

## 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.

## Season's Greetings

As I take a moment to reflect on the holiday season, I (as I am sure many of you are as well) am filled with many conflicting emotions.

While the pandemic continues to disrupt our lives, there is little doubt these holidays will be like none any of us have seen before. With all that we are dealing with, things may not seem very "merry," I still believe there is much to be thankful for.

When I count my blessings – of which I have many - after the health and wellbeing of my family and loved ones, I am most grateful for all of you.

The mere fact that we have made it this far, is in many ways nothing short of astonishing. Your jobs are far from easy during the best of times. During times like these it is hard to imagine the challenges you are faced with and overcome on a daily basis. While it has been a long road and the difficult journey is not yet over, the coming days will continue to test our resolve. I know you will - as you have always done in the past - be up to the challenge.

To be able to work with such dedicated and selfless health care and correctional professionals is truly a blessing. You fulfill our mission of public safety at a great personal sacrifice. Yet, despite all you have accomplished to this point, we must renew our commitment to fighting the spread of the virus. If we let our guard down now, all our efforts to this point will have been wasted.

It is my sincere wish that you are able to enjoy this holiday season, but I ask that you do so responsibly – stay safe, stay home. When I think about the need to keep family gatherings small, I realize how thankful I am for technology. With just a few clicks of a mouse, we can be connected to loved ones across town or across the world. It's hard to imagine how isolated we would feel without the aid of technology.

As always, I wish there was a better way to express my gratitude for all you do than just saying thank you. Above all else, I offer you hope. Hope and faith that this time next year the pandemic will be nothing more than a fading memory. Wishing you a happy, healthy, and safe new year.

With gratitude,

Angel Quiros, Commissioner

September 11, 2020  
through  
December 23, 2020

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24 Wolcott Hill Road  
Wethersfield, CT 06109

Ned Lamont  
Governor

Angel Quiros  
Commissioner Designate

Web address:  
[www.ct.gov/doc](http://www.ct.gov/doc)

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

# Coping With Covid-19 Related Stress

submitted by: *Robert Girard, LCSW, LADC Correctional Substance Abuse Counselor, Garner CI*

I think it is safe to say that Covid-19 took all of us by surprise. When all of this began happening back in March 2020, few of us thought that we'd still be dealing with this pandemic many months later. During these times of



**Substance Abuse Counselor  
Robert Girard**

crisis, our mental health can be challenged in ways that can catch us off guard. As essential workers, we were asked to face this pandemic head on. We have been on the front lines since day one. In corrections, we have a solid idea of what the front lines look like. They involve safety and security, treating other staff members as well as inmates with dignity and respect, and making it home safely to our loved ones. However, being on the front lines of a pandemic, we are trying to stay safe from something that we cannot see.

Whether if it has been dealing with the health of yourself or a loved one, working longer hours, changes in sleeping patterns, or an increase in alcohol and/or drug use, this pandemic has struck us in a number of ways. When you fly on an airplane, the flight attendant instructs you to “put your oxygen mask on first,” before helping others. This is because if you run out of oxygen yourself, you can’t help anyone else with their oxygen mask. The same goes for your mental health and the ability to care for your family. You must take care of yourself first, so that you can be the best version of yourself for your family.

I recommend doing a quick self-check in the morning and at nighttime. Notice how your body is feeling. This is important because stress can cause damage to your bodies muscular system. Your muscles tense up to protect themselves from injury when you’re stressed. They tend to release again once you relax, but if you’re constantly under stress, your muscles may not get the chance to relax. Tight muscles cause headaches, back and shoulder pain, and body aches.

Just as important as your body is to notice how your thoughts are doing, and as my night is winding down at home, I like to do a mental health check on myself. Have I been experiencing anxiety? Have I been obsessing on a certain situation or situations? Am I living too much in the past or the future? If so, this is a sign that I have something in my life that needs to be addressed. Some other warning signs of stress are problems with memory of concentration, making bad decisions, anger, irritability or restlessness. As we continue to get older, our lives become busier with more responsibility than ever. How are you handling the stress? If you are experiencing anxiety or depression, or “thoughts of impending doom”, you should reach out to a therapist or your doctor about this. Also, the Department of Correction has incredible EAP and EAU departments. Despite what some of us may have been told growing up, it’s okay to ask for help.

Like the Serenity Prayer says: *accept the things I cannot change, the courage to change the things I can, and the wisdom to know the difference.*

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

The number is intended to be an immediate telephonic portal for all DOC staff, retirees, and family/loved ones seeking support and resources for personal and/or job-related problems affecting one’s overall well-being .

## CRCC Welcomes Graduating Classes 279 and 280

Corrigan-Radgowski Correctional Center held a socially distant graduation to swear in and honor their latest officers and support staff.

Graduating cadets, led by class manager Lieutenant McCormack, marched in cadence to join their immediate family members at the outside pavilion on the grounds of CRCC where they were welcomed with inspiring and

encouraging speeches by Warden Martin and other administrative staff.

Deputy Warden Foote presented the Departments PRIDE award to Class 279 Officer Joshua Kravies.

After receiving their well-earned badges and certificates, Warden Martin officially swore in the graduates and congratulated them on their achievements. Warden Martin ended the ceremony by offering the graduates an open door policy for any support, advice, or suggestions they may have as they begin a challenging career that can have many ups and downs as well as assuring them that they will find “family” in the DOC that will support and encourage them along the way.



Members of Classes 279 and 280 take part in an open air graduation on the grounds of the Corrigan-Radgowski Correctional Center.

## PJ Day Pay to Park

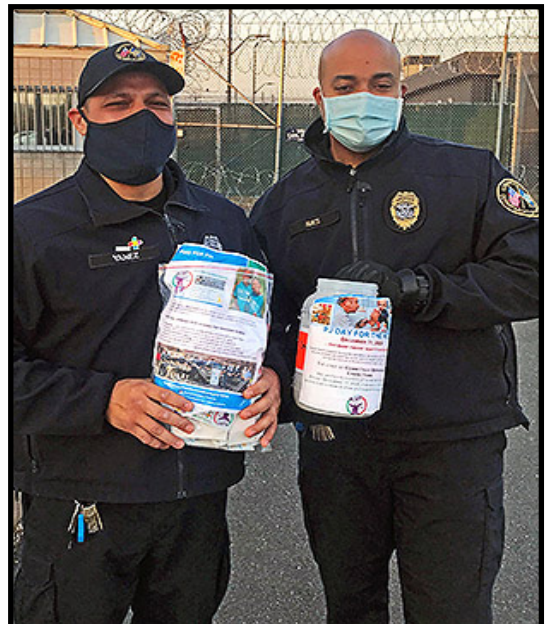
In what hopes to become an annual tradition, for the first time the Department of Correction participated in the Connecticut Children’s Medical Center’s PJ Day on Friday, December 11, 2020.

By means of an agency wide Pay-to-Park, in honor of PJ Day, approximately \$12,000 were raised to support the Children’s Medical Center’s Center for Cancer & Blood Disorders. For those unfamiliar with “PJ Day,” it is a day meant to support children suffering with cancer.

Even though this is the first day that the DoC participated in PJ Day for the kids it is actually the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the event.

The amount donated by Department staff is even more impressive when considering the economic stressors brought on by the pandemic, but as those involved with the fundraising campaign say, “Cancer hasn’t stopped during the pandemic, so neither can PJ Day for the Kids.”

Once again the remarkable generosity of the staff of the Department comes shining through for those who need it most.



Carl Robinson’s Correction Officer Leonardo Yanez (L) and Captain Juan Ibes participate in the PJ Day Pay to Park.

# Four DoC Staff Receive Project Longevity Award

Congratulations to the Security Division’s Captain Craig Burnett, Parole Manager Marvin Anderson, and Parole Officers Frank Vieira and Emily Zarotney for having been selected as award recipients from Project Longevity New Haven.

Project Longevity is a Community and Law Enforcement initiative dedicated to reducing serious violent crimes in three of Connecticut’s major cities: New Haven, Bridgeport, and Hartford. Project Longevity uses a unique combination of Community Involvement, Social Services, and Focused Policing to positively influence group dynamics.



**Project Longevity New Haven Award Winners (L-R): Craig Burnett, Frank Vieira, Emily Zarotney, and Marvin Anderson**

Project Longevity-New Haven is recognized nationally and internationally for the collaborative work their members have done in affecting group/gang gun violence reduction.

In a letter informing the recipients of the award, Stacy R. Spell, Project Manager for New Haven’s Project Longevity wrote, “...you contribute to the project’s success with your words, actions, and the role you have played in support of the community we serve.”

The award winners received their awards during a ceremony on October 27, 2020, held outdoors at the rear parking lot of the new New Haven Police Department’s Academy located on Wintergreen Avenue in New Haven.

# Around the Cell Block



**NEW YORK** – The State’s Department of Corrections announced plans to close three prisons as it continues to lower its incarceration rates and consolidates its sprawling correctional facilities. The closures will save about \$89 million a year.

**MICHIGAN** - The Council on American-Islamic Relations, Michigan chapter filed a lawsuit against the Michigan Department of Corrections for making Muslim and Moorish Science women remove their hijabs for mugshots.

**ARKANSAS** - After a night of drinking, two Arkansas men decided to test the durability of a bulletproof vest by shooting each other. Both men were arrested and charged with felony aggravated assault. Before releasing them on a \$5,000 bond, a judge issued a no-contact order between the men.

**Total  
Supervised  
Population  
on  
December 23, 2020**

**13,491**

**On December 23, 2019  
the population was  
17,111**

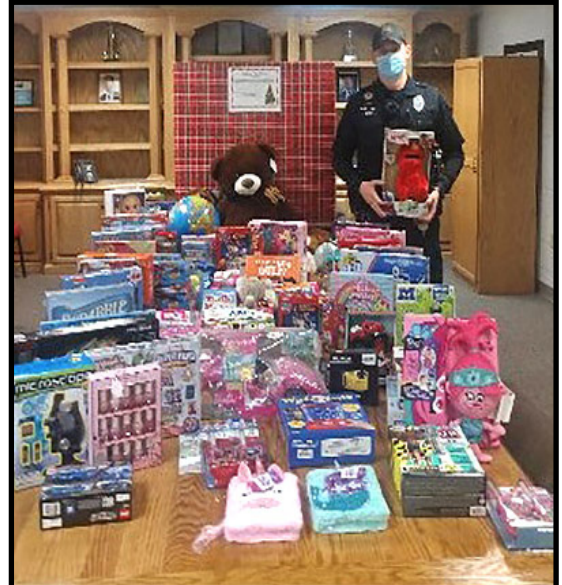
## DoC Season of Giving

# The DoC's generosity is never more evident than during the holiday season

*The following pages contain a sampling of the efforts our staff has made to help those in need*

### Hartford Correctional Center

Through the generous donations made by staff, the Hartford Correctional Center (HCC) Quality of Work Life Committee donated more than a hundred toys and gift to benefit the Salvation Army's Marshall House. The Marshall House is a homeless shelter, located locally in Hartford, that provides twenty-seven (27) beds to women and families 365-days per year. Residents are offered education, employment skills training, advocacy services, counseling and compassionate care so that they are empowered to lead responsible, self-sufficient lives. The staff at Marshall House provides a safe environment, support and guidance for residents during difficult periods in their lives until permanent housing can be secured.



**Hartford Correctional Center's QWL member Correction Officer Shaun Cary with the facility's donations.**

### Willard-Cybulski's Contribution

This Holiday season, the Willard Cybulski Correctional Institution (WCCI) sponsored a "Giving X-mas tree" in collaboration with the Bridgeport Department of Children and Family (DCF) office. The staff at WCCI graciously supported this cause by blessing 60 children with multiple gifts for the holiday season. Correction Officers Edona Bushi and Robert Scholtz delivered the gifts to the appreciative staff of the Bridgeport DCF office on December 7th.

All those who participate are very happy to be a part of giving back to the children/families in need within their communities.



**Willard-Cybulski's Correction Officers Edona Bushi and Robert Scholtz get ready to deliver the toys.**

### Security Division

Presents were collected for 65 children this year. Even during a pandemic, DoC personnel came through for these deserving children. Thank to you District I, District II, and Central Office staff for making this happen. A special thank you to Commissioner Designate Quiros and Director Santiago for supporting this cause.

## DoC Season of Giving cont.

### Corrigan –Radgowski

For the past few years, Corrigan-Radgowski CC has teamed up with the Willimantic Office of the Department of Children and Families to help provide a better Christmas for some of the children in their care. Staff selected a “Christmas Tag” for a child and purchased items on their list. A total of 75 children’s wishes will come true this holiday season. The gifts were delivered on December 10, 2020 by Counselor Supervisor Katie Iozzia, Counselor Michelle King, and Correction Officer Chris Muckle.

### Military Peer Support Group

The Agency’s Military Peer Support Group (MPSG) annually sends care packages during the holiday season, specifically to our military service coworkers who are actively deployed, in an effort to let them know their service is appreciated and not forgotten. Some of the items requested included: pens and note pads, snack bars, powder drink mix, beef jerky, tea bags, instant coffee, and various toiletries. The collection efforts at Central Office were led by Fiscal Administrative Assistant Joyce Gosselin and Administrative Assistant Elizabeth Chaput, who posted flyers, sent out emails, and placed collection boxes throughout the building.



Corrigan-Radgowski’s Counselor Supervisor Katie Iozzia, Counselor Michelle King and Correction Officer Chris Muckle.



Security Division’s collection for DCF children



Central Office’s Joyce Gosselin (L) and Elizabeth Chaput with some of the donations collected as part of the Department’s Military Peer Support Program’s holiday care package program.

# 1<sup>st</sup> Annual Trunk or Treat

With traditional door-to-door trick or treating placed on hold in many communities this year, the Quality of Work Life (QWL) committee at the Willard –Cybulski Correctional Institution was determined to come up with a way for children of staff members from the area’s facilities to celebrate the holiday. They came up with an ingenious solution, the First Annual Trunk or Treat event, in which children were safely given candy from the decorated trunks of staff members vehicles.

With the help of QWL members from both MacDougall-Walker and Carl Robinson facilities the call went out for donations of candy as well as for individuals to decorate their cars and turn them into Halloween candy dispensaries.

The call did not go unheeded, and on October 30<sup>th</sup> nearly 100 children were safely provided with “treats” from the trunks of 18 Halloween

themed vehicles.

As if providing a fun and safe Halloween experience wasn’t challenging enough, the day started out with a rare October snowstorm. Fortunately, the snow stopped and the sun broke

through the clouds around 4:00 p.m. just in time for the event.

Safety was a top priority as hand sanitizer was available at the beginning and end of the route, and masks were worn by all. The children were not the only ones who got into the spirit of the event, several staff members also wore costumes helping to ensure that

a good time was had by all. The Trunk or Treat was such a huge success that those involved are determined to make it an annual event.

## Oktoberfest at York CI

The York Correctional Institution’s Quality of Work Life team celebrated the start of the Fall season with an Oktoberfest event on October 8, 2020. With a temperature of 68 degrees and a bit breezy, the staff safely participated in games, car show, music, raffles and of course the centerpiece of the event, the food.

There were the popular fair foods items like loaded baked potatoes, chili cheese fries, fried dough, and caramel apples. As if that wasn’t enough to sabotage any diet, there was also mouthwatering jerk chicken, bratwursts, carrot cake and apple crisp. Not surprisingly, some of the food items sold out within a couple of hours. The event not only provided a well needed morale booster during this time of Covid-19, but it also helped to raise funds donated to a breast cancer awareness campaign.



**District Administrator Eulalia Garcia during Trunk or Treat event.**



**Records Specialist Allison Ouellette channels her inner unicorn.**



**Captain Colt Foley was the DJ for York’s Oktoberfest**

# MASK FATIGUE

Improper breathing while wearing surgical or cloth masks can cause anxiety, headaches, increased heart rate, dizziness, and fatigue. Follow these guidelines for better breathing while wearing your mask and help prevent the spread of COVID-19.



## TAKE 5 QUALITY BREATHS

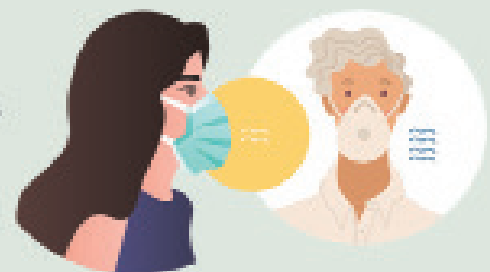
A quality breath is a 4 second inhale through the nose, 6 second exhale through the mouth, and a 2 second pause. Repeat 5 times.

- Take 5 breaths before putting on your mask.
- Take 5 breaths immediately after you put on your mask.
- Take 5 breaths one last time after removing your mask.

This technique sets the right pattern and helps prevent your autonomic nervous system from being locked into a dysfunctional breathing system.

## TAKE LONGER AND SLOWER BREATHS

Notice people around you. Some change their breathing patterns while wearing a mask. Combat this by taking longer, slower breaths while you are wearing yours.



## TAKE MASK BREAKS

- If you are wearing a mask for extended periods of time, take breaks from the mask periodically when it is safe.
- Breaks between times wearing a mask can reduce the negative effects.

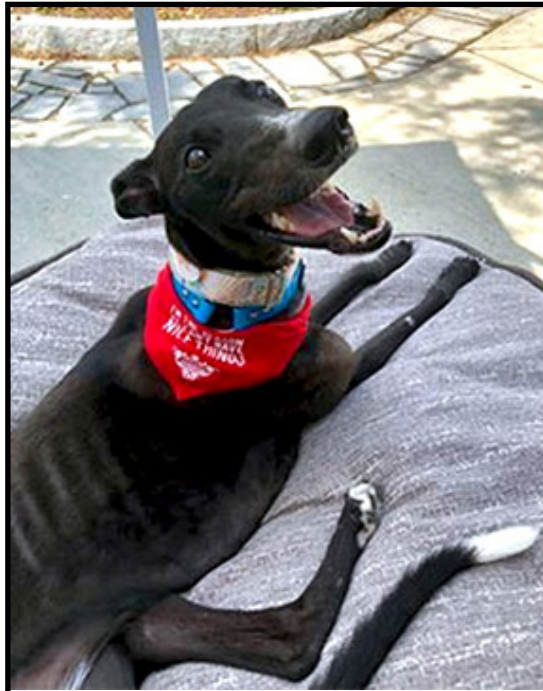


# From Timid to Adopted - Another Connecticut Prison Greyhound Success Story

*Submitted by Abigail Brone, a volunteer with the Connecticut Prison Greyhound program and the daughter of Counselor Supervisor Vanessa Fitzner-Brone*

Thanks to the dog handlers who are part of the York Correctional Institutions' Connecticut Prison Greyhound (CPG) program, nearly 30 greyhounds have been trained and adopted – allowing the dogs to live out their post racing lives as beloved family pets.

The CPG program was initially introduced within the Department at the Manson Youth Institute approximately four years ago, and was expanded to the York facility in May of 2019. Since its founding in 2016, Connecticut



**Caspian - Another Connecticut Prison Greyhound Program success story.**

Prison Greyhounds has secured forever homes for over 60 greyhounds. The retired racing hounds, coming to Connecticut from various states including Alabama, West Virginia, Kansas, and Florida, partake in a six-to-eight-week training program before being adopted, program founder Rick Lukas said. The program essentially teaches the dogs to be pets and live in a home - basic skills never learned at the racetrack.

In the 15 months since the program was introduced to the York facility, 27 greyhounds have “graduated” and subsequently adopted. The program at York also accepts hounds that have already been adopted, but require behavioral rehabilitation.

One of the recent graduates from the program at the women’s prison is Caspian. He was extremely shy when he first arrived in Connecticut. A recluse, he would stick to a singular corner of a room and refuse to make eye contact.

The program’s handlers, with the help of the trainer, managed to completely gain his trust and improve his attitude. Before long, Caspian - who loves to go on walks by himself or with a fellow greyhound – was accepting treats from people’s hands.

Following his graduation from the program, Caspian was adopted by a loving family where he is the only dog. His new owner came to an adoption event in Mystic earlier this year. After walking the dog through crowded downtown streets, Caspian never faulted and stayed by the potential owner’s side the entire time, she was enamored. His leash manners were impeccable and he sealed the deal with the signature greyhound “lean,” where the hounds press themselves against someone as a call for attention. The adoption was made official the next day. Before arriving at York, Caspian had been waiting (due to his timidity) at his kennel in Kansas on an adoption for months.

“I knew if We Adopt Greyhounds took Caspian on with the intent to send him to York through the CPG program, he would be set up for success and I couldn’t have been more correct,” We Adopt Greyhounds adoption coordinator Nicole Cylkowski said. “He has done a complete 180 and it is all thanks for the Connecticut Prison Program at York.”



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