

# Corrections Connections



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## Message from the Director



Director John R. Baldwin

The Illinois Department of Corrections is focused on building a culture of sustainability and efficiency by eliminating wasteful practices and developing innovative solutions. Because of your commitment to the state's Rapid Results initiative, we are doing our jobs faster, better, and with fewer resources.

From dietary aprons constructed from rice bags to LED lighting upgrades and offender clothing closets, staff have been ingenious in their efforts. Our Department is serving as a model for other state agencies that are also working to identify and improve inefficiencies in their everyday operations. I challenge you to think bigger and set even more ambitious goals that will drive transformational change at IDOC.

Thank you for your work. I am proud of what you've accomplished and look forward to seeing what you do next.

John R. Baldwin

# IDOC Recidivism Rate Drops for Third Consecutive Year

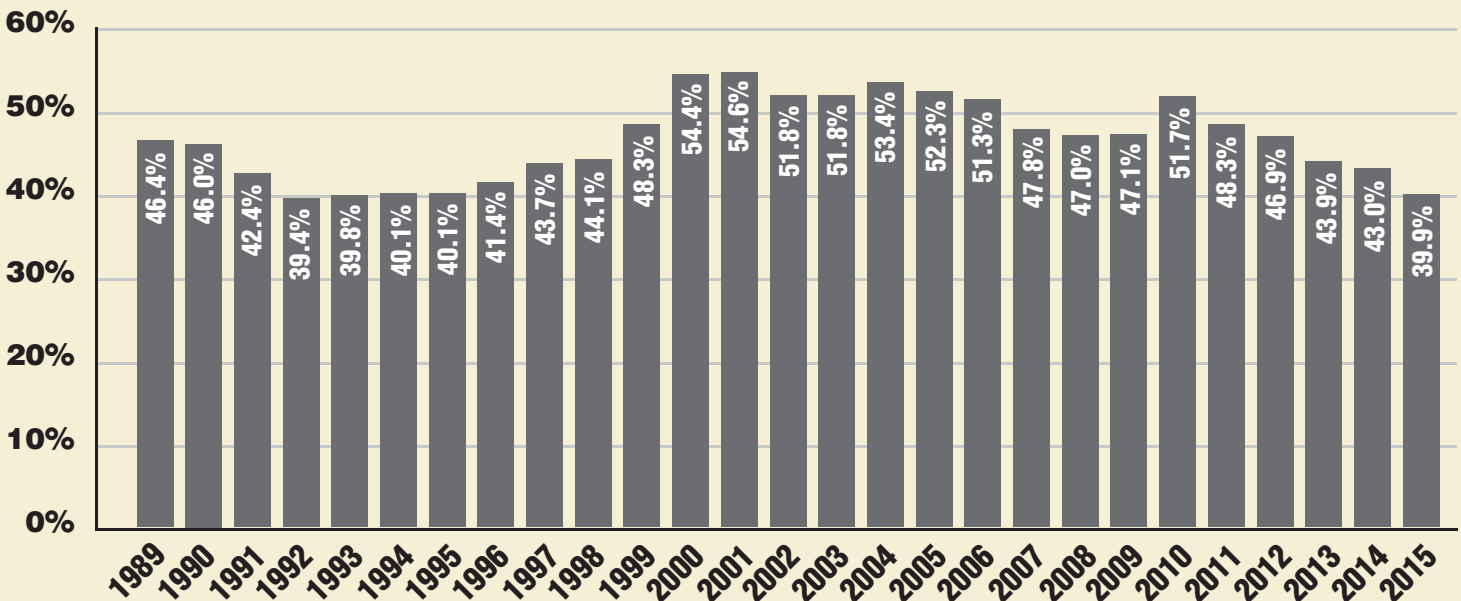
**Illinois Department of Corrections  
3-year Recidivism Rates by Gender  
FY10-FY15 Releases**

	Male	Female
<b>FY10</b>	53.1%	36.2%
<b>FY11</b>	49.7%	32.3%
<b>FY12</b>	48.4%	28.7%
<b>FY13</b>	45.7%	25.6%
<b>FY14</b>	44.6%	25.3%
<b>FY15</b>	41.3%	23.8%

**Illinois Department of Corrections  
Three-Year Recidivism Rates  
Fiscal Years 1989-2015**

1989	46.4%
1990	46.0%
1991	42.4%
1992	39.4%
1993	39.8%
1994	40.1%
1995	40.1%
1996	41.4%
1997	43.7%
1998	44.1%
1999	48.3%
2000	54.4%
2001	54.6%
2002	51.8%
2003	51.8%
2004	53.4%
2005	52.3%
2006	51.3%
2007	47.8%
2008	47.0%
2009	47.1%
2010	51.7%
2011	48.3%
2012	46.9%
2013	43.9%
2014	43.0%
2015	39.9%

**Illinois Department of Corrections Recidivism Rates  
FY89- FY15 Releases**



# Illinois Congressman Provides Special Opportunity for Incarcerated Fathers

Sheridan Correctional Center hosted Congressman Danny K. Davis and his staff for a Father's Day event on June 9th, 2018. Davis and his staff provided transportation for the families of almost 30 offenders. Refreshments were provided by Sheridan's culinary arts program. The children made cards for their dads during the event and were given coloring books and crayons to take home. The men were able to spend three hours visiting and playing games with their children and other loved ones. One offender was able to spend time with his two-year-old daughter whom he had not seen since she was four-months-old.

After visitation, the men had a conversation with Congressman Davis while their families participated in a workshop hosted by his staff. The importance of support systems for offenders returning



to the community was addressed, as well as information on how to access resources.

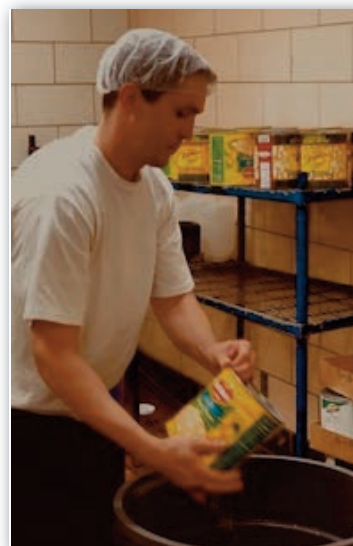
Sheridan Correctional Center strives to provide offenders with a therapeutic community in which to receive substance abuse treatment and re-entry support. Staff understand that

having strong support systems in the community is integral to offender success.

Congressman Davis' Father's Day program helps offenders realize the consequences their actions have on their families, and provides them with the tools to be better dads when they go home.

## Building a Culture of Sustainability

Illinois Correctional Industries implemented a recycling program at Sheridan Correctional Center in February. Since then, 63,000 pounds of cardboard and 25,000 pounds of tin have been collected. The tin cans are stored in dietary and picked up once a week. Cardboard is carted to the ICI building once a day.





# Day with Dad Strengthens Families

On June 23, 2018, a group of offenders at Pinckneyville Correctional Center had the opportunity to bond with their children through a new program called Day with Dad. The event was the first of its kind for the facility, and allowed offenders an opportunity to play and interact with their children beyond the standard visitations held at a table. "I didn't feel like an inmate that day; I felt like a father again," said offender Ventura Lechuga.

Day with Dad united the children and their father for a memorable day of games, food, and relationship building. Prior to the event, offenders participated in months of intensive programming and successfully completed the nation's only evidence-based fatherhood program designed specifically for incarcerated fathers, InsideOut Dad. "It really opened my eyes and

gave me tools that I had never seen before, that I can use for the rest of my life, and tools to pass along to my daughter and her kids," Lechuga said.

It is evident through the stories and the descriptions of their experiences, that the event has been extremely impactful for the offenders and their families who participated. "There's nothing better than the smile I saw on my child's face that day," said offender Darail Williamson. "This program truly showed me how to be a father and I'm forever grateful for the experience IDOC gave me and my family." Offenders have shared many of the positive conversations that occurred between them and their families during and even after the event. "I'm so grateful for the opportunity that the staff gave us to put what we had learned in practice and spend the day showing our kids love and just get to spend

a normal day with them," said offender Anthony Childs. "My kids have talked about it nonstop ever since." Since the day of the event, several support meetings have been held for these fathers to give them more tools for maintaining a positive support system at home. Pinckneyville staff will continue showing these fathers how they can continue strengthening their relationships with their children.



*Photos courtesy of Pinckneyville Press*





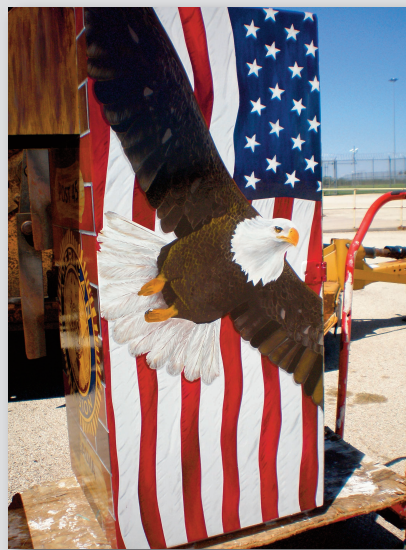
## TACT Team Fundraises for Officer's Family

In early May, Correctional Officer Bradley Bowen at Western Illinois Correctional Center created a GoFundMe page to help raise money for his mother who is a cancer survivor. Officer Bowen's mother underwent two years of treatment while his father also experienced medical issues. The Western Illinois Correctional Center TACT Team came up with a plan to TACT Commander Lt. Steven Ryan and Assistant TACT Commander Lt. Lucas Kempf organized a fundraiser outside of work and raised \$3,200 to help Officer Bowen's mother.

## Offenders Use Artistic Talent to Help Community

Offenders at Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Center participate in a multitude of community service projects at any given time. Recently, offenders painted flag retirement boxes that were placed at four local American Legion Posts. The project is part of a larger initiative that a young man is facilitating

for his Eagle Scout project. Offenders spent countless hours working on this project, including hours of research to ensure that the military scenes were accurate and represented in an appropriate manner.



## Offenders Recognize Memorial Day

Counselor Tim Carpenter at Taylorville Correctional Center coordinates a group for offenders who are military veterans. The group meets monthly and supports each other during their incarceration. On Memorial Day, the veterans came together to march and honor those who paid the ultimate price protecting our country.



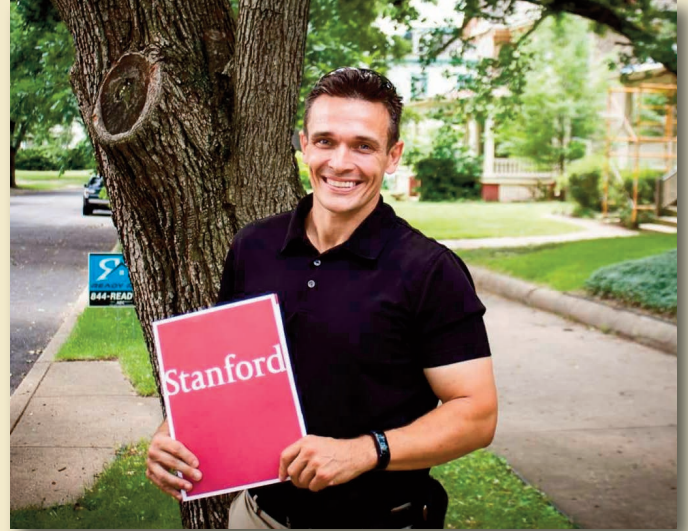
# Returning Citizen Accepted to Stanford University

At Peoria Adult Transition Center, staff is challenged with the task of reintegrating residents into the community through the path of least resistance. Many residents display great fortitude while navigating the system and putting the pieces of their lives back together. Recently, Peoria ATC had a resident most correctional staff can only hope to encounter during their career. After being incarcerated for almost 13 years, Jason Spyres entered the Peoria Adult Transition Center in April of 2016 with a sense of relentless determination. He knew he could not get back the years he had lost, but he refused to let it dictate what he could gain. Within a few weeks of entering the Peoria ATC, Spyres had demonstrated his hard work and dedication to a local restaurant owner. The owner ultimately promoted Spyres to manager and handed him the keys to the restaurant. For many residents that would have been enough, but Spyres did not stop there. He enrolled at Illinois Central College in East Peoria as a full-time student with a dream of one day attending an elite college. Spyres decided to tackle all of his obstacles head on by researching policies, regulations, bills, and laws to understand his best avenue to

success. When Spyres found hurdles he couldn't conquer, he would contact administrators or representatives and use his story to advocate, inspire, and create change.

While attending college, Spyres applied to be a member of Phi Beta Kappa. He had a 4.0 GPA and received a letter of recommendation from one of his teachers in the chemistry department. While filling out the application form, he noticed he was ineligible due to his felony conviction. Spyres wrote a detailed letter to the local and national Phi Beta Kappa chapters about why he would be an asset to their honor society. He was not only accepted, but Phi Beta Kappa expressed their intent to revisit and revise their rules in order to be a more comprehensive and diverse organization.

After 17 months at Peoria ATC, Spyres paroled with the same determination to persevere. He applied to many of the top colleges in the United States and was turned down for all of them except Stanford University, which put him on a



waitlist. Spyres did not let this deter him. He drove to a Chicago hotel to speak with a Stanford representative who was scheduled to recruit potential students. Spyres found the representative in the lobby and spoke with her for several minutes about his goals and aspirations. Three weeks later, Spyres received his email of acceptance to Stanford University.

Peoria ATC staff is fortunate to witness the opportunities and possibilities that are available to those with an unwavering persistence to succeed. Most correctional employees will never hear the outcome of an offender after they leave the institution; however, Jason Spyres has afforded Peoria ATC staff with his emphatic and heartfelt statement, "I will be forever grateful."



# House of Healing Fosters Hope

Lawrence Correctional Center has implemented the House of Healing program for offenders who have ten or more years left on their sentence. The men focus on getting to know themselves on a deeper level while reflecting on the experiences that shaped them into the men they are today.



## Blue and White Sunday Honors Law enforcement

Blue and White Sunday is an event in Quincy that began in 2008 to recognize the city's first responders and unite the community. This year's event was held in May at the Cathedral of Worship and was attended by IDOC Assistant Director Gladyse Taylor, Warden Cameron Watson of Western Illinois Correctional Center, Warden Glen Austin of Logan Correctional Center, Officer Nicole Watson of Jacksonville Correctional Center, Parole Agent E. Turner, and former warden Melody Johnson-Hulet. Blue and White Sunday included music and a sermon.



## Officer Assists Charity in Helping Children with Disabilities

Correctional Officer Megan Terry of Stateville Correctional Center is involved in a charity called Caps of Love. Caps of Love collects and recycles plastic bottle caps, and uses the money to buy or repair wheelchairs for children. Officer Terry collected nine large bags of caps from Stateville's MSU. In the future, she plans to involve even more Stateville staff and offenders in her efforts.





# Facility Fundraises for Lieutenant's Family

East Moline Correctional Center organized a bake sale for Lt. Brad Weets at Dixon Correctional Center. Lt. Weet's four-year-old son, Jeg, was diagnosed with a rare and fatal genetic disease

called NPC, which is sometimes called "Childhood Alzheimer's." More than \$1,300 was donated to Lt. Weets and his family to help cover medical expenses.



# Dogs Trained to Bring Comfort to Veterans

On June 6th, the first class of dogs graduated from the Shawnee Correctional Center SWATT (Shawnee Wellness Assistance Therapy Training) Dog Program. This program has been a collaborative effort between the facility, Project Hope Humane Society, trained volunteer Amy Cline of Amynta Kennels, and six offender dog handlers. Over a ninety day period, three dogs were fostered into the Shawnee Correctional Center and taught basic obedience skills. The dogs were also introduced into various veteran social settings like the Southern Illinois Honor Flight, the VA Home in Anna, and The Haven at Crab Orchard Lake.



# RAPID RESULTS

## Mattress Cover Project Saves Thousands of Dollars

Hill Correctional Center used to spend nearly \$12,400 per year on the replacement of mattresses and pillows for offenders. While some facilities had been attempting to salvage old mattresses by re-covering them with material from bedsheets, staff at Hill decided to take it a step further and look into a more

durable and hygienic option – vinyl. The project was implemented in March and the cost savings are clear. If Hill salvages just half of its mattresses and pillows using this method, the facility will save over \$4,600 annually. The vinyl mattress covers are now being used statewide.



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## IDOC Celebrates Rapid Results Success

On July 12, 2018, the Illinois Department of Corrections recognized the Rapid Results efforts of all IDOC facilities. In fiscal year 2018, there was an overall reported savings of \$850,000 and 18,000 labor hours reallocated. Congratulations to our 2018 award winners!

2018 Overall Rapid Results Champion: Shawnee Correctional Center

Innovative Project Award: Illinois River Correctional Center

Innovative Project Award: Hill Correctional Center

Maximum Security Highest Savings Award: Stateville Correctional Center

Maximum Security Most Labor Hours Saved Award: Joliet Treatment Center

Medium Security Highest Savings Award: Sheridan Correctional Center

Medium Security Most Labor Hours Saved Award: Kewanee Life Skills Re-Entry Center

Minimum Security Highest Savings Award: East Moline Correctional Center

Minimum Security Most Labor Hours Saved Award: Jacksonville Correctional Center





# Be Well

## From Corrections Fatigue To Fulfillment® – A Family’s Perspective

**The following narratives were written by the wife and teenage daughter of a staff member. This individual has worked security for more than 20 years at the Illinois Department of Corrections.**

*How does someone with 20+ years cope with stress and the everyday concern for your personal safety, as well as your co-workers? You become a different person or an alter ego if you will. This allows you to keep a stern profile and not allow people to see any other side of you. For safety and security issues this is more than acceptable. However, one needs to be able to turn that off when they leave work and go home to their family and friends.*

*Although I've never worked directly with offenders, because my husband deals with it on a daily basis, I feel as though I have lived the experiences, situations, etc. that he has. He has always been a wonderful provider,*

*soulmate, father and friend but recently I had noticed, those things were slowly diminishing and he was becoming someone that I did not feel as though I knew anymore. The stress of the job was getting to him and that stern profile he had to maintain eight hours a day while at work became his profile every hour of every day.*

*Our daughter had even noticed the change in her father and they had always had an inseparable bond, as most fathers and daughters do. This was breaking our daughter's heart and after a recent disagreement they had, she lashed out at me saying some very hurtful things about her father. I knew in my heart she truly did not mean them but was so angry she had just come to her boiling point and exploded. I asked her to give herself a few days to calm down and then discuss it with her father. A few days went by and she did what I asked. I did not witness the conversation but I came in*

*towards the end of it and I could see the pain and hurt in my husband's eyes. He had no idea things had gotten this bad.*

*We, as a family, discussed other issues that needed addressed. I felt that we had made progress but I did not have any idea how much until my husband went to the CF2F class. I remember him coming home from the class and immediately hugging our daughter and apologizing for his behavior and who he had become. I saw an immediate change in him after this class and his passion for this program.*

*The man I married 25 years ago has become the same man I fell in love with all over again!*

*This isn't something to be ignored. Corrections is a very stressful job and your family and friends are the ones who suffer from it. Don't shut them out, they are the ones who love and support you every day.*

*My father has always been my biggest role model. Every morning, he set me up for success. Words of encouragement were spoken, he told me I would do amazing things, said that he loves me, and out the door to work he went. The mornings, they made me happy. It was always the afternoon I dreaded, when dad came home from work. Dad would come home defeated every day, answering constant phone calls, and just looked like he had given up. My cheery, loving father seemed to vanish when he was off work. People started telling me things about my dad like how power-needy he was, how he had to be in constant control, how his*

*emotions always affected his attitude. I began to realize that my dad was becoming his work. I struggled with connecting with him, never feeling like I could disclose information to him, and instead feeling scared to tell my dad about my life in fear of him disapproving, or snapping at me. My mom and I brought this to his attention, and that's when things began to change. My father was so hurt - he never realized what was happening. Next thing I knew, Dad was gone for a week, in Springfield, attending the CF2F workshop. I remember the day he came home, and he came into the door and hugged me, and started giving Mom and I a summary of his week. Dad broke down,*

*sobbing. He told us all about these things that he learned, the stories he was told, and how he didn't feel like he was alone in his struggle of becoming his work. I broke down right along with him. From the moment he stepped into the door, I knew my dad was back. He was given the right tools to understand and cope with what he was going through, and he used them. Dad channels his rough patches into productivity, and I have never been so proud of him. Dad and I have never had such a strong relationship, and once again, I look to model myself after the person my father has become.*



## Be Well: Psychological Trauma and Corrections Staff

Being “tough” is essentially a requirement for the job – especially for security staff. Employees who experience or witness life-threatening incidents are expected to “get back on the horse” immediately, and continue functioning unscathed. This widely embraced expectation causes exposed staff to deny emotional struggles following traumatic events, to not appear “weak.” Instead of seeking help, they may feel ashamed because they are still troubled by incidents. Remember, even the “toughest of the tough” show signs of wear-and-tear

as the number and types of traumatic material to which they are exposed at work continue to accumulate. If that is true for you, here are some suggestions.

1. Acknowledge that you are still bothered by extremely stressful situations to which you were exposed;
2. Talk to significant others, peers, or spiritual advisors about this;
3. Seek help from knowledgeable medical

and/or behavioral health professionals;

4. Engage in activities that are health-promoting, body calming, emotion-calming, and nurturing socially and spiritually, such as physical exercise, outdoors activities, psychotherapy, journaling, or attending support groups or faith-based gatherings; and
5. Abstain from substance abuse or other addictive behaviors.

## Concert Provides Positive Experience for Incarcerated Women

On June 3rd, Logan Correctional Center partnered with WCIC radio station and several local businesses to host its inaugural Women's Empowerment Concert! More than 1,300 incarcerated women attended the event. The concert provided an uplifting experience and promoted positive behavior.

Associate Pastor Dee Pulliam opened the event with a sermon. The message was followed by performances by Christian hip hop artist Josiah Williams and Christian contemporary band Carrolton. The event was a huge success and rewarded those who demonstrated track records of progress.



# Murphysboro Implements Thinking for a Change Program

At Murphysboro Life Skills Re-Entry center, eight offenders graduated from the facility's first Thinking for a Change class. The program combined the cognitive restructuring theory and cognitive skills theory to help individuals take control of their lives by taking control of their thinking. There is an extensive body of research that shows cognitive-behavioral programming significantly reduces recidivism of offenders. The class was taught for three hours per week for 12 weeks.

Participants were required to complete all homework assignments, demonstrate all the skill sets and receive at least 75% on the post test. Assistant Warden Anita Ramsey reports not only did the eight participants complete all homework assignments, but one participant scored a 100% on



the final exam. Correctional Counselors Jarold Selby and Rhonda McWilliams were co-instructors for the class.

## IDOC Announces Construction of 200-Bed Inpatient Treatment Center

The Illinois Department of Corrections is gearing up to build a 200-bed mental health and medical correctional inpatient facility. This facility will provide the most intensive level of care for offenders who struggle with mental illness and to those who require long-term skilled nursing care. The 180,000-square foot facility will be located in Joliet on the same grounds as the existing Joliet Treatment Center. This \$150 million Inpatient Treatment Center will provide services to both male and female offenders with a maximum patient capacity of just over 200. More than 400 people will work at the facility including physicians, nurse practitioners, and licensed psychologists.

“The state-of-the-art facility will serve as a national model for



mental health treatment in corrections,” said IDOC Director John Baldwin. “An increasing number of individuals with mental illness are being sentenced to us, and we must provide the highest level of comprehensive care possible to ensure their success.”

The IDOC has partnered with the state's Capital Development Board (CDB) to get the project off the ground.

## 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.

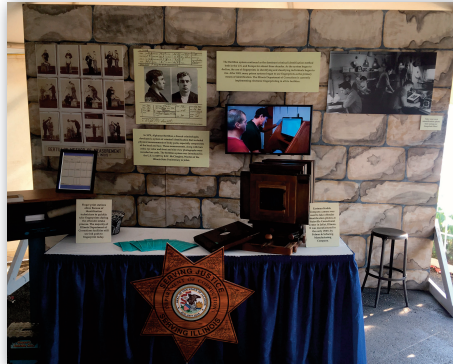
You can reach the PSP from 8:30 Am through 4:30 PM, Monday through Friday, at 1-800-647-8776.



# History of Offender Identification Highlighted at State Fair

The Illinois Department of Corrections displayed historical Bureau of Identification photos and artifacts at this year's Illinois State Fair and DuQuoin State Fair. Illinois played a major role in the implementation of an offender identification system in the United States. The Bertillon Method of Measurement was invented in France and included measurements of an individual's body parts as well as full-face and profile photographs. This system was introduced in the U.S. in 1887 by R.W. McClaughry, Warden of the Illinois State Penitentiary in Joliet. When fairgoers visited IDOC's booth, they could have their fingerprints taken and use

Snapchat to take their own identification photo. A special thank you goes to Stateville Correctional Center, Pittsfield Work Camp, Pinckneyville Correctional Center, and Vandalia Correctional Center for contributing to the display.



## Jigsaw Puzzles as Therapy

At Joliet Treatment Center, the Jigsaw Therapy program allows residents to work on puzzles at a table outside of the Leisure Time Specialist office. Residents randomly add pieces to complete the puzzle. Staff encourage residents to participate and engage in conversation. They have the opportunity to discuss various topics,

including their goals, interests, etc. When a puzzle is completed, it is framed and placed on the wall with the names of the residents and staff who contributed to its completion. This program has been a hit with residents. Many have been requesting to take puzzles back to their housing unit to work on with other residents.



Story ideas, feedback and comments can be submitted to  
Lindsey Hess at [lindsey.hess@illinois.gov](mailto:lindsey.hess@illinois.gov)

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