

GEO World

2nd QUARTER 2021

A GEO Publication for Employees and their Families.

GEO Continuum of Care®



Celebrates Annual Alumni Picnic



Executive Chairman's Letter

George C. Zoley, Executive Chairman of the Board

Our diversified operating divisions have continued to deliver strong operational performance amid a challenging environment, and our commitment to be the leading provider of enhanced in-custody rehabilitation programs and post-release support services has strengthened.

To the GEO Family,

During the first half of 2021, our diversified operating divisions continued to deliver strong operational performance amid what continues to be a challenging environment.

Our frontline employees continue to make sacrifices every day to provide high-quality services and humane and compassionate care to all those entrusted to our facilities and programs.

Working together with our government agency partners, we remain focused on implementing best practices to mitigate the impact of the ongoing and evolving COVID-19 global pandemic.

We are proud of our collective accomplishments, and we continue to be vigilant to ensure the health and safety of those entrusted to our care and our employees.

Despite the recent challenges we have faced together, our daily work continues. In fact, our commitment to be the leading provider of enhanced in-custody rehabilitation programs and post-release support services has only been strengthened over the past year and a half.

We continue to draw inspiration from the many success stories of our GEO Continuum of Care® (CoC) program participants.

The impressive rehabilitation and recidivism reduction statistics that our award-winning CoC program has yielded since launching in 2015 only tells one element of its success.

It is the lives these programs and services have helped and the second chances that so many of our CoC participants have been afforded that validate the success of our collective efforts.

In late June of this year, former CoC participants from around the country met in South Florida for an Annual CoC Alumni Picnic.

Their amazing success stories serve as a powerful reminder of the importance of our commitment to have a positive impact in the lives of those entrusted to us through enhanced rehabilitation and reentry programs.

Our CoC program is GEO's contribution to criminal justice reform as we continue to strive to draw national attention to the many still incarcerated in need of a more structured and comprehensive approach to rehabilitation.

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GEO Continuum of Care® Celebrates Annual Alumni Picnic

“Good Morning Family!” shouted Arthur Townes, GEO Alumni member and National Coordinator, to a sea of blue Alumni t-shirts cheering him on as he welcomed graduates from across the United States to celebrate success and fellowship at the GEO Alumni Picnic.

The Alumni Picnic was cancelled last year due to the COVID-19 pandemic; however, instead of concentrating on setbacks in 2020, this group of men and women pushed forward and continued to lift each other and their community.

GEO Alumni stayed connected during the pandemic through virtual meetings and calls. On June 26, 2021, the group was overjoyed to finally be together in person. The day began with an encouraging presentation from GEO Care President, Ann Schlarb, along with GEO Secure Services President, James Black.



The South Florida sun shined down upon staff, alumni, community partners, and families as they turned up the music and fired up the grill. GEO Alumni's philosophy of “One Love” was clearly on display as individuals from Arizona, Georgia, Florida, Pennsylvania, and Virginia traveled thousands of miles to cheer each other on. The crowd enjoyed a heartfelt presentation from Rob Wallace, CEO and Co-Founder of Power 52 Energy Solutions, along with spoken word and musical performances from GEO Alumni.

GEO leadership also acknowledged Alumni achievement throughout the day. GEO Game Changer Awards were presented to alumni

members who are dedicated to changing behavior and changing lives. Miguel Lopez, a graduate from South Bay Correctional and Rehabilitation Facility was joined by his family and alumni members to accept his award. Lopez declared, “We are here, we are Family. One Love my brothers and sisters. I will break the generational curse of incarceration; I am a success and will continue to be a success. We all can do it.”

Deynia Edwards, a graduate of Delaney Hall was also presented with the GEO Continuum of Care® Game Changer Award for her constant contribution to post-release support services within her New Jersey community. Deynia, now CEO of Bellavirago, reflected on her journey and how Alumni members inspired her success.



Three post-release services partners were recognized and were provided a donation through The GEO Group Foundation. All three organizations are led by men who were formerly incarcerated and are now partnering with GEO to give back to the community.

The three organizations were Alpha and Omega, Dignity Speaks, and Re-Entry One. Alpha and Omega is a social services organization comprised of returning citizens that helps other men in need. The organization was founded by Peter Noel, who was housed at South Bay Correctional and Rehabilitation Facility. The mission of the organization is to lower recidivism through in-reach (in-prison outreach), education, post-release services, transitional housing, employment, and purposeful living.

Dignity Speaks is a non-profit founded by Elmo Golden, a CoC alumnus and former inmate at the South Bay Correctional and Rehabilitation Facility. Dignity Speaks makes positive changes in communities through faith and character-based mentorship. Re-Entry One, also founded by a former inmate at the South Bay Correctional and Rehabilitation Facility, is an organization dedicated to reducing Florida's recidivism rates by providing effective reentry programs and services to returning citizens through its vision "to inspire a life of change and success in Florida's returning citizens population through ambitious transition/reentry programs and services."

At the picnic, participants had an opportunity to visit with GEO Community partners and vendors. Ashland University's Vice President of Correctional Education and Innovation, Todd Marshall, along with Associate State Director, Katy Graddy, attended the picnic and were awarded with the Continuum of Care® Game Changer Award. GEO partnered with Ashland University in 2019 to offer life-changing pre-release education through fully funded associate's and bachelor's degrees.

The Reentry Center of Riviera Beach was also on hand to support alumni members and family. Oswald Newbold, Alumni Member and Case manager at the Reentry Center of Riviera Beach, introduced center Director, Orie Bullard, and Case manager, Ashley Reid, to participants. Director Bullard urged attendees to visit the reentry center. "The mission of the Reentry Center is to provide non-traditional, comprehensive reentry support services to increase public safety, alleviate recidivism, and create productive citizens. We are here to help and are thankful to be a part of this great event!"

The day closed with a short drive for out-of-state graduates to experience their first trip to the beach. It was a day filled with love, friends, and fellowship. We are looking forward to next year's success stories and even more memories.



Telemedicine: Doctors do make House Calls!

Written By **Susan Napolitano, Corporate Human Resources**

Have you found yourself spending more time than ever at home since the pandemic began? We all seem to have adopted a new appreciation for various forms of technology, and rightly so since it has been placed front and center with almost all the services we need daily. Think back to one year ago—did you ever imagine having your groceries delivered, or movie streaming on your TV/PC/Tablet/Phone? Virtual meetings now take place in the office and at home with family and friends. Health care has also embraced technology with the growing popularity of telemedicine. Due to the pandemic, telemedicine exploded this past year, allowing patients to meet with their physicians remotely via telephone or video.

One study, published in JAMA Network Open, evaluated how health services changed during the pandemic in 2020. The study found that use of in-person medical services dropped by 23% in March and 52% in April, and telemedicine services grew by more than 1,000% in March and more than 4,000% in April! This holds true for GEO Employees enrolled in Blue Cross Blue Shield Plans who had access to Teladoc.

GEO employees have grown more comfortable connecting virtually for their medical needs. Teladoc showed the highest utilization during the months of April and July and overall our participation for General Medicine for calendar year 2020 was 22.3%; Dermatology was 6.6% and Behavioral Health visits accounted for 18.6%. Last year, our utilization was less than 8%. Texas and Florida top the charts with 23% utilization, followed by Arizona at 11%, California at 8% and Pennsylvania at 7%.

Telemedicine offers many convenient services that can make your life easier! Here are some of the benefits to using telemedicine:

- **Convenience:** Teladoc is available to all Blue Cross Blue Shield medical plan participants at no extra cost and provides board-certified, licensed physicians in your state, 24-hours a day, 365-days a year. No need to leave your home or office. A doctor will diagnose your non-emergency symptoms and provide treatment, which may include prescriptions, through your phone, video or mobile app.

South Louisiana IPC Partners with the National Guard to Host Vaccination Clinic

Written By **Deborah Lucas-Stevens, South Louisiana ICE Processing Center**



On Wednesday June 16, 2021, the South Louisiana ICE Processing Center (SLIPC) hosted a COVID-19 vaccination clinic in partnership with the National Guard. At SLIPC, every precaution is taken daily to reduce the risk of COVID-19, but there is always the possible risk of exposure. The clinic ran smoothly, and over seven hundred individuals were given the opportunity to receive the vaccine. Participation was voluntary, and while many had already received their vaccination shot, in the end, two hundred and seventy-six individuals accepted the COVID-19 vaccine. This is just one small step in the hopes of helping to prevent the spread for this awful disease. We give a special “thank you” to the men and women of the National Guard for their support and assistance in making this vaccination clinic a success.

- **Distance:** For employees who live in more remote areas that are far from the nearest medical facility, telemedicine provides a way to meet with a doctor within a matter of minutes.
- **Cost:** By receiving care through Teladoc, your co-pay is waived for the duration of the pandemic compared to urgent care or emergency room visits. Note: If you are enrolled on a High Deductible Plan, you must satisfy your deductible before the no-cost waiver is applied. However, the Teladoc fees you will pay will most likely be less than in-office visits. A general medical visit is \$55; Dermatology visit is \$85, Initial Psychiatrist visit is \$200; ongoing Psychiatrist visits are \$95 and Psychologist or Clinical Social Worker visits are \$85.
- **Range of Care:** Treatment for many non-emergency medical conditions, including cold and flu symptoms, respiratory infections, bronchitis, allergies, sinus problems, ear infections, urinary tract infections, skin problems and more can all be diagnosed and treated virtually!
- **Dermatology:** Log in to your Teladoc account, upload images of your skin issue, choose your pharmacy, and view your results online within two days. Co-pay waived until further notice. No more waiting two weeks for an appointment!
- **Behavioral Health:** As you may know, you can also access behavioral health counseling with Teladoc. The co-pay is also waived until further notice, which allows you and family members to meet with a licensed therapist, psychiatrist, or psychologist seven days a week.

Kaiser Colorado/California Participants: We haven't forgotten you! NurseLine offers you free access to get professional advice on minor emergency care 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

CIGNA Preventive Plus Plan Participants: You are able to access MDLive, which provides 24-hour physician advice for minor emergencies for a \$0 co-payment until further notice.

No matter which plan you are on, the first step in accessing care is to register yourself for an account:

BCBS Teladoc: www.Teladoc.com or call 800-Teladoc (835-2362)

Cigna (Allegiance) MDLive: www.mdlive.com/allegiance or call 877-753-7992

Kaiser Nurseline: www.KP.org or call 800-281-1059.

Safe, easy, affordable care is possible. GEO employees and their families have access to care at the click of a button. Register yourself for a telemedicine account today!



Staff Appreciation

Written By **Rebecca Barnett,**
Mesa Verde ICE Processing Center

National Correctional Officers and Employees Appreciation Week (May 5-11), is our opportunity to thank our team here at the Mesa Verde ICE Processing Center. It is a privilege to be part of the team here at Mesa Verde, where we enjoy coming to work.

This week of events is only a small token of our appreciation for all of the hard work of our staff. We had one of our best appreciation weeks with pizza, tacos, BBQ, pancakes, goodie bags, Olive Garden meals, coffee, and pastries. The best part of this week was witnessing the pride and camaraderie here at the center. You are appreciated every day for your continued hard work and personal pride in a job well done. A special thanks to the events committee for putting it all together.

Eagle Pass Detention Facility Provides Breakfast for Local Emergency Operations Center

Written By **Monica Reynaga,** Eagle Pass Detention Facility

The local Emergency Operations Center (EOC) has been working hard keeping the community safe and informed throughout this pandemic. The Eagle Pass Detention Facility wanted to express their gratitude by providing breakfast to them, a small token of appreciation which was greatly appreciated by the EOC staff.



Giving back to the Community

Written By **Jason McPherson, New Castle Correctional Facility**

Blessing those that are less fortunate is an honorable thing to do. Many of us forget that there are people across the nation who go to bed hungry and cold every night. Simple gifts can make a significant difference in someone's life. Giving to charities and community organizations is integral to the PLUS program at New Castle Correctional Facility (NCCF).

In May, 2021, the New Castle Correctional Facility was able to conduct a PLUS food sale, which marked the first one since February, 2020. The PLUS food sale was put together using Papa John's Pizza. The turnout for this event exceeded all expectations by selling around 7,800 items. These enormous numbers enabled New Castle Correctional Facility to donate to two charitable organizations in the area. Being able to enjoy great food while giving back to the community is a win/win scenario for New Castle Correctional Facility.

Wheeler Mission is an organization that was selected to receive a \$5,000 donation from New Castle Correctional Facility's PLUS Program to help fight hunger and homelessness, and to support their "Building for Change" campaign to expand the shelter. Wheeler Mission provides help, hope, and healing to surrounding counties that are in the midst of a homelessness crisis, helping women and children find safety, shelter, and stability. Women and children are the fastest-growing segment of the homeless population. Every night, Wheeler Mission serves increasing numbers of women and children.



Second Harvest Food Bank was the second organization selected to receive a \$5,000 donation from New Castle Correctional Facility PLUS Program to help support their efforts fighting hunger in the area. The mission of Second Harvest Food Bank is to provide help by feeding the hungry and by addressing the causes of food insecurity, while empowering individuals toward self-sufficiency. One in seven Americans struggle to get enough to eat. In fact, hunger or food insecurity exists in virtually every community in the United States. In East Central Indiana, hunger is a reality for over 74,000 people. Counties in East Central Indiana that Second Harvest Food Bank works with include Blackford, Delaware, Grant, Henry, Jay, Madison, Randolph, and Wabash.

These two generous donations are a remarkable demonstration of giving back to the community. This generosity is a core value of the PLUS program and teaches PLUS participants "The Golden Rule."



Correctional Workers Week: Signing of the Proclamation

Written By **Yolanda Gaines, LaSalle ICE Processing Center**

Jena, La. Mayor LaDawn Edwards signed a proclamation on May 4, 2021, declaring the first week of May as "National Correctional Workers Week." Employees from the LaSalle ICE Processing Center and Town of Jena were present for the signing. Mayor Edwards commended employees at the LaSalle ICE Processing Center for their dedication and hard work to ensure the safety of those in their care and the community.

Kingman On Target to Restore Wheelchair #15,000 in 2021

Written By **Shannon Hilton, Kingman Correctional and Rehabilitation Facility**



Since late 2015, GEO's Kingman Correctional and Rehabilitation Facility has enjoyed a great partnership with Joni and Friends, a service organization for people with disabilities.

The Wheels for the World program at Joni and Friends has 400+ volunteers in America who collect used wheelchairs that could end up in landfills. Instead, the wheelchairs are delivered to one of thirteen correctional facilities where inmates restore the wheelchairs to like-new condition.

Kingman CRF's Cerbat Unit employs approximately twenty-five inmates in its wheelchair restoration shop. The inmates take great pride in producing exceptional wheelchairs that will improve the quality of life for other human beings. They also repair walkers, crutches, and canes.

Inmates assigned to the restoration program typically express joy in giving back to mankind by helping those who are less fortunate. As of June 2021, Kingman inmates have restored over 14,000 wheelchairs.

Restored wheelchairs and other mobility equipment are eventually loaded by the inmates into ocean freight containers for shipment to under-developed countries. Upon arrival to other countries, missionaries and country representatives coordinate efforts to give the wheelchairs and other mobility equipment to people in need. Each recipient is also provided a bible and other religious materials.

Paul Dorthalina, Director of Wheels for the World, works closely with the Kingman operation and the other twelve correctional facilities that restore wheelchairs. Mr. Dorthalina offered the following comment about the partnership between Kingman CRF and Joni and Friends: "We appreciate the working relationship we have with GEO and Kingman CRF. The Wheels for the World program run by Ms. Smith (Program Coordinator) is on target to restore their 15,000th wheelchair by the end of 2021!"

The unique partnership between GEO's Kingman CRF and Joni and Friends is helping to improve the lives of thousands of people and families living with disabilities around the world.

HTCF – First GEO Facility Accredited for ACA 5th Edition Standards

Written By **Angela Reaves, Heritage Trail Correctional Facility**



Heritage Trail Correctional Facility (HTCF) recently completed their American Correctional Association (ACA) Accreditation using the new 5th Edition Standards. We were the first GEO facility to go through this process using the new standards. The audit was very successful with 100% compliance with all mandatory standards and a virtual 100% compliance rating on non-mandatory standards. There were two non-mandatory standards found non-compliant that pertained to the age and size of the physical plant, requiring a request for waiver of these two standards which we expect to be granted. HTCF is extremely proud of the professionalism the staff exhibited during our audit and the hard work they put in preparing the facility. The work that we do here at our facility is to be commended, and this accreditation demonstrates it. There is good work being done here, and the deep level of commitment our staff show everyday does not go unnoticed.

In Memoriam

Lea County Correctional Facility remembers valued employees and friends who passed away this year and pays tribute to the hard work and dedication of these employees and their families.

Written By **Dan Hutchison, Lea County Correctional Facility**



Caroline Heavington
Inmate records manager
23-year employee

When I started at LCCF in January 2001, Carolyn was one of the first people I remember approaching me and welcoming me to the facility. We became friends and had many good times together. I would often tell her she was my 'adopted mom'. Carolyn sometimes had a gruff exterior but that was only to hide how really caring, big-hearted, and sentimental she was. Carolyn sold Avon and donated all her profits to Relay for Life. She was also one of the primary organizers for facility fundraisers for Relay for Life and other fundraisers for fellow employees facing various hardships.

- *Susan Hutchison, Business Manager*



Arthur Sosa
Corrections Officer
23-year employee

I worked with Arthur his entire career. He held numerous positions in the security department over the last twenty-three years. Arthur was very knowledgeable and was always ready to help out and train new officers.

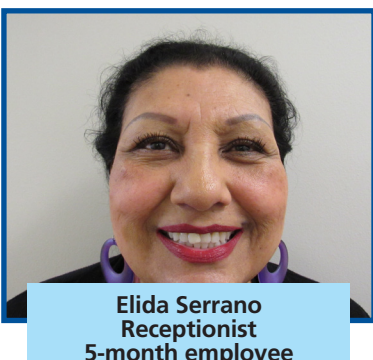
- *Melanie Serrvalle-Cox, Correctional Officer*



Kiwanis Moore
Classification Director
19-year employee

Her family was her life! And we at LCCF were as much her family as her own kids and grandkids. I remember one time in particular she told me how much she loved her family here. My fiancé had just passed away right before Christmas. At the time, Kiwanis was working a second job at K-Mart. I had told her that he and I had a layaway there for the kids Christmas presents that was in his name. Policy was that layaways could only be paid out by the person whose name it was under. She talked to the manager and got it approved for me to be able to pay it out so that the kids could get their Christmas presents. When I got there, she was in the layaway department, with the receipt already printed, and completely paid out by her and another LCCF co-worker.

- *Pia Dillard, Records Manager*



Elida Serrano
Receptionist
5-month employee

I worked closely with Elida. She was a sweet and loving lady. She was always calm, patient, and loved to talk about anything and everything. She could keep a conversation going for hours if you let her.

- *Laura Baeza, Accounts Clerk*

Kingman CRF Braille Program Celebrates Five Years of Service

Written By **Lisa Medley, Kingman Correctional and Rehabilitation Facility**



In 2016, the Kingman Correctional and Rehabilitation Facility (KCRF) partnered with the Arizona Foundation for Blind Children (AFBC) to create a braille program at the Huachuca Unit. Five inmates were certified in the first year of the program. Gradually, the number of inmates certified in braille continued to increase, and as of 2021, we have twenty-two inmates who have received their Literary Braille Certification from the Library of Congress.

AFBC has been a wonderful partner for the braille program. AFBC has provided computers, embossers, and even a closed network system that allows braille assignments to be issued and retrieved more efficiently. Additionally, since the inception of the braille program, four certified inmates have been released into the community and hired by the AFBC as contract braille transcribers.

Participants in the braille program complete work on textbooks, tactile graphics, and math. A special program called "braille on demand" was created

which allows AFBC to send assignments to the braille instructor for participants to complete within 48 hours. The program has become so popular that AFBC is receiving requests for Kingman's work from braille foundations all over America!

This year, the Arizona Department of Corrections, Rehabilitation and Reentry (ADCRR) tasked the Kingman braille participants with embossing the entire set of ADCRR policies for each facility in the state. Total production included 550 volumes and 72,530 pages of policy in braille.

As the braille program celebrates five years of service, we are proud to say we have transcribed over 600,000 braille pages and embossed over 80,000 pages. In 2021, we have transcribed 70 books, embossed 95 books, and completed 386 "braille on demand" work orders.

Looking ahead, the AFBC and Kingman CRF are planning to continue the expansion of the braille program in order to serve more of the visually impaired throughout America.

Lawton Gets Cooking for Correctional Workers Appreciation Week

Written By **Amanda Lien, Lawton Correctional and Rehabilitation Facility**

Lawton Correctional and Rehabilitation Facility offers Culinary Arts for residents who want to learn how to prepare, cook and serve food. During Correctional Workers Appreciation Week on May 10, 2021, through May 14, 2021, our facility administrators and the Culinary Arts instructor came in early to make burritos for breakfast one morning and grilled steaks during lunch on Friday. A taste test for the best dessert added to the fun. While our Culinary Arts program uses planned recipes and evidence-based practices in food preparation for our participants, corrections week allowed our facility administrators to practice their skills in the kitchen. It allowed our facility to give back to all the hard-working staff members who keep the facility running safely and efficiently.



The Story of the Good Deeds by SACM Continues

Written By **Tshifhiwa Given Mukwevho, South African Custodial Management**

South African Custodial Management (SACM), in Louis Trichardt, and the Kutama Sinthumule Correctional Centre came together for a day-long Sixteenth Annual Charitable Golf Day event which was held at the Soutpansberg Golf Club on May 28, 2021.

The event drew players from as far and wide as Mpumalanga, Gauteng, Mookgophong and Polokwane. A full field of eighteen teams, comprising of seventy-two players, competed in the Four Ball Alliance.

Players were welcomed during registration with goodie bags from SACM. There was heightened excitement and enjoyment during the teeing off and all day during the game. At the end of the day's competition, each player received a prize during a glittering ceremony.



The Mapula Enterprises winning team comprised of (from left to right) Mr. James Shirinda, Mr. Andre van Rooyen, Mr. George Mahlaule, Mr. Dumisani Nzimande, and Mr. Emmanuel Runyowa.

During the ceremony, Mr. Ryno Gerber, the golf club's captain, and the President of the Club, Mr. Inus Steyn welcomed all golfers who had participated in the game and added that they appreciated their presence at the club.

Kutama Sinthumule Correctional Centre's Director, Mr. Dumisani Nzimande, thanked the golf club management and all the teams that graced the event, adding that without their participation there was not going to be a charity golf day. He also thanked all the sponsors who had made the Charity Golf Day a huge success during challenging circumstances.

Mr. Nzimande said he was happy that the event had run smoothly. He mentioned that all the teams and players turned out in numbers and 100% participation was achieved.

All teams were considered "winners" by virtue of the fact that they participated in the charity golf day to raise funds for charitable organizations. There were, however, two teams who played exceptionally well, namely Mapula Enterprises with 106 points and, in second place, Kensani Corrections Management (KCM) with 101 points.

The main aim of the charity golf day is to generate revenue in order to give back to the communities within the Vhembe district to uplift the living standards of the most vulnerable communities.

ANZAC Day Commemorations in Australia

Written By **Dr. Leanne Habeeb, Fulham Correctional Centre**





Johan Basson from SACM Woodmead office, checks the coast before hitting the ball.



KSCC's Prison Director, Mr. Dumisani Nzimande, hits the ball during tee-off at the Sixteenth Annual Charitable Golf Day event.

Later in 2015, much-needed help was extended to the Songozwi Victim Empowerment Programme (SVEP) when they received a newly renovated and furnished building with beds, bedding and kitchen furniture, plus office equipment which included swivel chairs, desks, a lounge suite, a room divider, dinner sets and fans.

Additionally, another borehole water system, which included an equipped borehole and a water tank with taps, was erected for Vutlhari Stimulation and Disability Centre in Mamaila village near Masakona.

This year at least R126,000 was raised before all expenses were deducted. After all the costs were settled, funds raised came to R90,796.

In prior years, the proceeds from the Charity Golf Day impacted the lives of many people in different needy communities. In 2014, SACM used at least R70,000 to buy a heavy-duty generator and had it installed at the Takalani Children's Home in Siloam, paid for the operators' training fee, enhanced the children's play field, and bought soccer nets and groceries for the centre.

In 2015, a well-equipped borehole water system was donated to Waterval Pre-school, bringing water relief to over 100 children. At the time, the pre-school had been without water since it was established some twenty-one years before. SACM utilised around R30,000 for the water project at the pre-school.

These examples are only a slice from the many good charitable deeds that the institution has been able to do with the proceeds from the annual Charitable Golf Day event. The story of good deeds by SACM continues.



April 25, 2021, marks ANZAC Day – an important occasion in Australia and New Zealand, which commemorates the anniversary of the first major military action fought by forces from these countries in World War I.

Staff and prisoners at Fulham Correctional Centre attended an ANZAC Day Service in line with the Centre's COVID Safe Plan.

Indigenous inmates participated in a Welcome to Country and played the didgeridoo and clap

sticks. General Manager, Natalie Greenfield, and a special guest from East Sale RAAF Base delivered moving addresses to the group.

Traditional elements of an ANZAC day service were included, such as the playing of the Last Post and a minute's silence. The Australian and New Zealand flags were raised side-by-side with both national anthems played. Official speakers and inmate representatives laid wreathes of flowers, which were subsequently moved to a local cenotaph in the community.



New Graduates of Inside Out Program

Written By **Dr. Marietta Martinovic, Ravenhall Correctional Centre**

Eleven inmates and fourteen students from the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) University graduated from the Inside Out program at Ravenhall Correctional Centre in a special ceremony held on May 19, 2021.

The program lasts a semester and sees "insiders" and "outsiders" meet each week at the Centre to study a subject called Comparative Criminal Justice Systems. Both cohorts study as equals to learn about different criminal justice systems around the world. They write reflection papers, an essay, and complete a presentation to university standards.

The vast majority of the insider students have not finished high school, yet this program gives them the confidence to believe that "there is more to me than my offending."

The benefits to the outside students can be equally powerful. After the program, they say things like, "all my life I've wanted to enforce the law. Now, I actually want to prevent people going into the criminal justice system. I want to stop the cycle of intergenerational offending and incarceration."

The purpose of this program is to make re-offending less likely. A way to do that is not just through providing opportunities and building the

skills and confidence of the inside students, but by opening the eyes of the outside students, so that when those students graduate they will see the human behind the crime and the human side of incarceration.

When they become a police officer, or a corrections officer, or a court clerk, they will have more empathy and show more humanity, so that the person they are dealing with is less likely to actually re-engage back in crime. In doing so, we're not just creating a safer society, but a better one.

Inside Out started in 2015 and is running in five Victorian prisons. Since beginning at the Ravenhall Correctional Centre in 2018, forty-two inside students and fifty-six outside students have completed the program. Many inside students have gone on to further studies.

In addition, five RMIT students and three inmates also graduated from the 'Change on the Inside' Think Tank.

Participants met fortnightly to discuss the incarceration experience and the aspects of it that do and do not work well, and developed practical ways to make improvements to the incarceration and reintegration experience.

Tea time for a good cause

Written By **Lyndell Coutts, Junee Correctional Centre**

Staff at Junee Correctional Centre raised more than \$2,200 to support cancer prevention initiatives as part of the Cancer Council's annual *Australia's Biggest Morning Tea* event on May 27, 2021.

Thousands of baked goods were available for purchase by Centre staff, including hundreds of items cooked in the new dormitory bakery with the assistance of the fifteen inmates.

To ensure everyone working different shifts could participate, the items were presented at special morning and afternoon teas hosted in the staff dining room.

Bakery Overseer, Lori-Ann Ford has been managing the bakery since 2020 and jumped at the opportunity to support the annual fundraiser, particularly after experiencing first-hand a friend's struggle with cancer.

Changing of the Guard at Junee Correctional Centre

Written By **Lyndell Coutts, Junee Correctional Centre**

GEO Australia has appointed a new General Manager at Junee Correctional Centre following the retirement of Scott Brideoake from a decades-long career in the corrections industry.

Mr. Brideoake joined GEO Australia in June 2015 to oversee Junee Correctional Centre following twenty-six years in various roles at Corrective Services New South Wales (CSNSW). These included Manager of Security and Governor's positions, such as CSNSW Hostage Response Group Commander and Specialised Training Unit Manager.

GEO Australia Managing Director, Pieter Bezuidenhout recognised Mr. Brideoake as an exemplary leader through some significantly challenging times.

"Scott's legacy is his leadership expertise and the great respect he has engendered among all of his colleagues," Mr. Bezuidenhout said. "We wish him all the very best in his retirement."

In addition to the regular complexities of running a safe and secure centre, Mr. Brideoake led staff through a major expansion project, which included a new administration complex, 480-bed maximum security wing and a women's remand unit.

He also successfully managed staff, inmates, and visitors during one of the worst periods of



Former Junee Correctional Centre General Manager Scott Brideoake (L) with new General Manager Richard Heycock.

COVID-19 in NSW, including establishing an inmate quarantine facility within the Centre.

Mr. Brideoake said: "I will look back on what was an incredible opportunity in my corrections career and want to acknowledge the hard working and dedicated staff of the Junee Correctional Centre who assisted in making my job easier."

Former Governor of Cessnock Correctional Centre, Richard Heycock, was appointed as the new General Manager at Junee. He brings to the role more than twelve years of experience with CSNSW, including as General Manager and Governor of Hunter Correctional Centre.

"I feel privileged to begin my new role as General Manager at the Junee Correctional Centre and appreciate that some very high standards have been set by my predecessor," Mr. Heycock said.

"I look forward to the challenges ahead and to working with the staff, our partners, and the broader local community to maintain the level of excellence achieved in the operations of the Centre, and to support inmates with their rehabilitation and reintegration goals."

"A very dear friend of mine battled with cancer for the last few years," Ms. Ford said. "It's a terrible thing to have to watch someone you love fight so hard to keep going and be so strong for her family and friends."

She said staff and inmates were proud to be supporting the Cancer Council in its life-saving cancer research, prevention, advocacy, and support programs for people affected by cancer.



New Activities Hub Offers Spiritual and Cultural Connections

Written By **Dr. Leanne Habeeb, Fulham Correctional Centre**



Entrance to Cultural Centre.



Aboriginal Liaison Officer, Christopher Maynard in the new outdoor reflection space.



Inmates attending a program with Clinician Benjamin Kelly.

Despite the impact of COVID-19, Fulham Correctional Centre has been increasing the use of its new Culture Hub to include a range of programs and activities with a spiritual and cultural connection for staff and inmates.

With a focus on diversity and inclusion, the Hub is being developed as a space where everyone is welcome, where they can feel safe to be who they are, and where they can attend activities that interest them.

The Hub opened in November 2020, with its use being guided by a dedicated working group. This group includes key staff and other stakeholders committed to learning from what's working well at other places, and further developing the space and schedule in line with the Hub's purpose and priorities.

Just as the culture hubs at our other Australian Correctional Centres inspired the design of the new building, we are grateful to our colleagues for ongoing conversations that continue to inform our thinking about how to use this new space.

We also work collaboratively across departments to use the Hub's many fantastic spaces for a wide range of services, programs, and activities for inmates and staff. During the pandemic, our two large Halls have enabled Fulham to continue service delivery and meet targets. The range of group programs delivered during current COVID-19 population density restrictions, include: Educational, Therapeutic, Life Skills, Wellbeing, Art, The Torch, Faith/Culture based programs, and Staff training programs.

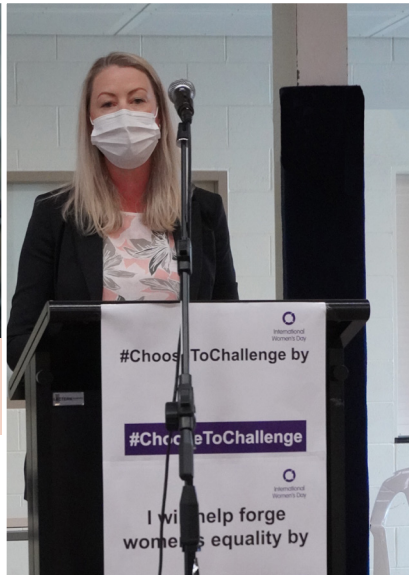
In February 2021, attendance at programs and activities in the Hub totaled more than 1,000 people. We look forward to introducing significant cultural events in COVID-19 safe formats to these larger spaces.

International Women's Day

Written By **Lyndell Coutts, GEO Group Australia**



*Fulham's Training Specialist,
Jenna O'Connor*



*Dr. Sarah Gray addressing
staff at Ravenhall
Correctional Centre*



*Ravenhall's Manager of Clinical
Intervention, Allana Osborne*

Staff across GEO's Australian Correctional Centres celebrated International Women's Day (IWD), on March 8, 2021, under this year's theme 'Choose to Challenge' and call out gender bias and inequality.

A range of activities were held throughout the week to celebrate female leadership in corrections and those women who are helping to forge a gender equal world.

GEO Australia's National Director of Rehabilitation and Reintegration, Dr. Sarah Gray, gave a poignant speech at Ravenhall Correctional Centre — where 50 percent of its workforce are women — about her upbringing and her role as a female leader in a traditionally male-dominated industry. A video compilation of staff who 'choose to challenge' inequality was shared, followed by a special IWD lunch.

Manager of Clinical Intervention, Allana Osborne, 30, is a registered forensic psychologist who joined GEO Australia at Ravenhall in 2017 as a Senior Clinician and was promoted in November 2020 to her current role. She leads a clinical team of 50 staff members and oversees the Centre's Prisoner Peer program.

Ms. Osborne said: "Good female leaders are those who demonstrate belief in themselves and others, are self-aware, are strong and tenacious,

but also empathetic. They are also brave enough to take risks, including challenging gender bias. The best female leaders equally embrace gender-based traits, such as vulnerability and empathy, which can be perceived as 'weak'

in the workplace, particularly in an industry like corrections."

At Fulham Correctional Centre, staff wore purple ribbons to mark the event and female Senior Leadership Team members addressed female staff on their experiences of leadership, with a focus on COVID-19. General Manager Natalie Greenfield was also a guest speaker at the local Rotary Club, where she was recognised as an important local female leader.

Staff Training Specialist Jenna O'Connor, 35, began her career with GEO Australia as a Correctional Officer. She is one of 390 staff at Fulham of which 44 percent are female.

Ms. O'Connor said she has been inspired by many female leaders throughout her life — each with skills and qualities she nurtures in herself to be the type of leader she would like to be. "In an industry like Corrections, women can contribute so many valuable skills and positive change, and it's inspiring to see the culture changing for the better," she said.

ISAP Helps Partners Overcome Pandemic Challenges By Serving the Community

Written By **Amber McMahon, ISAP- Fort Myers and New Orleans**

ISAP has built a strong network of community organizations nationwide that help us serve our program participants. During the pandemic, many of the non-profit organizations/ non-governmental organizations that we partner with faced significant challenges in serving the community. As ISAP case specialists worked diligently to connect participants with the increasingly limited community resources available, many ended up assisting our community partners to overcome their challenges in providing services as well.

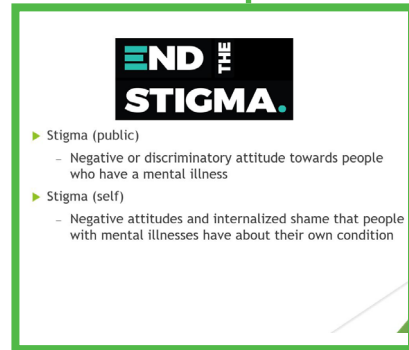


New Orleans ISAP has an established connection with a local non-profit organization that had a generous amount of food donations that they were unable to provide to the community. Due to the pandemic, their in-person services were limited, and we were able to assist them with getting twenty boxes of food into the community. New Orleans Program Manager, Andrea Pham worked with the organization to coordinate a donation event at the ISAP office, where individually packed boxes were distributed to ISAP participants in need. Andrea commented, "It was a heartwarming experience being able to provide food donations alongside

our community partner. The ISAP staff enjoyed watching participants walk out of the office with food and smiles." The organization expressed how grateful they were for this help and the true partnership that they have with our office.

Fort Myers ISAP found a unique way to support a local community partner who was struggling with limited services as well. ISAP consistently refers our Fort Myers participants to a local non-profit for clothing assistance, but due to the pandemic, their pick-up location has been closed. ISAP staff were able to coordinate picking up donations for our participants from this organization to distribute at our office. Through this arrangement, Fort Myers ISAP has helped many participants, from mothers outfitting their newborn babies with everything they need, to clothing for men who arrive in the U.S. with nothing but what they are wearing. Fort Myers ISAP Senior Case Specialist Victor Matos remarks, "It's encouraging to get a phone call from a participant thanking you for a referral that helped them in a time of need. The encouragement is even greater when we can personally see the participant's joy while receiving the help they need."

Our community partners have faced unprecedented difficulties this last year, and our program has been able to help many organizations accomplish their mission despite those challenges. It is our true connections with these organizations, and great work by the Case Specialists working to help their participants, that have enabled us to create these new paths to service this year.



Mental Health Awareness Month

Luzerne County RSC Written By Karen Collins, GEO Care Communications

On May 18, 2021, staff at the Luzerne County Reentry Services Center (RSC) attended a presentation centered around Mental Health Awareness month. The month of May is chosen as the month to celebrate and educate others on the impact mental health disorders have on the community. More importantly, it spreads awareness about the stigmas attached to mental health disorders and the different kinds of support people suffering from these disorders rely on. Although we do not provide direct mental health care, it is important to understand the effect mental health disorders can have on a person.

Assistant Case Managers, Pedro Vargas and Patricia Shenefield, along with Substance Use Therapist, Kevin Bzdyk, prepared the presentation to be shared with all staff at the facility. In the presentation, topics such as the different types of mental health disorders, symptoms, treatment options, and the stigma against those who have been diagnosed with mental health disorders were discussed. Statistics on mental health illness and warning signs of suicide were also reviewed. The effects of suicide affect the community as a whole which makes it important that we become better informed to help our participants receive the appropriate services.

Ms. Shenefield and Mr. Vargas placed bulletin boards throughout the facility that listed local mental health treatment providers. The stigma towards mental health can cause a person diagnosed with an illness to be less likely to reach out for help. Having contact information available for these service providers can help more people receive the treatment they need. We must meet the client where they are in their lives. Practicing empathy and understanding can help wash away the stigma towards people who have been diagnosed with a mental health disorder.

Santa Ana DRC Written By Yadira De Santiago, Santa Ana DRC

In our careers, we commit to serving each day, and the work we do can have an impact on our mental health if we don't take the necessary steps and inform ourselves on how to care for it. Mental health does not only impact ourselves but those around us. Therefore, it is important that our staff are well informed of the different resources available in our communities and the different things they could do to care for their mental health.

The facility staff were welcomed to a full month of mental health awareness topics, with a kick-off week that was all dedicated to our staff. We had tables set up with daily themes and staff

quickly made their way to the tables to grab goodies. Some of the daily themes had to do with nutrition, wellness, focusing on de-stressing, and self-care. Staff were given resources and information about Mental Health, and live resources such as CALHope.org, and the GEO Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

During our weekly staffing meetings, we had ice breakers that targeted mindfulness. We also had a Green Day Friday, and a "Paint Date," allowing staff to de-stress a bit from the daily tasks and clear up their mind by focusing on something different and sharing all these new techniques with their loved

ones and the population we serve.

Taking a few steps back and making it all about the staff by letting them know how much they are appreciated and hosting a month long of different activities was an amazing experience. Staff learned a lot, and most importantly, as a team we learned that we are responsible for taking care of our mental health.



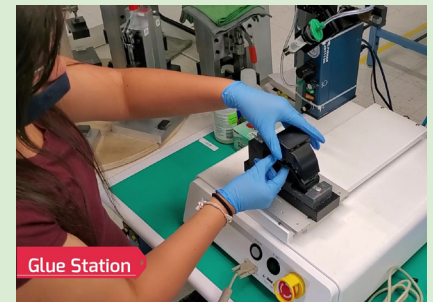
BI Creates Virtual Tour for High School Students

Written By **Erick Brangan and Slade Melton, BI**

Over the years, Kyle Kingrey, along with other employees from BI, has been a leader in student career outreach, including efforts to spark an interest in students to pursue a career in manufacturing. Public speaking events, on-site tours, internships, and equipment donations are just a few examples of the contributions that Kyle and the team have given to help cultivate the new generation of manufacturers. During 2020, these efforts were severely hindered due to COVID-19. To continue to inform our youth, while keeping the students and BI employees safe, Kyle came up with the idea of a virtual tour of the manufacturing facility. He reached out to Erick Brangan, Production Specialist on the manufacturing floor, and Slade Melton, Manufacturing Mentor, with the idea since he knew they had a YouTube channel. Erick and Slade decided to take on the challenge and developed a plan to create a virtual tour of the manufacturing facility.

The team wanted the concept of the video to be the manufacturing production flow from Receiving all the way to Shipping, and to showcase what a typical day of an internship would be like at BI. Over the next few weeks filming commenced, and Slade, who had been part of many of the student tours, helped direct the filming of the highlights of the manufacturing floor, while Erick became the narrator and tour guide. During the time of filming, BI had two interns on the manufacturing floor, and the team was able to highlight what a day in the life of an intern was like at BI.

The seven-minute video is now being showcased in classrooms across Northern Colorado in the hopes of inspiring students to consider a career in manufacturing. Erick and Slade are proud to have helped keep the passion of student outreach alive in these trying times and to showcase BI.



ACA Audit for the Grossman Center

Written By **Tammy Jones, Grossman Center**



The Grossman Center in Leavenworth, Kansas worked hard to prepare for their April 2021 American Correctional Association (ACA) accreditation, where we achieved 100% compliance. The auditors were impressed with how the facility looked, as well as the professionalism of our staff. The small staff and small number of participants makes the center feel like a small family.

The auditors arrived on a Tuesday morning and were finished by Wednesday afternoon. Auditors interviewed staff, some who had been there for years and some just a few days. Staff know the importance of the ACA audit and were unified in showing the auditors the quality of services at the center.



With Grossman Center being the only federal halfway house in Leavenworth, Kansas, we keep busy with all the new residents. COVID-19 slowed us down a couple of times in 2020, then we decided to have quarantine dates so we can keep bringing in new residents. This initiative has worked for us to stay safe and keep the facility operational.

Smoothies Bring Smiles to The Harbor

Written By **Karen Collins, GEO Care Communications**

For many residential centers around the country, the COVID-19 pandemic has presented a multitude of challenges. Staff have been engaged in keeping residents safe, keeping facilities clean, and making changes intended to ensure safety for all.

Residents who would usually work in the community have been kept in-house to help the facilities reduce the number of COVID-19 cases. Staff at The Harbor, a residential reentry center in New Jersey, have worked hard to keep residents engaged in programming and on the path to pursue a positive lifestyle during this difficult time.

To keep spirits up, staff decided to give participants a special treat. Sharon Brooks, Senior Coordinator of The Harbor, Sakinah Morton, Business Office Manager, and Harbor staff are committed to nurturing residents through awareness of achieving better health, and creating change in behaviors.

Ms. Brooks and Ms. Morton worked with a small local business, "Triple Double," that delivers healthy fruit and vegetable smoothies to residents to promote a healthy diet and increase awareness of good nutrition. Residents loved the smoothies, putting a smile on a lot of faces.



Fresno County DRC Has Success with Virtual Services

Written By **Karen Collins, GEO Care Communications**

The Fresno County Day Reporting Center (DRC) has continued to provide GEO Reentry services to its participants by successfully implementing virtual programming.

Angel Duarte, Program Manager, has devised new and innovative ways to keep participants on track with programming. Mr. Duarte has created a PDF schedule for participants and staff to use, which has worked very effectively for all, enabling both to remain on point with programming appointments. The schedule is sent out to staff and participants, and is easy and concise to follow. In addition, Mr. Duarte created morning and evening tracks which provide additional access to services for participants who work, are enrolled in school, or have family commitments.

"We are pleased to continue to uphold a high level of reentry programming by delivering GEO Reentry services to our clients," said Mr. Duarte.

"Staff have stood strong and have overcome challenges by addressing issues with an array of different technology, and have experienced success in keeping participants engaged."

Participants referred from Fresno County Adult Probation are being provided with Moral Reconciliation® Therapy (MRT), peer support, parenting skills, Intensive Outpatient Programming (IOP), anger management, Individual Cognitive Behavioral Treatment (ICBT), and Life Skills (T4C). Services are delivered through Microsoft Teams. Ground rules remain enforced, including a short time window that allows for technical difficulties, staying for full sessions, and having homework ready.

Both participants and staff have adapted well to virtual scheduling. With the implementation of virtual programming, individuals are reporting in every day and are being consistent with participation.

Sacramento DRC Helps Participants Look Good!

Written By **Karen Collins, GEO Care Communications**

The Sacramento County Day Reporting Center (DRC) recently began offering two new resources that benefit both program participants and staff. On behalf of program participants, the Center recently acquired a room-sized closet filled with donated clothes.

A former participant was working at a retail store seeking to give away a large amount of clothes, which led to another participant volunteering to organize an empty room at the Sacramento County DRC as a working closet. Since then, the closet has become an essential resource for many participants in need of new clothing to prepare for prospective employment opportunities and job interviews.



Participants, staff, and representatives from Sacramento County Probation continuously add to the closet, which stocks clothes for both men and women, including casual clothes, handbags, shoes, and belts.

“Having a clothing resource helps support a successful transition to society by improving self-esteem and making participants employment ready,” said Sacramento County DRC Program Manager, Shaney Gray. “Being comfortable is important to a participant’s ability to succeed.”

The DRC also recently began offering a new educational resource for staff — a modified version of The Carey Guide’s “Supervisor’s EBP BriefCASE” curriculum. Each of these 18 one-hour sessions addresses a particular tenet of reentry programming delivery, such as accountability, sanctions, and rewards; it also includes exercises, video, and written assignments.

During the course, employees are also encouraged to refer to prior case files to illuminate each lesson. Since completing the curriculum, some staff members have reported increased involvement from participants and attributed this rise in group participation to the BriefCASE’s impact.

“The EBP BriefCASE is a great teaching tool for staff,” Ms. Gray said. “If they can articulate programming better and deliver it in a concise manner, then that will help achieve our mission of reducing recidivism and creating positive returns for the community.”

The Sacramento County DRC provides a comprehensive service delivery program, offering evidence-based practices designed to change participants’ criminal thinking. Reentry services include individual and group counseling, anger management, life skills, cognitive behavioral treatment, GED preparation, employment services, and substance abuse treatment.

Tuolumne County DRC Holds Successful “Virtual Open House”

Written By **Karen Collins, GEO Care Communications**



Heather Smith, Program Manager at California’s Tuolumne County Day Reporting Center (DRC) and Jail Reentry Program (JRP), came up with the great idea of a “Virtual Open House,” that invited Tuolumne County Probation members and community partners to tour the facility.

The virtual Powerpoint presentation provided a tour of the facility, and an introduction to programs and staff.

What's Cooking in Casper?

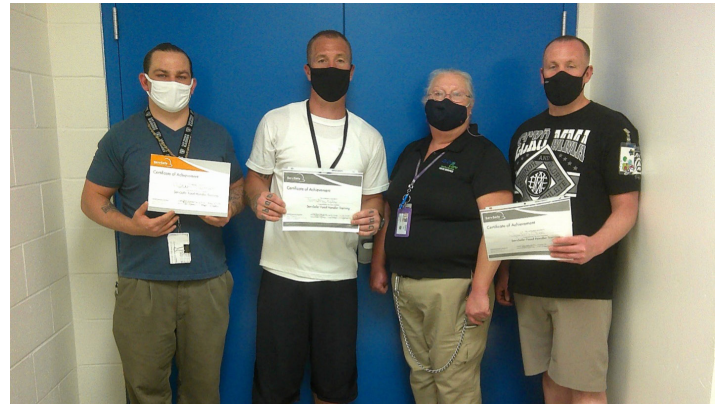
Written By **Ruth Armstrong, Casper Reentry Center**

Residents at the Casper Reentry Center (CRC) are not just learning to cook. Residents participating in the facility's kitchen program obtain various skills related to the Culinary Arts, and also have the opportunity to obtain ServSafe training and certification provided by the valued CRC Kitchen staff.

ServSafe is a food safety training and certificate program administered by the National Restaurant Association. The program is accredited by the National Standards Institute and the Conference for Food Protection.

The course discusses foodborne illnesses, including information on specific foodborne pathogens and biological toxins, contamination, and food allergies. Prevention is also covered, with information regarding purchasing and receiving guidelines, food preparation, holding and serving guidelines, food safety management systems, sanitation guidelines for facilities and equipment, and integrated pest control, as well as food safety regulations and employee training.

This training is critical. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employment of food and beverage serving and related workers is projected to grow 10 percent from 2019 to 2029, much faster than the average for other occupations. Job prospects are expected to be excellent, particularly for prospective workers who have completed their



ServSafe training. Today, most restaurants require it as a basic credential for their management staff. Some of CRC's graduates have gone on to work at or even manage local Casper restaurants.

Since 2019, CRC Food Services Supervisor, Ruth Armstrong, has been accredited by ServSafe as an instructor, and under her tutelage 180 participants have obtained this important credential. Ms. Armstrong has served more than 35 years in the culinary industry, including 11 years at CRC. Facility Director, Josh Brown, noted, "Her level of commitment to her students is reflected by the exceptional rate of success they have demonstrated in their certification testing; and, more importantly, in the kitchen itself. Ms. Armstrong is a valuable member of our team who greatly contributes to our overall success."

CRC places a high importance on changing behavior and changing lives. Through initiatives such as this, residents are given the tools they need to enhance their chances of success.

The Virtual Open House was held in February 2021 and was attended by the Tuolumne County Chief of Probation, Probation Officers, Adult Division of Supervision, and representatives from Columbia College in Sonora. Designed to inform clients and community organizations about the DRC, the presentation was full of information, including a walk-through, staff introductions, and an overview of programs and how treatment is delivered. Staff explain what their role is, and why they feel working for GEO Reentry is important.

"We are committed to partnering with our customers and local organizations to create a safe and productive community by helping participants reenter society with the proper tools

to embrace a crime free lifestyle," said Heather Smith, Program Manager of Tuolumne County DRC/JRP.

The virtual presentation was a success, resulting in staff anticipating added engagement in weekly meetings, and establishing a pathway for community members to be involved in what is going on at the DRC.

The Tuolumne County DRC has been practicing a hybrid formula for delivering services over the last year, with approximately 25% in-person visits, on-site drug testing and one-on-one services. Virtual services have been held by phone or through Microsoft Teams.



Lancaster & Berks RSC's Celebrate Second Chance Month

Written By **Karen Collins, Lancaster & Berks RSC's**

Both the Lancaster and Berks County Reentry Service Centers (RSC) celebrated Second Chance Month in April 2021, to highlight how reentry services work and demonstrate to reentrants that new beginnings are possible by using the tools learned at the Centers. Staff from both RSCs combined forces to create activities and projects that exemplify the cognitive behavioral change programming they provide.

A "Behavior Chain" chalkboard was created by staff as an activity designed to help reentrants understand the cognitive behavioral link. The Behavior Chain chalkboard utilizes the process created by the University of Cincinnati, based on Cognitive Behavioral Intervention for Substance Use (CBI-SU). The chalkboard activity entails naming a situation that could be a pre-cursor to negative behavior and options for making another

choice towards a positive outcome. This was used as a team-building exercise for both RSCs, serving not only reentrants, but also increasing staff understanding of the behavior change process.

T-shirts created by Berks RSC Counselors, Ms. Hammell and Ms. Martinez, were worn by staff and reentrants. "The best gift in life is a second chance," was emblazoned on the front of the shirts.

Second Chance Month proved to be an uplifting celebration for staff at both Lancaster and Berks RSCs. Remarkable staff members went above and beyond to impress upon reentrants that now is the time to invest in themselves, and that better days can lie ahead by using the tools provided by GEO Reentry Services!

Richmond ISAP Assist a Participant in Need

Written By **Ryan Nicholson, Richmond ISAP**



During a program enrollment with a new participant, Administrative Assistant, Wanda Heeke observed that the participant was visibly upset and in distress. Ms. Heeke pulled the participant aside with Case Specialist, Belinda Pino, and the participant then disclosed to Ms. Pino that she

and her infant daughter were unsafe because the individual who drove her to the office had been mentally and sexually abusing the mother. Richmond ICE ERO responded to the ISAP Office and interviewed the alleged perpetrator. Richmond DHS HSI were also notified due to the allegations the participant made regarding trafficking, and this prompted a full investigation.

Ms. Pino utilized a close working relationship with a local NGO, who was then able to assist the participant with short-term housing, food, clothing, and transportation. The entire Richmond ISAP office came together to provide a caring environment in the office for the one-year old child over the following two days, while the participant provided hours of interviews and information to investigators. The participant was then able to relocate safely to a different state to live with biological

family. While leaving the office for the last time, the participant expressed her deepest thanks to the entire Richmond ISAP office for "saving her and her daughter's lives."

Dauphin County Supports Second Chance Month

Written By **Karen Collins, GEO Care Communications**

Dauphin County Reentry Service Center (RSC) proudly celebrated Second Chance Month, wearing their custom designed T-shirts created by Program Manager Jacqueline Schap and her staff. Pennsylvania Governor Tom Wolf proclaimed April as Second Chance month to help eliminate barriers to employment and securing housing for offenders in the state. The T-shirts were worn by staff and reentrants throughout the month, including April 11-17, designated as Reentry Week in 2021, to raise awareness and demonstrate support for second chances.

"We are committed to delivering evidence-based reentry programming to help reentrants transitioning to the community with workforce development, and other tools they need to establish a successful start," said Jacqueline Schap, Program Manager of the Dauphin County RSC.

On the back of the t-shirts a favorite quote of the RSC is included: "I may have failed in the past. I am not a failure, for I will succeed today."

Luzerne RSC Shows Gratitude for Second Chances

Written By **Karen Collins, GEO Care Communications**

Second Chance Month was celebrated at the Luzerne County Reentry Service Center (RSC) throughout April 2021 as a way to highlight the importance of getting a second chance, a message that is at the forefront of the RSC. The Center helps reentrants by providing outpatient reentry services, designed to effect a cognitive behavioral change and create a positive lifestyle. Stacey Velez, Program Manager for Luzerne County RSC, believes in the mission she and her staff provide, and the importance of having the option of a second chance.

"We have seen so many individuals benefit from our program of reentry services and are able to change their lives for the better because they are given a second chance," said Ms. Velez. "Second chances work. We are glad to provide services that reentrants embrace and use going forward."

The first Second Chance month was celebrated in 2017 and was founded to raise awareness about

Both staff and reentrants took pride in the opportunity to support Second Chance month and the mission of the RSC. Dauphin County RSC is dedicated to helping individuals with a productive return to society. The RSC focuses on workforce development and provides Moral Reconciliation Therapy® (MRT), life skills, and other reentry services based on Cognitive Behavioral Treatment (CBT) programming to equip reentrants with resources that prepare them for a new and positive beginning upon program completion.

The Dauphin County RSC had an 85% employment rate for their reentrants for the year 2020, which was an increase over 2019, despite the pandemic.



the many challenges facing those reentering society. Additional RSC's in Pennsylvania also had celebrations, mostly during the last week of the month. The Centers celebrated by giving out treats, preparing and wearing Second Chance t-shirts, and designing uplifting wall posters.

On April 29, Luzerne County RSC put together a special treat for the reentrants. All were pleasantly surprised to receive a little goodie bag upon check in. The bag contained a bottle of water, cookies, and candy. Their thought behind the gift was: "Life is challenging enough, it's the unexpected, little things that can brighten people's day".

Everyone's day was brightened with gratitude for a second chance, and staff and reentrants shared hope and upliftment.

Engagement, Support, and Service Delivery Climb Amid COVID Pandemic in Chicago

Written By **Karen Collins,**
Chatham RSC, Chicago Heights RSC, and Chicago West Fulton RSC

Congratulations to the hard-working staff of GEO Reentry Services in and around Chicago for experiencing substantial growth in the participant population, while continuing to meet the highest quality delivery of reentry services. All three Chicago centers - the Chatham Reentry Services Center (RSC), Chicago Heights RSC, and Chicago West Fulton RSC, have accommodated an expansion of 60-100% growth in the number of participants they served from March 2020 to March 2021.

“We are honored to be chosen to serve the Illinois Department of Corrections (IDOC) by expanding our services to accommodate additional participants upon request,” said Andrew Young, GEO Reentry Area Manager. “Our Chicago staff has worked diligently to keep participants engaged, while providing GEO Reentry’s programming seamlessly throughout the pandemic.”

GEO Reentry was asked to help with individuals leaving the Sheridan Correctional Center who needed to complete a substance abuse assessment and any recommended treatment. The Chicago staff can be credited with excellent teamwork, coordinating programming needs with the IDOC, and providing flexible service delivery options to participants to promote maximum safety measures during COVID. The three locations never closed and were able to deliver services on a consistent basis to provide support, guidance, and hope. Several participants expressed appreciation that GEO staff were there to help them navigate through the pandemic and to keep them focused on completing their parole conditions.

The RSCs in Chicago provide non-residential programming to parolees referred by the IDOC.

Each program is individually tailored for the participant and employs a cognitive-based method to help change thinking and behavior. Services focus on substance abuse treatment, individual risk/needs assessments, Moral Reconciliation Therapy® (MRT), and employment readiness, amongst other evidence-based reentry services.

All three Chicago area GEO RSCs are licensed by the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Substance Use, Prevention, and Recovery (SUPR) , and offer substance abuse assessments and all levels of outpatient substance abuse treatment. The facilities also provide transportation assistance and actively collaborate with several other community service providers to address a variety of participant needs such as clothing, food, and medical/mental health/dental care.



Chicago West Fulton RSC Team

L to R: Cedric Harris, Jeanine Idubor, Ovita Ivey, Dayna Upton, Christine Diaz, Stephanie Scott, Patricia Green,



Chatham RSC Team

L to R: Back row: Brianna Cobbins, Case Manager, Shana Holloway, Substance Abuse Counselor, Cordelro Medley, Case Manager

Front row: Janet Szydelko, Program Manager, Odella Willis, Substance Abuse Counselor



Chicago Heights RSC Team

L to R: Harlan South, Employment/ Education Coordinator, Luke Lynch, Program Manager, Julius Haule, Client Services Specialist, Wanda Thomaston, Substance Abuse Counselor

Lycoming County RSC Launches Reentry Coalition

Written By **Karen Collins, GEO Care Communications**

The Lycoming County Reentry Service Center (RSC), in partnership with Lycoming County, Pennsylvania, welcomes the launch of a new County Reentry Coalition. Michael Boughton, Program Manager of GEO Reentry's Lycoming RSC and Lycoming County Criminal Justice Advisory Board members helped establish the new County Reentry Coalition that will meet quarterly to exchange ideas aimed to support reentrants of the Lycoming County Prison with a successful transition to the community.

"We are grateful to be helping to coordinate the Reentry Coalition and for our partnership in this community," said John Hogan, Area Manager, Pennsylvania, GEO Reentry Services Non-Residential.

"We look forward to the contributions the Coalition will make for returning citizens and bringing together the many stakeholders invested in successful Reentry in Lycoming County."

Samantha Koch, Reentry Coordinator for Lycoming County, has been at the Lycoming County RSC since 2015. With experience in Client Services, Case Management, and Transitional Services, Ms. Koch is helping male and female reentrants leaving prison with the resources, to ensure a positive start after release. Through the Reentry Coalition, information can be communicated for those in need of clothing, food, employment, substance abuse treatment, or educational services in the community.

Acting as a liaison to the county, Ms. Koch's duties include visiting the prison, setting up assessments, and working with reentrants to determine what specific needs will support their transition to a productive lifestyle. She then develops a transitional action plan that addresses criminogenic needs, a calendar with appointments, and information for local resources. Preparing reentrants with resources, while still in prison, helps give them a head start, providing a plan of action immediately after release.



"As Reentry Coordinator, the goal is to obtain a reduction in recidivism by providing support for those preparing to transition to the community," said Ms. Koch. "We encourage reentrants to ask for and accept help, and to use the resources we provide. Second chances for individuals and the community work."

Program Manager Boughton set up the first meeting of the County Coalition, which took place virtually in March 2021, with approximately 70 attendees that included judges and representatives from the courts, Sheriff's office, Probation, Drug and Alcohol County commission, outpatient services and community service providers.

Ms. Koch recently helped a female reentrant who desired to complete the degree that she had started before incarceration. That information was communicated to her probation officer, and connections were made to enroll her in classes to further her education.

With community support, goals created and set in motion help deter a return to the criminal justice system. Best of luck to the new Lycoming County Reentry Coalition, helping the county be safe while giving individuals a head start with local support services.



California DRC's Hold Drive-Thru Graduations

Written By **Karen Collins, Compton and Merced DRCs**

The Merced County DRC and Jail Reentry Program (JRP) held drive-thru graduations to celebrate participants completing programming throughout February and March 2021. The Jail Reentry Program went first, celebrating a graduation in February 2021. The Los Banos location followed next on March 4, and the Day Reporting Center on March 11.

For the JRP, food was brought to the John Latorraca Correctional Facility in Merced, where GEO provides reentry services. Officers then brought food to the participants as a congratulations for completing programming.

At the DRCs, tables were set up in the parking lots and each participant was able to stop at each, greet representatives from the Sheriff's Office and the Probation Office, and pick up their certificates and a trophy. Acknowledgment of program completion is recognized by certificates from an Assemblyman, a Senator, a County certificate signed by the Mayor of Merced, and the GEO Corporate certificate. Participants were able to join their Probation Officer and enjoy a meal together.

Virtual services started in March 2020, and in-person services took place occasionally to adhere to capacity guidelines. The DRC did extremely well continuing to provide services during the pandemic, experiencing an increase in client performance with the hybrid model. In late 2020, the DRC experienced their highest enrollment, complete with a waiting list.

Reno Bandoni, Acting Program Manager of the Merced locations and JRP, and his staff, conducted virtual services using Microsoft Teams for call-ins and webinars.

"Our staff did not skip a beat incorporating virtual services, and made sure all participants and staff were versed in the technology. They didn't miss a session of the behavior change programming we provide," said Mr. Bandoni.

Compton DRC held their drive-thru graduation on March 26, welcoming 30 graduates to the event. After completion of programming, which was all done virtually, the staff at Compton set up an outside table, complete with balloons, decorations, and goody bags for participants and guests that contained PPE supplies (mini hand sanitizer, disposable masks, etc.), a 20 oz. stainless steel travel tumbler, a GEO graduation certificate, and a polaroid of themselves in front of the colorful "Congratulations Graduate" banner made by staff as a keepsake. Food and ice cream were on hand, adding to the festive atmosphere.

Services at the Compton DRC were provided using a conference call format to deliver Moral Reconciliation Therapy® (MRT), anger management, substance abuse treatment, parenting, and individual meetings virtually. Staff worked hard to make the day special, honoring the commitment so many made to complete their behavior change programming and celebrate the tools given to them to begin a new and positive start.

"I am proud that we were able to uphold program delivery during this challenging time. Our staff here at the Compton DRC adapted to facilitating groups and overcame challenges to get all our participants on board and to complete their programming. We are proud to celebrate this graduation!" said Juan Nunez, Program Manager, Compton DRC.

Shasta County Partners with GEO Reentry to Help Juveniles

Written By **Karen Collins, Shasta County Juvenile Program**

GEO Reentry's Shasta County Juvenile Program, in California, opened in February 2021 in partnership with the Shasta County Probation Department. The program provides services for juveniles at the Juvenile Rehabilitation Facility in Shasta County. GEO Reentry Services is providing programming designed to address challenges facing young offenders.

"We are proud to be part of transforming young lives in California by providing GEO Reentry Services' evidence-based programming for juvenile offenders," said Amanda Lightfoote, Northern California Area Manager for GEO Reentry. "By addressing behavior patterns and providing cognitive change programming, we aim to create productive lifestyles that contribute to lower recidivism and safer communities."

A highlight of the program is family-engaged case planning, which includes family members at early stages of programming to help build support within the family unit, and ease the transition to the community. GEO Reentry staff work closely with juveniles and their families to establish communication and provide awareness of daily activities.

The six-month to one-year program consists of four phases of programming and includes individual and group sessions. A Behavior Change Plan (BCP) is established to map out goals and is based on an individual risk/need assessment. Juveniles are required to identify goals, possible challenges, and to be made aware of community support. Comprehensive services include Individual Cognitive Behavioral Treatment (ICBT), Moral Reconciliation Therapy® (MRT), substance abuse treatment, trauma groups, Thinking For a Change (T4C), restorative justice, reentry stabilization, and aftercare.

Best of luck to Amanda Lightfoote and her team in Shasta County in helping our youth have a better life!



Employee Appreciation Week

Written By **Tammy Jones, Grossman Center**



The Grossman Center celebrated employee appreciation week on May 17 through May 21, 2021. This was the same week their staff meeting would occur so they had the opportunity for all staff to be together. Kitchen Supervisor, Brian Baker and his assistants, Derrick Smith and Chris Asbury, made staff a nice breakfast that day.

Brian Baker, along with Director Chris Zych, came up with a schedule for the week to celebrate employees for all the hard work they do.

Monday, they served biscuits and gravy, Tuesday was pizza and pop, Wednesday was an ice cream social, and Thursday was the monthly staff meeting, so the kitchen staff made pancakes, omelets, hash browns and sausage. On Friday, they had donuts and juice.

Each staff member also received a 12-pack of their favorite pop/water and a small pie. Staff really enjoyed having something they could take home to share with their family. With approval, staff also could wear jeans on Thursday with their GEO shirts and on Friday, staff wore their favorite Kansas City Royals shirts. All staff participated and seemed to enjoy the week.



Case Managers Help Juvenile Participant Achieve Dream of Graduating High School

Written By **Merniqua Walls, Belleville Juvenile Reentry Service Center**

Elijah T. was referred to the Belleville Juvenile Reentry Service Center (RSC) in May 2020. At first, Elijah didn't have a good

impression of the program, stating, "This program is pointless. I won't get anything out of this, and I will probably go back to jail anyway." Due to COVID-19, Elijah continued to receive services by phone throughout 2020, and once in-person services resumed, he was resistant to report to the center. He was encouraged to keep an open mind and give the center a chance to show him how to use his potential for positive change in his life. This encouragement came from both the Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice (DOJJ) and GEO Reentry staff.

In April 2021, case managers Kimberly Kemp and Merniqua Walls learned that Elijah was failing a majority of his classes, and he was not expected to graduate. His school indicated that he could graduate if he completed make-up assignments for each subject. Elijah was extremely discouraged when he saw the amount of work he had to complete and the time span to do it.

Ms. Kemp and Ms. Walls empowered Elijah to complete the assignments, and Ms. Kemp worked with him daily over two weeks to help him complete his work. Elijah's willingness to commit to completing the work paid off, and he was able to graduate high school. Elijah has expressed gratitude toward the program, and he is now happy to be a part of the Belleville Juvenile RSC. His success is a testament to the strong partnership between IL DOJJ and GEO Reentry staff in empowering youth to flourish and excel in life!



Berks County RSC Re-Opens in Downtown Reading

Written By **Karen Collins, GEO Care Communications**

The Berks County Reentry Service Center (RSC) is settling into its new home, located in the heart of downtown Reading, Pennsylvania. The facility's move comes just in time to accommodate reentrants who are returning to in-person visits after having a limited schedule during the pandemic.

The Berks County RSC focuses on Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment for individuals referred from the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and the Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole. A hybrid model of delivering services has been very successful and will continue going forward. The hybrid model consists of in-person and virtual services, which allow for ease of access

for those who work, are in school, or have family commitments.

Kim Reichenbach, Program Manager at Berks County RSC, is pleased to be opening the new location in an old county building that had old holding cells in the basement. Opening the new RSC in that building is in many ways symbolic of the change in criminal justice reform now taking place across the nation.

"With the opening of the new Berks RSC, we are reminded of the change in approach for those who will reenter society, and the importance of the cognitive behavioral change programming we provide," said Ms. Reichenbach. "We are

New Program for Employment Opens in Fresno County

Written By **Karen Collins, GEO Care Communications**

GEO Reentry Services welcomes a new center, “Reentry Employment Program Services,” in Fresno County, California, which opened March 10, 2021, in partnership with Fresno County Probation. The program focuses on employment and education services for participants referred from Fresno County. In addition to providing a cognitive-based program aimed at employment readiness, GEO Reentry will provide referrals for both employment and education opportunities for those reentering the community.

“Our objective with the Employment Services program is to not only match participants with the right job but to help them with additional skills so that they keep their jobs and hopefully grow in their chosen field,” said John Thurston, Vice President, Non-Residential, GEO Reentry Services.

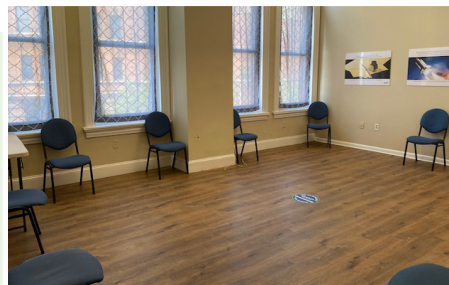
The Reentry Employment Program is delivered through a four-tiered system. The four tiers assist participants with effective approaches to the stages of establishing employment, Employment basics, Advanced Readiness, Work Ready, and Reach for the Stars.

“We are pleased to help those in transition with these important services that promote a successful start in the community,” said Vanessa Quintana, Program Supervisor for the Reentry Employment Program. “Assisting participants with employment and educational opportunities will help reduce recidivism, keep the community safe, and help individuals benefit from a rewarding life.”

Assessments and case planning meetings are conducted to help determine personal interests, and how well individuals will be candidates for certain professions. A computer lab with twelve terminals is on site for participants to use to work on resumes and job searches. Staff assist in job search techniques and help with following up on referrals.

Staff act as a bridge to the community by reaching out to prospective employers willing to offer employment to the participants, therefore providing opportunities for transitioning individuals and filling job openings within the community.

The new program accommodates up to 60 participants and is already experiencing success in placements for employment. As of May 2021, the team has successfully placed ten participants since program inception. Best of luck to the Fresno County Reentry Employment Program!



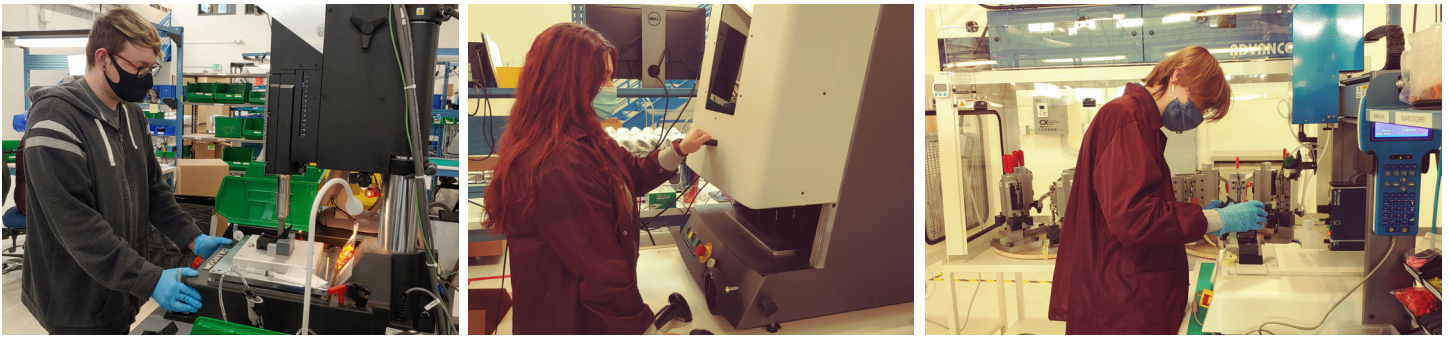
committed to providing evidence-based reentry programming that addresses the challenges reentrants face in the transition back to their community.”

The RSC provides comprehensive reentry services, including Cognitive Behavioral Treatment (CBT), Substance Use Disorder treatment, workforce development, life skills, Batterer’s Intervention, and other services. The Berks County RSC also works in conjunction with GEO Reentry’s ADAPPT Residential Reentry Center in Reading

to administer the State Drug Treatment Program (SDTP) for those identified with charges related to drug use.

The new center will have two group rooms, counselor’s offices, a lobby for check in, and a computer lab, and is accessible to public transportation.

An Open House is planned for Summer of 2021.



BI Donates Funds to Help Local Schools Written By Kyle Kingrey, BI

Recently, BI donated funds to three local schools in various school districts in the Boulder area. These funds were directed towards purchasing manufacturing equipment and materials to help aid teachers with teaching students about the many career paths manufacturing has to offer. Furthermore, BI has returned to hosting student job shadowing, offering manufacturing internships, and having BI Manufacturing personnel give their Manufacturing Career Path presentation in local schools.

BI has several core goals as it relates to supporting educational initiatives in the community. The first is to provide local schools with donations to purchase the right tools and equipment used in the real manufacturing environment to help teach students. Secondly, BI gives back to the schools by doing in-class presentations on manufacturing, on-the-job training, and paid manufacturing internships. BI's third goal is to show students that manufacturing can lead to many more opportunities such as careers in Information Technology, Engineering, Marketing, and Accounting. Lastly, BI's fourth goal is to help students recognize that they can have a successful and rewarding career by simply having a willingness to learn and an understanding of the importance of working on a team.

COVID SHOTS – 1st GEO Care Facility to be Vaccinated

Written By **Mr. Dorsun Salt, Mr. Troy Palmer & Ms. Kristy Ayagalria, Tundra Center**

Almost 400 miles west of Anchorage, Alaska sits an Alaskan Native Village called "Bethel", which is the main hub for the Yukon Kuskokwim Delta. Bethel is so remote, it is surrounded by 52 villages in the Alaska Bush and the only way to travel is by plane. Yup'ik (Yuk-Pik) is the native language to this region of Alaska and is spoken more than English. The word Yup'ik represents not only the language but also the name of the people themselves.

In November 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit the Tundra Center with force. Nearly all of the Tundra Center staff were out sick. At least seventeen residents were in quarantine with COVID-19, and the entire Tundra Center was placed on quarantine. The Tundra Center was saved by the help of GEO Staff from the Cordova Center in Anchorage and the Northstar Center in Fairbanks.

On January 21, 2021, all remaining residents at the Tundra Center received their 1st COVID-19

vaccination Shot and by February 2021 all staff and residents were fully vaccinated. New residents that come into the Tundra Center are receiving their 1st and/or 2nd COVID-19 vaccination shot as scheduled. To accomplish this big task has been a team effort from the Yukon Kuskokwim Correctional Center (YKCC), Yukon Kuskokwim Health Corporation (YKHC) and the Tundra Center Staff.



Establishing a Culture of Operational Excellence

Written By **Jonathon Dressler, Philadelphia Residential Reentry Center**

The Philadelphia Residential Reentry Center was the first GEO Care federal residential reentry facility, which was a stand-alone activation, not obtained through acquisition. The contract began in April 2019 and GEO has strived to maintain the highest levels of operational performance. In October 2020, the facility received an initial Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Certification with a 100% score and exceeding five of 41 federal PREA requirements. With this achievement, the facility demonstrated a commitment to resident care and safety, and a zero-tolerance culture against sexual abuse and harassment.

In continuing the push for ongoing operational excellence, the facility underwent an official initial American Correctional Association (ACA) Accreditation audit in March 2021, under the ACA Adult Community Residential Standards (ACRS). The facility was required to demonstrate adherence to 250 ACA standards outlined through ACRS by policy, procedure, and practice. The facility was successful in this important endeavor and received a 100% accreditation score. It is noteworthy that the ACA Accreditation was not a contractual requirement, but was undertaken to provide the facility with an additional layer of external oversight and reflect the Philadelphia Residential Reentry Center's commitment to continued operational excellence. Additionally, it should be mentioned that the facility went through one internal and one external audit in the two consecutive weeks

leading up to the accreditation. The team stayed focused and continued to provide the highest levels of services while maintaining all systems in place and balancing the demands of both internal and external audits. For the leadership at the facility, this was their first time experiencing the ACA Accreditation process. Facility Director, Lisa Yingling, and Assistant Facility Director, Jennifer Fox, spearheaded the accreditation process and Maria Rodriguez, Office Support Specialist, played an integral role in gathering the necessary documentation to demonstrate adherence with standards.

When asked about the accreditation experience, Facility Director Yingling stated, "I appreciate every single one of my staff who were involved in the successful ACA audit and the professionalism they exemplified. I would also like to extend thanks to the Quality Team for the awesome support they provided with the files and being here during the audit."

Congratulations to the Philadelphia Residential Reentry Center on this important milestone and special thanks to Contract Compliance Director, Danny Cole, Manager, Kathi Witt, ACA Manager, Erma Welch, Reentry Services Security and Quality team members, Regional Safety Manager, Luis Soto, Program Performance Managers, Adam Schlager and Edward Dobson, for providing the Corporate support during this important initiative!

Job Fair

Written By **Terri Yeats, Albert M. "Bo" Robinson Assessment & Treatment Facility**

Since COVID-19 protocols put a hold on attending job fairs, Bo Robinson's Human Resources staff decided to host one of their own. They held their first on-site job fair on June 3, 2021. They advertised in one local newspaper and on two newspaper websites, as well as on Facebook and through Career Builder platforms. It was held outside in a corner of the parking lot to help mitigate security concerns and traffic



control. Staff gave out packets to attendees, that included general information about GEO and Bo Robinson, the web address for applying, and contact information for Human Resources. They also distributed pens, eyeglass cloths, and nail files to prospective applicants. Staff have already started to plan the next job fair and look forward to many more to come!



Women Residents at Delaney Hall Receive Visits from Therapy Dog

Written By **Kristin SanFilippo & Karen Collins,**
Delaney Hall Residential Reentry Center

During their first visit, Allie and Ms. Lopez spent two hours with female residents and staff members. Ms. Lopez introduced Allie to the residents and allowed the women to simply spend time with her, getting to know her, pet her, and offer her treats.

Ms. Kristin San Filippo, Assistant Facility Director of Programs at Delaney Hall, recalls a story that exemplifies the importance of therapy dogs, "We have a female resident whose mother was killed in between her first and second visits with Allie. During her second visit, the woman verbalized to Allie that she "needed to talk" and then sat with her and told her all about her mother's death. She even let herself cry with Allie. In that sense, I think Allie will be invaluable when it comes to helping women cope with their traumas."

"Watching the female resident, who just had a tremendous loss in her family, break down sitting on the floor with Allie was an experience that

Delaney Hall has been the lucky recipient of two visits from Allie, a certified therapy dog, and her handler and volunteer, Ms. Paula Lopez. Allie is a three-year old English Cream Retriever from Bright & Beautiful Therapy Dogs. The residential center invited Ms. Lopez to visit the women's program in an effort to bring comfort and peace, soothe trauma, and establish a positive bond with the residents.

Luzerne County RSC Celebrates Events For Diversity & Cancer Awareness

Written By **Karen Collins, GEO Care Communications**



The staff at the Luzerne County Reentry Service Center (RSC) had a busy March this year, with staff providing programming designed to address criminogenic risks and needs and reduce recidivism. The staff made sure that reentrants were provided with events that helped establish a positive reentry experience. The RSC created a diversity learning experience for each month of

the year and March was deemed Irish Heritage Month. There were decorations, posters, maps, and history lessons posted throughout the facility and a fun St. Patrick's Day celebration, which was enjoyed by staff and reentrants.

In addition, to exemplify their commitment to community involvement, the Luzerne RSC donated and participated in the Northeast Regional Cancer Institute's annual C.A.S.U.A.L. (Colon Cancer Awareness Saves Unlimited Adult Lives) Day. March 25 was the designated day for 2021, and the staff supported the organization by wearing T-shirts and face masks with the C.A.S.U.A.L. logo. The Luzerne RSC demonstrated their support for promoting awareness and the importance of cancer screening and early detection.



I cannot put into words. Allie comforted her in so many ways that day, and I am sure she will continue to do so every time she visits," said Melissa Craten, Senior Area Manager, New Jersey.

Most notable was the fact that one of the female residents expressed an intense fear of dogs, given her past history of domestic violence where her abuser utilized a dog as a weapon against her. By the end of the therapy session, this resident allowed Allie to lay at her feet.

"There is something special about the way Allie relates to those with special needs; she is patient and waits for the individual to open up. This is particularly important for those living with depression, low self-esteem, PTSD, and suicidal thoughts or behaviors," said Ms. Lopez.

Allie has provided therapy services for schools, grief counseling, children's reading programs, and various mental health programs and events throughout New Jersey. Prior to visiting Delaney Hall, Ms. Lopez and Allie started a therapeutic program at the Middlesex Juvenile Detention Center, where they worked closely with males ages 15-21, and then expanded the program to the Garden State Youth Facility, where Allie spent time with correctional officers and staff.

"It is our ultimate goal to create a therapeutic bond between Allie and our female residents, as well as to expand the program to allow additional populations to experience the positive impact of repeated therapy sessions," said Ms. San Filippo.

The RSC has participated in Colon Cancer Awareness Month for several years, and is proud to promote awareness of the disease.

"Our goal is to introduce participants to the tools for living a productive life," said Stacey Velez, Program Manager for the Luzerne County RSC. "In addition to delivering behavior change programming, we provide community organizations with support, which helps reentrants enlarge their world and understand the importance of positive behavior and action."

Luzerne RSC provides reentry programming and is licensed by Pennsylvania's Department of Drug and Alcohol Programs to provide outpatient Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment. The RSC also provides electronic monitoring services and treatment services to the Luzerne County Division of Corrections.



