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Inside Corrections is a monthly publication of the Office of Public Information at the New Jersey Department of Corrections.

Story ideas and feedback regarding Inside Corrections should be directed to matthew.schuman@doc.nj.gov or by telephone at (609) 826-5662

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When Wildwood and Wildwood Crest officials wanted to make beach boxes available to vacationers, they turned to Deptcor.

PICTURE THIS
The Office of Victim Services recognized Mental Health Awareness Month at each of the 13 NJDOC institutions.
INSIDE WORD
with Acting Commissioner Marcus O. Hicks, Esq.

The National Alliance on Mental Illness reports that one in five adults in the United States will experience a mental health condition at some point in their lives. In a given year, approximately 11.2 million adults in the U.S. experience a mental illness serious enough to substantially interfere with or limit one or more major life activities. On average, individuals in the U.S. living with serious mental illness die 25 years earlier than others, largely due to treatable medical conditions.

Many of you are aware that May is recognized as Mental Health Awareness Month. The Office of Victim Services (OVS) did its part to help eliminate the stigma attached to mental health issues within the New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC) by supporting staff members.

Throughout the month of May, the OVS selected a day to set up a resource and information table at each of the 13 NJDOC institutions to provide an assortment of written materials for distribution. Photos can be found on page 16 of this newsletter.

Significantly, the tables included brochures relating to the Critical Incident Stress Management (CISM) program. Additional team members are being sought for CISM, a peer support service offered to employees impacted by a traumatic incident. For more information, call the OVS at 609-292-4036, x5299.

On behalf of the entire Department, I applaud the efforts of the OVS to combat the potentially devastating consequences of mental illness.

Sincerely,

Acting Commissioner Marcus O. Hicks, Esq.
The NJDOC was well represented on the Police Unity Tour to Washington, D.C.

ON TOUR

Law Enforcement Personnel Cycle to Washington, D.C.

By Matt Schuman

The primary purpose of the Police Unity Tour is to raise awareness of law enforcement officers who have died in the line of duty.

For Correctional Police Sergeant Anna Miglio of Bayside State Prison, who recently took part in the 300-mile bicycle ride to Washington, D.C., for the fifth time, it’s personal. Her father, Eugene Miglio III, a member of the Wildwood Crest Police Department, lost his life while on the job in 1995.

“My participation in the Police Unity Tour is a huge source of pride,” Miglio said. “It’s an amazing experience. Even when the weather is less than ideal, there’s a positive energy that keeps everybody going. Everybody realizes that we’re riding in honor of people who aren’t with us anymore.”

Miglio and more than a dozen others represented the New Jersey Department of Corrections on this year’s tour, a four-day trek that culminated on May 12 at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in the nation’s capital.

Thousands of riders and support personnel from across the United States and beyond, as well as family members of fallen officers, came together for the emotional gathering at the memorial.

On May 7, just a few days before the tour began, members of the NJDOC contingent were recognized during a ceremony held on the grounds of the Department’s Central Office headquarters.

“The support the Department has shown us is gratifying,” Miglio said during the Central Office gathering. “It makes all of us proud to be part of the Department of Corrections.”
Correctional Police Lieutenant James Russo of Northern State Prison, a first-time participant on the tour, agreed.

“We’re doing this to honor many of the individuals who have paved the way for those of us in law enforcement, so it means a lot that the Department took time out to acknowledge us,” said Russo, who purchased a new bicycle – a red and black Cannondale – for the occasion.

The tour made its debut in May 1997, when 18 riders left Florham Park, N.J., and arrived in Washington, D.C., four days later. This year, cyclists from at least 40 states and six countries rode.

Senior Correctional Police Officer (SCPO) Michael Gallagher of South Woods State Prison took part in the tour for the second time in 2019. The first time was in 2017, when he was riding as a tribute to SCPO Nikeelan Semmon, an Albert C. Wagner Youth Correctional Facility custody staff member who died in July 2016 while on duty.

Shockingly, approximately 30 miles into the 2017 ride, Gallagher suffered a near-fatal heart attack.

“I actually was dead before I hit the concrete,” said Gallagher, an Executive Vice President of the Policeman’s Benevolent Association, Local 105. “I had to be revived. When I woke up, there was a state trooper performing CPR on me.”

Gallagher, who underwent open heart surgery following the incident, was a member of the support staff during this year’s tour. He is hoping to ride in the 2020 tour.

“It’s so important to honor those officers who made the ultimate sacrifice,” stated Gallagher, who noted that the union provided financial support of the tour. “When we began the tour, 38 officers had died in the line of duty this year. That’s 38 too many.”

Members of the NJDOC contingent carried the badges of the Department’s fallen officers throughout their journey.

“It was an honor looking up all of those names [on the memorial] and then taking photos with their badges,” said Correctional Police Lieutenant James Hunsicker of Bayside State Prison, who participated for the fourth time.

Zachary Keller, also a Correctional Police Lieutenant at Bayside, was humbled by the encouragement the cyclists received throughout the journey to Washington, D.C.

“During the ride, a lot of schools would bring the kids outside as we came through,” said Keller, a four-time participant. “When you realize how excited the children are to see you, you immediately forget about how tired you are or how sore you are. As soon as you see the faces of the kids, nothing else matters. Those experiences were incredibly uplifting.”

However, the riders were in unanimous agreement that the single most inspiring moment of the tour was the arrival at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial.

“It’s overwhelming, especially for those of us who have an understanding of what the family members [of fallen officers] are going through,” Anna Miglio related.

Added SCPO Michael Drybread of the Correctional Staff Training Academy, a 12-time participant: “When you get to the Memorial, you see all the other riders and the families of those who died in the line of duty. If you don’t decide at that moment that you’ll be back again next year, then the significance of what you’re doing has been lost on you.”
CRITICAL THINKING

CINT Team Collaborates with BOP in Unique Exercise

By John Cokos

Members of the New Jersey Department of Corrections’ Critical Incident Negotiation Team (CINT) don’t spend time pondering the possibility of a crisis.

“It’s never a question of if a crisis will occur, it’s only a question of when, and we train with that in mind,” said Diane Patrick of East Jersey State Prison, a member of CINT since its inception.

In April, the highest levels of planning and practice took place during a training exercise involving CINT and the Federal Bureau of Prisons’ (BOP) Crisis Negotiation Team.

In an early-morning training exercise at the Federal Correctional Institution in Fairton, individuals from the state and federal prison systems converged for the first time to hone and coordinate their crisis negotiation capabilities.

Since 1999, NJDOC’s all-volunteer group has proven to be an effective and cohesive ensemble. Consisting of NJDOC custody and civilian staff, the team has been educated in critical incident negotiating by the Federal Bureau of Investigation and meets frequently to participate in rigorous, daylong training exercises.

As a result, the team has won multiple “Best of the Best” critical negotiation team competitions. More importantly, it has responded to and deescalated several actual crisis situations.

“This team is the real deal,” Patrick said, “and we believe in the good of what we are doing.”
Despite the group’s effectiveness, most members would agree the quest for additional knowledge and improved tactics is endless.

“We are always looking to expand our training opportunities,” said Correctional Police Sergeant David Kuperberg of Northern State Prison, who serves as a CINT training coordinator.

Patrick agreed that working with an outside agency is healthy.

“You can be on the team for a thousand years, and every single exercise presents a new learning experience,” she said.

The training exercise in Fairton involved an “officer held hostage” scenario that engaged all levels of the organizations’ hostage negotiation components. Despite slightly different approaches, both CINT and the BOP team have a similar goal.

“It’s all about the preservation of life,” said Correctional Police Lieutenant Bertha Lowery of Albert C. Wagner Youth Correctional Facility, the CINT team leader.

“The bottom line is to get everyone out safely, including the hostage taker,” added Patrick.

Critical incidents appear to be increasingly common, but the exact moment a situation becomes volatile can be complicated. The pressures of everyday life take a toll on society, especially within the law enforcement community.

“We have a saying. It’s, ‘Why today?’” said Lowery. “People are in big debt. The cost of living is high. Parents both have to work – some have more than one job. People are caring for chronically ill family members. Divorce continues to rise.

“We all have stress, but in recent years, many people are simply unable to get a respite so they can detoxify from it.”

During any scenario, real or simulated, the NJDOC team has a dynamic approach with many moving parts. There is a coach to assist the primary negotiator, information trackers, a timekeeper and various other levels of support, in the field and at the command post, to help develop and implement a multi-leveled plan of action.

At the end of the recent joint exercise, the BOP hosted an in-depth debriefing during which members from both teams were afforded the opportunity to discuss various aspects of the training.

“The high levels of mutual respect and professionalism led to a successful day of training for both teams,” Kuperberg said.

April’s crisis negotiation training has given way to new possibilities for NJDOC and BOP future endeavors, including the increased likelihood that the two organizations will work together during an actual incident.

“We are trying to usher in a new era of cooperation and togetherness with the BOP Crisis Negotiation Team,” Lowery said. “We are recognizing each other as valuable assets and are building a network.

“It’s not time to find out how we can work together when a real crisis occurs,” Lowery added. “It’s time for us to already know and have a plan now.”
TURNING THE TASSEL

NJDOC Employees Graduate from Various Colleges

By Shaheed M. Morris

Calvin Spires, East Jersey State Prison Assistant Superintendent, would leave work and find a quiet room at his home to study for his coursework at Ashford University, an accredited online university based in California.

“There were times I wanted to quit,” Spires said. “I alienated myself from my family for years to finish my degree.”

After five years, taking one five-week accelerated course at a time, Spires graduated with his bachelor’s degree in law enforcement administration in May of this year.

“One thing I got into a management role, I saw that pursuing an advanced education would help me understand management styles and protocols,” he said.

A few weeks after earning his undergraduate degree, Spires started to pursue his master’s degree in organizational management from the same university.

“Age is not a factor. The oldest person who graduated with me was 84,” said Spires, who graduated at 56. “The degree is something I started, and I wanted to finish.”

The month of May is known as commencement season for colleges and universities.

During this year’s commencement season, the New Jersey Department of Corrections had numerous employees receive college degrees,
including one doctoral degree, 10 graduate-level degrees, four undergraduate degrees and two associate degrees.

Among the graduates, Senior Clerk Typist Diarra Askew, 27, who works at East Jersey State Prison, was the first person in her family to graduate from college.

“The people who I have worked with both at Central Reception and Assignment Facility and East Jersey have been encouraging and supportive during my professional and academic career,” Askew said. “I was able to use the NJDOC [Tuition Reimbursement Program] to help pay for my senior year.”

Askew, a senior clerk typist, graduated with a bachelor’s degree in criminal justice with a minor in sociology from Kean University.

“My family is really proud of me for being the first one,” Askew said. “My mother didn’t go to college. My father went to college, but did not finish. I have charted a new course for my family.”

Askew started college in 2010, then took five years off, still undecided about what she wanted to do.

“I went back to school after I found what I wanted to do with my life, career-wise,” Askew said. “I hope to work in social work within the NJDOC someday.”

Acting Commissioner Marcus O. Hicks, Esq., says the Department is committed to helping its employees reach their academic and professional goals.

“Congratulations to all of this year’s graduates,” Hicks said. “Their commitment and dedication to learning is what makes the NJDOC one of the most effective and diverse correctional systems in the country.”

Garden State Youth Correctional Facility Supervisor of Religious Services Charles Atkins graduated with a Ph.D. in practical theology from the University of Montreal.

“It took me seven years of going back and forth to the University of Montreal,” Atkins said. “My family has been patient with me during that time.”

Atkins rode a bus to Montreal for eight to nine hours at a time once a month to complete his in-person classes.

“A big weight has been lifted off my shoulders,” Atkins said. “I’m very thankful for the Department’s help and support during this process.”

Atkins wrote a 387-page dissertation on “The Path of Logos: The Relevance of the Practice of Bible Study in an American Prison.”

“My dissertation was on how religion practices can become relevant in prisons,” Atkins said. “If the practice encourages the formation of critical thinking skills, then it becomes very helpful to the inmates and culture of the prison.”

Bayside State Prison Senior Clerk Typist Angel Nichols worked full-time and was a full-time student at Cumberland County College.

“I’m a single mother,” Nichols, 48, said. “It was very hard. I hardly got any sleep on the weekends.”

Nichols graduated with an associate degree in criminal justice.

“I’m happy that it’s finally over,” Nichols said. “It seems strange to finally have a social life again. I often find myself not knowing what to do with free time now.”

Another graduate, Information Technology Specialist Amirah Brown, who works at the NJDOC Central Office, graduated with her master’s degree in cyber security from Fordham University.
“The cyber security program at Fordham has given me great insight on the fundamentals of a computer system,” Brown said. “I have always had a love for both forensics and information technology, which inspired me to continue my education.”

Brown commuted on a train four times a week to the Manhattan campus, including the weekends.

“Graduating with a master’s degree is a huge accomplishment to me and will be a great foundation, as I am just getting started in my career,” Brown said. “My goal is to help ensure safe network usage.”
CONGRATULATIONS

NJDOC Employee Earn Their Degrees

DOCTORAL DEGREE RECIPIENT

DR. CHARLES ATKINS
Garden State Youth Correctional Facility
University of Montreal
Practical Theology

JOHN IACOBUCCI
Correctional Staff Training Academy
Seton Hall University
Human Resources Training and Development

MASTER’S DEGREE RECIPIENTS

AMIRAH BROWN
Central Office
Fordham University
Cyber Security

SHARELL MCLAUGHLIN
Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women
Villanova University
Public Administration

DENIA FERNANDEZ
Northern State Prison
Fairleigh Dickinson University
Public Administration and Management

JEANETTE RAMOS
Adult Diagnostic and Treatment Center
Fairleigh Dickinson University
Public Administration

ALVIN HERRON
South Woods State Prison
Rowan University
School Administration

PATRICK SESULKA
Central Office
Seton Hall University
Human Resources Training and Development

CRAIG HOBBINS
Central Office
Rowan University
Criminal Justice

MONIQUE SMITH
Central Reception & Assignment Facility
Kean University
Social Work

FATMA SUSAN TUFAN
Edna Mahan Correctional Facility for Women
Teachers College, Columbia University
Social-Organizational Psychology
**BACHELOR’S DEGREE RECIPIENTS**

DIARRA ASKEW  
East Jersey State Prison  
Kean University  
Criminal Justice

RAVEN PERRY  
Northern State Prison  
Florida International University  
Psychology

CALVIN SPIRES  
East Jersey State Prison  
Ashford University  
Law Enforcement Administration

MELISSA TORIBIO  
East Jersey State Prison  
Rutgers University  
Psychology

**ASSOCIATE DEGREE RECIPIENTS**

SHAHEED M. MORRIS  
Central Office  
Mercer County Community College  
Funeral Service and Funeral Service Certificate of Proficiency

ANGEL NICHOLS  
Bayside State Prison  
Cumberland County College  
Criminal Justice

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**Tuition Aid Program Available to NJDOC Employees**

New Jersey Department of Corrections employees who attend an institution of higher learning are able to take advantage of the NJDOC’s Tuition Reimbursement Program.

The program provides undergraduate students who are enrolled at a regionally accredited school with a 50 percent tuition reimbursement for courses in which their grades are either an A or a B and a 33.33 percent reimbursement for courses in which they earn a C grade. Graduate students who are enrolled at a regionally accredited school may receive a 50 percent reimbursement for courses in which they earn an A and 33.33 percent for B grades.

For more information about the Tuition Reimbursement Program, contact the Department’s Office of Human Resources.
Mountainview Youth Correctional Facility teacher Darlene Racht finds the most joy when her students grasp a difficult concept in her class.

“I am trying to help each inmate see that he has potential,” Racht, who teaches high school equivalency classes, said. “A lot of the inmates lack confidence in themselves. It is rewarding for them to find people who not only believe in them but want them to succeed once they return to society.”

On the first Friday in May, Racht found someone who believed in her. She was honored by the New Jersey Correctional Education Association (NJCEA.)

“It is very nice to be recognized,” Racht said. “There are so many people who work hard with the inmates. There are a lot of people who deserve the awards.”

Racht is a shy and reserved person, but was humbled by the recent recognition.

“I am just doing what I would normally do,” Racht said. “It’s not about recognition.”

The NJCEA honored Racht with a plaque awarded during the ceremony at its 19th annual Staff Development Day at the Hilton Garden Inn Hamilton on May 3.

At the all-day event, the New Jersey Department of Corrections and the New Jersey Juvenile Justice Commission each named a correctional educator of the year. The event also featured professional development workshops for correctional staff and educators.

Racht began working for the New Jersey Department of Corrections in 2002 as a teacher’s assistant. Encouraged by her then supervisor, Racht became a teacher in 2007 after completing additional college-level classes.

“It was first a job back then, but I have come to fall in love with it,” Racht said. “I am a results person. I love to see the results of my students’ efforts.”

Now in her 17th year with the NJDOC, Racht has enjoyed her longevity with the Department.

“I knew that I would be working with the NJDOC for a long time,” Racht said. “I am not a person who changes jobs a lot. It has been an honor to work here.”

Mountainview Assistant Supervisor of Educational Programs Jeannine Puliti nominated Racht for the honor based on Racht’s work ethic and positive spirit.

“I nominated her because her work ethic is…
unmatched,” Puliti said. “And [Racht] has a sincere concern about the progress of every student at Mountainview. She’s always in positive spirit.”

Racht has served as the Literacy Adult Continuing Education Data coordinator since 2012. She has administered the Tests of Adult Basic Education for the entire Mountainview population since 2016.

The recognition is not the first time Racht has been honored. In 2003, she was awarded the NJDOC’s Support Staff of the Year.

In addition to her job as an instructor, Racht helps with high school equivalency testing. She also provides support for the Petey Greene Program, which enables volunteers who come from local colleges and universities to tutor inmates.

“Darlene has been a real asset for the Department,” Puliti said. “Whenever we need help or support, she tries to be there for us. She goes above and beyond her duties. We just wanted to show her that we appreciate what she does for the Department and our students.”

Puliti said that Racht carefully matched the students with tutors in her classrooms.

“Racht is able to guide and identify helpful individuals,” Puliti said. “She promotes tutors in their community outreach with the students, and this has helped lead the students to academic success.”

As part of National Police Week, the South Brunswick Police Department honored Senior Correctional Police Officer Donald Carson of Garden State Youth Correctional Facility with a Community Service Award during the police department’s annual awards luncheon. The ceremony recognized Carson for freeing an injured woman from her burning vehicle after an accident on June 17, 2018.
Deptcor was capable of transporting up to 10 beach boxes at a time from Garden State Youth Correctional Facility to the Wildwoods.

WILDWOOD DAYS

Deptcor Produces Beach Boxes for Shore Towns

By Matt Schuman

As February 2019 gave way to March, and the annual influx of warm-weather visitors drew ever closer, the neighboring towns of Wildwood and Wildwood Crest made a joint decision to make wooden beach boxes available for rental on their shores.

The project was entrusted to Deptcor, the Bureau of State Use Industries.

“The original order was for 60 double-sided beach boxes, which translates to 120 rental units, and the project had to be completed and delivered prior to Memorial Day weekend, when the beach crowds would be arriving,” related Sales Specialist Brian Gallagher, who served as Deptcor’s point person for the project.

“The beach boxes are designed to store such items as beach chairs, umbrellas, inflatable pools and assorted toys, enabling beach-goers to avoid having to transport the items daily. The concept was so well-received that all 180 units were rented for the summer season in advance of delivery.

“Not only are the units a welcome convenience for visitors, but they’re a source of revenue for the beach communities,” Gallagher said. “We used pressure-treated wood and galvanized
materials so that the structures don’t weather in the salt air.”

DEPTCOR operates 18 shops and offices, employing between 700 and 800 inmates from 10 different state correctional facilities. A wide range of products are sold to tax-supported agencies, institutions and units of state, county and municipal governments.

The beach boxes were produced in Deptcor’s carpentry shop within the furniture shop at Garden State Youth Correctional Facility. Institutional Trade Instructors (ITIs) from the metal shop at nearby Albert C. Wagner Youth Correctional Facility lent assistance to make certain the order was completed ahead of the Memorial Day deadline.

“The logistics presented a multitude of challenges, as did the procurement,” Gallagher said. “Because we had all of these moving parts, so many people had to be on the same page in order for this to happen in approximately two months.”

For example, once completed, the double-sided beach boxes needed to be transported from Yardville, where the prison is located, to the Wildwoods. A Deptcor trailer is capable of transporting up to 10 beach boxes.

In all, 10 trips were required – sometimes more than one trip per day – in order to complete the delivery. Each trip required close coordination with officials from the beach communities due to the fact that the beach boxes needed to be unloaded from the trailers directly onto the beaches.

“Now that everything is in place, when you’re on the beach, you can scan the horizon leading out to the ocean, and you’re able to see the beach boxes dotting the shoreline,” Gallagher noted.

The beach boxes are among a plethora of products produced by Deptcor for use on beaches as well as recreational areas. In Cape May, located just a few miles south of Wildwood and Wildwood Crest, the beach contains Deptcor-supplied storage units for lifeguard equipment and other large items.

Deptcor also offers lifeguard stands, park benches, picnic tables and even storage garages that enable emergency vehicles to be housed on the beach.

All of these products, including the beach boxes in Wildwood and Wildwood Crest, help to carry out Deptcor’s primary mission, which is to educate, train and provide marketable skills to inmates through the operation of a variety of manufacturing and service enterprises.

According to Gallagher, more than 20 inmates participated in the beach box project for the Wildwoods.

“They got a real understanding of what a project of this magnitude entails,” he said. “The ITIs who were working with them were teaching them all about areas like project management, deadlines, construction, shipping and logistics. They saw how to go about seeing a project through, start to finish.

“Once the project was completed, the inmates – like everyone else who was involved – had reason to feel a sense of pride.”

Deptcor produced a total of 90 double-sided beach boxes - 180 units - for the Wildwoods.
May is recognized as Mental Health Awareness Month. Throughout the month, the New Jersey Department of Corrections’ Office of Victim Services chose a day to set up a resource and information table at each of the 13 NJDOC institutions. The tables provided a variety of relevant materials for distribution.

Social Worker Katherine Vittorini attended the event held at Bayside State Prison.

Associate Administrator Mervin Ganesh is flanked by a poster at Garden State Youth Correctional Facility.

Social Worker Diana Lapp served as a resource during the gathering held at Mountainview Youth Correctional Facility.

Senior Correctional Police Officers Taihina Hernandez and Christopher Bruton were on hand for the event hosted by Northern State Prison.