

# GEO<sup>®</sup> World

1st QUARTER 2020

A GEO Publication for Employees and their Families.



## 2019 GEO Continuum of Care<sup>®</sup> Conference *Inspires Change*





# Chairman's Letter

**George C. Zoley**, Chairman, CEO and Founder

**The commitment and dedication of our employees continue to underpin our company's growth and set GEO as the 'Best in Class' service provider to government agencies in the United States and internationally.**

## To the GEO Family,

During the fourth quarter of 2019, our company achieved several important milestones. In October, we hosted our second ever GEO Continuum of Care Conference, which built on our inaugural conference held in 2016. During two days of meetings and presentations, our facility, regional, and corporate leadership teams discussed all key elements of our Continuum of Care programs.

The highlight of the conference was a question-and-answer panel with nine Continuum of Care participants who have been released from several GEO facilities and are succeeding in their communities with the help of our post-release support services. Their first-hand testimony brought tears to everyone in attendance and further strengthened our commitment to provide enhanced rehabilitation and reentry programs to the all those in our care.

The Continuum of Care Conference was followed by our Annual Leadership Conference held also in October, which brought together the leadership teams of all our facilities and offices in the

United States and abroad. During the conference, management presentations focused on operational excellence enhancements and updates from our GEO Secure Services regional offices and GEO Care divisions.

During the month of December, we received several contract awards from the federal government.

First, on December 20th, we entered into two new contracts with U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) for five company-owned facilities in California totaling 4,490 beds. The contracts will have terms of 15 years, inclusive of two five-year options.

The contracts cover two company-owned facilities we currently operated on behalf of ICE: the 1,940-bed Adelanto ICE Processing Center and the 400-bed Mesa Verde ICE Processing Center. The contracts also incorporate three other company-owned facilities in California: the 700-bed Central Valley MCCF, the 750-bed Desert View MCCF, and the 700-bed Golden State MCCF, as facility annexes.

On December 23rd, we also signed a new managed-only contract with the U.S. Marshals Service for the government-owned, 512-bed El Centro Service Processing Center in California. The contract will have a term of eight years and nine months, inclusive of option periods.

These important contracts are representative of our long-standing private-public partnership with the federal government, which dates back to the 1980s. Our facilities are highly rated and provide high-quality, culturally responsive services in safe and humane residential environments, which meet the needs of the individuals in the care of federal authorities.

We take great pride in the milestones we achieved during the fourth quarter 2019 and throughout the entire year. The commitment and dedication of our employees continue to underpin our company's growth and set GEO as the 'Best in Class' service provider to government agencies in the United States and internationally.



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# 2019 GEO Continuum of Care Conference Inspires Change



In October 2019, GEO held its second ever GEO Continuum of Care Conference. The Conference featured multiple presentations over two days on a range of diverse topics. The morning session of the first day was kicked off by Ann Schlarb, President of GEO Care, and Dave Donahue, President of GEO Secure Services. David Burch, Divisional Vice President of the Continuum of Care provided an overview of the GEO Continuum of Care which led to a company-wide overview presented by GEO's Chairman, CEO, and Founder, George Zoley.

During the afternoon session, various GEO subject matter experts discussed topics ranging from Specialized Staff Training to Integrated Case Management. Dr. Mathew Abraham gave presentations on Specialized Staff Training and Cognitive

Behavioral Treatment while Angela Geisinger, Sr. Director of Academic and Vocational Programming, presented on Academic Programs and facilitated a workshop.

Debra Montgomery, Manager, Vocational Programs, gave a presentation on Vocational Programs, and Beth Ellefson, Manager, Training, presented on Integrated Case Management. Regional Vice Presidents Blake Davis and James Black gave presentations that highlighted the various GEO Continuum of Care initiatives in their respective regions.

On the second day of the conference, David Burch, Divisional Vice President of the Continuum of Care, and Craig Spatara, Director, Post-Release Services, gave a presentation on Transition Planning, which was followed by a presentation of Post-

Release Support Services. Rodney Quinn, Director of Quality Assurance, and Aaron Knight, Manager, Technology Integration Services, gave presentations on Quality Assurance and Data Integration and Reporting. Additionally, Dr. Ralph Fretz gave an in-depth presentation on Research and Performance Outcomes, while Sara Gray, National Director of Reintegration and Rehabilitation, International, spotlighted the milestones of the GEO Continuum of Care overseas.

The highlight of the second day of the conference was the Post-Release Participant Question & Answer Panel which was moderated by David Burch, Divisional Vice President of the GEO Continuum of Care. The guest panelists included Kyle Hancock and Kevin Holloway who were both released from the Riverbend Correctional and Rehabilitation Facility and participated in GEO







**Now I help those suffering with the same disease, using what I learned while at GEO. Together we are our cure.”**  
*- Nalio Ayala*

Continuum of Care’s Post-Release Services. Also featured were Herdy Cassius and Nalio Ayala who also participated in the Post-Release program and were released from the Moore Haven Correctional and Rehabilitation Facility, as well as Gary Stroup who was released from the Graceville Correctional and Rehabilitation Facility.

“GEO helped me identify that I was infected by the disease of addiction it also gave me the tools that I would need to combat that disease and more importantly taught me how to utilize those tools. Now I help those suffering with the same disease, using what I learned while at GEO. Together we are our cure,” said Post-Release Participant, Nalio Ayala.

Elmo Golden and Jonathon Kennedy were also guest panelists who were released from the South Bay Correctional and Rehabilitation Facility. Lastly, two peer mentors, Amlak-I Foley and Oswald Newbold participated in the panel as well. The room was full of tears, laughter, and joy as these men shared their stories and what the GEO Continuum of Care has meant for them and their journeys as productive members of their respective communities.

“It was amazing to see how the program has matured in the three years since the last Continuum of Care Conference. The Facilities have taken ownership of their programs. It came full circle



with the post-release services panel, which provided the opportunity to witness the true impact Continuum of Care is having on changing behavior and changing lives,” said Ann Schlarb, President of GEO Care.

The conference ended with a call to action from George Zoley which reinforced the vision for GEO to continue its course as the world leader in evidence-based offender rehabilitation programs.



# 2019 Diversity In Leadership Award Recipients



## Deborah S. Gatling – Executive Secretary at Rivers Correctional Facility

Ms. Gatling personifies the meaning of diversity and leadership as evidenced by her stellar performance with staff at the facility, the GEO Corporate office, and onsite Bureau of Prisons personnel. Furthermore, she has built essential relationships with local community leaders in the NC Department of The Secretary of State for the Northeastern Division where she teaches as a Notary Public Instructor. She also teaches classes at Roanoke-Chowan Community College, Martin, Beaufort and Pitt Community Colleges and the College of the Albemarle.

Deborah serves as a mentor for new staff, meeting with each one on a weekly basis to monitor their progress. This mentorship is in addition to other mission-critical duties at the facility. She has been trained and certified as a Mentor and holds a certification in Paralegal Studies.

Additionally, Ms. Gatling exhibits exemplary community service in several vital capacities. With everything she does for GEO, she still has time to serve as a Chaplain for Chaplains International Association, Virginia Beach; sit as a board member for Transformational Bible Institute and West Roanoke Missionary Baptist Association; and serve as a Youth Pastor, Vacation Bible School Director and Sunday School Instructor for her community and three other churches in Hartford County. In doing this, not only has she gained the admiration and support of the lives she has impacted but she has built many trusted relationships along the way.

## Melita R. Wilson – PREA (Prison Rape Elimination Act) Investigator at Broward Transitional Center

Melita holds several titles in addition to her official one at the Broward Transitional Center including Prison Rape Elimination, Sexual Abuse and Assault Prevention and Intervention Subject Matter Expert, also known as PREA SAAPI SME traveling auditor, alternate Disciplinary Hearing Officer (DHO), alternate Grievance Officer, facility trainer, new hire mentor and CPR trainer. Her official role is vital to the facility's operation since it requires constant monitoring and daily assessments of everything and anything related to the Prison Rape Elimination Act.

Ms. Wilson pays it forward by serving in several volunteer roles in her community where she can showcase her leadership qualities. With her passion to listen and advise, she is currently on the fundraising committee for Kids in Distress, Toys for Tots and the local Rotary Club. In addition, she serves as an advocate in several local senior centers.

Melita is seen by the Broward community as a leader, mentor, coach, and much more since she has made her way through the ranks as a natural leader. She leads by example and uses her skills of empowerment to motivate others inside and outside the organization to do the same. These qualities have produced results for the residents, staff and her inner circles who speak to her character and she shows compassion in each of her endeavors for the community and GEO.





# Plan for Financial Success in 2020

Written By **Susan Napolitano,**  
*Corporate HR*

Taking time at the beginning of the year to focus on your finances can put you on the right path to achieve your goals. You can take stock of where you stand with debt, credit, and savings and look ahead to plan what you want to accomplish. If you're not sure where to start, follow these 6 steps:

## 1. Make a budget or review your existing budget

A good budget provides the foundation you need to maintain financial stability. If you already have a budget, review it to make sure your income and expenses haven't changed. If you don't have a budget, start one. This can be as simple as writing your income and expenses down on paper or in a spreadsheet, or you can use free budgeting apps if you prefer a high-tech approach.

## 2. Set SMART goals for what you'd like to achieve

Next, you should think about the financial goals you want to accomplish and set SMART goals to achieve them. SMART stands for:

- **S**pecific
- **M**easurable
- **A**ttainable
- **R**elevant
- **T**ime-bound

Instead of just setting a goal to save money, plan to save a certain amount for a specific purpose by a set date. If your goal is to pay down debt, you decide which debt to pay first and when you want to have it paid off.

## 3. Take stock of your credit card balances and plan to pay them down

Even if you don't have a goal to eliminate debt, most people come out of the holidays with higher credit card balances. Write down the balance and APR (interest rate) for each account, then prioritize them for repayment. You can either start with the highest APR card first, which helps you save money, or pay off the lowest balance first, which is extremely satisfying and will give you the momentum to tackle the higher balances.

## 4. Look for practical ways to trim expenses

There are plenty of easy ways to free up cash for saving or debt elimination.

- *Review insurance policies and talk to your agent to find ways to save.*
- *Cut services you no longer use (e.g., land line phones) and limit things like streaming services to one service.*
- *Get a home energy audit to find easy ways to cut your electric bill.*
- *Check your mobile plan for features you don't use.*
- *Adjust your thermostat to reduce air conditioning or heating bills.*
- *Pack a lunch a few times a week.*
- *Cut out those vending machine snacks and high-priced coffees. Good for your wallet and your waistline!*

## 5. Review your long-term savings strategy

Check your GEO 401k Plan to see how much you've saved and consider increasing your contributions by 1% each year. You can set this up with auto-accelerate through MassMutual. If you're not enrolled in our plan, do so this year, and start with 1% of salary if finances are tight. If not eligible, you can set up an individual IRA through your local bank. If you have children, you also need to think about your saving strategy for college. Setting up a 529 college savings account can give your children a head-start on avoiding student loan debt.

## 6. Don't forget tax planning!

Income tax season is right around the corner, so it's a good idea to start getting prepared now. To boost your tax refund you may want to rethink your deductions and filing status and make sure you claim tax credits that apply to you such as the 'Child and Dependent Care Credit', the education credit 'The American Opportunity Credit' and also tax credits for energy-saving home improvements. Remember, the more deductions and credits you can claim, the less you'll owe. A bigger refund check in spring can also provide a boost for achieving your financial goals.

If you need help executing any of these steps, visit <https://www.consolidatedcredit.org/ppc/geo-group/> located in your GEOnet portal to find a range of tools to help you, including how-to videos, monthly webinars for things like tax planning, and calculators that can help you find the best way to pay off debt. You can also call the financial coaching hotline at 1-800-775-0171 to speak one-on-one with a certified financial coach who can help you set a course for success.

*\*Information provided by Consolidated Credit, GEO's financial wellness partner*





## Basile Community Trick or Treating

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

On October 29, 2019 the South Louisiana ICE Processing Center (SLIPC) participated in its Community Halloween. Mark Denette, Mayor of Basile, started the program several years ago as a way to let the children in the community enjoy the holiday in a fun and safe atmosphere. Though there was a bit of a mist and a little nip in the air, the staff at SLIPC enjoyed passing out treats to the children and seeing all of the creative costumes. SLIPC is looking forward to future participation in many community events.



## Suicide Awareness Walk

Written By **Kisha Porter**, McFarland Female Community Reentry Facility

On November 15, 2019, the McFarland FCRF organized a suicide awareness walk where participants and staff acknowledged the importance of suicide awareness, and how it affects behavior, feelings, and personal and family life. Participants discussed factors which may lead to suicide including depression, anxiety, loneliness, and substance use. These can create an experience of hopelessness and despair. Participants learned suicide can be prevented in the facility by intrinsic change, talking to staff, attending AA/NA, yoga, and self-empowerment groups.

One participant made a very emotional statement and said,

*"I took life for granted. I didn't have a care in the world, not even when it came to my family or kids. I look at life a lot differently since I have been here at MFCRF. The staff here believe in us when we don't believe in ourselves."*

The staff at MFCRF have an open-door policy where all participants are supported at any time regardless of who they are and where they come from. This community support, not only with the participants, but also with the staff, is an integral part of suicide prevention and the MFCRF team works hard to ensure individualized care with each person they have contact with.

*Pictured Left to Right: Above - Staff members Monica Valdez & Micha Stewart, Participants Deyanira Cuiriz and Allison Tiffany, Staff members Kisha Porter & Tasia Lelfore. Front row: Participants Kendra Fells & Desirre Aguirre. Below - Participant Kendra Fells*

## Federal Recognition of Montgomery

Written By **Randy Tate**, Montgomery Processing Center

On November 18 2019, on behalf of the Montgomery Processing Center, Facility Administrator Randy Tate was presented with this formal recognition by the U.S. Department of Justice's Federal Bureau of Investigation. The recognition acknowledges the cooperation and contributions in combating international terrorism.







# HTCF Building Trades Students Contribute to Imagination Lab

Written By **Dan LeFlore**, *Heritage Trail Correctional Facility*

Recently, *Building Trades* students at the Heritage Trail Correctional Facility (HTCF) in partnership with the Oakland City University (OCU), contributed to the mission of reentry by donating tables to the Imagination Lab.

The Imagination Lab, is a hands-on learning experience where students from Kindergarten through fifth grade at Plainfield Community Schools can experience a 90 minute "odyssey" of educational experiences such as building, inventing, investigating and digitizing.

HTCF discovered, through its partnership with the local Rotary Club, that this innovative learning space required various implementation phases to facilitate the program and the *Building Trades* students were called to action. The workshop tables are used in the lab and those involved in the partnership look forward to other opportunities for the HTCF students to support this unique educational endeavor.

The Plainfield Community School Corporation expressed gratitude and appreciation for their help in getting the lab up and going. OCU and HTCF are thrilled to be partners in giving back to the community and creating unique educational opportunities for all.



# Victim Impact

Written By **Kasia Kijanczuk and Dr. Ralph Fretz**, *Corporate, Research Department, Continuum of Care*

A significant portion of offender rehabilitation is reflecting on consequences of crime; how the criminal choices of the offender affect his/her family, friends, the community and the consequences of the crimes on the victims. One way to measure how the offender thinks about the effects of his/her past offense(s) is through a victim impact assessment that is administered at the beginning and end of treatment.

The "**Victim Impact: Listen and Learn**" curriculum is designed to educate individuals on the impact that crime has on victims, and to encourage a positive change towards pro-social attitudes and behavior. The curriculum covers sexual assault, domestic violence, child abuse and neglect, elderly abuse and neglect, drunk driving, drug-related crimes, gang violence, homicide, and property crime topics.

The Victim Impact assessment has five domains: *knowledge of victim's rights, knowledge of victim-related facts, sensitivity to victim's plight, victim blaming, and accountability.*

The assessment consists of 50 statements in a Likert Scale format, which means the participant scores each item from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 6 (Strongly Agree). The desired outcome is to see the scores for each domain to increase over time, which correlates with a potential for lower recidivism and a higher rate of restitution payment once the offender is reintegrated into the community.

DOMAIN	Description
KNOWLEDGE OF VICTIM'S RIGHTS	Participant's knowledge of victim's rights-related information
KNOWLEDGE OF VICTIM-RELATED FACTS	Participant's absorption of factual material from the curriculum
SENSITIVITY OF VICTIM'S PLIGHT	Participant's attitudes toward the victimization experience and rough measure of levels of expressed empathy
VICTIM BLAMING	Participant's tendency to blame victims for their victimization
ACCOUNTABILITY	Participant's attitudes regarding self-accountability and the need/desire to make amends with victim



## Remembering Brett Bement

Written By **Kassie Zambrano**,  
*Val Verde County Detention Facility*

On November 5, staff at the Val Verde facility joined together to honor the memory of Brett Bement, the former Facility Administrator, on the first anniversary of his passing. Brett Bement joined the company in July of 1989, starting at the former Bridgeport facility. During the course of his career, he served at several other facilities including Lindsey, Willacy, Karnes, Coke, and Central Texas. He also briefly served as the Asst. Director of Operations for both the Eastern and Central Regions. In 2012, he became the Facility Administrator of the Val Verde County Detention Facility, where he served until 2018.

Brett was best known for his wit, crafty humor, and contagious laugh. He was well-respected and developed many personal friendships with co-workers, local law enforcement, and others within the community. The Val Verde facility continues to honor his memory along with all other victims of cancer. In October, the facility donated \$500 to the Hope Cancer Resource Room in his honor.



## Moshannon Valley Correctional Facility Fall 2019 GED Graduation

Written By **Shelly Wriglesworth**, *Moshannon Valley Correctional Facility*

The Moshannon Valley Correctional Facility in Philipsburg, PA, celebrated its fall GED graduation on November 20, 2019. This is the second GED graduation for the year at the facility. A total of 51 students completed and graduated from the program so far during 2019.

The success of this program is due primarily to the ability to accommodate and adapt to the individual and focus on developing better learning strategies to overcome any learning deficits. There are also additional GED tutor times and access to 18 computers for utilization of the DCS GED practice programs.

During the graduation, guest speakers Reverend Phillip Billotte and Deacon Eugene Miller offered the invocation, while Facility Administrator, Lenny Oddo, delivered the graduation address. Graduates, Raul Munoz and Rosalio Chinchilla, presented graduation remarks. A small reception was held for the students at the conclusion of the graduation.

Lenny Oddo is the Facility Administrator at the Moshannon Valley Correctional Facility. The Programs Department is overseen by Assistant Facility Administrator of Programs, Vincent Cahill, and the GED Program is supervised by GED Administrator, Shelly Wriglesworth.







## Poetry Slam: Step Up to the Mic

Written By **Theresa Kemp**,  
*Blackwater River Correctional and  
Rehabilitation Facility*

At Blackwater River Correctional and Rehabilitation Facility in Milton, FL, the inmates know twice a year the Library Supervisor encourages them to write original poetry and perform it in the Poetry Slam.

After two years of hosting slams, the performers aren't reading poetry from a piece of paper; their pieces are memorized or they rarely make it to the second round.

It takes courage, dedication, practice, and nerve to get up and speak in front of a large audience of 150 fellow inmates. From stories about personal addiction, spiritual journeys, pleas of remorse, and humorous takes on possibilities once reentered into the community, the November 20, 2019 Poetry Slam was a special event that is still talked about among the Blackwater population.

Although these spoken words may be fictionalized and per the rules of the Slam- cleaner than many participants originally wanted, 150 other inmates were silent during each performance.

This art form is seen in national competitions and has found a place at Blackwater. Poetry itself provides an outlet for strong emotions to be expressed healthily. Slam poetry allows poetry and the emotions contained within to be shared with others. When words resonate with the audience, people realize they share some of the same experiences and mindsets as others.

Every participant shared a piece of their story. Derrick Thompson encouraged a friend with cancer and Irving Lennon memorialized his daughter, who died earlier in 2019. Maurice Brown shared some "Endless Thoughts." Kareem Gough overcame his battle with addiction and chooses to carry on. Fady Saweres contemplates his words to God after he dies, since his life has been in turmoil. Damian Cangas lamented missing his daughter growing up. John Fullbright took on the perspective of a death row inmate's last words. Christopher Altman apologized to his mother.

Some were in the competition to win it, and some were there for the catharsis offered by sharing their art.



All the participants faced judging on clarity, originality, timeliness, rhythm, performance, and audience response.

The winner of the latest Poetry Slam, Paris Regal, captivated the audience through humor and realism with lines like "Anything is possible if Moses could beat water from a stone; Anything is possible if Trump could make the Whitehouse his home." His poem "Win this World" easily clinched a spot in the finals, where he again drew in the audience for a thunderous applause when he took a breath before he even finished performing "Speak Louder."

Regal says that the slam helps give him confidence and a positive outlet. He plans to continue participating in Poetry Slams for as long as he is at Blackwater and in the community once released.

The growth of the Poetry Slam is something Blackwater takes pride in. As Regal wrote and performed, "all it takes is belief in self; Put on your coat of greatness and leave doubt at home on the shelf." Many participants write to encourage other inmates in the audience to find a path out of the one that got them there. Finding and encouraging talent recognizable outside of the day-to-day gives these poets self-worth. Providing this emotional outlet and modelled behavior aligns with GEO's Continuum of Care mission to reduce recidivism through programming.







## McFarland Donates Blankets and Towels to Local Animal Shelter

Written By **C. Calvo**, *McFarland Female Community Reentry Facility*

With the cold weather upon us, the McFarland Female Community Reentry Facility donated old blankets and towels to the local animal shelter. The city's current facility does not have the means or equipment to wash blankets and towels, and currently operates on a one animal use policy.

The city hopes to open a new shelter next year and with the help of community donations and support, will provide commercial washers and dryers which will eliminate the need for the one animal use policy.

In the meantime, the donations of blankets and towels are critical to keep the animals warm during the winter season, and with the constant intake of animals there is always a need. MFCRF was more than happy to help our four-legged friends, and we look forward to partnering with the shelter again in the near future.

*Pictured Left to Right: Claire Calvo, Assistant Facility Administrator, Oscar Maya, City of McFarland, Jose Munguia, City of McFarland, & Karina Hernandez, Correctional Officer*



## Cleanest Kitchen at GEO

Written By **Mandy Davis**, *Great Plains Correctional Facility*

Great Plains Correctional Facility's kitchen is known as the cleanest at GEO and it's reputation in this endeavor still holds true. Javier Rivera, Food Service Manager, not only runs a spotless kitchen, he has received several compliments from the client and any visiting staff who have had the pleasure of coming into the GPCF kitchen.

GPCF recently had it's annual CFM Audit, with no findings against. Great Plains' kitchen is being used as an example for all GEO staff as a standard to be put in place at all GEO facilities. This couldn't be done without Mr. Rivera's team.

The Overall success of achieving and maintaining a kitchen with high sanitation standards can be attributed specifically to the assigned tasks to workers, thorough inspections by Food Service staff, and the creation of a positive work environment for all. These measures require effective leadership and the ability to communicate and demonstrate high standards.

*Pictured from Left to Right: Front - Josh Royal, Robbin Wood, DeAnna Hicks, Linda Dean, Javier Rivera, Galina Baikova, Malia Ruiz-Weeke, Desiree Fisher. Back - Judy Griffin, Yaritea Garced-Matta, Elizabeth Doyle, Joshua Marcum, Angelica Harvell*



## HiSET Class Graduation

Written By **Nichella Fisher**, *McFarland Female Community Reentry Facility*

The Education Department at McFarland FCRF had 57 High School Equivalency Test (HiSET) graduates this year. This is an amazing number for a small facility of 300 beds. The objective of the HiSET class is to prepare students for the exam. The placement of HiSET students is based on their Test of Basic Adult Education (TABE) score, requiring a minimum of a 9.0 grade point level.

The students consist of new arrivals and transfer students from ABE II/III. Most students come in with a positive attitude and the willingness to work hard.

The structure of the classroom consist of an independent study, small group instruction, and one-on-one tutoring sessions. The success of the HiSET class indicates that facilitators, instructors and students are working together to help students accomplish the goal of obtaining their High School Equivalency Diploma.

*Pictured from Left to Right: Emily Axtell, Jeneva Sprecco, Nichole Aguirre, Leanne Fahrion, Tracy Vaughn, Daisha Williams, LaRae Pisano, Denise Shearer, Karlie Pierce, Fiona Fiasue, Samyra Pickney, Jessica Cuateco, Isabel Urias, Margarita Jimenez*





## International Corrections and Prisons Association Conference- Buenos Aires

Written By **Rich Felsher**, *Corporate Operations & International Services*

The International Corrections and Prisons Association (ICPA) 2019 conference was held October 27 to November 1, 2019 at the Hotel PanAmericano in Buenos Aires, Argentina. It was well attended with representatives from 77 nations participating. The theme of the conference was Strengthening our Correctional Cornerstones: Rights, Dignity, Safety and Support. The event was hosted by Argentina's Federal Prison Service. GEO has been building relationships with the ICPA and the attendees since our return to the association in 2015.

Dr. Ralph Fretz, Director of Research, GEO Care, presented at the conference. Rich Felsher, Manager, Operations & Administration, Secure

Services and International Services was a delegate to the Annual General Meeting and Conference. Dr. Nena Messina, who has worked with The GEO Group on several projects, partnered with Dr. Fretz on a Thematic Workshop supporting the 2nd Cornerstone of the conference- Dignity. Some in the audience were not supportive of privatization and by the end of the 3-part session, Dr. Messina and Dr. Fretz had clearly changed and influenced the opinions of the audience with their portrayal of the great work being done by GEO's Continuum of Care.

GEO had two nominations under consideration for the ICPA Correctional Excellence Awards. Ravenhall Correctional Centre received a Certificate of Nomination to formally acknowledge the high standards of work achieved within the field, specifically with regards to "Ravenhall Continuum of Care: A Unique Response to Reducing Reoffending and Improving Community Reintegration Outcomes' initiative". Dr. Nena Messina was also awarded a Certificate of Nomination for her research initiative at the McFarland Female Community Reentry Facility. Among those in attendance were Heads of Service from several nations and top academic experts. Peter Severin, Commissioner, Corrective Services, New South Wales, Australia

was elected as President and Hans Meurisse, former Director-General of the Belgian Prison Service, was elected Vice President.

Dr. Frank Porporino, President of The International Association of Correctional and Forensic Psychology (IACFP) and other leading researchers provided academic guidance for the educational sessions. The IACFP hosted the Distinguished Scholar lecture, presented this year by Professor Shadd Maruna of Ireland. His presentation was "From Labelling Bad Apples to a Better Science of Spoiled Barrels: A new Social Psychology of Risk".

The American Correctional Association (ACA) was well represented at the conference. They presented "International Correctional Core Standards" as part of ICPA's 1st Cornerstone-Rights. Speakers from the ACA included Elizabeth Gondles, Gary Mohr, and Denise Robinson with James Gondles also in attendance. Attendees were able to experience a Presidential election up close and personal with the Conference hotel a few feet away from the Obelisk of Buenos Aires. The Obelisk is the focal point of celebrations and protests following every election. Conference events were held at several landmarks including the Paz Palace and the Tango Porteno.



## Thanksgiving Food Baskets

Written By **Lindsey Vercher**,  
*LaSalle ICE Processing Center*

The 2019 LaSalle ICE Processing Center (LIPC) Thanksgiving Food Drive for the elderly of LaSalle Parish once again rose to the challenge and delivered baskets with a complete Thanksgiving

## Soldiers' Angels Treats for Troops

Written By **Darlene P. Semlinger**, *Karnes County Detention Facility*

It was that time of the year again to collect Treats for the Soldiers' Angels Treats for Troops for the Central Region. The collection was for our Active duty service members deployed and Veterans in and out of hospitals. Karnes County Detention Facility staff were challenged to collect candy for our 3rd Annual Soldiers' Angels Treats for Troops. The challenge was whatever shift and department that brought in the most candy pieces would win a pizza party provided by the facility. Shifts and departments were separated and at the end of the challenge B-Card Security Shift won with 5,723 pieces and the Medical department won with 4,880 pieces. The total collected for Treats for Troops was 17,306 pieces of candy, which represents to 350 lbs. Thank you KCDF Staff for your candy contribution to Soldier's Angels Treats for Troops!

*Pictured Left to Right: Loran Asebedo, Matthew Spencer, Elida Lopez, Maria Garcia, Alethea Hernandez, Blanca Garza, Mary D. Ramirez, Vanessa Puerto, Nancy Currie, Adriana May, Basil Usiabulu, Darlene Semlinger, Ashley Duran*



meals to twenty families on November 22, 2019. The LaSalle Council on Aging provided names of local elderly residents to us confidentially during this process. Our staff donated a variety of canned items, raw sweet potatoes, dessert mixes, twenty turkeys, and a variety of other food items.

According to an article from the Louisiana Budget Project dated May 23, 2019, "In Louisiana, 18.8% of people over 65 live below 125% of the federal poverty level (\$21,138 for a family of two). In such severely resource-constrained households, resources that would go to buy nutritious food compete with utility

bills, medication, housing costs and other necessities. While Louisiana has higher levels of senior food insecurity and senior poverty compared to the rest of the nation, Louisiana seniors who are eligible for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) receive benefits at levels below the national average (33% of eligible seniors enroll in SNAP in Louisiana, compared with 42% nationwide)." Sadly, Louisiana is statistically the worst in the nation for senior hunger. For these reasons, our goal is to provide food baskets for twenty-five families in 2020. The dedicated employees of LIPC helped make this event happen by also fundraising for the event through food sales and raffle tickets.



## Brooks County Detention Center Thanksgiving Meal Giveaway

Written By **Cheryle Martinez**, *Brooks County Detention Center*

The Brooks County Detention Center, in conjunction with the Falfurrias Police Department, proudly participated in a Thanksgiving Meal Giveaway on November 20, 2019. The employees of Brooks County came together and contributed food items which resulted in a total of 23 complete Thanksgiving meals. The donated items were packaged and delivered to needy

families in the local community and consisted of a large Turkey, mashed potatoes, green beans, corn, cranberry sauce, rolls and pies. The recipients of the Thanksgiving meals were very grateful, and the employees at Brooks County Detention Center were proud to make a difference and contribute to the less fortunate.

To the awesome employees of Brooks County, we thank you for your generous contributions, this couldn't have been done without you.

*Pictured Left to Right: Victoria Palacios, Regina Morais, Stephanie Villarreal, Valerie Ramirez, Billie Winner-Davis, Ryan Johnson, Valerie Johnson, Enrique Perez, Mario Herrera, Cheryle Martinez, Yvonne Garcia, Elena Moreno, Anna Tijerina & Daniel Maldonado.*





# Golden State's Continuum of Care Rings-in the Planets at Star Party VIII!

Written By **D. Davenport**, *Golden State MCCF*

The Star Party VIII astronomy event at Golden State MCCF on November 7 and 8, 2019 was a spectacular Continuum of Care event!

It brought views of two planets and the Moon down to the eighty inmate-students watching the night sky from the recreation yards. Several of the brightest stars were also visible, principles of "navigating by the stars" were presented, and astronomy resources galore were available for perusal.

The early November dates were chosen, because two large planets were easy to see, and the Moon's disk was 90% illuminated. Jupiter and Saturn were visible in the southwest night sky and were seen by students through a small refracting telescope. Most of these new astronomers were able to see the rings of Saturn for the first time through the optical tube and from 976 million miles away!

Participants examined the Moon through a large pair of astronomy binoculars, where they got a good look at the craters and "seas" of the Moon. On the line where the "lit" part of the Moon met the dark part of the disc, pupils could see the "3-D effect" the lighting had on the crater ridges of our only natural satellite.

Seven of the brightest stars were visible, even under the security lighting!

Mr. Davenport gave a "naming tour of the stars," using a green laser point. A demonstration of the use of the

marine sextant (sky protractor) with its companion book, the 2019 Nautical Almanac, was offered to interested students. The exact-time sounds of the U.S. government station WWV, from Colorado Springs, CO, was tuned-in on a special radio, and the use of "precise time" in celestial navigation was described.



These outdoor activities lasted one and a half hours, each night. The second half of each evening took place in an academic classroom. Here, dozens of astronomy books, star charts, a galaxy model, a Moon globe and celestial atlases were available for students to peruse and ask questions. Participants viewed with extreme interest a DVD documentary about amateurs "doing astronomy."

Each participant received an 18-page handout of the astronomy information for that night.

Both outdoors and indoors, the students were respectful of the astronomy tools, published material,



and the participating GEO staff. For many of the students, it was their first time to see the night sky through a telescope and special binoculars, and their first experience included viewing the rings of a distant planet!

This eighth Star Party, an instruction-based GEO Continuum of Care activity in McFarland, was made possible by Facility Administrator G. Brochu, Assistant Facility Administrator J. Lavallee, and Education/Programs Manager D. Meyer. Participating inmate-students were from academic classes of instructors Prentice, Garciasalas, Gallagos, Holguin and Davenport (who loaned the astronomy tools). Inmate-tutors with astronomy expertise provided able assistance at the telescope and binoculars. Security for the event was overseen by Chief B. Bodirsky and Lieutenant M. Acheson.

*Pictured Clockwise From Lower Left: Facility Administrator G. Brochu, Lieutenant M. Acheson, Assistant Facility Administrator J. Lavallee and Education/Programs Manager D. Meyer.*





# Broward & Corporate Walk for Breast Cancer Awareness

Written By **Chris Ferreira,**  
Corporate

On Sunday, October 27th, employees from GEO's Corporate Headquarters and Broward Transitional Center came together to support the American Cancer Society. Employees participated in the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk on Florida Atlantic University's campus. In addition to having nearly one hundred GEO employees participate in the walk, The GEO Group Foundation and Broward Transitional Center contributed \$5,000

and \$1,000, respectively, to the American Cancer Society.

The American Cancer Society started Making Strides Against Breast Cancer walks to unite communities in the fight against this deadly disease. Today, Making Strides is the largest network of breast cancer events in the nation - and they do more than just walk. They raise money to help the American Cancer Society fund groundbreaking breast cancer research and provide patient services like free rides to chemo, free places to stay near treatment, and a live 24/7 cancer helpline.







## Holiday Joy and Giving

Written By September Millar, Broward Transitional Center

The Staff at Broward Transitional Center went all out this Holiday Season by donating hundreds of dollars' worth of presents and gift cards. There is a special place in our hearts that is filled with the importance of giving back to those in need. Toys, household items, and small appliances were taken to the Broward Partnership for the many homeless families in hopes that their Holiday would be full of joy. Four baskets full of items such as perfumes, colognes, household items and gift cards were also given to a special family that just received a home through Habitat for Humanity after theirs burned to the ground from a dangerous fire. This family was

so grateful to receive our gifts and thanked us a million times. It is not about the gratitude you receive, but



the warmth you feel through being philanthropic. We would especially like to thank Officer Jacqueline Sunkins who made the baskets out of the donations while adding a significant amount of gifts herself. She really has a heart made of gold.

*Pictured Left to Right: Photo 1: Baskets for a Lovely Family – (From Left) Melita Wilson, Officer Jacqueline Sunkins, Officer Noreen Christie, September Millar*

*Photo 2: Baskets and the Lovely Family – (From Left) Raphael Williams Jr, September Millar, Rachel Sims, Ryan Sims, RyCarri Dailey, Facility Administrator Shad Rice*

*Photo 3: Broward Partnership Gifts for the Homeless- (From Left) Bryan Cochran, Christine Zapata*

## Christmas at Head Start

Written By Melinda Parker, LaSalle ICE Processing Center

LaSalle ICE Processing Center adopted the LaSalle Head Start program in 2011 and has provided support in various ways since. Each year, LaSalle staff spread Christmas cheer to the students at the local Head Start. On December 17, 2019, we delivered presents including books, coloring books, crayons, puzzles and stickers to 60 students. To help make the day a little more special, some staff dressed up and visited with the students while we delivered the presents. This year, we had the Grinch, Cindy Lou Who,

Santa and his Elf all go with us to the Head Start. Over the years, we have also donated computers and games, as well as, monetary donations directly to the Head Start program. This year, we made a donation of \$800. LaSalle

Head Start uses the funds towards additional training for staff, curriculum supplements for the students, and other support for classrooms.

*Pictured Left to Right: Joe Norton, Corrie Roark, Melinda Parker, Stacey Savage, Jeffrey Free and Ashley Aric.*







# Corporate Gives Christmas to Children from Boy's Town

Written By **Eileen Roth**, *Corporate*

Every year, our Corporate office brings Christmas to children at Boys Town, an organization located in South Florida whose mission is to change the way America cares for children and families. In early November, employees start looking forward to receiving the names of their children, so they can be that child's Santa. This year, we sponsored 101 children for Christmas.

**How the process works:** Elizabeth Lopez-Smith from Boys Town starts gathering the names of the children.



She puts them on a spread sheet and color codes families and single children, so if a department wants to take a whole family they can do so easily! The children from Boys Town can be referred by a therapist, the Department of Children and Families, or could have been removed from Foster Care or are in treatment facilities.

The excitement builds when the email goes out to all corporate employees that the "Ornaments" with the children's first name and their wish list have arrived. They are enthusiastic to grab an Ornament off the tree and



write their name next to that child. The employee is now officially a Santa with all the responsibilities of the job.

Some families ask for necessities like car seats and groceries. Departments stepped up and helped these families and children by providing support for those needs in addition to the presents.

Employees loaded the presents onto a truck provided by another volunteer and brought to Boy's Town.

*Pictured Top: Brian Evans and Eileen Roth  
Bottom Left: Marion Ysaguirre  
Bottom Right: Javier Bustamante*





# Angel Tree

The D. Ray James Correctional Facility has done the Angel Tree program for the last several years. The last four years it has been spearheaded by Amber Spell and Ashley Hartman this year. This year, we teamed up with the Folkston ICE Processing Center and were provided a list of 55 foster children in the area. These children range in ages from newborn to 18 years old. For each angel, we are provided the child's age, gender and his/her three wish list items along with clothing and shoes sizes.

The Angel Tree program invites employees to "adopt an angel". We encourage staff to adopt an angel for themselves or to go in as a department/group and adopt an angel or two!

If staff are unable to adopt a child we encourage them to donate a few dollars to help with the stocking stuffers (Toothbrush, Toothpaste, candy, etc.), more expensive gifts, and the children who do not get adopted. This year we were able to purchase gifts for all 55 children as well as stockings for each!



## Christmas Party

Written By **Randy Tate**, *Montgomery Processing Center and Joe Corley Processing Center*

This year, the Christmas Party for Montgomery Processing Center staff was held jointly with the Joe Corley Processing Center. A DJ provided oversight for the music for the night. Staff received a catered barbecue meal served at a main attraction event center in the Conroe, Texas area. Prizes were raffled off to those who attended or were at work at the time of the party. The two facilities experienced a very relaxing time as they celebrated together. The event was a success and both the Montgomery and Joe Corley Processing Centers utilized their Employee Morale Committees to plan and make all the arrangements for this well received event.



## Santa Came Early For McFarland First Graders

Written By **Claire Calvo**, *McFarland Female Community Reentry Facility*

The MFCRF team was in the true holiday spirit when they fulfilled the wish lists of 109 First Grade students at Kern Avenue Elementary School.

The staff received a wide range of requests with some children wanting toys, while others requesting shoes, clothes, and blankets. The staff were more than happy to make the students' wishes come true, and felt much excitement and joy as they heard the cheers and screams of children the day the gifts were delivered. The MFCRF staff then engaged with the children, and enjoyed snacks, wrote thank you cards, and shared lots of hugs and stories.

The MFCRF team continues to support this small town with their big hearts, and we are grateful for the staff and their efforts to bring joy to the children of the community.



*Pictured Left to Right: Top - Elizabeth Calderon, Lorena Martinez, and Kern Avenue Elementary First Grade, Classroom #4  
Bottom - (Back Row) Claire Calvo, Keisha Porter, Serrena McCuan, Liz Knott, Maria Robledo, Christina Gonzalez, Crystal Perez, Lorena Martinez, Georgina Medina, (Front Row) Yobani Gamboa-Campos, Elizabeth Calderon*



## Brooks County Detention Center Santa's Coming to Town Toy Drive

Written By **Cheryle Martinez**,  
*Brooks County Detention Center*

The Brooks County Detention Center made a difference this Holiday Season in the City of Falfurrias by donating over 150 toys to the annual local Toy Drive. Throughout the city of Falfurrias, different organizations partnered together to provide toys to the annual event "Santa's Coming to Town Toy Drive" hosted by the Falfurrias Police Department. Brooks County Detention Center was assigned the age group of 5-6 years of age. Generous toy donations were collected from staff, and employees were challenged to bring 1-unwrapped toy. As the donations started to come in and the boxes started to overflow with toys, we couldn't help but feel happy and fulfilled knowing that we were making a positive impact for the children in the community. We are so grateful to the employees of the Brooks County Detention Center for being so generous and giving during this Holiday Season. Happy Holidays from the Brooks County Detention Center.

*Pictured Left to Right: Maria Moreno, Anna Tijerina, Triston Sanchez, Billie Winner-Davis, Eloise Ruiz, Janette Arevalo, Mary Allen & Julia Garcia.*



## Spreading Holiday Cheer!

Written By **Tiffany Hartley**, *Western Region Detention Facility*

This has been a crazy, busy year for us here at WRDF. With the influx of Intake populations, we are often at capacity, which can in turn lead to some tension among the population. We realize this is the time of year that emotions run high and feelings of loneliness are shared among most. It was time to bring holiday cheer in hopes of raising the spirits of all, wow, did our plan work!

With much coordination and dedication to the cause, we were able to host a holiday concert for all at the facility. Without the selfless dedication of church members from Sion Centro Cristiano and Lo Mejor Del Trigo, this event would not have been possible.

These individuals graciously volunteered their time on a Saturday with the goal of bringing joy. Beautiful holiday songs were sung and prayers were said; it was such a sight to see tears of happiness across many faces. The music fostered closeness and empathy among the population, just enough for them to forget where they are for a moment.

The two groups combined sang their hearts out for nearly 12 hours! It was a long day but absolutely worth the pay off. Several individuals expressed their gratitude and positive sentiments, claiming the concert was exactly what they needed. Staff were also uplifted. What a great way to spend your shift, surrounded by the sounds of the season.

We will absolutely be making this event an annual tradition! It was an exciting day that brought joy to many and erased feelings of sorrow, if only for a little while. To witness the overwhelming appreciativeness was an incredible feeling. We have to constantly remind ourselves that 'the little things' do matter and may be considered 'big things' by others.







# Commodore Winner Revealed

Written By **Philip Goslin**, *Junee Correctional Centre*

Fiona Dawson is now the proud owner of a beautifully restored 1987 VL Holden Commodore after her name was drawn out of the barrel by New South Wales Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections Anthony Roberts at the opening of Junee Correctional Centre's new maximum security wing.

The car has been restored from scratch over a 12-month period by a group of 10 inmates — with the youngest 19 years of age and the oldest 56 — to raise money for local charity Country Hope.

Following strong promotional support from staff at Junee Correctional Centre

the raffle raised in excess of \$63,000. It is the third time in five years that inmates at Junee Correctional Centre enrolled in automotive courses through TAFE NSW have restored a car for charity.

Manager of Rehabilitation and Reintegration at the Centre, Trevor Coles, said the program was about building practical skills and personal development.

"Projects of this nature provide inmates with a wonderful opportunity to apply the technical skills they are learning," he said.

"On this project, those skills included spray painting, automotive restoration, panel beating and mechanical engineering.

"The participants get invaluable hands-on experience and develop a strong sense of teamwork that promotes personal development.

"They are really proud of both their work and the contribution they are

making to members of the community who need support."

As the recipients of the \$63,000 raised, Country Hope will utilise the money to support local families who have a child diagnosed with cancer or a chronic life-threatening illness.



*Pictured Left to Right:  
Top: General Manager Scott Brideoake handing over the keys of the restored 1987 VL Holden Commodore to Fiona Dawson.  
Bottom: General Manager Scott Brideoake, Fiona Dawson, Industries Manager Peter Holt, Country Hope Fundraising/Events Coordinator Michael Small and Manager of Training Services TAFE NSW Nikki Hansell.*





## Stunning Mural Lifts Old Hall

Written By **Philip Goslin**, *June Correctional Centre*

A group of talented inmates at June Correctional Centre have painted a stunning mural that captures the essence of the township of Old Junee.

The project — which took 15 months to complete — followed a request from the Old Junee Hall Committee to enhance its community space.

Rich in colour, the artwork serves as a stage backdrop and features golden canola fields, silos, old town buildings, a train and an Australian cattle dog set against a brilliant blue skyline.

Inmates used photos of the local area as inspiration and a group of four worked on site at the hall to complete the mural.

## Teddy Toy Run

Written By **Regina Regulska**, *Fulham Correctional Centre*

Twenty-five teddy bears made by inmates participating in the Soft Toy Program at Fulham Correctional Centre found loving homes after they were donated to the local Christmas toy run. The organisation and distribution of the annual event, which delivers hampers to low-income and underprivileged residents, was taken over this year by the Red Knights International Firefighters Motorcycle Club.

Club president Andrew Young praised the Centre for responding to their request for donations, saying, "It's terrific to get this sort of support - I love doing toy runs".

Fulham Correctional Centre's general manager Natalie Greenfield and correctional officer Helen Dolan, who oversees the program, handed over the teddies to Mr. Young and club member Neville McKenzie.

The Soft Toys Program at the Centre was developed in 2015 and presents participants with an opportunity to give back to the community while supporting children in need.

The program initially produced 'trauma teddies' which have long been considered to be a therapeutic tool for children during distressing incidents. When attending such incidents, Ambulance Victoria members would give the child a teddy to soothe and distract them from their immediate surroundings.

In recent years, the program has expanded and now includes a variety of teddy sizes and a range of soft toys including dolphins and rabbits. Approximately 250 soft toys have been produced since the program was introduced.





# Junee Expansion Opens

Written By Philip Goslin, Junee Correctional Centre



The New South Wales Minister for Counter Terrorism and Corrections, Anthony Roberts officially opened the new 480-bed maximum security wing at Junee Correctional Centre in December.

Part of the NSW Government's \$3.8 billion investment in safer communities, the expansion includes accommodation areas as well as activities and services infrastructure, a purpose-built administration building, and new gatehouse.

Minister Roberts was joined by Cootamundra Member of Parliament Steph Cooke and Corrective Services NSW Assistant Commissioner Carlo Scasserra at a ceremonial centre-keys handover with centre General Manager Scott Brideoake.

"Junee Correctional Centre is one of the biggest employers in the Riverina and its expansion has led to an additional 130 ongoing jobs in the area and a continuing investment in the region," Mr. Roberts said.

"The new modern wing will enhance the Centre's strong reputation in reducing reoffending through improved inmate access to education, programs and training."

The new jobs created include positions for 116 correctional officers and supervisors, as well as, 14 medical and cultural support staff.

Steph Cooke said the construction project had already made a positive contribution to the Wagga Wagga and Junee economies.

"At the peak of construction there were between 250 to 300 tradies working on site to ensure the new centre wing was delivered on time and on budget. During that time, they were shopping, eating and staying locally," she said.

Carlo Scasserra said the new wing would strengthen the Centre's focus on inmate rehabilitation.

"A dedicated new industries building with bakery, laundry and other operations will ensure inmates are readily employed and learning skills to prepare them for life on the outside," he said.

The expansion also includes a new K9 Unit and two ovals.

Scott Brideoake said the project included many benefits for staff and inmates.

"We welcome the refurbishment and expansion of our gatehouse, health centre, inmate reception and administration building to make a better workplace," he said.

Work will continue into next year, with the refurbishment of support areas within the existing centre and construction of a new 10-bed Female Unit.

The new wing takes Junee Correctional Centre's capacity to about 1300. The expansion mirrors the existing design and adds four accommodation units including one for remand inmates. It significantly increases Junee's operational flexibility by offering a 'surge capacity' from 480 to 720 inmates.

The centre currently employs nearly 360 staff with about half of those living in the local area. It also invests heavily in the local community, contributing over \$10 million annually through local purchasing, donations, scholarships, sponsorships and charity work.

"We are very proud of being a major employer in the region and being recognised by the local community as a good neighbour," said Scott Brideoake. "Junee Correctional Centre is dedicated to reducing reoffending through education and vocational training and to supporting successful reintegration back into the community."

"We are confident that this expansion and the recruitment of additional staff in rehabilitation, reintegration, health and other support roles will enhance our capacity to deliver on this commitment."

The GEO Group Australia has successfully managed Junee Correctional Centre on behalf of the NSW government for over 26 years.



## Arthur Townes, NJ Alumni Manager, Speaks on “Balancing Justice with Mercy” Panel

Written By **Karen Collins**, *GEO Care Strategic Marketing*

Arthur Townes, GEO Reentry’s Alumni Services Manager for New Jersey, was a recent speaker and contributor at the “Balancing Justice With Mercy” panel discussion, which took place October 19, 2019 at the Fountain Baptist Church in Summit, New Jersey. Mr. Townes joined a panel consisting of two formerly incarcerated individuals and two family members of loved ones that are currently incarcerated. The panel addressed the attendees on the topic of the criminal justice system, and participated in a Q&A.

The event was designed to help individuals address issues that mass incarceration brings to families and the community. Mr. Townes presented on the importance and value of reentry services being provided in prisons,

and shared his personal experiences while facing the challenges of reentry. He gave credit to reentry services and previous alumni who helped him, as well as, others reenter society successfully.

“Reentry services can change lives. I see many people develop hope if they are willing to be open and change,” said Mr. Townes. “We are honored to deliver the message that there is help out there through the transition, and that a positive lifestyle is attainable.”

As the Manager for GEO Reentry Services, Mr. Townes works with individuals currently in and out of the system to support a successful reentry, providing informational resources on substance abuse treatment, educational and vocational opportunities, housing, and other services available in the community. Members of GEO Reentry Alumni Services act as mentors to those transitioning to a positive lifestyle.

The event was sponsored by Healing Communities USA, Urban League Reconnections program, and the Fountain Baptist Church. Rev. J.



Michael Sanders is the Pastor at the Fountain Baptist Church and hosted the day’s event. Attendees were treated to an address by the Rev. Dr. Harold Dean Trulear, National Director of Healing Communities, USA. Dr. Trulear served as Associate Professor of Applied Theology at Howard University School of Divinity, and has attained numerous national honors for his work with families and community members impacted by crime and mass incarceration.

Topics for the presentation included “Experiences with the Criminal Justice System,” “The Community Response,” and “The Response of the Church to the Needs of Families and Communities Impacted by Crime and Mass Incarceration.”

## Lycoming RSC Joins “Running Over Addiction 5K”

Written By **Michael Boughton**, *Lycoming RSC & Karen Collins*, *GEO Care Strategic Marketing*

Congrats to staff and alumni from the GEO Reentry Services’ Lycoming County Reentry Service Center (RSC), on their sponsorship and participation in the “Running Over Addiction 5k,” event on September 21st 2019. This is the first year the center is both a participant and sponsor of the event.

“We are very proud to be a partner in this event, and share in our mission of helping individuals in our community become substance free,” said Michael Boughton, Program Manager at Lycoming County RSC.

Staff walked and ran the 5K race and were given the chance to speak with members of the community and other treatment agencies that were in attendance. Information was available at a table set up by the Lycoming RSC in order to inform members of the Lycoming County community of its services. Alumna Heather S. volunteered her time to work at the RSC information table at this year’s event. The event was held at the South Williamsport Pool Complex, and the walk/run took place on the Lycoming County River Walk.



The Running Over Addiction 5K event is produced by the West Branch Drug & Alcohol Abuse Commission (WBDA). The event is held to help raise awareness and funds to provide referral and treatment services to those who live in Lycoming and Clinton counties in Pennsylvania. At WBDA, treatment and prevention services are available to those in the community fighting addiction.

Lycoming County RSC is located in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, and is a GEO Reentry Services center that provides non-residential reentry programming to those referred from the Lycoming County Probation Department. The center has a commitment to helping individuals recover from substance abuse and criminal lifestyles by providing the tools to for another chance to live a positive lifestyle.



# Mid Valley Celebrates a Successful End to 2019

Written By **Claudia Herrera**, *Mid Valley House*

In September, we celebrated another school year of the Parenting Program where residents invited their families to celebrate a back to school bash. We had a great turnout and residents and their children enjoyed activities, pizza and desserts. Surrounded by music, free haircuts and the Edinburg Fire Department Heroes along with SPARKY everyone had a great times. Staff had the opportunity to meet the children and families of the residents we are assisting. Special Thanks to Mr. Frank Gonzalez from Family Services for selecting our facility to donate over 40 backpacks filled with school supplies.

Then, in the month of October, we celebrated a Candy Bash Family Night where residents had the opportunity to enjoy carnival games with their kids, win prizes and enjoy a train ride. This event brought families together and gave the opportunity for some residents to meet their grandkids for the first time.

Finally, in December, we celebrated another successful family night with a "Dinner with Santa." Children met Santa and enjoyed good food, presents and pictures with Santa Claus. This gave residents another opportunity to enjoy time with their families, play board games, enjoy good food and catch up with their kids. Mid Valley House continues to promote healthy family relationships helping residents release successfully from the program.





# GEO Reentry Services Celebrates National Recovery Month

Written By Karen Collins, *GEO Care Strategic Marketing*

GEO Reentry Services celebrated National Recovery Month coast to coast throughout September, with events that highlight the importance of reentry services provided nationwide. Staff, alumni services members, visitors, and current residents of facilities took part in scheduled events which included Recovery Month walks, guest speakers, sign contests and an overall focus on the importance of using the tools of reentry services to begin a life that is substance and crime free.

In New Jersey, Alumni Services members and staff from local facilities participated in a community "Walk for

Wellness" and concert in Liberty State Park. Several attendees represented GEO Reentry on a glorious day joined by others in nearby New Jersey, New York, and Pennsylvania communities to share the joy of living drug free.

"It was truly inspirational to see so many gathering to share the message of recovery," said Arthur Townes, Coordinator for New Jersey Alumni Services. "We are proud to carry the message that reentry works, and we are there to support recovery as others transition into the community."

On September 27 2019, the Southwestern Illinois Correctional Center (SWICC) in East St. Louis, held a "Together We Are Stronger," Recovery Walk in a designated area on the grounds of the facility, with GEO staff holding custom made signs and posters in support of Recovery Month. Approximately 230 inmates also participated in the Walk and joined in chanting recovery slogans.

"It was great to see staff smiling, having fun, laughing and participating as a team," said Lori Moore, GEO Program Director at SWICC. "It was an uplifting celebration for all."

GEO staff also created a Recovery Month Spirit Contest. Housing units were able to design and decorate their dayrooms with posters that highlight recovery. Many made a real effort and the result was a powerful array of posters that were displayed. The creativity was overwhelming, making for a tough decision for the judges. Offenders even participated as mannequins, a 3D book was created, and staff felt the message of recovery was truly emphasized.

On the west coast the GEO Reentry staff at North Kern State Prison in Delano, California, celebrated National Recovery Month by providing a whole week of guest speakers that featured personal stories from inmates regarding their journey to prison and their hopes of recovery going forward. Guest speakers consisted of GEO employees from other facilities as well as community members who



shared their personal stories. Topics included overcoming addiction, criminality, being raised in poverty, prior gang involvement, incarceration, prostitution, being a victim of human trafficking, loss of children to the state, and dealing with loss of life.

"Recovery Month was successfully celebrated at North Kern," said Danielle Gonzales, GEO Program Director. "Inmates were moved by the stories shared by the visitors, enough to be encouraged to carry on the message weeks after the visitors were gone."

GEO Reentry enjoyed a large array of events nationwide that reminded current and former residents about the importance of recovery.





## Delaney Hall Hosts Employee Appreciation Luncheon

Written By **Karen Collins, GEO Care Strategic Marketing**

A demonstration of staff appreciation was held at Delaney Hall, a residential reentry center in Newark NJ, for employees. Taking place on a beautiful day on the grounds of the facility, staff were honored with an Employee Appreciation Luncheon/BBQ meal as a symbol of gratitude for their hard work and dedication. A great day was had by all and everyone enjoyed the camaraderie and sharing a meal.

"We wanted to show our appreciation to our staff here at Delaney who bring their best everyday to their jobs, helping the residents in our care by delivering the best quality services we can provide," said Alan Chapman, Facility Director of Delaney Hall. "The luncheon helps solidify employees as a team and supports positive work relationships."

Approximately 25 staff were treated to a barbecue lunch of hot dogs, hamburgers, and assorted sides. A little outdoor time was shared and enjoyed, and there was a positive response all around. The facility bought the food, and Director Chapman and the administrative staff did the cooking.

The large facility can accommodate approximately 1,000 male and female residents and houses different populations from New Jersey State Parole and Essex and Union counties.



## ADAPPT Reentrants Help Local Library

Written By **Karen Collins, GEO Care Strategic Marketing**

Fall has arrived in Reading, Pennsylvania, and the staff and reentrants at ADAPPT's AOD unit did not skip a beat in their community service. On October 2, 2019, four reentrants accompanied by staff answered the call to the local branch of the Reading library, which needed volunteer help for minor construction and cleanup to provide an improved environment for visitors.



ADAPPT has volunteered at the library on previous occasions to help with construction and clearing areas to improve the library for its children's area and other visitor rooms.

Bronwen Gamble, Executive Director of the library welcomed the volunteers and was appreciative for the help provided by the ADAPPT reentrants led by staff member Jose Candelario. On this occasion, reentrants assisted in the dismantling of book shelves and cleaned an area to prepare for a new reading lounge for library visitors.

Extensive work was done by the reentrants, who tirelessly lifted and cleared away materials. Those who participated in the service at the library confirmed they felt a sense of satisfaction from their efforts of serving the community through positive actions. By the end of the day the library was ready to set the stage for a new lounge area that will soon welcome readers.

ADAPPT residential reentry center provides programming to reentrants referred from the Pennsylvania Department of Corrections and Pennsylvania Board of Probation and Parole. The focus is on substance abuse programming and community service. The facility contributes hundreds of hours of community service on an annual basis and has been consistent with its volunteerism in the City of Reading for many years.

## Telling Our Story

Written By **Danielle Gehrung, Shasta DRC**

"Our perception is our reality." Life is as simple and as complex as this phrase. What our communities hear or see about us will be the information in which their perception of who we are and what we do is formed. This perception can be either good or bad; it depends on what information they receive and who they receive it from. Hopefully it is directly from us.

It comes down to one simple point, *if we do not tell our story, someone else will tell it for us.* This is the ongoing message from our Partnership Development team. The Shasta DRC is working hard to tell our story to our community members, partners, and stakeholders. A step we recently took to increase community awareness was to create a visual

display of our company and program located outside the Shasta County Board of Supervisor Chambers. Our goal is to help inform our community about the Shasta DRC program and our efforts to reduce recidivism, change lives, and improve public safety.





## ADAPPT Assists at Local Church Block Party

Written By **Karen Collins**, *GEO Care Strategic Marketing*

ADAPPT, a residential reentry center in Reading, PA, is always available to the community to be of service, sending volunteers of staff and reentrants ready and willing to help out. The latest outing for the group entailed helping out at the St. John's Missionary Baptist Church Saving Souls block party, which took place on August 24.

Fifteen individuals lent a hand to set up stands, canopies, tables, and assisted with the cooking. The party was held at the local church. The outdoor party drew a crowd on a late summer day. All experienced the satisfaction of

giving back to the community, sharing with others, and the positive actions of working as a team. ADAPPT volunteers also assisted in building a stage, where individuals were able to share stories of recovery and worship.

"We are very pleased to offer community service to the City of Reading," said Mike Critchosin, Director of ADAPPT. "Our commitment to community helps our reentrants give back and provides a valuable experience of engaging in positive behaviors that support a change in thinking and outlook on life."

ADAPPT staff and reentrants continue to help the City of Reading by volunteering for community service opportunities. The team has consistently volunteered at city cleanups, snow removals, and local church events.



*Pictured Left to Right Bottom: Back row: Alexandra Mendez, and Esthefany Luna, Miles Whiney, Lynzey Lawyer, Shirlene Sample, Dawn Martin along with Joseph Elmo Serrano. Second row: Matthew Williams, Andrew Hopkins, Oliva Frisch and Francis Palmieri Front row: Travis Kinner, Charles Martino, Bartolo Lugo, Jose Candelario*

## Tully House Takes Silver Broom Award At Newark Cleanup

Written By **Karen Collins**, *GEO Care Strategic Marketing*

Congratulations to Tully House staff and residents for participating in the 17th Annual Gateway to a Cleaner Newark Citywide Cleanup on October 10, 2019. The hard-working team from the GEO Reentry Services facility came in second place collecting the most trash, resulting in being the recipient of the "Silver Broom" award.

Known as "Slam Dunk the Junk," the annual cleanup is hosted by the Office of the Mayor, Newark Municipal Council, and the Department of Public Works. Word went out to many local businesses, schools, residents, and community groups for volunteers. Last year, the event drew approximately 800 volunteers.

"We are grateful to be part of this community service event for the City of Newark," said Richard McCourt, Senior Area Manager Northeast, GEO Reentry Services. "This community service helps improve the City, helps our residents

give back to society, and helps them experience the rewards of positive behavior."

Mr. Carmen, Operations Counselor at Tully House accompanied the residents to the cleanup. All felt a sense of fulfillment and gratitude for the opportunity to give back to the community.

"We are so proud of our residents for receiving the Silver Broom award," said Paula Lord, Director of Tully House. "The act of helping the community helps re-enforce the goal GEO reentry programming aims to achieve."

Tully House is a residential reentry center in Newark, New Jersey. Programming consists of a full spectrum of reentry services and highlights family services, education, and alumni services. Community service has always been central to the programming and is considered a valuable lesson in giving back to the community.

Congrats to the Tully House team for their achievement!





# Lycoming County RSC Celebrates Five Years Of Service & A Tenth Transition Ceremony

Written By **Michael Boughton, Lycoming RSC** & **Karen Collins, GEO Care Strategic Marketing**

The Lycoming County Reentry Service Center (RSC) in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, held its tenth Transition Ceremony on Friday, September 6, 2019, at the Community Theatre League, graduating 23 individuals after successful completion of reentry programming.

Following the ceremony, a celebration that highlighted five years of GEO Reentry Services was held at the facility. Lycoming County RSC provides non-residential reentry programming for probationers referred by Lycoming County.

Program Manager Michael Boughton started the ceremony with opening remarks, followed by guest speakers



President Judge Nancy Butts, Adult Probation Office Deputy Chief John Stahl, Commissioner Tony Mussare, and Commissioner Jack McKernan.

“A big thanks to the Lycoming County Courts, the Prison, the Adult Probation Office and the Commissioners for collaborating on reentry services for Lycoming County over the past five years,” said Michael Boughton, Program Manager.

Several graduates also spoke at the ceremony, relaying their experience of how programming changed their

outlook and how they developed belief in the program. Graduates Mr. Drum and Ms. Williams shared their initial doubts with the crowd in attendance, and how they experienced change by recognizing how beneficial the program could be. A former participant, Ms. Slocum, shared stories of previous attempts at other programs, and how GEO Reentry’s Lycoming RSC was the first place that offered a program that focused on the self, instead of the drug.

After the graduation, everyone was welcomed back to the RSC to continue the celebration with a ceremony recognizing five years of reentry programming at the Lycoming center. Program Manager Boughton thanked partners from Lycoming County who help make the program a continued success by presenting each representative with a plaque.

Graduate Ms. Williams was also given the opportunity to present a painting she created to the RSC as a symbol of positive change through adversity.

*Pictured Left to Right: Above: Brad Shoemaker, Nancy Butts, Michael Boughton, John Stahl, Jack McKernan  
Left: Graduates Milton, Cooley, Washington, and Slocum*





## Lancaster RSC Celebrates 30 Graduates

Written By **Karen Collins**, *GEO Care Strategic Marketing*

The Lancaster County Reentry Service Center (RSC) held a transition ceremony on November 19, celebrating the success of thirty individuals from the program. The event recognized the accomplishment of reentrants completing either Day Reporting Services or Cognitive Behavioral Interventions (CBI).

The ceremony was held at the facility in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and hosted graduates, parole officers, and staff. The facility was decorated for the festivities with balloons and decorations, all in the GEO colors of blue, green and white. The keynote speaker for the ceremony was Oscar S., a former participant and returning alumnus who made great progress through the programming six months prior and is now leading a positive lifestyle in the community.

The GEO Reentry program at Lancaster RSC recognizes the importance of acknowledging progress as participants advance through the program. Kim Reichenbach, Program Director, reinforces the program by including two unique features which help emphasize positive change and provides a sense of accomplishment for each participant. An MRT® (Moral Reconciliation Therapy) tree is set up, with participants names added on leaves pinned at the bottom of the tree for program start, and are moved up the tree as programming advances. Upon graduation the leaf is moved to hang from the ceiling, symbolizing release and freedom. A custom of the graduation, individuals experience and identify a completed cycle of recovery and the freedom to move forward with reentry skills learned at the RSC.

Another custom of programming at Lancaster is the ownership of the "grounding stone." Each participant claims a stone with an inspirational message, which they take with them to hold as a remembrance of the skills learned through programming.

Two graduates were also speakers at the ceremony, one being Luis R., who struggles with addiction and now celebrates his longest time clean and sober. He encouraged others with his commitment to recovery, crediting staff and the programming that helped to bring him this far. Luis credits the program with helping him acquire and maintain a new job and the ability to reunite with family members.

Transition ceremonies are a celebration for participants and staff, acknowledging the hard work by all that prepares individuals for a positive transition into the community.



## NJ Communities Enjoy A Thanksgiving Meal Courtesy of GEO Reentry

Written By **Karen Collins**, *GEO Care Strategic Marketing*

Thanksgiving gratitude was abundant in two New Jersey communities as a result of the generosity of GEO Reentry Services, who donated 200 holiday turkeys that were distributed to low income housing residents for Thanksgiving. The donated turkeys were given out by volunteer New Jersey Alumni Services members and staff from residential reentry centers Talbot Hall in Kearny and Bo Robinson in Trenton.

"We are honored to be a part of our community," said Angela Geisinger,

Senior Director, Education & Programs for GEO Care. "Our hearts are full of joy, and the alumni family is committed to sharing that joy."

GEO Reentry purchased the Thanksgiving main course to be given out as a gesture of community



outreach at different locations that included Lincoln Towers, a senior living community in Newark, Bradley Court in Newark, and Kingsbury Housing

in Trenton, both low income housing sites. The GEO teams delivered the goods where they were greeted with smiles and expressions of gratitude. "As members of Alumni Services, we are proud to demonstrate acts of selfless service to those less fortunate on this Thanksgiving holiday," said Arthur Townes, Manager of New Jersey Alumni Services. "We received another chance from GEO Reentry services, and we are grateful to pass along a message of hope to those who are less fortunate. I appreciate a great turnout from alumni, and staff from Talbot Hall and Bo Robinson for volunteering to help those who could not otherwise have a Thanksgiving meal."

The GEO teams experienced a very rewarding day as they gave the turkeys to those less fortunate. It was a powerful beginning to the Thanksgiving holiday and all were grateful for the opportunity to help.



# Tuolumne DRC Transition Ceremony Brings Words of Encouragement and Hope

Written By **Karen Collins**, *GEO Care Strategic Marketing*

The Tuolumne County Day Reporting Center (DRC) celebrated a transition ceremony full of hope and a brighter future for those in their care on December 5, at the Black Oak Hotel in Tuolumne, California. Facility staff were proud to have 17 men and women graduate from the GEO Reentry Services program. Twelve participants celebrated graduation from the day reporting program, and five participants from the jail reentry program. Both programs are conducted in partnership with Tuolumne County.

A well-attended event, the transition ceremony welcomed county officials including the Tuolumne County Probation Chief and Assistant Chief, the Manager of Adult Supervision, the Undersheriff, Sergeants from the County Jail, and Probation Officers.

"We are very pleased to see so many participants recognize the value of their programming by taking pride in their graduation," said Lesette Ortiz, Program Manager of Tuolumne DRC. "We had every graduate attend the event, in addition to one of our jail reentry graduates who has been discharged."

Two graduates spoke at the ceremony and shared their hope and forward outlook for the future, expressing gratitude to the staff and program. Attendees were treated to an inspiring speech by keynote speaker Kayla Barnes, a previous graduate who

is now celebrating a year since she started college. Ms. Barnes is a single mom with a full-time job and is pursuing a degree in counseling since her graduation from Tuolumne DRC.

"GEO taught me that not only was I an addict, but that it was my behaviors that sparked my addiction," said Ms. Barnes. "If you utilize the tools that you have learned and reach out to the resources provided, success is possible. Today, I am completing my first full year at Columbia College, working a decent paying job, and I have been able to reunify with my family. My days are wonderful, full of the laughter of my children, positive relationships, and a whole community of support. I am truly grateful that I have been given a second chance."

Anthony White-Ramos was another speaker, who recounted his troubled past and expressed gratitude at the chance to start anew. He referenced the words of Helen Keller and reminded all that if she could surpass her difficulties then others could as well.

"It takes courage to face our fears, it takes determination to break beyond challenges, it takes you to make a choice of what mirror image your behavior reflects," said Mr. White-Ramos. "At this juncture in your lives, you all have the opportunity to make the choices necessary to break free of the cycle that has held us back for so long."

In addition to speakers, the ceremony included a special acknowledgment for Paige Woodard, a new Probation Officer who is supportive of the Tuolumne DRC program. Ms. Woodard was presented with a plaque at the ceremony as recognition for her support.

The Tuolumne DRC offers day reporting services for participants referred from the County Probation department and the Sheriff's office. Individuals enrolled in the DRC program are provided with a wide range of reentry services that includes outpatient substance abuse



treatment, parenting skills, life skills, Moral Reconciliation Therapy® (MRT), and employment and education readiness. The facility also engages with the County Jail and provides reentry programming to those still in custody, who receive a reduced group of services including life skills, MRT, and one-on-one counseling services.

*Pictured: Top: Chantelle Fontana, a graduate of the DRC program, speaks at the graduation ceremony. Ms Fontana is currently enrolled in an Adult Education program and anticipates completing courses for her high school diploma early next year.*

*Bottom: The Tuolumne Day Reporting Center located in Tuolumne, California.*





## Tim O'Boyle, Alumni Manager, Presents At Illinois Certification Board Fall Conference

Written By Karen Collins, *GEO Care Strategic Marketing*

GEO Reentry's Tim O'Boyle, Manager of Alumni Services, was an invited speaker for the 2019 Illinois Certification Board's (ICB) 23rd Annual Fall Conference, which took place October 14-18, 2019, in Mt. Vernon, Illinois. The Certification Board is a division of the Illinois Alcohol and Other Drug Abuse Professional Certification Association, Inc. (IAODAPCA). The Illinois Certification Board is a non-profit agency whose mission is to promote standards for professionals in the field of addiction treatment. Tim is a board member of the organization.

Tim was part of a panel that presented "Cognitive Behavioral Intervention Programs Within the Criminal Justice System." The workshop presentation

was designed for criminal justice professionals and examined the therapeutic community and its structure and tenets of learning, with a focus on educational and vocational programs. Tim focused on the importance of mentoring others specifically through the CAAP program - (Certified Associate Addictions Professionals), wherein offenders are given an opportunity to enter a training program to become certified addictions counselors. Three of the four representatives on the panel are CAAP graduates and two are successfully employed as addictions professionals.

"We wanted to present the importance of the CAAP program to the therapeutic community and its value to professionals," said Tim O'Boyle. The CAAP program has been successful for many of us, by mentoring others we have found purpose, a rewarding profession, and a message that we are committed to carry to others."

Tim was joined by Martin S., Chris S., and Joshua H. on the panel, all former offenders who have successfully turned their lives around giving credit to reentry programming they received. Tim was a graduate of the CAAP program offered at the Southwestern Illinois Correctional Center, as a component of the GEO Reentry programming there. The CAAP program requires a sincere commitment to change and a desire for a second chance, consisting of

hours of study and working with staff and others. It is embraced by many preparing to reenter the community, as they are able to identify with addiction and wish to help others. The training is in accordance with the requirements for the Illinois Certification Board.

"We have come full circle, from peers in recovery to professionals," said Tim. "We all share the mission of helping each other, and mentoring those who are willing to change and live a productive lifestyle by embracing the CAAP program."

The panel presented to a wide audience of representatives from the Illinois Department of Corrections, Illinois Department of Juvenile Justice, counselors, treatment providers, behavioral health professionals, and standards and testing professionals in the field of substance abuse treatment.

*Pictured Left to Right: Presenters Joshua H., Tim O'Boyle, Chris S., and Martin S.*





# SWICC Holds Event Celebrating Three Program Graduations

Written By **Karen Collins**, *GEO Care Strategic Marketing*

The Southwestern Illinois Correctional Center (SWICC) continues to experience success in the in-prison treatment program with the celebration of a GEO Reentry Services Program Graduation held on August 29 in East St. Louis. The event celebrated graduation from three programs that are provided within the overall curriculum for inmates at the Illinois Department of Corrections facility.

The combined graduation included a CAAP graduation (Certified Associate Addictions Professionals), a training program providing the opportunity for offenders to become certified addictions professionals; the InsideOut Dads® program, a fatherhood program for incarcerated men; and the Seeking Safety Trauma treatment program, designed to address PTSD/ Anxiety with Substance Abuse.

“We are pleased to see individuals willingly engaged with the GEO Reentry programming we provide at SWICC,” said Lori Moore, Program Director for GEO Reentry Services at SWICC. “Staff and participants both have worked hard to achieve the goals for completion of the specialized programs.”

Rewarding for staff and participants, the graduation event is held to acknowledge progress and skills provided to the population that voluntarily enroll in the special programs that GEO Reentry provides. Programming focuses on substance abuse treatment and family reunification at SWICC. The well-regarded CAAP program provides inmates with professional skills that can be used to help others.

Staff remarked that “a good time was had by all,” and “all the graduates

looked genuinely happy,” saying it was great to see the happiness and pride shared amongst staff and graduates.

The celebration drew guests from the Illinois DOC including Warden Ron Vitale and Assistant Warden of Programs Sharlette Rodgers, both supportive of GEO Reentry Services programming. Speakers for the graduation included Assistant Director Warren Johnson, who coordinated the InsideOut Dads® program, KaShena McDonald, Certified Associate Addictions Program (CAAP) Professional Trainer, and Clinical Manager Maggie O’Connor. Ms. O’Connor coordinates the Trauma group, holding sessions that encompass case management, cognitive, behavioral, and interpersonal training to address managing symptoms of anxiety and PTSD related to substance abuse.



All GEO staff at the facility also attended. Others present included Illinois DOC counselors and staff, representatives from Treatment Alternatives for Safe Communities (TASC), educational and health care support staff, and Tim O’Boyle, Manager of Alumni Services for GEO Reentry. Mr. O’Boyle is a former graduate of reentry programming at SWICC who graduated from the CAAP program and is now successfully leading a positive lifestyle and helping others transition to the community from GEO Reentry programs.

All graduates received certificates and enjoyed a day to acknowledge their hard work and accomplishment upon returning to the community.

## Telling Our Story

Written By **Levi Patton**, *Sacramento DRC*

In November 2018, in partnership with the Bureau of Prisons (BOP), GEO Reentry opened a Day Reporting Center (DRC) in Sacramento, CA. To celebrate the first anniversary, the facility hosted an open-house inviting the Federal Bureau of Prisons, local law enforcement, local legislators, community-based organizations, and more.

The open house consisted of many booths and stations where GEO Reentry staff shared insight into the operations of the facility including: the program model, evidence-based practices, program curriculum, accountability using electronic monitoring, and employment and community resources.

The Sacramento DRC implements home confinement with the unique blend of programming for federal inmates. Federal inmates placed on home confinement have the opportunity to serve their sentence at home with the support of their families, obtain employment, and receive help from a group of dedicated staff as an alternative to Residential Reentry Centers or a correctional facility.

During the open house, GEO Reentry staff provided a tour of the facility where guests had the opportunity to understand how the facility works in collaboration with the BOP.

The event had a great turnout and many staff from neighboring DRC’s attended as well. The BOP was very appreciative of the event and spent time acknowledging staff for the fantastic work they’re doing.







## Chicago Heights RSC Former Grads Achieve Certification

Written By **Karen Collins**, *GEO Care Strategic Marketing*

A proud Harlan South, Employment/Education Coordinator at the Chicago Heights Reentry Service Center (RSC), looked on at the graduation ceremony of two of his former graduates, as they celebrated the completion of a vocational training program which allows them to reenter society equipped with a trade and the promise of employment.

While participating in the GEO Reentry program offered by Chicago Heights RSC, participants Mr. Harris and Mr. Christopher were enrolled in a ten-week training program offered by Associated Builders and Contractors, Inc. (ABC). After their successful completion, both were awarded certification in Carpentry Level 1 and

the receipt of their OSHA licenses. "The two young men are on track to become employed within the next few weeks with a local construction company," said Ms. Crenshaw, ABC Program Coordinator.

The goal of the Chicago Heights Reentry Service Center is to provide reentry programming to those preparing to transition to the community, increasing the chances of a successful reentry and reducing recidivism. Having been trained in a trade is an important component that contributes to an individual's success. Associations with community organizations support the GEO mission and are an effective partnership that enhances the reentry services provided at the program.

"We are extremely pleased with this new partnership and look forward to referring more qualified participants to ABC for their next enrollment period this fall," said Harlan South, who attended the graduation ceremony for his former graduates which took place on August 28, 2019.

Mr. South and Luke Lynch, Program Manager, and the staff for Chicago Heights RSC, are committed to providing reentry programming that helps turn lives around and assists individuals in going forward with a positive start. The facility is extremely pleased to see these accomplishments and wish both former participants the best in their new careers!

## Community Relations Board Meeting

Written By **Tammy Jones**, *Grossman Center*

On December 11, 2019, the Grossman Center hosted their quarterly Community Relations Board Meeting. The facility was honored to have 25 individuals from the community in attendance. Our guest speaker was Sam Mcleod, Sales Manager from Express Employment. He discussed the success he has had in gainfully employing the Grossman Center residents securing employment for 54 residents in 2019.

John Redden, a volunteer from Leavenworth, Kansas was in attendance and has been with Grossman Center for ten years conducting bible study groups with the residents on Saturday mornings.

Teresa Storch, the facility PREA Coordinator also works closely with the volunteers to facilitate religious programs for our volunteers.



## Luzerne County RSC Knows How to Celebrate Small Wins

Written By **Stacey Velez**, *Luzerne County RSC*

In August of 2019, the Luzerne County RSC and Electronic Monitoring staff in Wilkes Barre, PA, were treated with ice cream twice to honor all the hard work put in by staff to maintain the highest quality services available.

On August 6th, 2019, an enterprising ice cream truck happened to come through the GEO Reentry Services parking lot and Program Manager Stacey Velez provided each staff member with a frozen treat.

Later, on August 20, 2019, landlord Joe Bennet brought over a cooler full of ice cream to thank GEO for being such good tenants for the last nine years. Reentry staff teach participants to appropriately reward themselves for jobs well done, and it was nice to be able to model this skill in such a tasty fashion.



## Alabama Secretary of State Speakers at ATEF Graduation

Written By **Karen Collins**, *GEO Care Strategic Marketing*

The Alabama Therapeutic Education Facility (ATEF) hosted a special guest, The Honorable John H. Merrill, Secretary of State for Alabama, as the keynote speaker for the facility's graduation ceremony on November 15, 2019. Secretary Merrill was inspired by the unique programming of the GEO Reentry Services facility which maintains a partnership with the Department of Postsecondary Education. After speaking to a graduating class of fifteen, Secretary Merrill offered the following on his Facebook page:

"It was great to be back in Shelby County this morning and be the keynote speaker at the graduation ceremony for the inmates that participated in the Alabama Therapeutic Education Facility in

Columbiana! We need more programs like this in the Department of Corrections!"

Secretary Merrill toured ATEF which operates in partnership with the Alabama Department of Corrections, the Department of Postsecondary Education, and GEO Reentry Services.

The recent graduation acknowledged fifteen males who have completed a six-month reentry program that comprises varied services designed to assist the resident with a successful reentry to the community. Programming at ATEF is an intensive treatment program that focuses on relapse prevention and work release preparation through Cognitive Behavioral Treatment (CBT) and vocational training.

"We are very grateful to host Alabama Secretary of State John Merrill for our November graduation," said George Edwards, Director of ATEF. "November is the month of gratitude, which has the power to shift us from focusing on the negative and learning how to



appreciate the positive in our lives." All graduates received a certificate stating they have completed a program of reentry services, in addition to educational and vocational training. Individuals must complete training in a vocation in either carpentry, plumbing, HVAC, or welding, in order to be considered for graduation.

In attendance at the ceremony were staff, resident graduates, and visitors. The visit from Secretary of State Merrill uplifted all, and his words gave hope to the graduates to continue their positive transition back into the community.

## Erie Outpatient Gives Bicycles A Second Chance For Neighborhood Kids

Written By **Annette Garcia**, *Erie Outpatient & Karen Collins*, *GEO Care Strategic Marketing*

Participants at the Erie Outpatient Reentry Service Center (RSC) in Philadelphia, went above and beyond to demonstrate the benefits gained from their reentry programming. Several participants joined together to create a project to rebuild bicycles for the neighborhood children.



"Their selfless actions demonstrate the benefits of reentry programs and our participants' commitment to their communities. It's a privilege for the GEO Reentry Services team to be part of our participants behavior change," said John Hogan, Area Manager for Pennsylvania, GEO Reentry Services Non-Residential.

One of the many services offered in the curriculum is Moral Reconciliation Therapy® (MRT), a cognitive-behavioral treatment strategy designed to enhance self-image, promote growth of a positive, productive identity, and facilitate the development of higher stages of moral reasoning. Participants came up with the bicycle project to put into practice in the curriculum Step 6 – "Helping Others," and Step 9 – "Commitment to Change."

"It is very rewarding to see individuals embrace change by incorporating the MRT programming we provide, and having a sincere desire to help the children of the community," said Annette Garcia, Program Director at Erie Outpatient.

Using his vehicle, participant Edward G., collected old and rusted bike parts. He transported the broken pieces to the RSC, and with the help of other participants, he reconstructed the bikes. The group was led by Ernest J., who would buy new tires, paint, chains, and other needed parts to make the old pieces new and improved. When complete, they lined the bikes up on the street, so that any child in the neighborhood would be more than welcome to take a bike for free.

"It is worth noting that none of the participants did this for recognition," continued Director Garcia. "It was a project they came up with on their own, by a desire to demonstrate how Steps 6 and 9 from the MRT programming had influenced them."

This successful group effort put smiles on the faces of neighborhood kids.



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