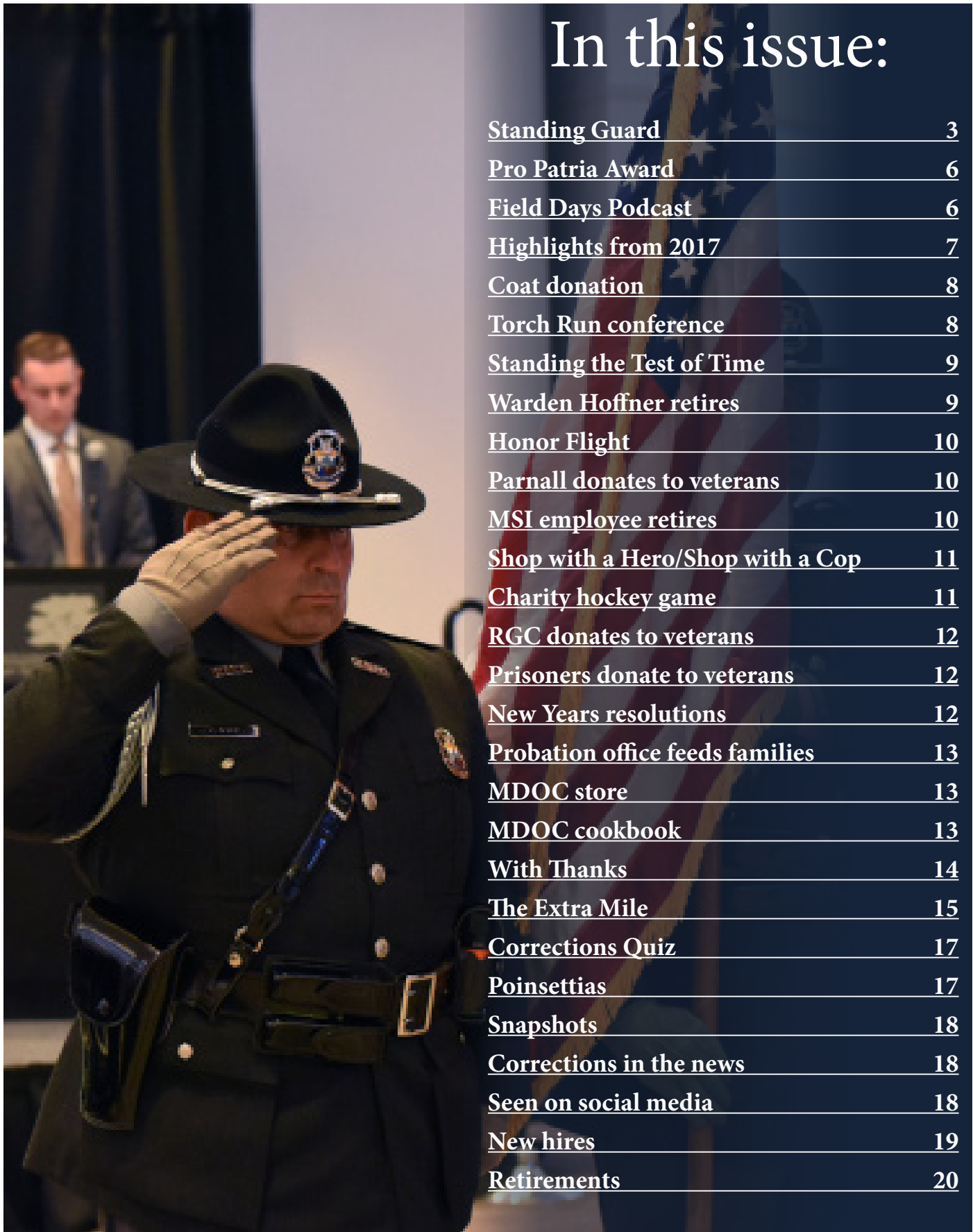


Corrections Connection



Volume 29, Issue 12

December 2017



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Corrections Connection is a publication of the Office of Public Information and Communications. Story ideas, feedback and comments can be submitted to Holly Kramer at KramerH@michigan.gov. Like MDOC on [Facebook](#) or follow us on [Twitter](#).

The image on the cover was taken at Tahquamenon Falls by **Carla White**, corrections program coordinator at Alger Correctional Facility. For the chance to have your photo featured on the cover of the newsletter, email a high-resolution version of the image and a description of where it was taken to Holly Kramer at KramerH@michigan.gov.

Standing Guard



Michigan Department of Corrections Honor Guard celebrates 30 years of service

In March 1987, the Michigan Department of Corrections was reeling from the death of Josephine McCallum, a young corrections officer who was murdered at the hands of a prisoner.

Department leaders wanted to show the highest respect for her life and sacrifice protecting Michigan's citizens. They tapped an inspector with military experience to create a paramilitary-style unit that would represent the department during her service.

"I said I really wanted to do it and the department really needs that," said Bruce Curtis, who was tasked with

developing the unit that would lead to the Michigan Department of Corrections' Honor Guard.

Thirty years later, the honor guard has included nearly 100 members. In three decades they have provided a stoic calm at hundreds of funerals and have represented the department at hundreds more ceremonies and parades.

"It's a tremendous privilege to be part of something that gets to serve in the way we do," said John Cordell, current commander of the MDOC Honor Guard. "We're ambassadors of the department. When we put that uniform on it means something very special."

Early Days

When MDOC leaders asked Curtis to establish a unit for McCallum's funeral, he went to the corrections officer academy and selected a group of young recruits who would have less than a week to train before the service. Their presence at the memorial service was moving.

As a result, then-MDOC Director Robert Brown, Jr. decided the department needed a standing honor guard and tasked Curtis with organizing a unit that included



Pictured above: MDOC Honor Guard members salute the flag during the national anthem at the 2016 Employee Appreciation Banquet.

members from across the state and across administrations. “What we wanted in the honor guard was a picture of what the department was like,” said Curtis, who retired in 2016 as assistant deputy director for the Correctional Facilities Administration and was the honor guard’s first commander. He and William Ray, then an inspector at Carson City Correctional Facility, interviewed 80 department employees who were recommended by their wardens, supervisors and shift commanders. The honor guard’s founding members included Linda Jackson, Crystal Richardson, Diana Hayes, Gloria Louder, Willis Chapman, Elizabeth Sharrer, Joseph Martin, William Irvin, Henry Parker, Renay Gardner, John Sura, Kimberly McNally, Dale Ninko, Herman Eleby, Roxann Hill, Robert McConnell, Stanley White, Jeff Stevens, Michael Heath, William Luetzow, James Lyon, Randy Bertram, Jim Usitalo and Harold White. “I took it as a huge responsibility,” said Willis Chapman, acting warden of Thumb Correctional Facility, who was a founding member and former commander of the honor guard. “I

knew that for many people it was their first encounter with someone from the department of corrections. We wanted them to know we take pride in our work and we are caring, giving and will support each other.” Curtis said when he interviewed candidates for the new honor guard, he wasn’t looking for military experience or marching abilities, he was looking for compassion and dedication. Those traits were crucial for representing the department at public events, and more importantly, for honoring fallen officers and supporting their families. ***Honoring the Fallen*** Less than a year after the unit was created, members prepared to pay

tribute to another officer killed in the line of duty – Jack Budd. “It brought a chilling reality that you’re in a line of work where you could lose your life,” said Chapman, who had joined the department two years earlier and was an officer at Western Wayne Correctional Facility. “It was surreal.” Every loss is difficult, but being in a position to support the families of fallen officers and show respect for their sacrifice is one of the most meaningful parts of serving with the honor guard, members said. “It’s very humbling to be put in a position to remember those who were lost in the line of duty,” said honor guard member Kirk Downs, a corporal at the Special Alternative



Pictured above: The 1998 MDOC Honor Guard.



Pictured above: The MDOC Honor Guard participates in a parade in Ionia in 1989.

Incarceration Facility. “Sometimes people look at this job and they don’t realize how tough it is and how dangerous it is.”

The honor guard completed 48 details in 2017. Half of those were funerals, including the service for Candice Dunn, an Oakland County probation agent who was killed in a car accident the same night she was honored as the department’s Agent of the Year. The unit also attended services for correctional employees killed in Delaware, Georgia and North Carolina.

Saying goodbye to fallen staff is one of the toughest, but most important roles of the honor guard, Cordell said.

“It’s more difficult 20 years later than when I started,” Cordell said. “You’re

personally invested in service to these people. It takes a toll, but I wouldn’t trade that. For the families, it means so much to have us there.”

Moving Forward

Members of the honor guard know how important it is to be a positive representative of the department for their colleagues, many of whom work behind the walls of correctional facilities and away from public view.

Christianna Borst, a member of the honor guard and lieutenant at Lakeland Correctional Facility, said people often approach her and other members at public events to talk about the department.

“We get asked questions all the time,” Borst said. “Usually the response is with a smile and ends

with a handshake.” But being part of the honor guard also requires much personal sacrifice, along with the support of family members and department leaders.

Members volunteer their time to attend funerals and other ceremonies and must be ready at a moment’s notice, said Parole Board member Sonia Warchock, a former member of the honor guard who served as its first female commander.

“We were able to be that unit that went out there representing the department in the most positive way during some of the most negative times and showing how much heart, how much integrity and how much people of the department were willing to give voluntarily,” Warchock said.

Honor guard members said though they aim to complete each detail flawlessly, they are often their own toughest critics and work to continuously improve.

For Curtis, seeing the honor guard march through the decades gives him a sense of pride.

“The honor guard has been so much a part of my life,” Curtis said. “I watched it evolve. It has always been very important to me. Whenever I see them perform, I’m very proud of them.”

The Michigan Department of Corrections Honor Guard is seeking new members.

To apply, send a resume, cover letter and recommendation from your warden or supervisor to John Cordell at CordellJ@michigan.gov.

New members must have two years of experience with the MDOC and be willing to make a five-year commitment to the unit.



Pictured above: The MDOC Honor Guard on detail for a fallen officer in Texas.

Department receives Pro Patria Award for support of employees in the Armed Forces

Michigan Department of Corrections received the Pro Patria Award for efforts to support employees serving in the National Guard and Reserves.

The award is presented annually by the Department of Defense's Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) program to one small, one large and one public sector employer in each state.

It is the highest honor an organization can receive from the program.



“Our employees serving with the National Guard and Reserves make great sacrifices to protect our freedoms,” Director Heidi Washington said. “They deserve our gratitude and support, and we are committed to assisting them in any way we can.” Almost 2,000 of the Michigan Department of Corrections’ 13,000 employees are military veterans. There are 31 employees who are currently deployed. The department was nominated for the award by Ed Mize, who was serving as Operations Administrator of the Correctional Facilities Administration when he was called to active duty in 2014.

“The ESGR Pro Patria Award was created to publicly recognize the most exceptional employers in each state, like the Michigan Department of Corrections, who provide extraordinary patriotic support and cooperation to their employees,” said Melvin Bauman, Michigan ESGR state chairman. “Guard and Reserve member employees, who like the citizen warriors before them, have answered their nation’s call to serve. Supportive employers like the Michigan Department of Corrections are critical to maintaining the strength and readiness of the nation’s Guard and Reserve units.”

HAVE YOU HEARD?

Check out the latest episodes of the Field Days podcast

- [Andy Potter and Jeremy Tripp of the Michigan Corrections Organization discuss the Move Forward Campaign.](#)
- [Michael Keck and Lara Neuman highlight the department’s use of COMPAS](#)
- [Ear Hustle Podcast co-host Nigel Poor talks about producing a podcast inside California’s San Quentin State Prison](#)
- [Members of the MDOC Competitive Shooting Team share their success](#)



FIELD DAYS
PODCAST

Listen to us on



SOME HIGHLIGHTS FROM 2017

The past year has been eventful for the MDOC. Check out just a few of the changes and notable events from 2017.



New Vocational Village Opens

The department's newest Vocational Village launched at Parnall Correctional Facility and celebrated its grand opening in August. Skilled trades offered at Parnall include robotics, computer numerical control machining, carpentry, automotive technology, commercial driving, forklift operation, and concrete and masonry work.

2017 Employee Engagement Survey

The State of Michigan launched its fourth Employee Engagement Survey to help measure progress in creating a supportive environment for staff.

When the survey concluded, 72 percent of department employees had participated — the highest rate yet. Staff expressed they were more engaged and more likely to continue their careers with the department than two years ago.



Employee Recreation Day

The department held its first Employee Recreation Day since 2005 at Riverwood Resort in Mount Pleasant. About 200 employees from around the state attended to participate in a day of fun and camaraderie with their colleagues.

Honoring Veterans

The department took big steps to honor and assist veterans.

MDOC employees with a history of military service were honored with a variety of events in November, and deployed staff will receive extra recognition and support. The department also opened a new veterans housing unit at Saginaw Correctional Facility.



Field Operations pilots new programs

The department's Field Operations Administration implemented innovative programs to help lead offenders to more successful lives.

That included Carey Guides, the use of Vivitrol and expanding probation sentencing specialists to statewide work.

Field agents and correctional facility team up to provide 400 coats to students in need

The cold and snow can bring fun outdoor activities for many across the state. But when temperatures drop, it can be a challenge for those in need to stay warm, especially children. It's why field agents in Wayne County have worked each year to donate coats to students in low-income areas of Detroit.

Sometimes children miss days of school because they don't have warm winter items to wear, said Carol Davenport, an offender success lead agent who helped organize this year's drive.

When G. Robert Cotton Correctional Facility Deputy Warden Douglas Smith heard about the effort, he decided to share the information with prisoners who were looking for ways to give back to their communities.

Prisoners decided to give \$5,300 from the Prisoner Benefit Fund to help purchase coats for students at Detroit Public Schools. Field staff also donated coats and pitched in to help provide snacks for students at the school.

Together, MDOC staff and prisoners were able to provide about 400 coats to students at Clippert Multicultural Honors Academy and Harms Elementary School. Metro Territory field staff and G. Robert Cotton Correctional Facility employees were able to present coats to students at Harms on Dec. 5.

Many students beamed as they picked up their new coats, boots and other warm winter items, and stopped to thank MDOC staff.

Mindy Wallace, special activities director at G. Robert Cotton Correctional Facility, said many prisoners were from the Detroit area and wanted

to give back in any way they could to help keep children warm this winter.

Prisoners were excited to learn about the results of their donation, she said.

Harms Elementary Principal Mauro Cruz said many students previously didn't have a good coat to bring to school.

"It means a lot," Cruz said of the donation. "We really appreciate any and all donations when it comes to the kids of Harms Elementary."

[Click here to see more photos of students at Harms Elementary School in Detroit receiving their coats donated by the MDOC.](#)



Sign up now for Torch Run Kickoff conference

A Law Enforcement Torch Run kickoff conference will be held January 11 and 12 at the Grand Traverse Resort and Spa near Traverse City. The deadline to register is Dec. 31. Attendees will be able to hear about how they can become more involved in helping to support special needs athletes through Special Olympics. The Law Enforcement Torch Run is one of the largest fundraisers for the Special Olympics. Criminal justice and law enforcement personnel from across the state organize and participate in fundraisers to support Special Olympics, including a more than 700-mile relay run across Michigan. [Click here to register.](#)

Committed to Protect, Dedicated to Success

Standing the Test of Time

Officer with 48 years of service is department's longest-serving employee

To say Officer Stephen Fineis is an experienced correctional employee is a bit of an understatement. When he started with the department, Lyndon B. Johnson was president, Gus Harrison



Corrections Officer Stephen Fineis

was the director of the Michigan Department of Corrections and Richard Handlon was leading what was then the Michigan Training Unit.

He has seen sweeping changes and improvements to staff training, offender programs and technology. He has witnessed major events in the department's history, such as the riots of the early 1980s.

With 48 years of service to the department under his belt, he is currently the MDOC's longest-serving employee.

"The department has been very good to me," said Fineis, a corrections officer at Bellamy Creek Correctional Facility who joined the MDOC in April 1968. "It has been a pleasure working here at Bellamy Creek." After starting his career at the Michigan Training Unit,

Fineis stepped away from corrections to explore other job opportunities.

Ultimately, he decided corrections was where he wanted to be and returned to work as a supervisor for Michigan State Industries at Michigan Reformatory for about 20 years.

When MSI laundry operations were relocated to Muskegon he decided to stay in Ionia and work as a corrections officer. In his years with corrections he said the department has made strides in programming for prisoners.

"The department has tried to do everything it can to redirect prisoner behavior," Fineis said. Staff training and safety measures have also made leaps. His advice for a long and successful career in corrections includes being punctual, paying attention to supervisors, and looking out for fellow officers. Corrections employees should also be decisive, but use good judgement and act compassionately, he said. What he has enjoyed most are the people he works with.

"It's fun to come to work with these guys," Fineis said. "It's more like a family."

[Click the image below to hear more from Officer Fineis on the Field Days Podcast.](#)



Lakeland Warden Bonita Hoffner enters retirement

Lakeland Correctional Facility Warden Bonita Hoffner will retire following more than 32 years of service with the department. Hoffner began her career in 1985 as a psychologist at the former Florence Crane Correctional Facility in Coldwater.



Warden Bonita Hoffner

She became administrative assistant at Lakeland Correctional Facility in 1988 and administrative assistant for the deputy director

of the Correctional Facilities Administration in 1989.

In 1994 she was named assistant deputy warden for Lakeland Correctional Facility and became deputy warden a year later.

Hoffner was named warden of Lakeland in 2012.

Hoffner, who retires Jan. 1, felt passionately coaching and mentoring staff and served as chairperson of the Michigan Corrections Officer Training Council. She also was involved with the development and implementation of Lakeland's rescue dog training programs and worked to address geriatric and elderly prisoner housing. She said she is most proud of the accomplishments of the staff at Lakeland.

"They are a great group of dedicated professionals," Hoffner said. "It has been a real privilege to work alongside this outstanding staff throughout the years."

She plans to spend time with family, travel and enjoy time on the water in retirement.

U.P. Correctional facilities donate to Honor Flight

Two Upper Peninsula correctional facilities are giving veterans a chance to travel to see memorials honoring their service. Baraga Correctional Facility staff raised \$722.04 and Marquette Branch Prison staff raised \$423.69 during Veterans Appreciation Week in November to give veterans a chance to visit Washington, D.C. through Upper Peninsula Honor Flight. The mission of the organization is to fly Upper Peninsula World War II and Korean War and Vietnam War veterans to see the memorials that stand in their honor. This "Tour of Honor" is free to the veteran and transportation, meals, other items are provided at no cost.



Pictured: Baraga Deputy Secretary Katy Holm, Prison Counselor Jason Bessner, Corrections Officer Chuck Nagele, Assistant Resident Unit Supervisor Gena Healey and Deputy Warden Lincoln Marshall



Pictured: Pam Ranta, Marquette Acting Warden Erica Huss, Benny Mercier and Honor Flight representative Scott Knauf

Parnall Correctional Facility employees donate to help veterans

Staff at Parnall Correctional Facility pulled together to help veterans in southwest Michigan. Employees donated a trailer full of furniture, \$750 and many other supplies to Veterans helping Veterans of Southwest Michigan. Parnall employees and veterans Stan Dowell, James O'Connor, Brad Budzynski, Paul Kwart and Ray Closson, also participated in a Ruck March, where they carried backpacks full of supplies from Firekeepers Casino in Battle Creek to the fountain in Marshall where a memorial service was held.



MSI accountant retires with 46 years of service

Manuel Araoz has spent most of his career at the Michigan Department of Corrections. He joined the department in 1987 as an accountant for Michigan State Industries and retired on Dec. 15.



He had more than 46 years of service to the State of Michigan, which included work with the Department of Treasury and what

is now the Department of Technology, Management and Budget.

He said his colleagues were what he enjoyed most about working for the MDOC.

"I've worked with great people who made the job enjoyable," Araoz said.

He said he has no set plans for retirement, other than to relax and potentially move toward warmer climates.



MDOC gives back through Shop with a Hero and Shop with a Cop

Children in need around the state were able to check items off their holiday lists with the help of staff from the Michigan Department of Corrections through annual Shop with a Hero and Shop with a Cop events.

Staff at Ionia, Saginaw, Parnall, Cooper Street and Woodland Center correctional facilities participated in the shopping events with children in their communities.

During the events, children in need were given money and paired with an officer to help them shop for the holidays.



Pictured: Woodland Center Correctional Facility staff participate in Shop with a Cop



Pictured: Ionia Correctional Facility staff participate in Shop with a Hero (left), Saginaw Correctional Facility staff participate in Shop with a Cop (right)

Officer/Fire Fighter Howard Memorial Hockey game

Hockey Game to benefit the Family of Allen Howard
End of Watch July 18th 2017

MDOC BLACK KNIGHTS



Lenawee Smoke Eaters



DECEMBER 16TH, 2017 7:00 pm
Arrington Ice Arena, Adrian, MI 49221

For ticket information contact:
CTO Bolan

Bolank@michigan.gov

C/O Sissen

SissenM@michigan.gov

TICKETS \$10

Charles E. Egeler Reception and Guidance Center staff donate to Disabled American Veterans

Michigan Department of Corrections employees at Charles E. Egeler Reception and Guidance Center raised \$400 to help provide care and assistance to wounded veterans.

The donation to the Disabled American Veterans organization came from a fundraiser held during the facility's Veterans Appreciation Week in November.

Bobby Body, a combat-injured veteran and powerlifting champion who was named Disabled Veteran of the Year in 2016, visited the facility on Dec. 11 to accept the donation on behalf of the organization. He shared an inspirational message with staff in attendance about supporting veterans.



Column: Making New Year's Resolutions? Keep these tips in mind

The start of a new year is a very potent force.

It can prod most of us into action. Many of us look to our personal life for areas of improvement.

While that is a great focus, it is not all of which we are comprised. We have our work, and corrections can be a challenging field.

Here are six suggested resolution areas:

1. Work for the broad mission: Remember that we are working to keep safe, staff, offenders, and the public.
2. Act on smaller goals to support this mission.
3. Continue thorough contraband control practices.
4. Maintain positive staff relations.
5. Observe patterns and deduce why they may change.
6. Continue good communications.

Again, these are merely suggestions. Whatever corrections resolutions you choose as a focus, may you have a productive and happy 2018.

*Submitted by Joe Bouchard,
Librarian at Baraga Correctional
Facility*

Share Your Stories

We want to hear from you. Give a shout out to a colleague who is doing great work in the community, or tell us about a program making positive changes in the lives of offenders. You can submit ideas to Holly Kramer at KramerH@michigan.gov.

Parnall Correctional Facility donates handmade blankets to veterans

Prisoners at Parnall Correctional Facility turned donated yarn into another kind of donation intended to benefit military veterans.

Prisoners at the facility learned to crochet, then created 42 blankets that were provided to the Region 8 Veterans Community Action Team serving southwest Michigan.

The blankets will be donated to organizations, such as VA hospitals, that assist Michigan veterans.



Greenfield District Probation Office collects 1,600 items to feed hungry families

It was no ordinary year for the Greenfield District Probation Office's annual Harvest Gathering campaign.

This year the office put a twist on the campaign and made it a small competition between each supervisor's team, as well as one another, to encourage participation.

For every 10 items that were donated by a team, their

supervisor would receive a mark under their name to track who brought in the most food, toiletry and personal items.

Each individual also received a mark by their name for every five items brought in.

By the end of the campaign, the office had collected more than 1,600 items, along with \$200.00 to be donated.

Donations were so plentiful that the office was able to give to Gleaners Food Pantry, as well as Genesis House Women's Shelter.

Submitted by Probation Agent Tiara Warren



Employee Store: The one-stop shop for MDOC gear

The Michigan Department of Corrections Employee Store offers a wide selection of MDOC logo merchandise to department staff, retirees and their families.

Customized orders for other items are also available. Proceeds from the store will also be used to support events for MDOC staff.

For a link to view and order store items, and for instructions on logging in click the CVSD logo on the department's [SharePoint Intranet page here](#).

For questions about the store, contact the EPIC Office at MDOC-EPIC@michigan.gov.



Try a new recipe

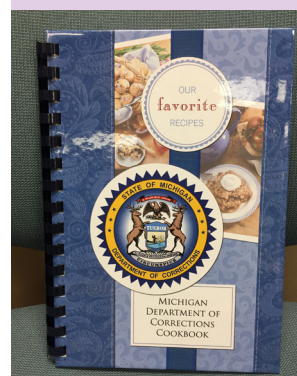
MDOC Cookbooks available for order

A compilation of favorite recipes from department staff is now available to employees statewide.

The Michigan Department of Corrections Cookbook is complete and ready to order.

We hope you will enjoy making these recipes and are able to find a new favorite to share with your family and friends.

You can fill out an order form for the cookbook [here](#) and send it to mdoc-wellness@michigan.gov.



A portion of the proceeds will help support the EPIC Employee Engagement Team, State Employees Charitable Campaign and Harvest Gathering. Each cookbook will be sold for \$10.00 and recipe submitters may receive a 10% discount on their total order.

With Thanks

Sheriff shows gratitude for Shop with a Hero donations



SAGINAW COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

618 Cass Street • Saginaw, MI 48602
PH: 989.790.5456 FAX: 989.790.5429

WILLIAM L. FEDERSPIEL
Sheriff

PHILIP J. HART
Undersheriff

December 4, 2017

Dear Circuit Court Probation,

Thank you for the donation you provided to the 18th Annual Shop with a Hero that will be held in December 2017. Last year 75 children were able to receive a shopping spree and food basket to share with their family. With your support this year, we will be able to promote generosity between the public safety agencies and the residents of our community. We thank you again for your support and look forward to your support in the future years.

Sincerely!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Wm. Federspiel'.

William L. Federspiel
Sheriff

Has your worksite done an outstanding job giving back to the community?
Send thank you letters you have received to KramerH@michigan.gov and they could be included in a future edition of the Corrections Connection.

The Extra Mile

MDOC staff go beyond the call of duty to help others



Pictured: HUM Janet Campbell, Warden Sherman Campbell, Officer Joseph Brown, Sgt. Nickolas Leslie, Officer Tony Pankhurst, Registered Nurse Jennifer Stillman, Nursing Supervisor Chris Pigg and Director Heidi Washington.

In November 2016, Corrections Officer Joseph Brown found a prisoner unresponsive in his cell at Gus Harrison Correctional Facility and called for assistance.

Sgt. Nickolas Leslie and Corrections Officer Andres Trejo responded and began administering CPR. Registered Nurse Michelle Caldwell and Corrections Officer Tony Pankhurst also arrived to assist with CPR.

After about 10 minutes of chest compressions and breaths, Caldwell was able to find a pulse on the prisoner and Registered Nurse Jennifer Stillman assisted in keeping the prisoner stable until emergency medical services arrived.

The prisoner was transported to the hospital for further treatment, then to Duane Waters Health Center to recover.

The initiative, professionalism and integrity staff showed in their response earned them the department's Lifesaving Award.

In November 2016, a prisoner at Gus Harrison Correctional Facility was found lying on his back on the floor in the middle of his cell and appeared to be having trouble breathing.

Registered Nurse Mary Velarde and Corrections Officer Melvin Fowler responded to help the prisoner and found he had stopped breathing. Velarde administered rescue breaths and when he began to breathe again, she inserted a tube into his mouth to prevent airway obstructions. Velarde and Fowler continued to monitor the prisoner until emergency medical services arrived.

Their decisiveness and quick actions earned Velarde and Fowler the department's Lifesaving Award.



Pictured: Warden Sherman Campbell, Officer Melvin Fowler and Director Heidi Washington.



Pictured: Warden Sherman Campbell, Officer Mackie Fleenor and Director Heidi Washington.

Corrections Officer Mackie Fleenor was working at Gus Harrison Correctional Facility in December 2016 when he was notified of a prisoner who had attempted to hang himself.

Fleenor breached the door of the prisoner's cell and untied him.

Fleenor and Sgt. Nathaniel Root removed the prisoner from his cell and called for additional assistance. Fleenor then began administering chest compressions and after 10 to 12 compressions, the prisoner began to breathe again.

Fleenor's immediate assessment of the situation and response earned him the department's Lifesaving Award.

The Extra Mile continued...

In October 2016, Rick O’Connell, a reentry facility coordinator at G. Robert Cotton Correctional Facility, saw a three-car accident happen in front of his home.

The driver of one of the vehicles was pinned inside his car. With the assistance of a police officer and another witness, O’Connell was able to pry the door of the vehicle open enough to support the driver’s head and neck until emergency medical services arrived.

The driver was then removed from the vehicle and air-lifted to the hospital for treatment of his injuries.

O’Connell’s concern for the accident victims and efforts to help earned him the department’s Citizenship Award.



Pictured: William Gonwicha and Lt. Charles Levens

William Gonwicha, a departmental analyst with the Office of Research and Planning, received a challenge coin from Absconder Recovery Unit Lt. Charles Levens for work on the extraction, analysis, and delivery of the Absconder List. Gonwicha was given a project to update the monthly Absconder Report which is used regularly by the ARU. He was able to complete this project and go beyond what the existing report included.



Saginaw Correctional Facility inspectors Todd McLean and Todd Massick received the Teamwork Coin from Warden Tom Winn on Dec. 7.

They were instrumental in preventing the introduction of contraband into Saginaw Correctional Facility.



Parole Board member and retired MDOC Honor Guard commander Sonia Warchock received a 30th anniversary Honor Guard badge that recognized her 16 years of service to the unit. Warchock was the honor guard’s first female commander and was selected to join the unit in 1989.

Corrections Quiz

Name this MDOC employee with experience as a professional wrestler, and professional Santa Claus.

Send your answer to Holly Kramer at KramerH@michigan.gov. The first person to answer correctly will receive a congratulatory shout out on MDOC social media, and the answer and winner will be published in the next edition of the newsletter.

November Quiz Recap

Which correctional facility has been growing poinsettias and donating them to local organizations for the holidays since 2003?

Answer: Gus Harrison Correctional Facility

Check out more on Gus Harrison Correctional Facility's history donating poinsettias below.

Congratulations to **April Christian**, an accounting technician at Detroit Reentry Center, for being the first to answer the September Corrections Quiz. Great job!

This prison poinsettia patch has been sharing blooms with the community for almost 15 years

Growing poinsettias has been a tradition at Gus Harrison Correctional Facility since 2003.

The intensive process of growing and caring for the plants begins in early July.

Poinsettias are not native to Michigan, so growing them, and getting them to flower, can be complex. About 10 weeks before the poinsettias are expected to be delivered to organizations around the state, prisoners work to start the flowering process. They need 14 hours of complete darkness and 10

hours of sunlight to produce flowers, so they are put on shelves and covered in the evenings and moved into the sunlight on greenhouse tables during the day.

This year, the correctional facility grew about 400 poinsettias.

Deliveries began the week of Thanksgiving and continued through the first week of December.

Plants were donated to local organizations including the Daily Bread Soup Kitchen, LISD Adult Transition

Center, Habitat for Humanity, HOPE Center, Siena Heights University and Fishes and Loaves Food Pantry. Poinsettias are also donated to Michigan Department of Transportation Welcome Centers along I-75 and US-23.

Taylor Skelton, a corrections program coordinator at Gus Harrison Correctional Facility, said MDOT passes on props from travelers. "They are always quick to give us a good word when travelers ask about the plants," Skelton said.



Snapshots

A look at life around the MDOC



Bellamy Creek Correctional Facility hosted a resource fair for prisoners in November to help connect them with organizations that could help them achieve success after release. The event included 22 different employers, community organizations and government agencies.



Staff in the Michigan Department of Corrections' central office in Lansing donated nearly a dozen boxes of food to the Homeless Angels to help feed residents in need.

[Homeless Angels](#) is a street-based outreach program in Lansing.



Five members of the Branch Area Food Bank met with prisoners from the Lakeland Correctional Facility horticulture program to discuss the benefits of volunteering.

Members highlighted the impact volunteering has on the community and the satisfaction that can be gained from helping others. Food Bank members also discussed how volunteering helps teach important job skills and can aid in finding employment.

Corrections in the News

[MDOC recognized for employees in the Armed Forces](#) — WILX TV

[Michigan Department of Corrections receives award from DOD](#) — WJMN TV

[Michigan prison teams up with dog rescue group to rehabilitate dogs](#) — WXYZ TV

[10 years, over 1,000 adoptions for RPSM](#) — Coldwater Daily Reporter

[Bills would allow terminal, medically frail felons to be paroled](#) — WKAR

[Over 30 families to benefit from Shop with a Cop](#) — WTVB Radio

Spread the word about some of the great things happening at the MDOC and share these stories with friends, family and coworkers.

Seen on Facebook...



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October New Hires

Allen, Joshua	Storekeeper, Charles E. Egeler Reception and Guidance Center
Ballew, Kristin	Library Technician, Charles E. Egeler Reception and Guidance Center
Boike, Staci	Licensed Practical Nurse, Earnest C. Brooks Correctional Facility
Christie, Jani	Word Processing Assistant, Court Services Unit
Cook, Rebecca	Corrections Officer, Chippewa Correctional Facility
Dishnow, Pamela	Librarian, Marquette Branch Prison
Dutiel, Jayson	Registered Nurse, Marquette Branch Prison
East, Kevin	Trades Instructor, Parnall Correctional Facility
Frazier, Nicole	Corrections Qualified Mental Health Professional, Parnall Correctional Facility
Fulks, Sonya	Registered Nurse, Charles E. Egeler Reception and Guidance Center
Galbraith, June	Registered Nurse, St. Louis Correctional Facility
Goins, Alane	Registered Nurse Manager, Woodland Center Correctional Facility
Grew, Zachery	Licensed Electrician, Detroit Reentry Center
Heimerl, Brian	Power Plant Operator, Marquette Branch Prison
James, Marlon	Field Agent, Calhoun County Probation Office
Johnson, Deanna	Special Alternative Incarceration Officer, Special Alternative Incarceration Facility
Johnson, Keigel	Trades Instructor, Parnall Correctional Facility
Kienitz, Sarah	School Teacher, Central Michigan Correctional Facility
Londry, Gail	Registered Nurse, Kinross Correctional Facility
Martin, Kelly	Corrections Qualified Mental Health Professional, Carson City Correctional Facility
McGinty, Evonne	Registered Nurse, Charles E. Egeler Reception and Guidance Center
Mikelait, Eric	Corrections Qualified Mental Health Professional, Parnall Correctional Facility
Navarre, Rebecca	Corrections Qualified Mental Health Professional, Woodland Center Correctional Facility
Norris, Nicole	Licensed Practical Nurse, Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility
Paterra, Giovanni	Licensed Practical Nurse, Parnall Correctional Facility
Pratt, Collin	Corrections Officer, Michigan Reformatory
Ribbey, Melissa	Corrections Qualified Mental Health Professional, Parnall Correctional Facility
Schofield, Teddi	Word Processing Assistant, Muskegon County Probation Office
Sumner, Joan	General Office Assistant, Charles E. Egeler Reception and Guidance Center
Taulbee, Chelsea	Corrections Officer, Detroit Reentry Center
Thomas, Dawn	Trades Instructor, Thumb Correctional Facility
Thomas, Debra	Word Processing Assistant, Court Services Unit
Tilman, Jennifer	General Office Assistant, Oaks Correctional Facility

October Retirements

Borgerding, William	Physician Manager, Chippewa Correctional Facility
Brewer, Danny	Corrections Officer, Lakeland Correctional Facility
Brigham, Kristine	General Office Assistant, Richard A. Handlon Correctional Facility
Casler, Terry	Assistant Resident Unit Supervisor, Lakeland Correctional Facility
Cross, William	Corrections Officer, Oaks Correctional Facility
Crow, Daniel	Corrections Shift Supervisor, Charles E. Egeler Reception and Guidance Center
Drahaman, Crystal	Corrections Officer, Chippewa Correctional Facility
Flanagan, Cheryl	Accounting Technician, Detroit Reentry Center
Ford, Arnetta	Secretary, Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility
Hawkins, Robert	Corrections Officer, Earnest C. Brooks Correctional Facility
Humphrey, Dean	Corrections Transportation Officer, Central Michigan Correctional Facility
Jenkins, Glen	Prison Counselor, Muskegon Correctional Facility
Kavanagh, Douglas	Corrections Officer, Carson City Correctional Facility
Koenigsknecht, Jacque	Administrative Assistant, Carson City Correctional Facility
Kope, Paul	Corrections Officer, G. Robert Cotton Correctional Facility
Larson, Jeffrey	Resident Unit Manager, Ionia Correctional Facility
Leonard, Stanley	Physical Plant Supervisor, Carson City Correctional Facility
Lewis, Vicki	Corrections Officer, Gus Harrison Correctional Facility
Luckey, James	Library Technician, Cooper Street Correctional Facility
McInnis, Joe	Corrections Officer, Alger Correctional Facility
Mick, Matthew	Corrections Officer, Cooper Street Correctional Facility
Neufer-Witte, Sandra	Field Agent, Shiawassee County Parole and Probation Office
Perreault, Roger	Maintenance Mechanic, Baraga Correctional Facility
Rameau, Robert	Corrections Officer, Michigan Reformatory
Rennaker, Donald	Corrections Officer, Macomb Correctional Facility
Reppenhagen, Marlene	Corrections Officer, Macomb Correctional Facility
Sanders, Beneva	Corrections Officer, Macomb Correctional Facility
Smith, Ralph	Corrections Office, Parnall Correctional Facility
Stone, Robert	Corrections Security Inspector, St. Louis Correctional Facility
Theel, Thomas	Corrections Officer, G. Robert Cotton Correctional Facility
Tipsword, David	Corrections Transportation Officer, Marquette Branch Prison
Treppa, Joseph	Physical Plant Supervisor, Women's Huron Valley Correctional Facility
Ward, Matthew	Corrections Officer, G. Robert Cotton Correctional Facility
Warner, Mark	Corrections Officer, Detroit Reentry Center
Weaver, Cathy	Dental Hygienist, Muskegon Correctional Facility