

# AROUND CORRECTIONS

Official Newsletter of the  
Virginia Department of Corrections



Summer 2015

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## Director's Message



Approximately five years ago, the Department began planning and implementing several new initiatives, including Motivational Interviewing, Dialogue, Healing Environment, Soaring, EPICS, Learning Teams, Effective Communications, Thinking for a Change, Intensive Reentry, Program Officers, and other Evidence Based Practices. We began studying leadership together and ways to improve our organization. We recognized the challenges that lay before us in creating lasting public safety. We recognized that we couldn't just continue doing business the way we'd always done while expecting improved results.

The offenders coming to us today are sophisticated and cunning, and pose increasing challenges. Inmate gangs are increasing in number, membership, and complexity, and may be more violent than in the past. Offenders are taking advantage of technology (including cell phones and social media) to promote their criminal intentions. Gangs collaborate and learn from each other. In response, we are about to host our first Future Search conference on gangs. The mid-September conference will bring together many stakeholders, including local law enforcement, academics, VADOC staff, and others. In many ways, the world has become smaller, and we are left with a puzzle of increasing complexity to address. This is why we have to become better. We must stay a step ahead and innovate.

So what have we done? Early in our transition, with NIC's assistance we engaged the services of the Urban Institute (UI). Their task was to look at the transformation of our agency in general, and specifically to analyze the reception by our staff of the Healing Environment, Dialogue, and other initiatives. I'm very proud to say the UI Department-wide surveys have revealed that we have made significant progress in transforming ourselves as an organization in such a manner that we are better positioned to realize our vision, mission, and values. The Urban Institute completed the third annual Department-wide survey earlier this year; in that survey, 88 percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "I believe in the value of the Healing Environment initiative," up from 77 percent two years prior. Eighty-eight percent of respondents agreed or strongly agreed with the statement, "What this organization stands for is important to me." Over all three years of UI surveys, 80-90 percent of respondents supported offenders' access to programs and reentry practices.

We've positioned ourselves as number two in recidivism nationwide and received the STAR Award for the Step Down program, which has reduced reliance on restrictive housing by about 70 percent, resulting in a better working environment for staff and a better living environment for the offenders, as well as increased public safety. People have stepped out of their comfort zones, recognizing that our icebergs are melting and we need to adapt and respond. This is all possible because of the caliber of staff found throughout the VADOC. While there will always be people who are skeptical about the impact or worthiness of the initiatives we've embraced, the results we've realized should help show them we're on the right track.

*Harold Clarke*

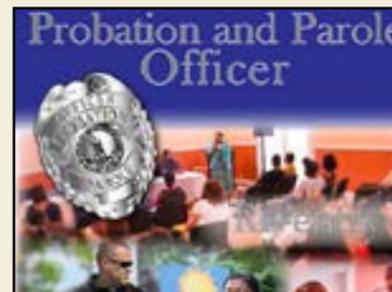
## Department Honors Service Award Recipients



The Virginia Department of Corrections honored its service award recipients in June, acknowledging the important role all of the agency's employees play in promoting public safety and reducing crime. Please check out the photo galleries on four different pages.

- See Central Region Photo Gallery
- See Eastern Region Photo Gallery
- See Western Region Photo Gallery
- See ASD & HQ Photo Gallery

## Virginia Honors Probation and Parole Officers



Virginia's Probation and Parole officers play a critical role in keeping our communities safe. Their dedication was honored July 12-18, Probation & Parole Officer Appreciation Week in the Commonwealth and across the country.

Whether it's answering a phone call in the middle of the night, offering encouragement before a job interview, or holding someone accountable for a violation of his terms of supervision, Probation and Parole officers play a critical – if often unseen – role in guiding offenders toward successful reintegration into the community. P&P officers deserve considerable credit for Virginia's low recidivism rate, currently the second lowest in the nation.

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## Governor Touts Rights Restoration at Reentry Event in Petersburg



Governor Terry McAuliffe took center stage at Petersburg's 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Reentry Forum to emphasize the importance of the restoration of rights for returning citizens. During his time in office he has restored the rights of more than 9,300 Virginians, he said, "more than any previous governor has in four years." To underscore his point, he then restored rights of ex-offender Yolanda Allen.

VADOC Director Harold Clarke took the stage moments later, noting the Department's commitment to reentry and reducing recidivism. The event served as an opportunity for ex-offenders to learn about and access community resources. The Petersburg Sheriff's Office hosted the August 4 event at Good Shepard Baptist Church.

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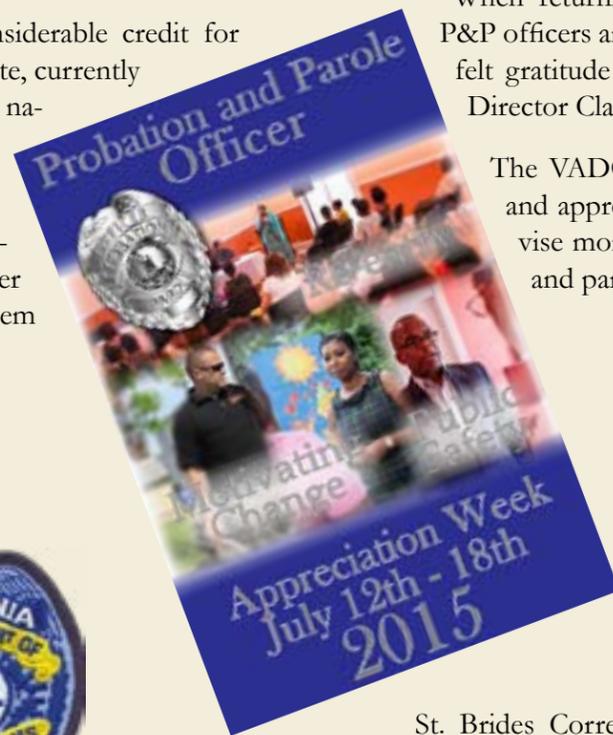
“Our officers do an incredible job helping returning citizens find a better path while also holding them

responsible for their actions,” said Virginia Department of Corrections Director Harold Clarke. “Our P&P officers use evidence-based practices to improve outcomes, guiding offenders based on what research shows us is working.”

Virginia’s P&P officers bring resources and people together in ways that promote positive, often transformational change. P&P officers foster reentry success through programs involving peer support, family reunification, anger management, motivational interviewing, and job readiness workshops.

“When returning citizens succeed, everyone benefits. Our P&P officers answer a vital need, and we owe them our heartfelt gratitude as they work throughout our communities,” Director Clarke said.

The VADOC employs approximately 625 P&P officers and approximately 125 senior P&P officers who supervise more than 58,600 offenders in 43 state probation and parole districts throughout the Commonwealth.



St. Brides Correctional Center’s Graphic Printing Instructor Keric Brown and his students created the Department of Corrections poster for Probation and Parole Officer Appreciation Week 2015.

### Governor’s Proclamation for

### Pretrial, Probation, Parole and Supervision Week

7/12/2015

WHEREAS, the safety and well-being of the families and communities of the Commonwealth are of the utmost concern and importance to all Virginians; and

WHEREAS, Virginia maintains a system for defendants and offenders to be supervised in their communities while on pretrial supervision or on probation or parole as a direct result of a sentence to probation, or after being released from incarceration to community supervision; and

WHEREAS, pretrial, probation and parole officers are community corrections professionals charged with the duty of helping to preserve the safety of the citizens of Virginia by maintaining contact with defendants and offenders, supervising their behavior, ensuring their strict adherence to mandated conditions including appearance in court and assuring appropriate interventions and sanctions for non-compliance of probation or pretrial conditions; and

WHEREAS, pretrial, probation and parole officers assist the citizens of their communities by promoting effective prevention and intervention strategies to reduce recidivism including assessment and monitoring of defendants and offenders while assisting them in becoming law abiding citizens through appropriate education, treatment and employment options; and

WHEREAS, probation, parole and pretrial services officers are a force for positive change in their communities and within the criminal justice system in Virginia by supporting rehabilitative justice, implementing evidence-based practices and helping defendants and offenders become productive citizens;

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Terence R. McAuliffe, do hereby recognize July 12-18, 2015, as PRETRIAL, PROBATION, PAROLE, AND SUPERVISION WEEK in our COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA, and I call this observance to the attention of all our citizens.

## Probation and Parole Officers Try Unique Approaches

VADOC's Probation and Parole Officers are trying unique approaches to help returning citizens reenter their communities. Here is a brief look at three.

**In Portsmouth,** Senior Reentry Probation and Parole Officer Maxine Porcher works closely with the Portsmouth Reentry Council to promote employment opportunities for returning citizens. She recently spoke to the Olde Towne Business Association to make its 80 members aware of the benefits of hiring ex-offenders. "I talked to them about the skills and training our returning citizen have and talked about hiring incentives like the Federal Bonding Program and available tax credits," she said.

As part of her job she works closely with the Portsmouth Reentry Council and has guided a subcommittee that recently hosted an entrepreneurial seminar for the returning citizens. There, returning citizens met members of the local business community who shared valuable business lessons. These businessmen were former returning citizens that are very productive in the community and serve as good role models for other returning citizens. Members of the Portsmouth Reentry Council subcommittee have also visited local employers to discuss hiring returning citizens. "It is a gradual process, but local employers who were skeptical are coming around. Now many are thinking that hiring returning citizen is a viable business opportunity."

**In Richmond,** the Reentry Unit at District 1 recently partnered with a local employment agency to promote the reentry success of returning citizens. In late May, District 1 and J&G Counseling hosted a family reunification forum, an event for probationers, parolees and their families designed to create a support network that promotes successful reentry. "Family reunification efforts strengthen critical relationships for returning citizens," said Reentry P&P Officer Michael Sparks. "Our panel members shared their very personal stories so that all could learn, gain strength and find hope in what was said," he added. "This is an effective approach. Other P&P offices are interested in our success and visiting us to learn more about family reunification, a critical piece in any successful reentry."

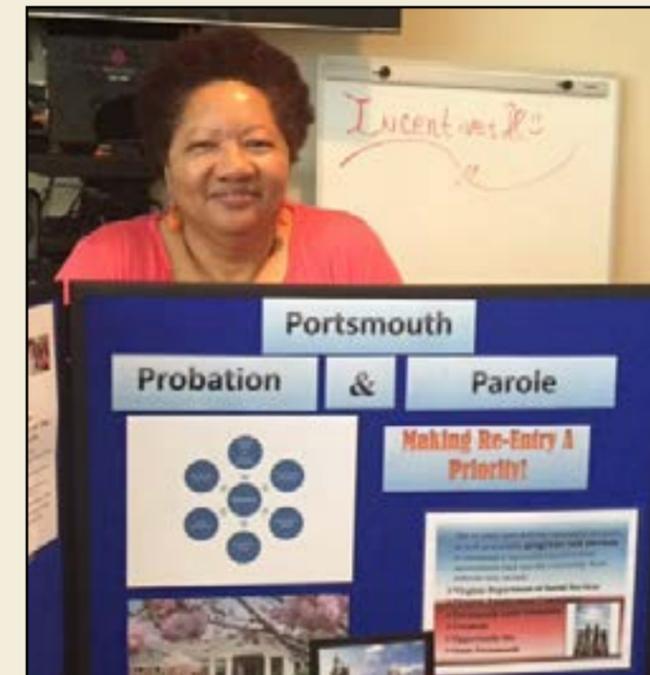
**In Lynchburg,** Senior Reentry P&P Officer Ben Morgan partners with the staff at Dillwyn Correctional Center to facilitate pre-release family reunification seminars. During the seminars, specific information is offered regarding reentry: understanding the phases of transitioning and adjusting to release from incarceration, supervision requirements and community resources available to families and offenders. Dillwyn Correctional Center has served as the pilot facility for this initiative since November 2012 and continues to host seminars quarterly. This intra-agency collaboration highlights one of VADOC's many exceptional accomplishments. SRPO Morgan also facilitates similar seminars in the community hosted by the Lynchburg P&P Office.



The Portsmouth Reentry Council



District 1's Effie Seals-Ransome



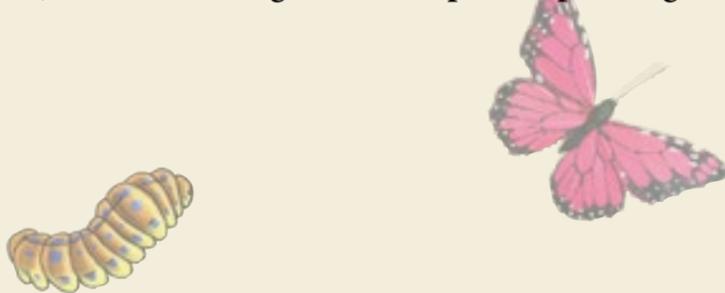
Maxine Porcher

### Central Region Service Awards

The 38th Annual Central Region Employee Service Awards Program was held Friday, May 29 at the Hilton Richmond Hotel. "Supporting New Growth" was the theme for this year's Service Awards Program. Just when the caterpillar thought, "I am incapable of moving," it became a butterfly. Honorees were recognized for their dedicated years of service and commitment to the Commonwealth of Virginia. The years of service ranged from 5 years to 50 years. Special recognition was given to Charles A. Bradley of Central Virginia Correctional Unit 13 for 50 years of service. Mr. Bradley, shown at right with his wife of 27 years, Ethel, has four children and six grandchildren.



(Click on the image above to open the picture gallery)



## Eastern Region Service Awards

The 37th Annual Eastern Region Employee Service Awards Program was held Friday, May 22, at the Hilton Garden Inn located in Suffolk. “Branching Out Together as One” was the theme for this year’s Service Awards Program. Honorees were recognized for their dedicated years of service and commitment to the Commonwealth of Virginia. The years of service ranged from 5 years to 40 years.



(Click on the image above to open the picture gallery)



## Western Region Service Awards

The Western Region's 12th Annual Employee Service Awards Program was held Wednesday, June 10 at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center in Abingdon. "Service with Excellence" was the theme. Honorees were recognized for their dedicated years of service to the Commonwealth of Virginia. Through their commitment and sacrifices, our organization continues to be an evidence-based, learning organization that embraces a healing environment. The years of service ranged from 5 years to 40 years. Regional Business Manager Shawn Mason, who retired effective July 1, received special recognition for 26 years of service.



(Click on the image above to open the picture gallery)



## HQ & Academy for Staff Development Service Awards

The 41st Annual Service Awards Program for the Virginia Parole Board, Headquarters, Academy for Staff Development and Virginia Correctional Enterprises was held Thursday, June 4 at the Four Points by Sheraton in Richmond. “The theme was “Sailing in Service... We Appreciate You” for this year’s program. Honorees were recognized for their dedicated years of service and commitment to the Commonwealth of Virginia. The years of service ranged from 5 years to 45 years.



(Click on the image above to open the picture gallery)



## Governor Touts Restoration of Rights at Petersburg Reentry Event

Governor Terry McAuliffe took center stage at Petersburg’s 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Reentry Forum to emphasize the importance of the restoration of rights for returning citizens. During his time in office he has restored the rights of more than 9,300 Virginians, he said, “more than any previous governor has in four years.” To underscore his point, he then restored rights of ex-offender Yolanda Allen.

VADOC Director Harold Clarke took the stage moments later, noting the Department’s commitment to reentry and reducing recidivism.

The event served as an opportunity for ex-offenders to learn about and access community resources. The Office of Petersburg Sheriff Vanessa Crawford hosted the August 4 event at Good Shepard Baptist Church.

Chef Jeff Henderson, an ex-offender and award-winning chef, was the keynote speaker of the event and emphasized how he and other returning citizens must use their prison time wisely, learn about themselves and return ready to utilize their natural gifts effectively. Chef Jeff said that while in prison he discovered and honed several of his talents, especially culinary arts, but also sales, promotion and public speaking.

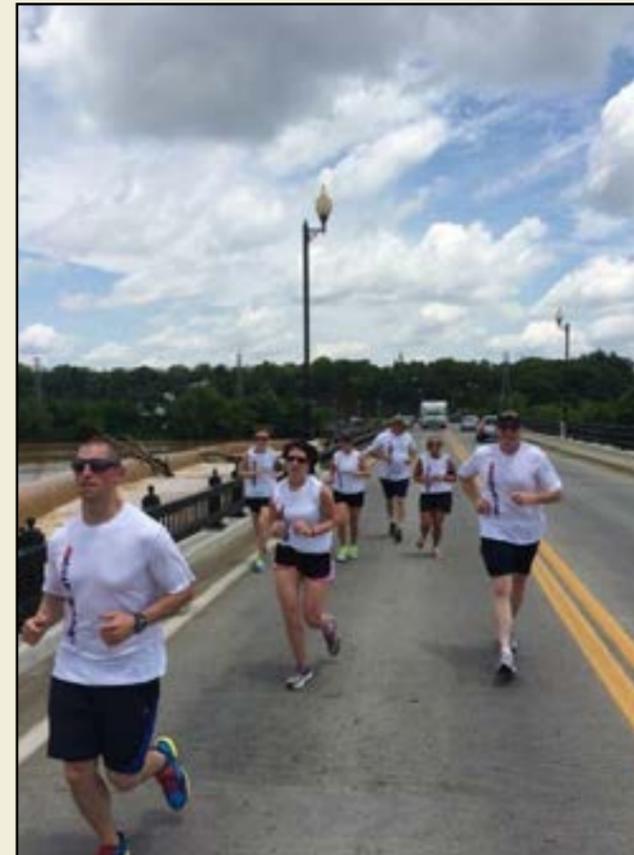


At left, Governor McAuliffe restores Yolanda Allen’s rights; below from left to right: Chef Jeff Henderson; Director Harold Clarke; Governor McAuliffe and Director Clarke shake hands.



## Scenes from the Special Olympics Torch Run

In June, Special Olympics Virginia held events around the Commonwealth to celebrate the beginning of the summer games held this year at the University of Richmond. VADOC employees turned out in force to support and promote the activities, especially during their local Torch Run events.



## Jan Dow Inducted in the Special Olympics Hall of Fame

Jan Dow was recently inducted into the Virginia Law Enforcement Torch Run Hall of Fame in honor of her lifetime efforts to support the Special Olympics Virginia and the Law Enforcement Torch Run.

During a special presentation before the VADOC Executive Team in early June, Ms. Dow was honored for her many roles in the annual Law Enforcement Torch Run. She served as a liaison to the VADOC for two years and served as a member of the Torch Run Executive Council and was its secretary for more than ten years.

“She has not only served the Torch Run by holding these leadership positions but also has led by example by participating in and helping with so many Torch Run events year after year,” said VADOC Liaison to the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics Charles Sims.



Jan Dow

Additionally, Ms. Dow has done many things to help and has become an asset to the annual Corrections Charity Classic Golf Tournament. She has also volunteered for many other events, like the annual Polar Plunge in Virginia Beach.

Ms. Dow also takes time out to find new ways to educate her colleagues and attends professional development classes.

She regularly attends and participates in kickoff events and is known as one of the first to volunteer, Mr. Sims added.

## ADC Helps Open New Softball Park, Hiking Trails

Articles submitted by: Lisa Hubbard

### ADC Helps with New Trails in Wise County

In May, Appalachian Detention Center detainees helped build a new trail in Wise County.

This new trail on Sugar Hill adds new features to the existing ten miles of hiking, biking and fishing trails already in use. The work that was done by Appalachian Detention Center starts from a cliff trail first hand dug by early settlers in 1771.

Franke Kilgore, a local attorney and community volunteer who worked with the offenders, said job could not have been done without help from the detainees. "The steep and very rocky terrain is very hard to hand dig," he said. "Without the young men from Appalachian Detention Center we could not have finished it. They work hard, use common sense and have pride in the results. The Detention Center was also crucial in helping me build a 14-mile trail on Clinch Mountain that accesses a natural area preserve called 'The Channels' on the Washington/Russell county lines."

The new path provides access to a series of cliffs that will be outfitted with permanent hardware for rock climbers of different skill levels. The new trail loops above the cliff line and reconnects with the original cliff trail to create a new one-mile loop trail open to the public.

Hundreds of people use this entire trail each year and well over a thousand uses the shorter section to the Channels.



### Detainees Provide Assistance in Completing Ballfield

On July 16, Honaker Little League opened a new ballfield and took the opportunity to thank Appalachian Detention Center for its help in making the new field a reality.

Throughout much of the spring, ADC scheduled work crews to the Honaker Little League Park to build the new field and make sure that the park's two existing fields were cleaned, maintained, painted and mowed for the grand opening.

During the opening ceremonies as more than 500 fans looked on, Honaker Little League representatives thanked ADC and the Department of Corrections. One commented that "without the help of ADC there is no way we could have ever gotten this finished."

The detainees were led by Cpl. Nathaniel Hubbard, Cpl. Mike Stoots, Cpl. Greg Stoots, Cpl. Rodney Whited and Cpl. Greg Gilbert.

The Honaker Little League also thanked VA-DOC's Major Jody Shelton, a long-time softball coach, and asked him to throw out the ceremonial first pitch. Major Shelton coached two different Honaker softball teams to the Little League World Series, a feat matched by no other Honaker Little League teams.

The opening event July 16 featured three girls softball tournaments (ages 10-11, 11-12 and 18) involving 21 teams from around the state.



From top: Major Jody Shelton throws out the first pitch; Major Shelton up close; Cpl. Randy Howard, left, and Major Jody Shelton, right, flanking detainees; the newest field at Honaker Little League Park



## Southampton Mobile Pantry Program Helps Offenders Pay off Court Fines

In December of 2011, Franklin Probation and Parole began helping with Southampton's Social Services' Mobile Pantry which, in turn, helped offenders pay off their court debt.

Offenders sent to the mobile pantry by Franklin P&P receive the equivalent of \$7.35 for every hour volunteered.

Though they do not receive the money in pocket, it is used to pay off their court debt, very similarly to the way that work study would help to pay off college debts.

Franklin P&P's effort started when ten offenders volunteered to participate. By the end of 2014,

the number had grown to 97.

As an additional bonus, offenders also receive food baskets to take home. Because offenders may not be released until all debt is paid in full, this can be a very useful opportunity.

The Social Services' mobile pantry first started distribution in April 2010.

The distributed food comes from the food bank of Southeastern Virginia IT Infrastructure Partnership. The program has grown enormously and distributed a total of 80,748 pounds of food in 2014, mostly fresh produce, breads, pastries, and a few canned

goods. This July the mobile pantry served 182 households, 516 individuals, and 6,377 pounds.

According to Jean Stephenson, of the Southampton Department of Social Services, "We could not achieve these numbers without the help of District 42/Franklin Probation and Parole. The District is a 'pillar of this project.'" This includes not only the offenders in the program, but the staff that dedicate their time routinely to transporting/supervising the clients for this monthly detail like Patrick Stockwell, Vonda Sessoms, David Turner, and other officers that fill in when needed.



Jean Stephenson of Southampton Social Services, center, ensures District 42's offenders get community service in lieu of court costs payments. One either side of her are District 42's David Turner, left, and Patrick Stockwell, right.

## Get Ready for the State Farm Mud Run!

The Southern States Correctional Association (SSCA) will be hosting its Second Annual State Farm Mud Run on Saturday, September 26 at the State Farm Correctional Complexes/Training Center, Powhatan, with registration starting at 8 a.m. and the race starting at 9 a.m. You have the option of running or walking either a 5k or 10k. The race is open to all VADOC employees, friends, family and community members ages 18 and over. Registration costs \$40. You can register and get more information [here](#).



## VCA Annual Training Institute October 1-2



The Virginia Correctional Association is hosting the Annual Training Institute on October 1-2, 2015, at the Double Tree by Hilton Hotel in Richmond. A flyer and registration form are available via [IDOC](#).

## VASA Conference October 8-9



*Waves of Change & Oceans of Opportunity*

The Virginia Administrative Support Association is hosting their 2015 conference on October 8 and 9 in Norfolk. The registration and itinerary are available via [IDOC](#).

## PSCC Staff Aids in Flood Relief

Submitted by Catherine Smalling

On June 10, several Pocahontas State Correctional Center (PSCC) staff members donated cleaning supplies and volunteered their time to assist the Town of Pocahontas with distributing emergency supplies. The Town of Pocahontas was recently affected by flooding caused by heavy rains, as well as prolonged power outages, boil water advisories, and loss of water services. More than 80,000 pounds of food and drinks, cleaning supplies, and household goods were among the items provided. Staff from PSCC assisted into the Light Ministries with organizing and distributing the relief supplies to the hundreds of people that were affected by this disaster. Members of the PSCC staff generously donated time and supplies which ultimately strengthens ties and help in the healing of their community.



## U.S. Deputy Warden's Conference

On July 12-16, several members of the VADOC community attended the 70th annual United States Deputy Warden Association Conference in Minnesota. The USWDA is the only professional organization focused on the nation's deputies, associates and assistant wardens. The atmosphere fosters the positive development of the organization and its members, both professionally and personally.

Pictured from left: Dara Robichaux of Marion Correctional Center, Israel Hamilton of Red Onion State Prison, and Joycetine Boone of Sussex I State Prison.



## A Message from the Diversity Council

The Director's Diversity Council has established an email account for receiving ideas, suggestions and information about diversity-related events. In order to better serve our staff and our agency, we ask that you email us with events that will be taking place in your area of Virginia so that we may inform staff. In addition to that, if your office or facility has suggestions about specialized Diversity programming or training, such as seminars, programs, talks, exhibits, etc., which you would like to see offered or explored, please send to this email box: [DOCDiversityCouncil@vadoc.virginia.gov](mailto:DOCDiversityCouncil@vadoc.virginia.gov)

## Petersburg P&P, CSS & Associates Reach Out to Families of Returning Citizens

CSS & Associates has been supportive of the Petersburg/Dinwiddie local Re-entry Council for more than three years. Both CSS & Associates and Petersburg Probation and Parole continue to share ideas for enhancing reentry programs for returning citizens released back into the community. While incorporating a holistic approach, CSS & Associates identified a need to reach out to the families of those returning home as well. It is clear from watching the local news, listening to the radio stations, and talking to local law enforcement agencies, that children need to receive support and positive information.

CSS & Associates and the Petersburg Probation & Parole Office District 7 collaborated to address the needs of the community's girls in the Tri-City areas. Founder of CSS & Associates, Coretha Claiborn and her staff members Hadiya Meade and Monica Cutchen formed a group, known as the "Sunflowers of Petersburg." The focus is to help girls between the ages 6-12 address self-esteem awareness and develop substance abuse prevention skills. The kick off was held on Wednesday, June 24 at the Petersburg Probation & Parole Office. The sessions were conducted every Wednesday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. The projected graduation date was mid-August.

**Below:** Hadiya Meade, left, and Coretha Claiborn of CSS & Associates. Inset: Ms. Meade, right, and Monica Cutchen with the "Sunflowers."



## Norfolk Reentry Council Promotes Employment



More than 80 people attended an employment and training event hosted by the Norfolk Reentry Council at the Workforce Development Center in late May. Representatives from Virginia Employment Commission, Opportunity, Inc., Educational Opportunity Center and the Virginia Department of Corrections fielded the questions after a panel discussion focused on employment and training resources.

The event included a short presentation about the "I Am Bondable Letter" which persons convicted of a misdemeanor or felony charge can obtain and provide to an employer as a job-hire incentive. Attendees also had the opportunity to have their resumes reviewed and prepared on site by an employment service professional. Hundreds attended a follow-up event, the Second Annual Hampton Roads Equal Opportunity Job Fair on June 23.



**Upper left:** VADOC Bonding Coordinator Kia Parson, left: Regional Offender Workforce Development Specialist Senior Marion Curry, above: Norfolk's Workforce Readiness Coordinator Mike Paris.

## VADOC Safety Professional of the Year: Dillwyn's Gary Sink



Gary Sink

Submitted by: Meriam Thacker

Gary Sink, Dillwyn Correctional Center's Institutional Safety Specialist, received the 2015 Safety Professional of the Year Award. The award was presented by George Hinkle, Eastern Regional Operations Chief, at the Joint Safety Meeting on June 11 at the Academy for Staff Development's Crozier campus. Mr. Sink received a framed certificate that was signed by Director Clarke, a gift card and recognition leave.

The DOC Safety Professional of the Year Award was first presented in 2010. The winner is selected by the VADOC's safety professionals (institutional safety specialists and unit safety coordinators). They vote for the person who embodies the values of a safety professional and has made a contribution by providing assistance to other VADOC safety folks. It is an honor to be selected for such an award by your peers.

VADOC safety professionals are charged with assuring the safety of employees, offenders and visitors at their facilities. This is not an easy job. It takes knowledge, dedication and perseverance to perform the required inspections, provide training, maintain accurate records, and all the other duties that are assigned to safety professionals.

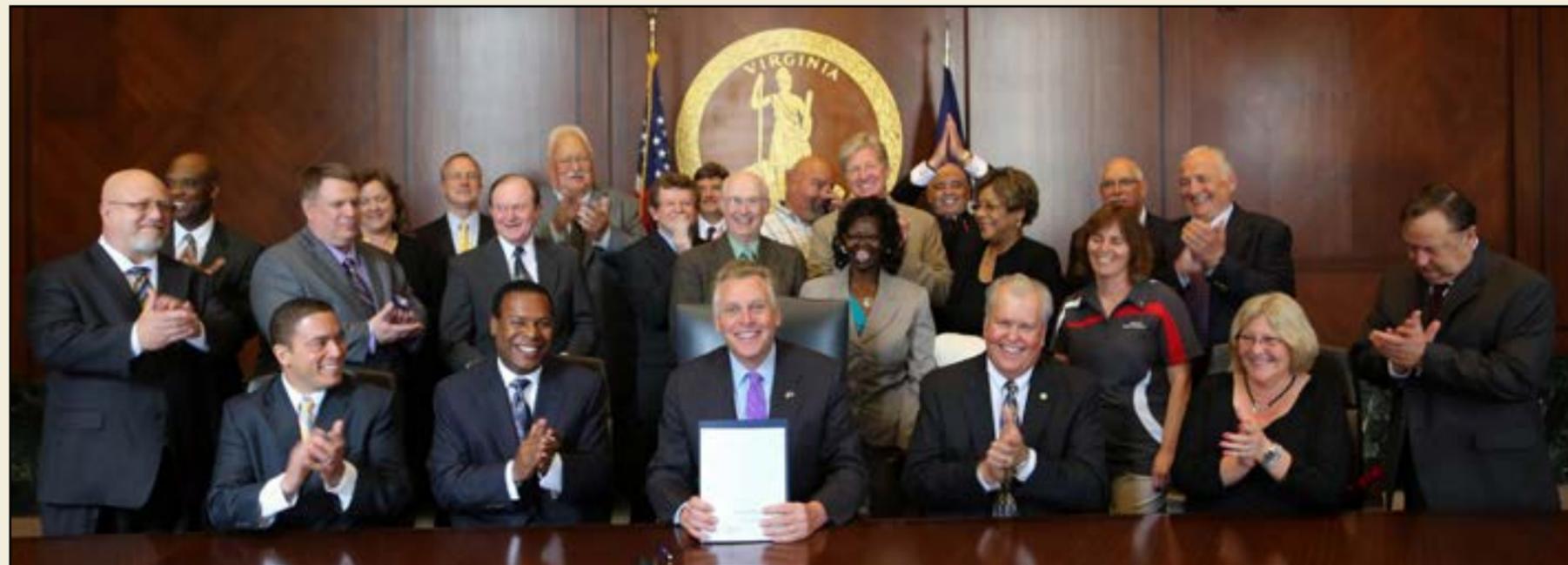
Mr. Sink began working at the Department in 1985 at Powhatan Correctional Center as a correctional officer and achieved the rank of sergeant. Mr. Sink transferred to Dillwyn

in 1993 and he took the position of institutional investigator. Mr. Sink became Dillwyn's institutional safety specialist in 2002. In addition to his regular duties, Mr. Sink provides chain saw safety hands-on and classroom training to VADOC employees and offenders not only at Dillwyn but also at other facilities.

Mr. Sink is leading Dillwyn Correctional Center through the Occupational Safety and Health Administration Voluntary Protection Program (OSHA VPP) Challenge Program. The Challenge Program encourages continual assessment and improvement of safety and health programs by involving every employee. One requirement for the Challenge Program is that Dillwyn must have a lower rate of employee injuries than the national average for correctional centers. The Challenge Program has three stages. Each stage requires substantial work and commitment from the employees to successfully complete. This program will ultimately lead to OSHA VPP Star Certification. Successful completion of the Challenge Program, although demanding, will be possible for Dillwyn with Mr. Sink's leadership.

Mr. Sink accepted the award with humble grace. He thanked his peers for the honor of being selected for the award. He thanked his peers and Mike Williford for their past, present and future help and support. Mr. Sink is to be congratulated on a job well done.

## Governor McAuliffe Signs First Bill in the Nation For Voluntary Safety Compliance



On June 3, Governor Terry McAuliffe signed a bill for the historic Voluntary Protection Programs (VPP) Act in Virginia. The bill will continue developing the successful VPP system, which encourages companies to take safety above and beyond the Occupational Safety and Health Administration's (OSHA) safety requirements.

The VPP Act enjoyed broad support from several groups in attendance, including the Virginia American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations (AFL-CIO), Virginia Chamber of Commerce, Virginia Manufacturers' Association (VMA), American Society of Safety Engineers (ASSE), American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA), Virginia De-

partment of Corrections (VADOC), Voluntary Protection Programs Participants' Association (VPPPA) and many companies that participate in VPP, according to a VPPA press release. Several representatives of the VADOC attended, including Director Harold Clarke.

Mike Maddox, chairman of VPPPA, applauded the bill. "Governor McAuliffe and leaders of the labor and workforce safety sector made history. VPP companies do more than save lives; they are more productive, have greater employee satisfaction and give American companies a competitive edge in the global marketplace. We look forward to other states following Virginia's lead."



## Meet the Mayor's Youth Academy Interns

By: Sydney Vick, Communications Intern

This summer the Virginia Department of Corrections employed four interns from the Mayor's Youth Academy. Mayor's Youth Academy, or MYA for short, is a city-wide program in Richmond that allows teens in the area to gain work experience and skills in a paid environment. Much like the VADOC, MYA is an organization for positive social change. Welcoming the interns with open arms, Director Clarke sees this as another opportunity to help people be better, the basis of the VADOC's mission.

Two of the internships allowed Kameron Bond, 19, and Deshaundra Otey-Easley, 17, to work with Dewey Jennings and research management services. During their time with the Research Management Unit, they have done and will continue to do many projects, such as creating brochures, working on research papers, and attending policy meetings. Since starting their internships, both have grown in their interest of corrections and things surrounding it.

Outside of MYA, Ms. Otey-Easley attends Highland Springs High School and, as a rising senior, enjoys most teenage activities like shopping and listening to music, but she also likes to help others. Because she already had an interest in criminal justice and helping those incarcerated, this was the summer internship of her choice. She even said, "I like working here and if the program is still here next year I would like my placement to be here again." When Ms. Otey-Easley finishes her education, she would like to become a criminal justice social worker and believes corrections should increase its emphasis on helping children.



**Deshaundra Otey-Easley**

Ms. Bond, who will be entering her sophomore year at Richard Bland College this fall, would also like a career in criminology. One of her life goals is to become a forensic psychologist, and from this internship, Ms. Bond feels more inclined to follow that path.



**Kameron Bond**

Academy, an academy which meets in person once a week. But just because she's homeschooled doesn't mean that she's not working hard. Although she is still young, Ms. Mason has made some big goals for herself and has a one-track mind for her future. She aspires to go to college, become a lawyer and live a successful life. For her, this was the perfect opportunity to get a head start on those goals. "I think this is a great company and I think is a major component of keeping Virginia a functioning state."

In for its second year with MYA, the Communications Unit also offered an internship. This year Sydney Vick, 17, had the opportunity of working with Win Sisson. During her experience she honed her writing skills and learned many unique things, like how to use certain features in Adobe's InDesign and Photoshop.

Chief of Professional Services Dean Ricks also got in on the action to help teach the ways of the law and guide Tiffany Mason. As a Legal Division intern, Ms. Mason was able to get real experience in doing things like appeals and correspondence. From this experience, Ms. Mason has and will continue to learn new and important skills for her prospective career in law.

Ms. Mason, 17, is currently homeschooled and will be continuing to the 12<sup>th</sup> grade at New Destiny



**Tiffany Mason**

Ms. Vick, a rising senior at Richmond Community High School, is one who aspires to be happy by having a fulfilling life helping others. Prior to her experience with VADOC, Ms. Vick's main goal was to become a teacher. This internship has opened new doors for her as she now realizes her strength in writing. Not only that, but Ms. Vick is also considering a career in corrections after she completes college.

"Originally this was not the internship of my choice, but I'm so glad that I had the chance to be part of its history. MYA is a great program partnered with a great agency. What more could a seventeen year old ask for?"

All of the interns truly enjoyed their positions at the VADOC and said that if possible, they would come back for another summer. These young ladies have had the chance to do many things that the typical teenager hasn't. For example, they had the opportunity to meet with and ask Director Clarke a few questions about why and how he became director. In addition, they have gained new and useful skills that will stay with them as they advance in life. When asked, Ms. Bond said "The internship influenced [me] to want to do better in my life and make wise choices by doing the best I can. It taught me more about how to always be respectful to people, no matter what the circumstances. Overall this has been a wonderful learning experience for me. The DOC promotes a strong ethic by promoting excellence and never giving up on anyone."

The internships began July 6 and concluded on August 14.



**Sydney Vick**



## Cold Springs Helps Open a New Park



The town of Craigsville dedicated the opening of its new park on July 11, and recognized Cold Springs Correctional Unit 10 for its contribution. Earlier in the summer, the offender work force from Cold Springs went to Craigsville to assist in getting the park ready. Offenders helped place picnic tables and new playground equipment in the Craigsville Community Park.

During the dedication ceremony, Lt. Charles Ashley, left, was invited to represent Cold Springs and was presented a plaque of appreciation from Mayor Richard Fox, right, and the Craigsville Town Council.

## TRUE BLUE Receives the Law Enforcement Challenge Award for Polar Plunge



On June 25, Senior Vice President of Special Olympics of Virginia Roy Zeidman presented the Law Enforcement Challenge Award for Polar Plunge 2015 to ASD's Captain James Shantz, shown left. Captain Shantz serves as one of the team captains on the Polar Plunge

team "TRUE BLUE." To receive this award, a law enforcement agency must have the most plungers.

By virtue of its 103 plungers, the Virginia Department of Corrections Polar Plunge TEAM "TRUE BLUE" won the award. This is the fifth year in a row that "TRUE BLUE" has earned the award.

Team "TRUE BLUE" consists of staff, family of staff, and friends of staff who come together to show support of the Department of Corrections and the Department's involvement in the Law Enforcement Torch Run, which benefits Special Olympics of Virginia.

The plungers come from around the Commonwealth of Virginia to participate in this fun event - a great example of how the Department engages with Virginia's communities.

## Ex-Offender Turned Braille Translator Speaks at FCCW

On May 22, Fluvanna Correctional Center (FCCW) for Women welcomed ex-offender Deborah Adams as the keynote speaker for its school graduation.

While incarcerated, Ms. Adams learned to transcribe Braille and since her release, has forged a new career path providing reading materials for the blind.

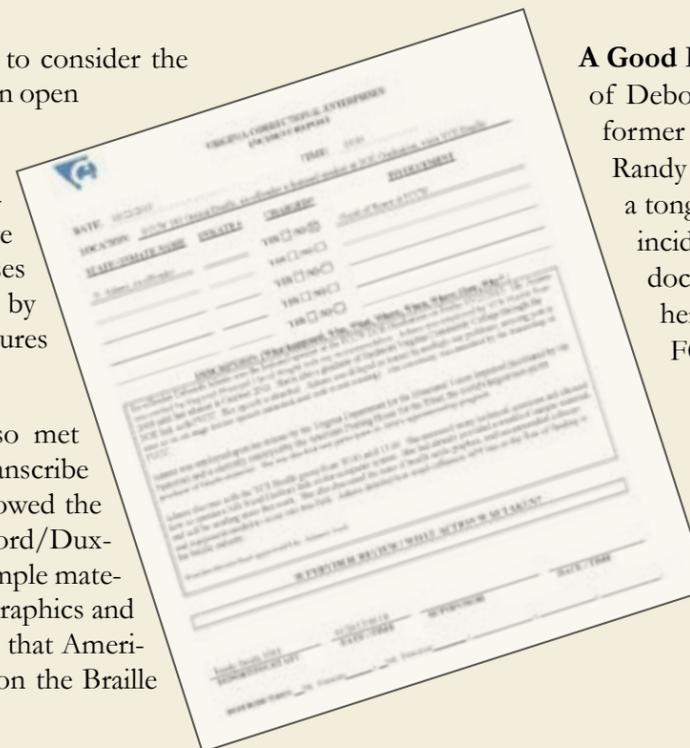
She offered an uplifting message for the graduates, discussing her struggles as an ex-offender and how she moved forward in life.

She told her audience she was privileged with the opportunity to learn to transcribe Braille. Shortly after leaving FCCW, Ms. Adams was ready to start her new life, but as an ex-offender she faced many hardships. She said her nineteen felonies created a real obstacle, one that she said "crushed" her. But she continued to move forward, drawing on the support of those around her.

Ms. Adams said she has learned from her past, especially her mistakes and "taken this journey and used it for success." She encouraged the women attending the graduation to do the same, while warning that "it is not

always easy." Adams urges the women to consider the possibilities, saying that "with honesty, an open mind, and willingness, anything is possible." In concluding her speech, she quoted National Public Radio personality Terry Gross saying, "I believe we are shaped by our failures, by our weaknesses and setbacks, at least as much as we are by our successes in many cases, those failures make ultimate successes possible."

Following her speech, Ms. Adams also met with the women now learning to transcribe Braille. During the meeting, Adams showed the group how to operate a Microsoft Word/Duxbury link on the computer, provided sample materials, discussed Braille tactile software, graphics and equipment, and explained the influence that American Printing House for the Blind had on the Braille industry.



**A Good Report:** One of Deborah Adams' former instructors, Randy Smith filed a tongue-in-cheek incident report documenting her return to FCCW.

# VADOC Walks the Skyline



In April, Virginia Governor Terry McAuliffe issued a challenge to all state employees to participate in his virtual WALK THE SKYLINE event that launched May 1. His goal was to promote a healthy and productive Virginia workforce by challenging state employees to walk the 105- mile equivalent of the Skyline Drive from Front Royal to Rockfish Gap in one month. VADOC employees responded by putting on the walking shoes and rising to the challenge.

### Tops in Intra-Agency Participation

Major Institutions	<b>St. Brides 5.28%</b>
P&P Districts	<b>Chesapeake 63.16%</b>
Detention/Diversion/Field Units	<b>Southampton Men's 5.56%</b>
HQ/Regional Offices/ASD/VCE	<b>Central Region 66.67%</b>

### Statewide

The Virginia Department of Corrections with its 11,513 employees, finished third among the state's largest agencies in participation as 493 VADOC employees (4.3 percent) participated in the Governor's Challenge. VADOC's Tyronza Harris finished second in the individual mileage category posting 600 miles total.

## Dialogue: Staying Motivated

*Below are some suggestions designed to promote dialogue about staying motivated.*

*What topics or issues would you like to suggest for an upcoming newsletter? Let us hear from you!*

### Improving What We Do

#### Dialogue Topics:

What do you do when you don't feel like doing? All of us have "off days." Athletes often practice pre-game rituals such as jogging, stretching, and warm-up moves to put them in "game mode." Do you have a ritual that helps you stay focused?

What are your favorite ways to stay motivated?

Read and listen to positive information. What are your favorite sources of positive information? What are your favorite sources of challenging information?

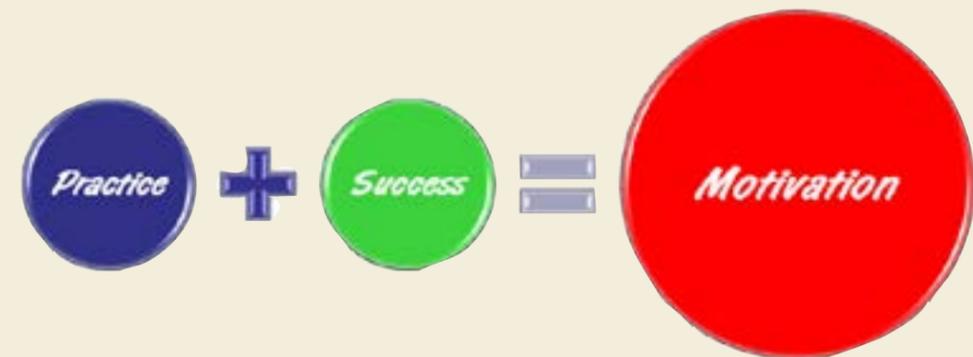
Do you have a favorite quote or affirmation that helps you stay on track?

What can you be positive about on a daily basis? Exercising, cleaning house, saving money, and getting an annual check-up are not always exciting things to do, but look at the benefits – and smile!

Positive thoughts promote positive actions, which in turn promote positive reactions. Think about the most positive person you know. How does his or her positive attitude manifest itself? How can you be more positive in your approach?

Keep it simple, but remember to plan. Setting reasonable daily goals will allow you to feel accomplished at the end of the day, and success is merely a series of small wins.

Who are the members of your support team? How do you support each other? We are in this together. When others lend you their help, know it, acknowledge it, encourage it and try to return the favor.

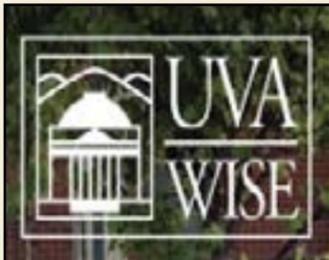




Catch VADOC in the News!



**Managing Chronic Illness Inside Virginia's Prisons:** In June, WCVE 88.9 FM profiled You Can! Live Well Virginia! a collaboration between VADOC and the Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services.



**Student Says Internships are Vital:** UVA Wise News featured a VADOC intern who spoke enthusiastically about working with the Department.



**Students Learn Realities of Criminal Justice:** Students at Washington and Lee University took the study of the criminal justice system to a new level this spring, visiting Augusta Correctional Center.



**Honoring P&P Officers:** Read about the Department's efforts to honor its P&P officers as noted by Newsplex.com in Charlottesville.



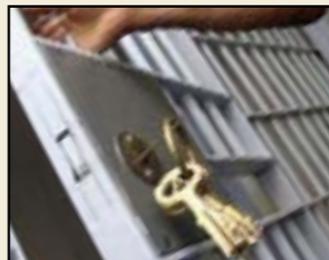
**Offenders Find Purpose in Training Service Dogs:** See a moving film about the program Bland Correctional Center that joins with St. Francis Service Dogs.



**Virginia Guard Secures Former Correctional Site:** The new Virginia National Guard readiness center will be what was previously known as Botetourt Correctional Center. Read the story in the Roanoke Times.



**Hear a Gorgeous Seventies Soul Track Recorded in a Virginia Prison:** In 1979, a group of inmates at the now-closed Powhatan Correctional Center recorded an album Rolling Stone called "fascinating."



**Parole - Back in the Spotlight:** Readers across Virginia's media landscape and beyond learned about Correctional Officers' Week following the distribution of an Associated Press story.



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