our power switch OFF, reacting by "kicking and screaming," being thrown around by our circumstances. The situation would be controlling us, running the show and possibly ruining our lives.

A second option is to throw our power switch ON by choosing to look at the situation with new eyes, the eyes of positive expectancy and a type of trust. How can I come up with solutions to the challenges staring me in the face? How can I make this hardship work for me? How can I turn this pile of manure into fertilizer for my own personal growth and for the benefit of others?

Why Throw the Switch ON?

Throwing our power switch ON empowers us with hope and positive anticipation so we can hold on and persist in our efforts. It also opens up our eyes to see how hardship can be put to work for our own good and the good of others in ways we had not anticipated before. In other words, throwing our power switch ON, both makes us resilient and also keeps us resilient, able to persevere in spite of opposition, and able to bounce back after failure, loss or rejection.

Everybody I know will testify that character development—our maturation as people—does not come about during easy times. Rather, character is usually forged in the fires of affliction. We might exclaim, "Who wants more character! I'm fine the way I am!" We may be just fine, but this hardship has just kicked our door down, and whether we like it or not, it's now in our face and in our space. What will we choose to do?

We do indeed have the power to make productive fertilizer out of the manure that has been dumped on our doorstep by developing qualities in ourselves that are in line with our highest values. For example, we may find that tough times provide us with opportunities to develop skills and launch endeavors that we would have never considered had the hardship we encountered not happened. We may find ourselves practicing compassion, patience, ingenuity, or courage in ways we never thought were possible for us. We may come to value our relationships with others, and to appreciate life more than ever before. Additionally, our experiences of adversity may become springboards for helping others with the life lessons we learn and the skills we acquire.

In choosing to throw our switch ON, we decide to no longer waste precious energy and time in fruitless resentments and exhausting fist pounding about situations or people. Grudges sap our strength and slowly poison us. Instead, we want to see past adversity to ways we can move to new methods of operating. We focus on problem-solving and personal growth. Doing so takes us out of a helpless victim position and brings us back to the controls again. History is full of stories of courageous individuals who inspire us because they used the trials of life to reach new heights of love and service through self-control and by how they chose to respond to their circumstances.

In Conclusion

In short, what makes or breaks us is not what happens to us, but how we deal with it. Do we react, seeing only the negative, or do we thoughtfully examine the possibilities and chart a positive, perhaps "out of the box" course? What to one person becomes the end of the road to another is a whole fresh set of opportunities. Let us aspire to become people who bounce back after hard times, truly tougher, wiser and perhaps even more noble.

Wingin It at York CI



With bragging rights on the line, staff at the York Correctional Institution hosted a “Wingin’ It” wing competition recently. A total of 11 competitors offering up their own take on the classic snack. Congratulations to Correctional Counselor Tracey Dineen-Hutchins whose Kickin’ Garlic Parmesan wings took the top prize.

Picture are (from left to right): Correction Officer Caleb Cooper, Correctional Counselor Britney Gillis, Correction Officer Sarah Scalia, Correctional Counselor

Thamare Morency, CS Michelle Ramos, Correctional Counselors Tracey Dineen-Hutchins, and Nina Joseph, Deputy Warden Morgan Suess and Correction Locksmith John Carboni.

Honoring Women at Brooklyn CI

Just a few days prior to the agency wide Women’s Summit, the staff members of the Brooklyn Correctional Institution hosted their very own Women in Correction Luncheon on March 24, 2025. Held for the benefit of the female staff members of the Brooklyn facility in conjunction with Women in History Month, the event featured several guest speakers representing various department divisions, and one staff member from Connecticut State Police’s -Troop D.

Warden Charlatta Jones delivered the opening remarks. Other speakers included: Connecticut State Police Lieutenant Jana Mazzarella, Employee Assistance Unit (EAU) Director Dianne Moynihan, Regional Chief Operating Officer (RCOO) Jennifer Sanchez, Parole Officer Tamara Logan, Human Resources Generalist Lindsey MacDonald, and Correctional District Food Service Manager Sara Olse.

Special thanks to K9 Handler Officer Kristen Brousseau who not only addressed the group, but she was also thoughtful enough to provide gift bags for those in attendance. As a special treat, lunch was prepared by Deputy Warden Nathan Alexander, Correctional Captain Zach Faucher, and Correctional Counselor Supervisor Craig Dumas, and was served by various male facility staff members helping with the event.

Thanks also to all those involved in organizing the event, which was a resounding success and well received by all who participated.

In honor of National Military Appreciation Month

MPSP Badge Fundraiser

Staff Will be allowed to wear the red white and blue badge for the entire month of May

\$5

All proceeds will be used to support correctional veterans

For badges, contact MPSP Members or Christopher.Hebert@ct.gov