



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



As you are well aware the inmate who escaped from custody was arrested last week in a convenience store in Canton, Georgia. The capture of the escapee was the result of a tireless collaborative effort among many law enforcement entities including: the US Marshals Service, the Connecticut State Police, the Hartford Police Department, and of course staff members from the Department of Correction. However, I would like to give special credit for their outstanding efforts in the apprehension of the escaped offender to the members of the Parole and Community Services Fugitive Investigations Unit.

The members of the Unit led by Parole Manager Dan Barry are: Parole Officers Netasia Jones, Edgar Nunez, Ike Okwuosa, Alan Piascik, Mark Sarsfield, Sheila Thompson, Frank Vieira and Albert Bonfiglio. I offer my sincere gratitude for your dogged determination to track down the escaped inmate.

As with so much of the work that is done by the staff of the Department of Correction, it often goes unnoticed and unheralded. I want to make sure that the yeoman's work done by the Fugitive Investigation's Unit is publicly acknowledged.

Although the incident resulted in the (thankfully) peaceful apprehension of the escapee, the aftermath of this event will be felt within this Agency for a longtime to come. The security audits of each of the facilities has been completed, and some changes have already been implemented to address identified vulnerabilities. The internal investigation, while still ongoing, has resulted in some initial administrative action. It is important to remain supportive of anyone affected by the agency's investigative process. This remains a difficult and stressful situation for all involved. Please remember the ultimate goal is not to assign blame, but rather to prevent a reoccurrence of a similar incident. I remind you again as it pertains to this incident, or any other incident, to please refrain from discussing publicly (or posting on social media) matters which involve or affect Department of Correction safety and security.

In the wake of this recent incident, I ask that each of us (myself included) recommit ourselves to being the best correctional professionals we can be. As I have said in the past, I have every confidence that we will all learn from this experience and be a better agency for it.

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DoC Season of Giving Wrap-up

Christmas With the Crooms'

In September, Correctional Officer John Crooms, who is assigned to Northern CI, was doing tree work for a fellow officer when tragedy struck and he was knocked off of his ladder by a tree limb. He was rushed to the hospital after falling 40 feet and sustaining multiple injuries. Officer Crooms spent several weeks in the hospital where he underwent a number of procedures, one of which included the amputation of his left leg below the knee. Throughout the time he was in the hospital, staff visited Officer Crooms and were inspired by his positive attitude and determination to get back to everyday life and put this tragedy behind him.

The Northern CI Quality of Work Life (QWL) Committee held a pot luck holiday celebration luncheon on December 14, at which Officer Crooms and his family were invited to attend as the guests of honor. At the celebration, the Crooms' family was presented with more than \$4,000 collected from the statewide pay-to-park, as well as a contribution from AFSCME Local 391, and an astonishing amount of presents and gift cards donated by fellow staff members.

The celebration was highlighted by a visit from Santa who presented the gifts to Officer Crooms' four young daughters. Their smiles lit up the room as they opened their gifts and visited with Santa. This event served as an inspirational reminder to staff that although our jobs as correctional professionals are often challenging and often underappreciated by the general public, we come together when it matters and take care of our own. The members of the Northern QWL Committee, on behalf of the Crooms family, would like to thank everyone for their generous donations and support.



The Crooms family visits with Santa.

York CI's Giving Tree



Loading up the sleigh at York CI.

As in years past, staff members of the York Correctional Institution provided presents in time for Christmas to children in the care of the State's Department of Children and Families (DCF). A box-truck load of presents was delivered to the Norwich DCF offices on December 20, 2017. From there, the presents were distributed to children in need in time for Christmas.

Correctional Counselor Jason Olson headed this year's Giving Tree efforts with great success. The "Giving Tree" is decorated with ornaments and on each ornament is a child's wish for a particular gift. Participants select an ornament, and purchase the item wished for by the child. Thanks to the generosity of the York CI staff, a total of 50 children will receive specially selected gifts of their choosing, with a few additional presents thrown in by the elves at York for good measure.

DoC Season of Giving Wrap-up

Special Deliveries from Hartford CC

Thanks to the efforts of the Hartford Correctional Center's Quality of Work Life (QWL) Committee, and Mail Handler John McKeever, some Hartford-area children and adults' holidays were a little cheerier.



Counselor Grace Lee and Counselor Supervisor Dianna Gonzalez (3rd & 4th from left) make a special delivery.

Counselor Supervisor Dianna Gonzalez and Counselor Grace Lee along with members of the QWL of the Hartford facility delivered a donated bicycle which was purchased by Mail Handler McKeever to 96.5 TIC -FM radio station's, "We are the Children" foundation. We Are The Children is an organization founded in 1985 by Gary Craig, morning radio personality of 96.5 WTIC-FM in Hartford, Connecticut. Craig, along with a tremendous support committee including various corporations is committed to raising funds for abandoned, battered, disadvantaged, and needy children. To date, We Are The Children is a 100% volunteer organization with all goods and services donated by members of the local communities.

The bicycle was donated to a child in need during the We are the Children Christmas party held on Christmas day at the XL Center in Hartford.

In addition to the donation of the bicycle, on December 22, 2017 staff members from the Hartford Correctional Center went to The House of Bread shelter and soup kitchen in Hartford to deliver two 20-pound turkeys. Once again, the donation was possible thanks to the benevolence

of Mail Handler McKeever. On top of the donation of the turkeys, Hartford's QWL Committee also donated some apple pies for dessert.

Memorial Wreaths

Appreciative staff members (active and retired) of the Department of Correction volunteered their time to honor the memory of those who served in the United States Military by placing wreaths on the gravestones of veterans interred at the Massachusetts Veterans Memorial Cemetery in Agawam, MA.

Among the more than 6,000 soldiers honored on Saturday, December 16, 2017, was one special veteran, former Correction Officer Todd Johnson. Officer Johnson, who served in the United States Coast Guard, passed away on July 28, 2017, after battling brain cancer. Johnson had worked at the Carl Robinson Correctional Institution.

Those helping to honor the memory of our veterans, and their former colleague, included: Captain

Margarita Rios, Officer Angel Rivera, Officer Jason Cote, Officer Matt Hubbard and Retired Officer Joe Golfieri.



Paying tribute to our nation's veterans: Officer Matthew Hubbard, Officer Jason Cote, Captain Margarita Rios, and Officer Angel Rivera.

Continued K9 Success and New Beginnings

Submitted by Lt. Ronald Zaczynski of the K9 Unit

The Department of Correction K9 Unit was established more than thirty years ago and is a full time tactical unit for the agency. The Canine Unit strives to respond and assist at a moment's notice during emergency situations. In addition to providing safety and security to the correctional institutions, the K9 teams assist local law enforcement, parole, and provide educational demonstrations for people of all ages.



Commissioner Scott Semple and Deputy Commissioners Monica Rinaldi and Cheryl Cepelak with members of the DoC's K9 Unit following the graduation of the three newest members.

It was no different in 2017. Our K9 teams patrolled facilities on a daily basis, while also successfully locating missing persons and numerous narcotics throughout the state. Individually, Officer Ildio Rodrigues received the Distinguished Service Medal, while Lieutenant Josh Trifone was awarded the Stephen A. Davis Patrol Handler of the year award. As a whole the Canine unit is well respected for the hard work and dedication our Officers provide on a daily basis. Although these achievements are welcomed the Canine Unit receives greater satisfaction when working hand in hand with facility staff. On December 21, 2017, three new Canine teams joined our ranks after graduating the 191st Connecticut State Police Canine Academy: Officers James Hensley, Jason Masis and Smith Payne. Together they faced a grueling 15-week academy that tested both their physical, and mental strength. In the end they came together representing all the attributes of the Department of Correction staff, such as pride, honor, and integrity. On behalf of the members of the Canine Unit, we thank all the staff members of the Department for your continued support. We look forward to working with you in the year(s) to come.

Around the Cell Block



MISSOURI - After a victory in a court case brought about by an inmate in the Missouri Department of Corrections who suffered health effects from secondhand smoke, the department will ban smoking in designated smoking areas around prisons, effective April 1, 2018. Staff and visitors will be able to smoke in a designated area outside the prisons.

OREGON – With a staff of 4,700, the Oregon Department of Corrections is struggling to attract new employees as almost one-fifth of its workforce becomes retirement eligible in 2018.

TEXAS – Houston police are looking for an armed robbery suspect who should be easy to identify – he has his social security number tattooed on his forehead. In their criminal complaint, Houston police said his “distinctive” face ink and numerous other tats were the reason he was so identifiable to his victim.

**Total
Supervised
Population
on
Febraury 5, 2018**

18,369

**On February 5, 2017
the population was
19,317**

DoC Season of Giving Wrap-up

Christmas in Connecticut

The Carl Robinson Correctional Institution Diversity Council and the Central Transportation Unit (CTU) in partnership with the Relief Center for our Caribbean Friends conducted a “Fill the Bus” Toy and Coat Drive for the benefit of Puerto Rican families that have relocated to Connecticut in the wake of the devastation left following hurricane Maria. The CTU bus was parked in front of the East Windsor Wal-Mart on December 16, 2017, where staff members collected toys and winter clothing donated by generous shoppers.



Carl Robinson and Central Transportation Unit staff members help Santa Fill the Bus to benefit recently arrived families from Puerto Rico.

Caring for our Troops



Members of the Military Peer Support Program Committee members prepare to ship care-packages.

The Military Peer Support Program (MPSP) Committee, whose activity supports our agency’s active and veteran Military-staff, recently assembled and sent care-packages to those currently deployed on active duty overseas. Seemingly simple items – like hand sanitizers, sunblock, chapstick, shaving products, foot powder, socks, playing cards, writing pads, pens, candy, beef jerky, etc. – make a difference especially overseas and reminds them their service is appreciated; they are missed and in our thoughts; and are wished a safe return home.

Various gestures throughout the year by the committee on behalf of the agency, such as this one as well as the

MPSP’s Annual DOC/CMHC Military-Staff and Families Appreciation Event, are made possible through agencywide support of MPSP fundraisers. The MPSP Committee wants to take this opportunity to thank you – the Department of Correction – for supporting our active and veteran military staff members.

DoC Season of Giving Wrap-up

Wishes Fulfilled at Brooklyn CI



Christmas wishes fulfilled at Brooklyn CI

Correction Officer Mike Behrle and Secretary 2 Louise Downer of the Brooklyn Correctional Institution worked with the State's Department of Children and Families' (DCF) Norwich office to help children in the care of DCF have their Christmas wishes come true. The children in DCF care were allowed to fill out wish slips for a list of items they wanted for Christmas. Nearly 100 children's wish slips were filled by staff members of the Brooklyn facility – with additional assistance from the Corrigan-Radgowski Correction Center, DoC friends and family, Judicial Branch – Superior Court - GA 11, Danielson and Willimantic Probation Offices, and the Norwich Sleep Clinic.

This year the "Wishing Tree" campaign, led by the Brooklyn CI staff members, was able to considerably increase their donations from the previous year when a total of 60 wish slips were filled. Great group effort to grant the wishes of children under State care.

Heroes and Helpers

A handful of York and Corrigan-Radgowski staff members teamed up with the Waterford Police Department for a Heroes and Helpers event at Target. This event helps some families that need a little boost through the holidays, and brings children to shop with one of our local community heroes. Target supplies the kids with a \$100 gift card, and they are matched up with one of the aforementioned "heroes" to shop in the store for holiday gifts for themselves and their families. Once they pick out their gifts, the children wrap presents in the store, and get some refreshments provided by Target. Not only does the event bring children and families some holiday cheer, but it also helps to form positive and lasting connections with members of the law enforcement community.

The Heroes who participated are pictured in the photo from left to right are: Lt Brent Fitzgerald, Deputy Warden Anthony Corcella, Officer Elizabeth Brown, Officer Michael Bennet, Captain Douglas Andrews, Captain Francisco Mangual, Officer Justin Murphy, Officer Maura Atkinson, Captain James Korch, and Officer Sarah Maltz.



The Heroes who participated are pictured in the photo from left to right are: Lt Brent Fitzgerald, Deputy Warden Anthony Corcella, Officer Elizabeth Brown, Officer Michael Bennet, Captain Douglas Andrews, Captain Francisco Mangual, Officer Justin Murphy, Officer Maura Atkinson, Captain James Korch, and Officer Sarah Maltz.

Please Hear What I'm NOT Saying

by Anonymous

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<http://desertwaters.com>

More than once we have been told by corrections staff that prior to a coworker dying by suicide, there had been no detectable signs of emotional distress or cries for help. How can that be? This article gives what may be one explanation of what may be happening as staff work alongside one another in the corrections culture of toughness.

“Don’t be fooled by me. Don’t be fooled by the mask I wear. For I wear a mask. In fact, I wear a thousand masks, masks that I’m afraid to take off, and none of them is the real me. Pretending is an art that is second nature with me, but don’t be fooled!

I give the impression that I’m secure, that all is sunny and unruffled with me, within as well as without. That apparent confidence is my name, and coolness is my game. That the waters are calm, that I’m in command, and I need no one. But don’t believe it; PLEASE DON’T.

My surface may seem smooth, but my surface is my mask, my ever-varying and ever-concealing mask. Beneath lies no smugness, no coolness, no confidence. Beneath dwells the real me—sometimes in confusion, in fear, in sadness, in loneliness. But I hide this; I don’t want anybody to know it. I panic at the thought of my weakness being exposed. That’s why I frantically create a mask to hide behind, a nonchalant, sophisticated façade to help me pretend, to shield me from the glance that knows. But such a glance is precisely my salvation. And I know it. It’s the only thing that can liberate me from my masks, from my own self-built prison walls, from the barriers that I so painstakingly erect. But I don’t tell you this. I don’t dare. I’m afraid to.

I’m afraid your glance will not be followed by kindness and acceptance. I’m afraid that you will think less of me, that you’ll make a crude joke, that you’ll laugh—and your laugh will kill me. Deep down inside I’m afraid that I’m just not good enough, and that you’ll see this and reject me. So I play my games, my desperate, pretending games, with a facade of assurance on the outside and at times an insecure child within. And so begins the parade of masks, the glittering but empty parade of masks. I idly chatter with you in the suave tones of surface talk. I tell you everything that’s really nothing, nothing of what’s crying within me. And my life becomes a front.

So when I’m going through my routine, don’t be fooled by what I’m saying. Please listen carefully, and try to hear what I’m *not* saying; what I’d like to be able to say; what, for my emotional survival, I need to say—but I can’t. (Yet.)

I dislike the hiding. Honestly, I do. I dislike the superficial phony games I’m playing. I’d really like to be genuine and spontaneous, to learn to be the real me, BUT YOU HAVE TO HELP ME. You have to help me by holding out your hand, even when that’s the last thing I seem to want or need.

Each time you are kind and gentle and encouraging, each time you try to understand because you really care, my heart begins to grow wings. At first, very small wings. Very feeble wings. But wings. With your sensitivity and empathy and your power of understanding, I can make it. You can breathe life into me. It will not be easy for you.

My habit of fear of being me and my fear of being seen and known build strong walls. But love is stronger than strong walls, and therein lies my hope. Please come alongside me to beat down those walls. Do so with firm hands, but with gentle hands, for, truly, I am very sensitive, even though I come across as rough and tough and indifferent.

Who am I, you may wonder. I could be any man and any woman you meet working in this profession we call “corrections.”



Help and Hope Award

Congratulations to Chaplain Ramon Rosado of the Osborn Correctional Institution for being selected as a recipient of the Help & Hope Award from Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Hartford. The Help & Hope Award is presented by the Catholic Charities of the Archdiocese of Hartford to three to five individuals or groups each year whose work defines the mission of Catholic Charities to “Provide Help and Create Hope.” The Award was established to recognize volunteers and friends of the Agency who make extraordinary efforts to provide assistance to those of our neighbors who are most in need.

Among Deacon Rosado’s good works include the establishment of the Melanie Rosado Scholarship Fund in 1999, which he managed for ten years. The scholarship fund partnered with local Hartford-area organizations such as Southside Neighborhoods Alliance (SINA), Hartford Hospital, Trinity College and the San Juan Center. The fund was named in honor of Chaplain Rosado’s daughter Melanie, who died at the young age of 18 years. The first scholarship (\$1,500) was awarded the day of Melanie’s graduation from Bulkeley High School, just two months after her death. Following the initial scholarship operated for ten years, each year awarding \$1,000 each to four Bulkeley High School graduates advancing to higher education at a local college or university, and/or an accredited trade school.

Deacon Rosado also worked with Catholic Charities while at Saint Ann-Immaculate Conception Church as chair of the Social Justice Committee he coordinated with Catholic Charities, as well as other

area organizations and businesses to provide much needed services and support to the area neighborhoods.

As Deacon and Pastoral Associate for St. Peter and St. Augustin Parishes in Hartford, Deacon Rosado helped families in need of housing, utilities assistance, etc., by referring them to the appropriate providers. He also advocated for and organized neighborhood youth events in an effort to “keep kids off the streets.”

Deacon Rosado also collaborated with the Office of Catholic Social Justice (Arturo Iriarte) assisting families and individuals with issues of immigration throughout the state. He wrote, collected and delivered letters to state senators and representatives promoting laws and statutes that would benefit immigrants (i.e. possibility of obtaining a driver’s license).

Deacon Rosado gave testimony at legislative hearings in favor of in-state-tuition for children of undocumented immigrants who graduated Connecticut high schools and attended Connecticut State Colleges and Universities. As a Chaplain for the agency, Deacon Rosado engages in coat and clothing drives with local churches to make these items available to inmates leaving the facility. He also informs inmates being released about local organizations that provide services such as substance abuse counseling, housing, and employment procurement. For the last three years Deacon Rosado has been a member of the Institute for Hispanic Family Advisory Board, serving as co-chair. The board oversees the operation of the institute making recommendations to improve the care and services of the members of the community.

In January of 2017 Deacon Rosado was invited and accepted a seat at the University of Saint Joseph’s Institutional Review Board (IRB). The invitation to join the IRB noted his experience working in corrections, his passion for supporting youth, and his work with the church and in the community as attributes that would be a “significant contribution” to the board.

Please join the agency’s Director of Religious Services Charles Williams in congratulating Chaplain Ramon Rosado on receiving this prestigious, and well-deserved, award.



Chaplain Ramon Rosado with his wife after his pre-service class' graduation ceremony.

She's Going to Disney World



L to R: Records Specialist Allie Ouellette, Administrative Assistant Susan Grucci, and Warden John Tarascio.

When Administrative Assistant Susan Grucci announced she had been diagnosed with ALS or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (a.k.a. Lou Gehrig's disease), her wish was clear, "I have never been to Disney and I would love to go with my grandchildren".

For Warden John Tarascio and the staff of the Willard-Cybulski Correctional Institution, that was all they needed to know. Led by Records Specialist Allie Ouellette and Officer Brian Bannish, they began organizing the fundraising events to make Susan's dream come true.

Special thanks to Secretary Pam Neuendorf for providing the housing; Secretary Diane Kay for organizing the Bake Sale at the State Employee Credit Union in Enfield. Thanks to Warden William Murphy, Deputy Warden Julie Mudano, Records Specialist Tracey Hannan and Counselor Lori Calabro for organizing the Pay-to-Park at Carl Robinson CI. Also, thank you Warden Anne Cournoyer, and Secretary Nancy Sessa for organizing a Pay-to-Park at Enfield CI. Administrative Assistant Laurie Viscomi, Secretary Kristine

Randolph, Counselor Kim Such and Correction Officer Steven Acanto for the Pay-to-Park at Osborn/Northern CIs. Finally thanks to the WCCI family for donating more than \$1,600 to the cause. To date, over \$6,000 has been raised towards Susan's "Make-a-Wish" vacation. Thank you everyone.

Toys for Correctional Families

Members of the Employee Wellness and Quality of Life Committees from the MacDougall-Walker Correctional Institution donated \$500 worth of the Lego toys to the Correctional Peace Officers Foundation. These toys were given to the children of fallen correctional staff during the Holiday Season. The Correctional Peace Officers Foundation is a national, non-profit charitable organization created in 1984. Its primary function is to preserve and support the surviving families of Correctional Officers who lose their lives in pursuit of their chosen profession.



Cheshire CI's Employees of the Quarter

Warden Scott Erfe is pleased to announce the Cheshire CI Employees of the Quarter: Correction Officer Jennifer Rodriguez, Correctional Counselor Vanessa Fitzner, and Correctional Captain Marcin Domitrz. Congratulations to all.



Going the Distance

Among those who completed the 47th New York City Marathon, the largest marathon in the world, held November 5, 2017, were two staff members from the York Correctional Institution. Correctional Counselor Karolina Urbanowicz and Licensed Correctional Social Worker Jessica Loss' journey to run the marathon began back in April of 2017, when they were fortunate enough to finally be selected via the lottery system after several years of unsuccessfully trying to gain entrance in the race. Once selected the two trained together and built up to the marathon with an 18-week training program, which included competing in numerous other races. Both are avid runners and prior to the NYC Marathon LCSW Loss completed the Newport (R.I.) half-marathon and CC Urbanowicz completed the Ct. Law Enforcement Memorial 5k run in which she finished in first place for female Officers and 3rd overall in her age class.

This year's NYC Marathon featured more than 50,000 participants with runners from 125 countries. The 26.2 mile course covers all five boroughs and begins in Staten Island, crossing over into Brooklyn, continuing into Queens, over into Manhattan, up to the Bronx, then finishing back in Manhattan in Central Park. LCSW Loss was able to complete the marathon with a time of three hours and 37 minutes for an eight minute, 17 second mile pace and CC Urbanowicz was able to complete the marathon with a time of four hours and two minutes for a nine minute, 15 second mile pace. Congratulations to them both on this great accomplishment.



York CI's Licensed Clinical Social Worker Jessica Loss (left) and Counselor Karolina Urbanowicz with their NYC Marathon medals.

The Benefits of Running

Running as we all know has many benefits and is a great way to increase one's overall level of health. Research shows that running can raise your levels of good cholesterol, boost your immune system and lower one's risk of developing blood clots. Running prevents disease and can actually help to lower a woman's risk of breast cancer. It can reduce the risk of stroke and has proven to help reduce the risk of having a heart attack. Running can also help in weight loss as it is the second most effective exercise (following cross country skiing) in terms of calories burned per minute. It also relieves stress and eliminates depression as the brain secretes hormones that naturally improve your mood. While these are just some of the benefits, running really is incredibly beneficial to the body, mind, and spirit, and you will find that even short runs can leave you feeling more energized, more focused, and better able to enjoy all that life has to offer.



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