

Corrections Connections

Illinois Department of Corrections | Monthly Newsletter

May/June 2018

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Message from the Director

In May, we celebrated and honored our staff and remembered those who have died while performing their duties. While National Correctional Officers and Employees Week gives the Department the opportunity to highlight the great work that you do, please know your efforts are noticed and appreciated each and every day.

Corrections requires a tremendous amount of courage, resilience and sacrifice. It is a line of work that is often thankless despite its importance. Many of you strive each day to be the best you can be; your professionalism and commitment is what makes our Department top-notch.



Director John R. Baldwin

Not only is IDOC staff committed to their profession, but also to improving their communities. I am very proud to lead a workforce that so generously gives of their time and hearts to make a difference in the lives of others. Many of you volunteer for nonprofit organizations, coach youth sports or are active in the Department's fundraising efforts for Special Olympics Illinois. It is truly touching to witness the enthusiasm of staff who participate in events, such as Cops on a Rooftop, Polar Plunge, the pistol match and more.

The IDOC is not just a team, we are a family. Together, we are moving closer to our goal of operating one of the finest correctional systems in the country. Thank you for your hard work!

John R. Baldwin

Making Every Minute Matter

Most people wake up every morning, go to work, do what's expected out of them, drive home to relax and enjoy time with their family, and wake up to do it all over again. But for one man, his work day isn't just an eight hour shift. Tony Surratt makes every minute count!

Suratt's day begins at 6 AM and ends most nights at 10 or 11 PM. He wakes up every morning to get his two kids ready and sent off to school, and then heads off to Western Illinois Correctional Center where he is a Correctional Counselor II. At work, Surratt is the Programs Counselor, Veterans Affairs Liaison, and President of the Employee Benefit Committee. He instructs writing and life skills classes to offenders to help rehabilitate them before they re-enter society. Surratt knows that if he can change the way many of these inmates think about situations and make decisions, he can help change the society they will be living in when they are released.

As a U.S. Marine, Surratt understands the importance of taking care of our veterans, and has helped raise over \$6,000 for the Honor Flight Foundation. This foundation helps send former military personnel to Washington D.C. for a day-long trip to observe the military monuments and cemetery.

Surratt also leads a group of 13 employees who organize

staff appreciation events, conduct fundraisers, plan the holiday party, and help boost morale among employees. He tries to show his appreciation to everyone. He hasn't forgotten where he came from as a Correctional Officer I on the midnight shift. Surratt worked midnights for nine years not necessarily because he wanted to, but because it allowed him the most time to be a husband, father, and coach. After nine years in security, Surratt promoted to Correctional Counselor II.

After Surratt's work day is over, he heads out to coach his son's little league baseball teams, youth football teams, and youth basketball teams depending on the season. If all that coaching is not enough, he is also the Bluffs Jr. High School basketball coach and school bus driver. Tony is the president of both the Tri-County Little League and the Bluffs Little League. He rallies and fundraises for these children to get uniforms, sports equipment, and money for umpires and field maintenance. Surratt is constantly working to improve the lives of these children and help give them the opportunities that other children may not have available. He realizes that a combination of youth sports participation and strong support from coaches and parents are some key components of developing the necessary team and



leadership skills to be successful in life.

After a jam packed day you would think Suratt would head home to eat and relax, right? Nope. After all this, if the weather is permitting, Surratt heads home to work a few hours on his family's garage that he has built with his own two hands. If he has any spare time, Surratt works on completing the three car garage that he and his wife have dreamt of for years.

If there is any extra time left in the day, Suratt helps with homework, dishes, preparing dinner, laundry and all the day-to-day chores that every family faces. But at the end of the day, if you asked Surratt if he would ever change his busy life he would tell you no.

Suratt is just one of many employees at Western Illinois Correctional Center who gives back to his co-workers, community, and family.

Teri Kennedy Becomes Pontiac's First Female Warden

Teri Kennedy has made history at Pontiac Correctional Center as the first female warden of the facility. In its 125-year history as a penal institution, the facility has never had a woman at the helm – until now. Kennedy took over the role of warden after the retirement of

Michael Melvin in March. She began her IDOC career in 1995 as a Correctional Officer. Over the years, she promoted to Leisure Time Services, Correctional Counselor II, Casework Supervisor, and Assistant Warden of Operations.



"I have served under, and with, strong and knowledgeable staff at all levels for the past 25 years. Their tutelage, along with my passion for corrections, has proven invaluable and has ultimately afforded me the opportunity to attain my current position. It will now be my honor and duty to share

my knowledge with the next generation of corrections. Along with the hardworking committed staff of Pontiac Correctional Center, we will work to keep staff, offenders, and the community safe. I am excited to serve as Warden and work with the Department as we face our

new challenges and implement our new initiatives."

-Warden Teri Kennedy,
Pontiac Correctional Center

Offenders at Lawrence Learn To Control Their Thinking

On Friday, April 6, 12 offenders graduated from the first ever Thinking for a Change cognitive behavioral program at Lawrence Correctional Center. These 12 offenders worked hard for five-and-a-half months learning about social skills, cognitive self-change, and problem solving. Offenders are expected to use these skills in their daily lives by using new thinking that results in positive behavioral changes. The offenders will take control of their lives by taking control of their thinking.



Supporting Our Soldiers

Chaplain Paul Weber of East Moline Correctional Center serves in the U.S. Army and was deployed overseas in September 2017. While on this deployment, his wife Heather has been in regular contact with the facility and provides updates on Chaplain Weber. Mrs. Weber provided information regarding items that were needed by the

troops. In February, the facility collected various items for care packages for the soldiers. Mrs. Weber provided a picture of the donations and shared a message from Chaplain Weber that read, "Thanks from all of us for the care packages received today, the day after Easter. Yesterday's ham dinner and then spring picnic was pretty good."



Shawnee Dog Program Benefits Veterans

On Friday, April 13, staff from the SWATT (Shawnee Wellness Assistance Therapy Training) dog team at Shawnee Correctional Center took three dogs to the veterans home in Anna as part of basic obedience dog training. Many veterans gave a warm welcome to the training dogs with smiles and generous amounts of affection. This joint effort between the Department of Corrections and the Department of Veterans Affairs was a success! The SWATT dog program was able to introduce the dogs to new experiences by socializing them so they can act and react appropriately with veterans. In addition, the experience lifted the veterans' spirits.

At the end of the basic obedience dog training, the dogs were made available for adoption by military veterans through Project Hope, a no kill animal shelter in Metropolis.





Giving the Gift of Life

Dixon Correctional Center hosted the American Red Cross for a blood drive on April 27, 2018. Despite several emergency writs and a Tact call out, the staff at Dixon had an amazing turn out. Staff worked together taking on extra reliefs or forfeiting their own lunch break to participate in the blood drive. The American Red Cross was able to collect 45 units. Twenty of the units collected were Power Red units, which mean 135 lives will be saved with the

blood donated by staff at Dixon Correctional Center!



Taylorville Holds Annual Art Show

On April 13, the Taylorville Correctional Center Veterans Group hosted its annual art show. The Veterans Group meets once a month to coordinate various events throughout the year. The art show is an opportunity for offenders to showcase their artistic talents while both offenders and staff spend the day viewing the art. Offenders sit next to their work throughout the day to explain their thoughts behind their creations.

Beautifying the City of Kewanee

Offenders at Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Center recently had the chance to give back to our local community by providing a valuable service towards meeting the city's goal of beautification. Offenders were on site to assist with Kewanee's "Clean Up Day" where community members had the opportunity to bring large items they did not need anymore to a centralized location for appropriate disposal. Kewanee LSRC offenders were on site at two

locations -- one that was collecting junk items and one that was specifically collecting old/used tires for proper disposal. The men assisted community members with unloading their trucks and trailers. Overall, the event went so well that the city plans on doing it again in the fall using the assistance of KLSRC offenders.



Creating an Inviting Atmosphere

In recent months, Hill Correctional Center has been working to improve the atmosphere of its visiting room. Murals have been painted on walls both inside and outside of the visiting room and checkerboards have been painted on the tables. The

kids' corner of the visiting room features puzzles, games, and coloring books as well as wall murals of popular characters. The corner serves to enrich the visiting experience and help assist in fostering quality time between offenders and their children.



Committed To Community Service

Officer Darryn Hayes has worked for the Illinois Department of Corrections for 19 years. Mr. Hayes created Life Choices, a non-profit organization in which he serves as an avid mentor and motivational speaker. For the past 14 years, Life Choices has primarily concentrated on youth services and charitable donations, such as food, clothing, school supply drives, and volunteer work at homeless shelters. Mr. Hayes has worked with local high schools to guide young people on a road to success by offering tutoring services and resume writing tips. Mr. Hayes also works with Habitat for

Humanity to build homes for families in need. Mr. Darryn Hayes' efforts have been diligent resulting in shining success!



Cop on a Rooftop

Six facilities participated in Cop on a Rooftop on May 18. Staff collected donations at Dunkin' Donuts stores across the state and raised thousands of dollars for Special Olympics Illinois!



Be Well

Depression and Corrections: Identifying the Symptoms

Research reports a rate of depression for corrections staff, and corrections officers in particular, that is much higher than that of the general population. The following work conditions can increase the risk of developing depressive symptoms: high psychological job demands, low social support, and low decision-making authority. Signs of depression include:

- Tearfulness
- Crying
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Difficulty concentrating
- Difficulty remembering
- Lack of energy
- Loss of appetite or overeating
- Feelings of hopelessness, worthlessness, and/or helplessness



- Self-blame
- Irritability
- Anger Outbursts
- Social Withdrawal
- Loss of interest in what was previously enjoyed
- Thoughts of death and dying

If you are experiencing symptoms of depression, please seek expert help

immediately. Do not ignore them, thinking that they will go away, and definitely, do not try to escape them through substance use or other addictive behaviors.

Source: "Depression." *Staying Well, Strategies for Corrections Staff*, by Caterina G. Spinaris, 2nd ed.

AFSCME Illinois Personal Support Program

The professional staff of the AFSCME Personal Support Program (PSP) is ready to help you or a member of your family with personal concerns or problems, whether they occur at home or at work. The PSP offers services statewide through a network of licensed

professionals who are specially trained to provide confidential assistance on a wide variety of concerns and problems, including stress, marital/partner problems, parenting, grief, and elder care concerns.

You can reach the PSP from 8:30 Am through 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday, at 1-800-647-8776.

Chico's Fitness Corner

By Robert Miller, Supply Supervisor I, Vandalia Correctional Center

Breathe/Exercise/Repeat to Reduce Stress and Tone Body

If you haven't worked out in a while, have never tried any specific exercise routine, or just want to switch up your training, this

Breathe/Exercise/Repeat (BER) workout is for you! The BER workout is designed to be schedule friendly and easy to accomplish with absolutely no equipment necessary. The exercises will help you to reshape and redefine your body!

For this exercise routine, a round timer app on your phone can be helpful. There are many available for free for Android and iPhone users. Just set your round timers to 50 second intervals with eight second rest periods.

Remember, it is recommended you check with your physician before beginning any exercise program. Just remember to breathe, exercise, and repeat. Let's do this!

BODY WEIGHT SQUATS – (50 seconds with 8 second rest period)

Feet should be shoulder width apart. Reach your arms and hands straight out from your chest; maintain arms this way throughout the squat. Bending your knees, drop your bottom first as if you are sitting in a



chair. Inhale while descending. Try not to lean forward. Squat until thighs are parallel to the floor (invisible chair position). Exhale as you begin standing. Stop just short of locking your knees in the standing position and descend back into a squat. Remember to inhale while squatting and exhale when returning to the upright standing position. Repeat for 50 seconds.

COBRA PUSH UPS – (50 Seconds with 8 Second rest period)

Lie flat on the floor chin slightly above floor, eyes forward. Bring hands next to your chest with your thumbs touching you and keep your elbows close to your body. Relax pelvic area, from the waist down, and let the pelvis, knees, and feet rest on the floor. Now push yourself upward, inhale to top position. Locking your elbows, flex your triceps, squeeze your chest, and descend back to the floor while exhaling while you descend. Repeat for 50 seconds.

LEG RAISES –(50 seconds with 8 second rest period) Lie flat on your back, place hands under lower back straighten legs, inhale, and raise both legs simultaneously. Legs should be perpendicular to the floor, creating an L Shape. Exhale, lower feet 6" above the floor and do not let your feet touch the floor. Inhale; raise legs so that your body is in an L formation. Repeat for 50 seconds.

CARDIO HORSE STANCE 4 PUNCH SQUAT JUMP – (50 Seconds with 8 second rest)

Spread feet laterally about 6" wider than shoulder width. Point toes and drop your bottom as low as possible. Put your hands up towards your cheekbones in a relaxed fist position. Throw four alternate punches-- right, left, right, left and repeat. Return fist to cheeks after both sets of punches, then explode into a jump from the horse stance squatting style position.

Repeat cycle three times or as many times as possible.

Calm Your Mind and Body with Box Breathing

Box breathing is a simple technique to relieve stress and sharpen your focus. Try it before and after a workout. In a seated position, breathe in for a count of four and hold for four seconds. Exhale for four seconds and then rest for a count of four.



RAPID RESULTS

Cooking up an Innovative Idea

About six months ago, Illinois River Correctional Food Services Supervisor III Jeff Shults was in the dietary office and noticed some of the empty rice bags that were set aside. He thought, "How can those be used?" Soon after, he had an "ah ha" moment! Shults had seen one of the offender dietary workers wearing a make-shift apron and it dawned on him that maybe the rice bags could be used as aprons! He tossed the idea around a bit with a few staff and then took some of the bags over to clothing to see if it was something they could do. Luckily for us, we have some pretty good tailors! One of them came up with the design and whipped up an apron pretty quickly. We have been using them ever since!

It takes three rice bags to make one apron and

converting these five pound rice bags into aprons doesn't cost the facility anything. The bags are made of a tarp-like material, so the aprons are stain and water resistant. The dietary workers love them because they keep them dry, are easy to clean, and are better than the duck material aprons previously used. The aprons have been used mainly in the pot and pan area where the dishwashing is done, but will be used in the future for other areas of dietary. Doing so may also improve wear and tear on our dietary uniform tops. If these aprons double the life of the uniform, we would save approximately 50% or \$630.00 (or more) per year.



Not to mention the savings we already have from the cost of the aprons themselves. Current pricing for the aprons we use is \$11.00 each.

Illinois River dietary workers have been using the rice bag aprons since around January of this year. They seem to like the aprons, which can be easily replaced. Rice is a dietary staple so we always have bags and it's an easy project for our tailors to sew.

Fallen Heroes and Exemplary Staff Recognized at Memorial Wall Ceremony

Illinois Department of Corrections, Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice and the Correctional Employees' Memorial Association recognized the Department's past and present heroes at a Memorial Wall Ceremony on May 9. The event was held during National Correctional Officers and Employees Week, which is designated annually to honor all of the men and women in corrections. "During National Correctional Officers and Employees Week, it is very

important that we remember the past as we look to our future, said IDOC Director John Baldwin." "The IDOC's future includes fewer staff assaults, a healthy environment, and increased recognition of the difficult job that staff do each and every day."

The first half of the Memorial Wall Ceremony paid tribute to employees who have died in the line of duty. Governor Bruce Rauner provided remarks and also laid the

wreath in honor of the 36 employees who paid the ultimate price.

The second half of the service honored current employees of IDOC and IDJJ. 65 employees were nominated by their colleagues and supervisors to receive the highest honor of Correctional Officer of the Year, Parole Agent of the Year, and Corrections Employee of the Year. These awards recognize those who have shown outstanding leadership and professionalism.

Employee of the Year Nominees



Big Muddy River
Centralia
Danville
Decatur
Dixon
East Moline
Graham
Hill
Illinois River
Jacksonville
Joliet Treatment Center
Kewanee
Lawrence
Lincoln
Logan
Menard

Sgt. Tony Stoner
Administrative Assistant I Melissa Rucker
Records Office Supervisor Melissa Robbins
Account Technician I Carol Culp
Corrections Counselor II Dana Thompson
Sgt. Alonzo Boardman
Electrician Paul Magruder
Administrative Assistant I Aimee Bequette-Cheney
Field Services Representative Penni Harris
Food Services Supervisor I Deb Heck
Electrician Bruce Van Duyne
Chaplain Justin York
Administrative Assistant II Kelly Richardson
Health Care Unit Administrator Lisa Hopp
Office Coordinator Abigail Ingram
Corrections Maintenance Supervisor Corey Phoenix

Pinckneyville
Pontiac
Robinson
Shawnee
Sheridan
Southwestern Ill.
Stateville
Taylorville
Vandalia
Vienna
Western Illinois
Fox Valley ATC
Peoria ATC
General Office
Parole

Food Services Program Manager William Harris
Electrician Timothy Fitzsimmons
Account Technician I Jenna Hankins
Office Associate Angela Galbraith
Corrections Supply Supervisor II James Shankle
Food Services Program Manager John Klutz
B of I Technician Sheena Thomas
Record Office Supervisor Janis Jokisch
Sgt. Charlie Rose
Executive Secretary I Teresa Ralls
Office Associate Amanda Lewis
Correctional Counselor II Petrice Foster
Corrections Residence Counselor I Melinda McCallister
Method and Procedure Advisor I Brittney Lamsargis
Office Associate Geri Arsenault

Employee of the Year: Brittney Lamsargis

Correctional Officer of the Year Nominees



Big Muddy River
Centralia
Danville
Decatur
Dixon
East Moline
Graham
Hill
Illinois River
Jacksonville
Joliet Treatment Center
Kewanee
Lawrence
Lincoln
Logan
Menard
Pinckneyville
Pontiac

Christopher McCabe
Ashley Sears
Steve Hall
Chadd Mathias
Arthur Manzano
Susan Scott
Tony Castillo
Brian Ledbetter
Norman Smith
Roger Hanlin
John Leonard
Hollie Lester
Jeff Molenhour
James Elmore
Anthony Riss
Janell Stanley
Stacey Gibson
Andrew Smith

Robinson
Shawnee
Sheridan
Southwestern Illinois
Stateville
Taylorville
Vandalia
Vienna
Western Illinois
Fox Valley ATC
Peoria ATC

Dustin York
Jonathan Winters
Jason Stahl
Anthony Castellano
Rontisa Ivery
Michael McNary
Josh Smith
Larry Busby
Jennifer Horton
Counselor I Sherise Thatch
Correctional Residence Counselor I Jay Wilhelm

Correctional Officer of the Year: Chadd Mathias

Parole Agent of the Year Nominees

Parole District 1
Parole District 2
Parole District 3
Parole District 4
Parole District 5

Lynette Faulkner
Candice Larson
Eli Betancourt
Matthew Roadman
Sarah Snyder



Parole Agent of the Year: Matthew Roadman

Story ideas, feedback and comments can be submitted to
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