

Corrections Connection

A full-page background image showing a winter sunset. The sun is low on the horizon, casting a warm orange glow across the sky and reflecting on a body of water. Several bare, dark trees stand in the foreground and middle ground, their silhouettes against the bright sky. The ground is covered in a thick layer of snow, with long, soft shadows cast by the trees. A wooden fence is visible in the middle ground, separating the snowy area from the water.

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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 in Ludington, Mich. by **Wendy Rademacher**, a word processing assistant in Central Office Human Resources. 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.



Beyond A Blessing

First service dog trained by incarcerated veterans finds new home, new life

In early 2017, Saginaw County Animal Control authorities found a young pit bull mix chained in the yard of a Saginaw home. He was emaciated and covered in wounds from use as a bait dog in illegal dog fighting. He needed help. So did Ericka Benson, a veteran who had been searching for a service dog to help her for years and continued to hit roadblocks. In December, both found new life together with the help of a program that teaches incarcerated veterans to train service and therapy dogs for veterans in the

community who need them.

“It’s like an angel came down and said this needs to happen,” Benson said. “This means the world to me.”

Meeting Needs

After healing in the hands of new caregivers, the dog, who was named Bravo following his rescue, was taken to Saginaw Correctional Facility.

It was there that he was paired with two incarcerated veterans in the facility’s [new veterans housing unit](#).

The unit aims to meet the unique needs of incarcerated military veterans and address common issues they may face, like Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder. It also includes the Michigan Dogs of Corrections training program, which matches incarcerated veterans with rescue dogs selected for training as service or therapy animals.

Bravo’s prisoner handlers initially spent time socializing and training him in basic obedience. When he was matched with Benson, they worked with him to help meet some of her needs, like helping to pull her up from a chair or from the ground.

Bravo was the first dog to complete the program and

Committed to Protect, Dedicated to Success

be paired with a veteran. Three more dogs have since been matched up with new homes. "It's very rewarding," said Guylynn Rubin, one of the prisoners who helped train Bravo. "We know we're helping our fellow veterans." Saginaw Correctional Facility Warden Tom Winn said the dogs in the program will help more than their new military veteran owners. They help prisoners too by giving them a sense of purpose and outlet for giving back. "It's just a preview of good things to come," Winn said.

Making a Match

For Benson, Bravo was a blessing. She was in an accident in 2004 that resulted in a number of intensive surgeries, chronic pain and difficulty keeping her balance. She spent two years searching for a service dog, but it wasn't until her husband, Rick Benson, a corrections officer at Chippewa Correctional Facility, made a connection with a colleague that the need was fulfilled.

Rick Benson was at a Michigan Corrections Organization veterans committee meeting when he and Corrections Officer John Hassen began discussing the difficulties his wife was experiencing finding a service dog.

Hassen, who coordinates the



Ericka Benson hugs Bravo at Saginaw Correctional Facility before bringing him home.

[therapy dog program at Woodland Center Correctional Facility,](#)

connected Benson with Stiggy's Dogs founder Jennifer Petre. From there, "everything lined up perfectly," Hassen said. Stiggy's trains service dogs for veterans, and Petre worked with the Ann Arbor-based Eisenhower Center to launch the Michigan Dogs of Corrections program at Saginaw.

She was able to help find a perfect match for Ericka in Bravo.

"Here was this dog that needed a job and needed some sort of direction for the future," Petre said. "Thank God that we were able to identify that and be able to pair him with someone. It's the best."

Bravo even had such a close

resemblance to one of the Benson's former dogs, that for the family, it felt like fate.

"It was meant to be," said Ericka Benson, who calls the team of people who trained and connected her to Bravo her "angels." "It's really a miracle."

Bravo becomes more attached to Ericka every day, Rick Benson said. In the weeks since they took Bravo home there have already been positive changes.

Ericka is more active, less withdrawn and is eager to take Bravo out into the community. She smiles more now than she has in a long time, he said.

"He's very much by her side," Rick Benson said. "Watching them together has made me smile."



Ericka and Rick Benson, Corrections Officer John Hassen and Saginaw County Animal Control, Michigan Dogs of Corrections and Saginaw Correctional Facility staff stand together before Bravo leaves the facility.



Ericka Benson and prisoner Guylynn Rubin, one of Bravo's handlers, talk about Bravo's training.

Michigan Department of Corrections partners with Wayne State University for oversight of prisoner health care

The Michigan Department of Corrections has partnered with Wayne State University, which will oversee prisoner health care.

The agreement gives the MDOC access to WSU's network of medical experts, and cutting-edge technology backed by leading academic health care experts.

"The leadership of the Michigan Department of Corrections should be commended for reaching out and pursuing an academic medicine partner," said Jack D. Sobel, M.D., dean of the Wayne State University School of Medicine. "They understand the value of academic medicine and what it can do for the prison population."

WSU will provide a chief medical officer, Carmen McIntyre, M.D.; chief psychiatrist, Shahid Hussein, M.D.; and an assistant chief medical officer, James Blessman, M.D. The three will provide clinical direction and oversight of the state's prison health care system, including working with the medical

staff contracted by Corizon that provide care in the prisons.

"We are excited about this innovative partnership with Wayne State University that will allow us to continue providing quality health care to prisoners," MDOC Director Heidi Washington said. "Their team will be able to offer expert guidance and support to providers at our facilities to ensure the best-possible health outcomes for prisoners."

This partnership is an opportunity to integrate mental and physical health care for prisoners, with the goal to lead them to healthier lives.

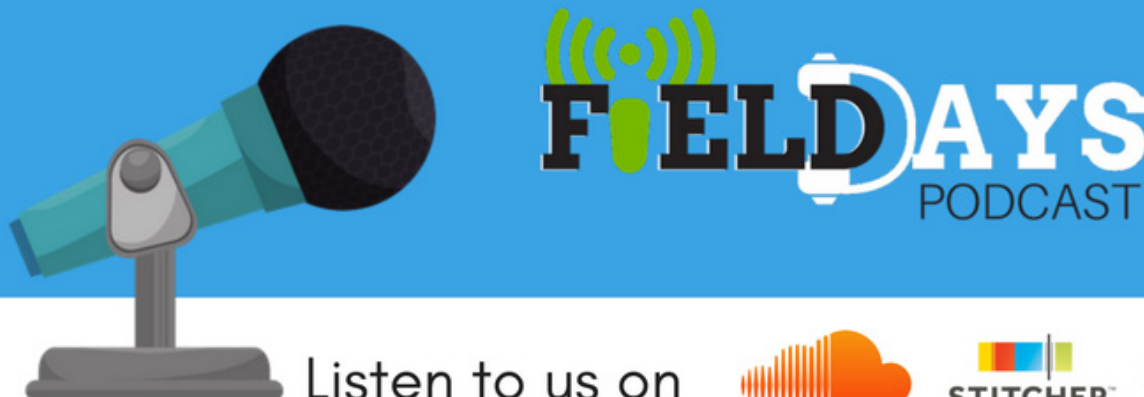
WSU and the MDOC believe the partnership will help reduce health care costs among the state's inmate population.

The partnership will also provide the opportunity for clinical rotations at some state facilities for WSU medical students, just as the department has done with other universities and continues to do.

HAVE YOU HEARD?

Check out the latest episodes of the Field Days podcast

- [The Field Days Podcast team interviews Honor Guard Commander John Cordell about the MDOC Honor Guard's 30th anniversary.](#)
- [Legislative Liaison Kyle Kaminski discusses legislation passed in 2017 and how it will impact the department](#)
- [Chris and Greg share some highlights and high points for the MDOC from 2017, including awards won by the department.](#)
- [The Field Days Podcast team recaps the year and talks about some of their favorite episodes from 2017.](#)



Listen to us on





MDOC welcomes 23 new field agents

The Michigan Department of Corrections welcomed 23 new field agents and field service assistants during an oath ceremony Jan. 9 in Troy. Field Operations Administration leaders were on hand to congratulate the new agents and encourage them to use their career to make a difference in the lives of offenders. “We have the ability to impact the safety of our communities and we can help people be successful,” Deputy Director Russ Marlan told new agents. “Be focused on making a difference.”



Agent Martina Griffin

Martina Griffin, a new agent headed to the Macomb County Probation Office said she was drawn to field work after transferring from the

former Mound Correctional Facility to the Detroit Metro Parole Office as a secretary.

“I really fell in love with it,” Griffin said.

She said she looks forward to having the opportunity to interact with offenders and their families in a positive way and assist her coworkers.

New field staff included:

Thomas Catrell — Otsego County Parole and Probation
Samantha Corrigan — Macomb County Probation
Jalen Echols — Macomb County Probation Office
Christy Greathouse — Macomb County Probation
Martina Griffin — Macomb County Probation
Patrick Makowski — Macomb County Probation
Tomasz Nowicki — Macomb County Probation
Lauren Ozias — Macomb County Probation
Travis Sharp — Monroe County Parole and Probation
Dianna Springer — Monroe County Parole and Probation
Emily Vasilovski — Macomb County Probation
Amanda Wietecha — Macomb County Probation
Haley Huff — Calhoun County Probation
Joshua LaMaire — Calhoun County Parole
Marlon James — Calhoun County Probation
Michelle Olds — Kent County Parole
Christopher Boyd — Chrysler District Probation
Tavish Dickerson — Chrysler District Probation
Katie Gubachy — Court Services Unit
Bria Morris — Court Services Unit
Ahmad Proctor — Greenfield District Probation
Cary Tiller, II — Greenfield District Probation
Crystal Jones — Greenfield District Probation

New Agent excited for opportunity to work in the field

Lauren Ozias has always had a passion for law enforcement. The first five years of her career were spent as a police officer for the McKinney Police Department in Texas, before she moved on to



Agent Lauren Ozias

work with children's protective services. So it seemed like a natural transition when she decided to work for the Michigan

Department of Corrections as an agent with the Macomb County Probation Office.

She said her work with children's protective services taught her a lot about case management and her police work helped her learn more about the criminal justice system. She planned to draw on the experience she gained from both. “This is a great fit for me,” Ozias said. “I'm really excited about it.” Ozias said for now she is focused on learning more about field supervision, but she is fascinated by electronic monitoring and hopes to learn more about it in the future.



Power of Positivity

Richard A. Handlon Correctional Facility lieutenant uses positive thinking to propel powerlifting career

Eric Jones says he isn't your typical powerlifter. His 5-foot-10 stature is smaller than other lifters who tend to tower above 6-feet tall. But that hasn't stopped him from



Lt. Eric Jones

taking home championship titles in the sport.

Jones, a lieutenant at Richard A. Handlon Correctional Facility, won his 7th consecutive title at the World Powerlifting Championships in Las Vegas in November, lifting 461 pounds. He said he has lifted as much as 605 pounds during practice at the gym.

His success comes just as much from his strength and discipline, as it does from his outlook.

"I really believe in positive thinking," Jones said. "I see myself lifting certain weights. I meditate and I really focus."

Jones was always an athlete. He played basketball and was a bodybuilder before he started powerlifting in 2006.

"We find some of our gifts accidentally," Jones said. "I was a strong person, but I didn't know how strong."

Jones said he was always interested in powerlifting, but it wasn't until

his mother passed away that he decided to pursue the sport. He said he often told her he wanted to be a world champion powerlifter, and her passing made him realize it was time to make that dream reality.

Jones won his first competition at the state open at Lansing Community College in 2006.

In 2010, he edged out about 50 other competitors to take the overall title in the United Powerlifting Association competition in Indianapolis. He has earned the title for his age class in the last seven World Powerlifting Championships he has competed in.

He said he trains five days a week and will sometimes practice twice a day.

"Sometimes your body hurts, but you have to keep pushing forward," said Jones, who has worked for the department for almost 19 years. "You have to be willing to make that sacrifice." Jones, who was named Corrections Officer of the Year in 2006, is also active in the community, working with local youths as a mentor. He said he uses his experience powerlifting to inspire and motivate young people.

He formerly operated a community program for at-risk youth in Lansing that included tutoring, job workshops and GED preparation. In addition, he has spoken to groups around the state about violence prevention and gang intervention.

He said it is a goal of his to start a youth powerlifting team.

"I want to help young people bring out the champion in themselves," he said.

Assistant Deputy Warden positions return in 2018

The New Year is bringing several changes to the department, including the return of the assistant deputy warden position.

Department leaders announced the change in late December. The position has an important role in creating new leaders to guide the department forward. It was, and is, an excellent way for staff to learn more about the overall operation of a facility and to prepare them for a deputy warden or warden position later in their career.

The department is focused not just on offender success, but on the success of employees and their ability to advance and promote through the ranks. As a larger percentage of staff near retirement, the department needs to engage a new group of leaders in our workforce and provide them with the tools necessary to steer the MDOC in the years and decades to come. In bringing back this position, there will be changes elsewhere in the structure of leadership at facilities. The department will be removing the position of the third shift captain. This change will not affect facilities which operate on a 12-hour shift. Facilities housing male prisoners will also have one deputy warden position.



Check upcoming editions of the Corrections Connection for more information on the 2018 Employee Recreation Day and activities that will be available at this year's event.

MDOC names new wardens

The Michigan Department of Corrections has named three new wardens to lead correctional facilities in the Upper Peninsula, including the first female warden for one facility.

Connie Horton will serve as warden of Chippewa Correctional Facility, Erica Huss will lead Marquette



Warden Connie Horton

Branch Prison and Daniel Lesatz will serve as warden of Baraga Correctional Facility.

The appointments were effective Dec. 31.

Horton joined the department in 1989 and started work as a corrections officer at Standish Correctional Facility. She went on to hold positions that included resident unit officer, assistant deputy warden and deputy warden. She also formerly served as an assistant Emergency Response Team commander and was deputy warden of Chippewa Correctional Facility, prior to her appointment as acting warden of the facility in early 2017.



Warden Erica Huss

Huss is the first female warden of Marquette Branch Prison, and started her career with

the MDOC in 1994.

Huss first worked as a corrections officer at Camp Cusino in 1994. She later moved on to roles as resident unit manager, assistant deputy warden and deputy warden at facilities that included Ojibway and Ionia correctional facilities and Marquette Branch Prison. She most recently served as acting warden at Marquette Branch Prison. Daniel Lesatz joined the department in 1992 as a corrections officer at the Charles E. Egeler Reception and Guidance Center.



Warden Daniel Lesatz

He later served as a resident unit officer, prison counselor, resident unit manager, assistant deputy warden and deputy warden. He had served as acting warden of Baraga Correctional Facility since May 2017.

The department also named four new acting wardens, which include Jack Kowalski, acting warden at Earnest C. Brooks and West Shoreline correctional facilities; Bryan Morrison, acting warden at Lakeland Correctional Facility; Andy Hubble, acting warden at Newberry Correctional Facility; and Tim Ball, acting warden at Oaks Correctional Facility.

Committed to Protect, Dedicated to Success

BELLEVILLE POLAR PLUNGE



Special Olympics Michigan | 50 YEARS 1968-2018

2018

Belleville Yacht Club
831 E. Huron River Dr., Belleville MI

Saturday, February 10, 2018
9:30 a.m. - Registration
11:45 a.m. - Parade of Costumes
12:00 p.m. - Plunge
12:45 p.m. - Awards and After Splash Bash

For more information on the Belleville Polar Plunge, contact Supervisor David Katz at katz.david.b@gmail.com or (313) 460-2604.

The Michigan Department of Corrections hopes to have each worksite represented with a plunge volunteer on Team MDOC at Polar Plunge events throughout the state. Funds raised for the Polar Plunge will benefit Special Olympics Michigan.

For a listing of Polar Plunge events, to sign up, or to donate visit firstgiving.com/polarplunge.

Saginaw Correctional Facility staff recognized for rescue

A 20-year-old woman was rescued by five Saginaw Correctional Facility employees after her car slid into a snowy ditch and became buried.

Sgt. Randy VanSumeren, Lt. Roland Price and Corrections Officers Bobby Karl, William Putnam and John Klapish stopped when they saw the glow of the brake lights and head lights from the woman's car, which would have otherwise been completely hidden in the ditch. The driver's side door was pinned shut and the windows were frozen. The officers were able to get the woman out through the passenger side of the vehicle.



The woman's mother called the officers "guardian angels" and publicly thanked them for rescuing her daughter. See the stories about this heroic rescue from [ABC 12](http://abc12.com) and [WNEM](http://wnem.com).

Agent wins Liberator Award for efforts to fight human trafficking

Monroe County Agent Lennie Alcorn has been focused on fighting human trafficking in Michigan and across the country.

She played a key role in creating the first Human Trafficking Response Team



Agent Lennie Alcorn

in Monroe County and has spoken locally, nationally and internationally about human trafficking and treatment for survivors. Her efforts earned her a Liberator Award, which recognizes the

work of individuals and groups dedicated to putting an end to human trafficking. She was nominated for the award by a survivor of human trafficking and won after earning the most votes.

Alcorn's work has also included developing law enforcement training programs and conferences on the topic of human trafficking.

In addition, she has worked with the Save Our Adolescents from Prostitution program, a survivor support group that educates and increases awareness on the prevalence of human trafficking.

She travelled to California with the group in 2016 to help educate San Francisco-area businesses on recognizing the signs of trafficking.



Listen to the upcoming episode of the Field Days Podcast to hear her talk about her award and her work.

Corrections Officer donates more than 400 toys to Toys for Tots through sale of Christmas ornament

Lisa Baugher wasn't always fond of spiders. The arachnids are not usually welcome in homes, so when a friend told Baugher about a group making



Corrections Officer Lisa Baugher and State Rep. Jason Wentworth hang her ornament on a tree at the state Capitol.

spider Christmas ornaments, she initially didn't jump at the chance to join them. Then her friend encouraged her to read an Eastern European tale about Christmas

spiders, whose webs were turned to silver and gold trimmings on the tree.

"I hated spiders," said Baugher, a corrections officer at Central Michigan Correctional Facility. "Then I

read the story and I thought it was really neat." Baugher started making and selling the spider ornaments, until one day a child approached her at a craft show and asked to buy one of the ornaments. For Baugher, it sparked an idea to use her talent instead to give back to the community by helping children in need.

She began using the money she made selling the ornaments to buy toys for children in the community, and in 2007, she teamed up with Toys for Tots.

"I thought, you know what ... I'm blessed," Baugher said. "It's time to give back."

This year, she was able to deliver more than 400 toys to Toys for Tots, and joined state Rep. Jason Wentworth in hanging one of her ornaments on a tree at the state Capitol.



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

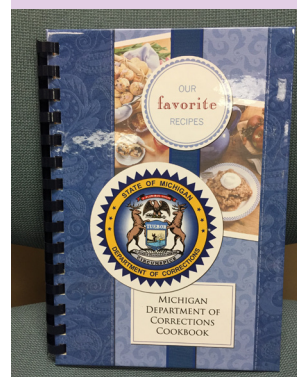
MDOC Cookbooks available for order
A compilation of favorite recipes from department staff is now available to employees statewide.

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.



Helping Hands for the Holidays

Michigan Department of Corrections staff never hesitate to give back to their communities. That's especially true during the holiday season.

Here are a few examples of how facilities and field offices made the holidays brighter for those in need.



Staff from Charles E. Egeler Reception and Guidance Center, Parnall Correctional Facility and G. Robert Cotton Correctional Facility, partnered with law enforcement and Northwest Community Schools to help children shop for their families through Shop with a Cop.

Parnall Corrections Officer Jennifer Breslin has participated in the event for five years and said it is a rewarding experience. One year, a child she was paired with later saw her at a sporting event and ran to give her a hug.

"It felt amazing to know that I had that lasting effect on her in such a positive manner," Breslin said.

Participants included Danielle Pietrangelo, Danielle Schuette, Sara Hendricks, Jamie Cummins, Lt. Martin McCallum, Capt. Anthony Schnell, and corrections officers S. Miller, Ray Closson, Antonio Melvin and Jamie Wild.



St. Louis Correctional Facility adopted two families and 30 "angels" for the holiday season. Staff donated many items for the families and individuals in need and also raised money through casual days, auctioning parking spots and collecting other monetary donations.



The Michigan Department of Corrections teamed up with the Lake County Sheriff's Office to help children at the COVE shelter for women and

children in Ludington.

Women at the Lake County Residential Reentry Program made stockings as part of a restorative justice project and staff filled the stockings with gifts, in addition to providing other items to help families in need at the shelter.



Staff at Thumb Correctional Facility donated gifts for children at Hurley Hospital and the Whaley Children's Center.



Charles E. Egeler Reception and Guidance Center and Duane Waters Health Center adopted four families from Townsend Elementary School in Jackson.

The families were all anonymous and included 14 children and five parents. There was an outpouring of support and generosity from staff for the

families and a number of employees assisted with collecting donations, shopping for and wrapping gifts.

With Thanks

Detroit Public Schools thank MDOC for donation to students in need

DETROIT PUBLIC SCHOOLS COMMUNITY DISTRICT

Clippert Multicultural Honors Academy
1981 McKinstry
Detroit, Michigan 48209
Phone: (313) 849-5009 Fax (313) 849-5740



On behalf of Clippert Multicultural Honors Academy, I would like to thank the Metropolitan Territory Region 10 for the awesome donations of coats for our students. The amount of coats was a total blessing for our Clippert students. In preparation for the coat drive, the staff was submitting names of students who are in need of assistance. Usually we would have to rank the students on a “need” basis, which means someone may be left out and this does generate a bit of anxiety because we never want to omit anyone from receiving. But due to the ginormous donation from MDOC, we were able to provide every child on the list with a coat. There were some students on the list who had siblings in our school, but names were NOT on the list; the bigger blessing was because of the very generous donation of coats, hats, scarfs and gloves we were able to provide a coat to the siblings of the students as well. Because we are a middle school, a lot of our students wear adult sizes. The adult coats are more expensive and we often fall short in size selection. The donation allowed the larger students to find a coat in their size. Some students who received a Christmas shopping spree, were able to remove the purchase of a coat from their list and get something else; that alone made the students very happy. We arranged the coats according to size and set-up the room like a store. They were able to shop for their own coat. The experience of watching pre-teens and teenagers try on coats was priceless. I witnessed students helping other students to select a coat and complimenting each other. I even heard a seventh grade boy say, “Hey Ms. I look good in this coat huh?” When the students and staff passed the room, they all wanted to know what was happening. Some of the students asked if they could get a coat because they wore hoodies; I was able to say, “Yes!” without the fear of running out. PRICELESS! I tell you, this was the BEST coats drive I have experienced in my thirty one years of service.

Although it was a collective effort, I want to thank Agent Davenport for reaching out to the Detroit Public School Community District and Clippert Academy. Please know that your every effort and minute spent on this task was so very worth it. It was a major blessing and it opened the door to allow other blessing to flow for our students. Two words that have so much impact, THANK YOU!

Angela Walker-Tolbert, Certified School Counselor

Field Operations Administration staff in metro Detroit partnered with G. Robert Cotton Correctional Facility to donate 400 coats to students at Clippert Multicultural Honors Academy and Harms Elementary School. Read more about it [here](#).

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



Former Lakeland Correctional Facility Warden Bonita Hoffner, Corrections Officers Erik Huff, Steven Brott, Michael Green, and Chad Poynter, and Director Heidi Washington

In January 2017, Corrections Officers Erik Huff and Chad Poynter responded to a call for assistance regarding a prisoner found unresponsive in his cell at Lakeland Correctional Facility. When they arrived on the scene corrections officers Michael Green and Steven Brott had moved the prisoner to the ground and were administering chest compressions. They brought a defibrillator to the prisoner, but he began breathing on his own before it was needed. The four officers continued to monitor the prisoner until health care staff arrived. Their actions saved the life of the prisoner and earned them the department's Lifesaving award.

Field Operations Administration staff across the state were recognized for going above and beyond to assist other states and other law enforcement agencies.

Monroe County Agent Vince Paladino, Supervisor Lori Lehmann and Department Technician Lisa Gros were nominated by the state of Pennsylvania for recognition from the Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision. Paladino, Lehmann

and Gros acted quickly to obtain a warrant for a Michigan offender being supervised in Pennsylvania in order to protect a victim from retribution by the offender.

Detroit Metro Parole Agent Krista Greenwood was nominated by the state of Kentucky for her work on a 2016 case involving a Michigan and Kentucky parolee. Greenwood also received recognition from the Interstate Commission for Adult Offender Supervision. A limited number of individuals nationwide received the recognition.

Agents Aaron Hundt and Marcus Robinson were recognized for their work assisting law enforcement agencies with local cases.



Pictured left: Assistant Deputy Director Denise Allsberry, Department Technician Lisa Gros and Deputy Director Russ Marlan. Pictured right: Agents Aaron Hundt, Krista Greenwood and Marcus Robinson



Agent Vince Paladino, Deputy Director Russ Marlan and Supervisor Lori Lehmann



Saginaw Correctional Facility Lt. Dennis Wirley received the Good Government Symbol of Leadership Coin from Warden Tom Winn for his work to help recruit new employees.

Wirley is an integral part of recruitment efforts around the state for the Michigan Department of Corrections.

Corrections Quiz

Which MDOC facility celebrates its 30th anniversary this year?

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.

Have a question?

Send it to AskMDOC@michigan.gov

Have you ever wondered about the history behind a historic site or figure in corrections? Do you have questions about operations?

If so, send them in to AskMDOC@michigan.gov and your question, and the answer to it, could be included in a future edition of the Corrections Connection or on the Field Days Podcast.

Students invited to apply for Susan M. Hunter Scholarship

Applications will be accepted for the Susan M. Hunter Scholarship award starting Feb. 1. New scholarship recipients will be awarded \$1,500 and those renewing their scholarship application can receive \$750.

Children of current, retired or deceased full-time corrections employees are eligible to apply. Students must fill out an application online and include an essay describing career goals and letters of recommendation.

Applicants are expected to receive notification from the scholarship review committee in June. For more information, visit asca.net/susan-m-hunter-scholarship.

December Quiz Recap

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

Answer: Phil Monahan

You can read more about Monahan in the story below.

Congratulations to Ingham County Parole Office Secretary **Jennifer Kaminski** and G. Robert Cotton Correctional Facility Reentry Coordinator **Rick O'Connell** for being the first to answer the December Corrections Quiz. Great job!

Wrestler, Santa and Quartermaster

Known as "Nitro" in the ring, Phil Monahan is both a professional wrestler and professional Santa Claus.

We also can't forget about his role as quartermaster at Parnall Correctional Facility and more than two

decades of service with the Michigan Department of Corrections.

If Monahan wasn't already known for playing the good guy in the wrestling ring, he is certainly known for it in his everyday life.

Monahan spends his holidays dressed up as Santa Claus bringing joy to adults and children,



Phil Monahan

and also uses his talent as a wrestler to raise money for people in need.

He has supported a number of charities including the Special Olympics and Toys for Tots and has used his wrestling career to advocate against bullying in schools.

"That's how I was raised and brought up — to help people less fortunate," [Monahan said in 2017](#).

He is a role model who inspires others to be kind and giving to those in need.

You can hear more from Monahan on his wrestling and Santa Claus careers [in this episode of the Field Days Podcast](#).

Snapshots

A look at life around the MDOC



Delta College staff and Saginaw Correctional Facility staff met to discuss prisoner education at the 2nd Chance Prison Pell Initiative Board Meeting at Delta College.



MCM Staffing held a hiring event for the North American International Auto Show at the Detroit Metro Parole Office. The company hired 50 individuals.

Corrections in the News

[Wayne State signs medical supervisor contract with Michigan prison system](#) — Crains Detroit Business

[Wayne State University partners with Department of Corrections to provide health care for inmates](#) — WDIV TV Detroit

[Officials, law enforcement laud Detroit crime drops](#) — The Detroit News

[Freeland prison inmates seeing hope thanks to programming offered in part by Delta College](#) — WSGW Newsradio 790

[Hoffner recognizes staff as she leaves post as Lakeland warden](#) — Coldwater Daily Reporter

[Would your Body Shop hire a convicted felon?](#) — Body Shop Business

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

Seen on Twitter...



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Committed to Protect, Dedicated to Success

November New Hires

Boyd, Elizabeth	Administrative Manager, Corrections Central Office
Cowden, Dianna	Registered Nurse, Lakeland Correctional Facility
Dean, Melissa	Resident Care Aide, Woodland Center Correctional Facility
Emerson, Amy	Resident Care Aide, Woodland Center Correctional Facility
Gebert, Sarah	Library Technician, Parnall Correctional Facility
Green, Garrett	Corrections Qualified Mental Health Professional, Marquette Branch Prison
Hatch, Tracy	Corrections Qualified Mental Health Professional, Gus Harrison Correctional Facility
Hokanson, Gloria	Licensed Practical Nurse, G. Robert Cotton Correctional Facility
Howard, Kierra	Word Processing Assistant, Chrysler District Probation Office
Johnson, Patricia	Accounting Technician, Macomb Correctional Facility
Longo, Marc	Corrections Officer, Cooper Street Correctional Facility
Miracle, Hunter	General Office Assistant, Charles E. Egeler Reception and Guidance Center
Sanders, Abbey	General Office Assistant, Charles E. Egeler Reception and Guidance Center
Walters, Kerri	General Office Assistant, Lakeland Correctional Facility
Woodring, Veronica	Accountant, Michigan State Industries

November Retirements

Baker, Gerald	Corrections Officer, Charles E. Egeler Reception and Guidance Center
Belanger, Theodore	Corrections Officer, Alger Correctional Facility
Briggs, Eric	Corrections Officer, Gus Harrison Correctional Facility
Calloway, Cynthia	Field Agent, Detroit Reentry Center
Campbell, Todd	Corrections Officer, Detroit Reentry Center
Caskey, Suzanne	Accounting Technician, Northern Region Administration and Support
Champion, Rodney	Corrections Officer, Marquette Branch Prison
Colamarino, Richard	Corrections Officer, Central Michigan Correctional Facility
Davis, Robert	Corrections Officer, Central Michigan Correctional Facility
Duchane, Lawrence	Corrections Officer, Saginaw Correctional Facility
Emelander, David	Corrections Officer, Oaks Correctional Facility
Ferguson, Denard	Corrections Medical Officer, Woodland Center Correctional Facility
Garber, Todd	Corrections Officer, Oaks Correctional Facility
Gomery, Glenn	Field Manager, Kent County Parole Office
Grant, Terry	Corrections Officer, Michigan Reformatory
Grubbs, William	Corrections Transportation Officer, Gus Harrison Correctional Facility
Hamilton, Timothy	Corrections Officer, Cooper Street Correctional Facility
Heibeck, Mark	Corrections Officer, St. Louis Correctional Facility
Houle, Robert	Psychologist, Michigan Reformatory
Korpal, Glen	Corrections Transportation Officer, Central Michigan Correctional Facility
Langschwager, Laurie	School Teacher, Saginaw Correctional Facility
Larsen, James	Corrections Officer, Carson City Correctional Facility
Lemke, Lynda	Corrections Officer, Ionia Correctional Facility
Matuszak, Patricia	Psychologist, St. Louis Correctional Facility
Meier, Margaret	General Office Assistant, Richard A. Handlon Correctional Facility
Pincumbe, Walter	Corrections Officer, G. Robert Cotton Correctional Facility
Reed, John	Corrections Shift Supervisor, Bellamy Creek Correctional Facility
Rule, Jerome	Corrections Officer, Michigan Reformatory
Sattler, Dennis	Corrections Officer, Lakeland Correctional Facility
Smith, Walter	Corrections Shift Supervisor, Alger Correctional Facility
Woodard, John	Assistant Resident Unit Supervisor, Gus Harrison Correctional Facility