**Director's Message**

Soon spring will arrive, bringing with it a new season of growth. As we shake off the last of winter’s chill, we might ask what ways we can grow and embrace better ways of living and working.

There are many good answers. We might try something new or increase some of our good habits:

- Practice gratitude
- Meditate
- Exercise
- Eat healthier foods
- Foster better relationships with family and friends

One good habit I hope you will increase is your use of dialogue.

Dialogue is more than communication; it is a means of mutual thought and reflection. Dialogue enables us to find the best answers together. It gives us a common language and a safe space.

When we practice dialogue, we are listening to each other, and the best listening occurs when we listen with respect, with empathy, and with suspension.

Dialogue helps us think together. We are smarter together, and we forge better outcomes when all voices are heard.

Dialogue can create conditions that allow us to achieve those intangibles many of us want—things like a sense of security, progress, and peace of mind.

Dialogue contributes to this agency’s success, and it can contribute to your life outside work as well. Many Department employees have talked of using the dialogic practices at home with their families, enabling calmer, more fruitful interactions.

As you prepare to spring forward into the coming season, I hope you will consider expanding your use of dialogue as a means of enriching your professional and personal life.

Harold Clarke

---

**VADOC Receives Excellence in Government Award for Partnerships**

The Virginia Department of Corrections will receive a 2019 Excellence in Government Award recognizing two public-private partnerships that have the same goal: training offenders to return successfully to society.

**VADOC Agency Legislative Wrap Up**

The 2019 General Assembly session came to an end in late February. The Department’s sole agency bill, HB2605, has now been passed by both the House and Senate and will soon be on its way for the Governor’s signature.

**VADOC Plungers Raise $20,000 to Support Virginia Special Olympics**

Sixty-four members of VADOC’s team True Blue took part in the annual Polar Plunge at Virginia Beach on Saturday, February 2. The plungers raised approximately $20,000 to benefit Special Olympics Virginia.
VADOC Receives Excellence in Government Award for Public-Private Partnerships

The Virginia Department of Corrections will receive a 2019 Excellence in Government Award recognizing two public-private partnerships that have the same goal: training offenders to return successfully to society.

“The spirit of citizenship and tremendous generosity exhibited by our community partners Johnson Controls and the Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation benefit all Virginians, because when former offenders succeed, our communities gain long-lasting public safety,” said Director Harold Clarke.

VADOC is one of seven honorees the Virginia Commonwealth University L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs announced February 8.

In the Green Heating Ventilation Air Conditioning (HVAC) program at Indian Creek Correctional Center in Chesapeake, students gain technical skills in a cutting-edge classroom and an energy conservation lab built with assistance from industry leader Johnson Controls. This one-of-kind effort puts students together with industry experts and keeps them abreast of new developments in the ever-changing HVAC industry while also allowing them to earn certifications and credentials necessary for future employment.

The Thoroughbred Retirement Foundation works with VADOC at the State Farm Work Center providing care for retired thoroughbreds to prepare offenders for careers in the equine industry. Skills include daily management of and hands on care for horses, feeding and nutrition, health assessments, facility maintenance and management. Offenders can also learn skills to prepare them for careers in farrier science. Since its inception in 2007, around 100 men have completed the program and numerous horses have found adoptive homes. The James River Chapter of TRF raises approximately $100,000 each year to provide the Groom Elite program education for the offender participants and care for the horses.

Virginia holds the lowest recidivism rate in the nation at 23.4 percent. For those completing a Career and Technical Education (CTE) program in the Virginia prison system, the rate is even lower, at 12.3 percent.

Award recipients will be honored at a luncheon April 11 from noon to 2 p.m. at the Richmond Marriott, 500 E. Broad St.
The 2019 General Assembly session came to an end in late February. The Department’s sole agency bill, HB2605, has now been passed by both the House and Senate and will soon be on its way for the Governor’s signature. This will change the Code of Virginia to reflect the Community Corrections Alternative Program implemented by the Department in May, 2017, repealing the language for Detention, Diversion, and Bootcamp programs in the Code.

The following bills not introduced on behalf of the VADOC but impacting the Department have also passed both the House of Delegates and the Senate:

- HB1642 and SB1777 require the Department to report certain measures related to the use of restricted housing.
- HB1884 requires the Director to review and revise as necessary the Department’s policy concerning visitors’ wearing tampons and menstrual cups when visiting.
- HB1917 and SB1273 requires the Director to establish a statewide health care continuous quality improvement committee.
- HB2499 requires the Department to develop policies to improve the exchange of medical and mental health information and records of offenders.
- SB1516 allows the Department of Health Professions to release information from the Prescription Monitoring Program to specific individuals designated by the Director.
- HJ 697 designates the first full week of May in 2019 and in each succeeding year as Correctional Officers’ Week in Virginia.

(HB=House Bill, SB=Senate Bill)
VADOC Plunges to Support Virginia Special Olympics

Sixty-four members of VA-DOC’s team True Blue took part in the annual Polar Plunge at Virginia Beach on Saturday, February 2. The plungers raised approximately $20,000 to benefit Special Olympics Virginia.

The Virginian-Pilot posted a YouTube video that included familiar looking unicorns and a deep-sea diver.
Plunge - Continued: They Came from Far and Wide Just To Plunge
Lindsey Frazier serves at River North Correctional Center as a Treatment Officer in the unit dedicated to offenders with mental health issues. She facilitates and co-facilitates programs for the Secure Diversionary Treatment Program and encourages pro-social behavior, attitudes and interactions between offenders. She often serves in the front search position, and a big part of her job involves de-escalating difficult situations.

**Recent accolades:** River North’s Employee of the Year

**How did you get into corrections?**
As a child, my dream job was being a part of law enforcement. I attended Youngstown State University where I studied some criminal justice but ended up changing my studies to a health-related field. After working in the dental field, I quickly realized I should have stuck with a criminal justice-related career. In 2017, I was hired at RNCC.

**Why do you stay in corrections?**
I stay with corrections because of the job stability and the many avenues for growth and opportunities. I enjoy my job and don’t dread coming to work every day. I really enjoy the staff that I work closest with in the mental health unit; we have a great team within the unit.

**What keeps you coming back?**
As a treatment officer, my position can be very rewarding. I work with offenders whose mental health issues require that they complete programs to work their way back to general population or into a Shared Allied Management System (SAMS) pod. It is rewarding to watch these offenders transform.

**You are said to be observant, alert and motivated. What keeps you motivated?**
The positive work environment contributes to my motivation within my job; you never know what may happen next. Staying alert and being prepared and motivated for what may come is just a part of the job.
Getting to Know VADOC: Greensville Correctional Center - Kathy Turner

What they say: Sgt. Turner’s supervisors appreciate her approach as much as her commitment.

“Sgt. Kathy Turner is very dedicated. She serves as the Intel Sergeant; she also serves as the Treasurer of the Employee Fund and as a member of the CVC Committee. She assists in any area of the facility whenever called upon. Sgt. Turner respects others, and, in turn, receives their respect. By her manner and attitude, she effectively models the Healing Environment Initiative.”

Warden Mack Bailey

Kathy Turner serves at Greensville Correctional Center as the building Sergeant of Housing Unit Two. Her primary duty is to ensure safety of staff and offenders.

Recent accolades: Greensville’s Security Employee of the Year

How did you get into corrections?
I started Corrections in 1998, after I had my first son. I needed a job with benefits to provide for my family.

Why do you stay in corrections?
I made the decision to stay in Corrections because I enjoy helping others make a positive change in their lives.

What keeps you coming back?
There have been some struggles through the years, but my motivation keeps me moving forward.

How has your approach helped you be successful in the Department?
Even though I just recently made Sergeant, I always have carried myself as a leader.

I love my coworkers and I always support them to the fullest. By doing this, I have gained so much respect from staff and offenders. I must say that I have met some great leaders down my career path in corrections and all thanks goes to them.
Jeremy Carter serves as Correctional Officer Sr. and an Officer in Charge (OIC) for Rustburg Correctional Unit 9. His duties include working all posts. He also assists in transporting offenders to medical appointments, participating in any emergency transports, and evacuations.

**Recent accolades:** Rustburg Correctional Unit’s Employee of the Year

**How did you get into corrections?**

I originally wanted to get into law enforcement and a friend recommended the Department of Corrections to me.

**Why do you stay in corrections?**

I stay with Corrections because no one day is the same in this field. I love a challenge and it challenges me in some way each day. I also enjoy helping people, and I get that opportunity each day that I work with offenders preparing them for reentry and treating them with dignity and respect in the hope that it will change their way of thinking in preparation for their return to society.

**What motivates you?**

My personal motivation is when my day is over, I maintain the hope that I am making a difference to my co-workers, the offenders that I supervise, and the community that I serve in.

*What they say:* Jeremy Carter’s supervisors offer high praise.

“Officer Carter is an asset to the Department because he is always willing to help in a pinch. He is quick, reliable and very dedicated. He brings versatility and a positive attitude to the job. He is there to help his fellow officers whenever needed. He is always upbeat. He is the epitome of what an officer should be for this Department.”

Superintendent Jerry Townsend

From left: Superintendent Jerry Townsend and Jeremy Carter
Lucille Brown Middle School Students Visit Headquarters

Students from Lucille Brown Middle School in Richmond City visited VADOC’s Headquarters on February 6.

The 12- and 13-year-old students heard from a variety of VADOC staff including Barry Elgert, Patricia Parham, Teri Thomas, William Barbetto, Vernon Yerby, Greg Holloway and Director Harold Clarke. The annual visit by Richmond City Public Schools system middle schoolers has become tradition as the young teenagers learn about the Department, its mission and the wealth of opportunities it offers across the Commonwealth.
Middle School Students Meet Greta - A Drug Detection Dog

Greta, a drug-detection dog, stole the show during the recent student visit. A Labrador/Shepherd mix, she teams with Lt. Vernon Yerby at Haynesville Correctional Center and works statewide. The pair make up one of 109 VADOC K-9 teams. Each K-9 team provides one of four services; patrol, narcotics detection, contraband detection and search. VADOC’s leader of the K-9 Unit, Captain William J. Barbetto joined the K-9 unit to give an informative talk that included quick detection demonstration.
VCCW Artists Shine at Art for the Journey Reception in Richmond

An art exhibit held recently in downtown Richmond featured several works from the Virginia Correctional Center for Women. The two-week exhibit that opened February 14 at The SunTrust Building displayed works by students taught by Art for the Journey, a Richmond-area non-profit that has had an ongoing relationship with the Department since June 2014.

The VCCW artists used large canvases to tell the outside world about themselves and their experiences. The exhibit featured eight paintings by VCCW artists that included moving testimonials. The exhibit also included six traditional works done during the facility’s Art for the Journey painting class. The class is always popular, organizers said, because participants learn what can be either valuable professional skills or, at the very least, a positive, stress-relieving recreational activity.

At left are VCCW Warden Donald Wilmouth, the Director of the Art for the Journey Jamie Wiggington and VCCW Acting Principal Latosha Branch.
Almost Home’s Soda Tabs Making a Difference to Families with Critically Ill Children

That orange poster you may have noticed hanging in HQ’s Atmore Café is a thank you message from a young woman who collects soda can pull-tabs to benefit the Ronald McDonald House of Charites.

Dr. Susan Williams’ daughter, Taylor, is collecting the tabs.

Pull-tab collection offers young people an opportunity to make a difference and the pull-tabs have a high concentration of aluminum, according to the Ronald McDonald House Charities website.

All of the monies earned defray medical costs of families who have a critically ill child, according to McDonalds.

At left, Food Operations Director Brenda Reed of Almost Home Café displays the thank you poster and a box of pull-tabs.

Learning Team Helps Friends of the Homeless

On February 5, Subject Matter Specialist Leader and Chief of Special Investigations Paul Haymes led his learning team to Richmond City’s Broomfield Baptist Church to prepare and serve more than 100 individuals as part of the Richmond Friends of the Homeless program.

The menu was fried chicken, seasoned green beans, corn, potato salad, rolls, and cookies for dessert. The entire learning team participated in the event.
Several VADOC staff attended the funeral of Virginia State Trooper Lucas B. Dowell including representatives from Red Onion State Prison, Keen Mountain Correctional Center, Pocahontas and Wallens Ridge State Prison. Trooper Dowell died Monday, February 4 serving as part of a team executing a search warrant in Cumberland County. Services held in Dowell's hometown, Chilhowie, in southwest Virginia's Smyth County, drew approximately 1,500. Representatives of law enforcement agencies from around the nation attended, as did Governor Ralph Northam, and Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security Brian Moran.
While serving time at James River Work Center (JRWC), Ronnie Nuckols learned a skill set that he put to use when he re-entered society. He worked on the JRWC dairy farm and learned to operate a skid steer, front end loader tractor, and backhoe. Mr. Nuckols also learned how to calculate feed rations and mix them together in the feed wagon.

When a local dairy farmer was looking for help and came to the State Farm, he interviewed Mr. Nuckols. Upon his release, Mr. Nuckols went straight to work for White Oak Dairy Farm. Three months later, the owner said that he couldn’t be happier with the skills and work ethic of Mr. Nuckols.

Former Offender Using Agri-business Skills to Make a New Life

Submit by Keith Schinabeck

VADOC Recognizes National Pride in Food Service Week, February 4-8

A Message of Thanks from the Director

February 4-8, 2019 is designated “Pride in Foodservice Week” by the Association of Nutrition & Foodservice Professionals (ANFP). This recognition week applauds nutrition and foodservice professionals and other members of the nutrition services team for their hard work and dedication on the job.

Each day VADOC Food Services strive to fulfill the vision and accomplish the mission of the department by serving nutritious meals to staff and offenders statewide by preparing, cooking and storing food under state and federal sanitary guidelines. Food Services provides offender programs; Serv-Safe, Culinary Arts and Foundations that foster positive change for a smoother reentry transition into the community.

I would like to take this opportunity to applaud our food service employees and express my pride and appreciation for their dedication and service.

Harold Clarke
In Case You Missed It: VADOC’s TRF Partnership Posted Online and in Social Media

Richmond Times-Dispatch video:
VADOC Partnership Highlighted
The Richmond Times-Dispatch visited the State Farm Work Center and talked with Instructor C.J. Weldon to learn more about the award-winning program there. To see more, click here.

As Seen on Twitter:
News Release: VADOC Receives Excellence in Government Award for Public-Private Partnerships. To see the related tweet, click here.

From the Augusta Free Press: VCU announces recipients of 13th annual Excellence in Virginia Government Awards. See the related tweet here.

State Farm Work Center TRF Horse Program highlighted by the Richmond Times Dispatch: To see the related tweet, click here.
Beautiful day for an icy plunge: Thousands of participants brave the icy waters of the Atlantic during Saturday, February 2, 2019, afternoon's annual Polar Plunge at the Virginia Beach Oceanfront. Proceeds benefit the Special Olympics.

Incarcerated veterans find community in all military housing unit: The “vet dorm” located in the Haynesville Correctional Facility in Virginia, doesn’t appear what you’d imagine jail to look like at first glance. In fact, it sort of looks like military barracks. The area, created in 2012, is called the “vet dorm.”

Homecoming: The Feeling Of Having Your Voting Rights Restored After Incarceration: “I’m free!” Those were the first words I said in 1998 when I was released from prison. But with the restoration of most of my civil liberties this week, it feels sincere. I was arrested in 1992 for being a gangster.

Virginia correctional facilities to begin composting: The prison in Buckingham County is about to start a new composting program. Other prisons in Virginia are already doing this, in an effort to keep costs down.

Graduate student provides inmates with technical training for agricultural work: Virginia Department of Corrections prison farms, located throughout the commonwealth, house approximately 2,000 beef cattle.

VADOC honored for partnerships emphasizing offender training: The Virginia Department of Corrections has been recognized for two private-public partnerships that aim to train offenders so they can successfully return to society. The VADOC will receive the 2019 Excellence in Government Award.

Graduate student provides inmates with technical training for agricultural work: Virginia Department of Corrections prison farms, located throughout the commonwealth, house approximately 2,000 beef cattle.

VCU announces recipients of 13th annual Excellence in Virginia Government Awards: The L. Douglas Wilder School of Government and Public Affairs at VCU has announced the seven honorees who will be recognized at the 13th Excellence in Virginia Government Awards.

Inmates at Goochland facility learn job skills, patience by caring for former racing horses: Scott Frankel said that when he was first brought to the State Farm Work Center, he looked out of the bars of the prison transport van and saw other inmates tending horses in the fields.

Do you have a story idea for the newsletter (or IDOC)? Please contact Win Sisson at george.sisson@vadoc.virginia.gov or call (804) 887-8072.