

INSIDE



CORRECTIONS

Newsletter of the New Jersey Department of Corrections

In This Issue

NJDOC Discusses Updates On Edna Mahan Correctional Facility

Members of the Executive Staff provided updates on reforms at Edna Mahan Correctional Facility during a virtual public meeting. Pg. 1

Hero Spotlight

Senior Correctional Police Officer Diaz assisted medical professionals in performing CPR on an unresponsive individual. Pg. 2

NJDOC Officer Raises Money to Donate Back-to-School Supplies to Families of Staff Members

Officer Nwachuku of New Jersey State Prison raises money to donate backpacks filled with school supplies for kids and grandkids of civilian and custody staff. Pg. 3

Willie Bonds Is Appointed to Acting Deputy Commissioner

Willie Bonds receives appointment to Acting Deputy Commissioner for the Department. Pg. 4

Tracey Syphax Visits NJDOC to Encourage Incarcerated Persons to Enter Entrepreneurship

Tracey Syphax and business partner CJ Meenan stop by NJDOC's NSP and EMCF to discuss their entrepreneurship program coming to the Department this fall. Pg. 5



Commissioner Victoria Kuhn speaks at the Edna Mahan Correctional Facility Virtual Public Meeting.

PUBLIC MEETING PROVIDES UPDATE ON EDNA MAHAN CORRECTIONAL FACILITY

On September 16, 2022, the Department held its second virtual public meeting, with over 160 participants in attendance, as the Commissioner and other senior members provided updates on a wide range of reforms implemented at Edna Mahan Correctional Facility (EMCF), located in Clinton, NJ.

"We are continuing to establish a culture that better supports those incarcerated in our care and reinvests in our staff," said NJDOC Commissioner Victoria Kuhn. "This is a very exciting time for the Department to bring forth these changes for the women at Edna Mahan Correctional Facility and to the State of New Jersey."

cont'd p.2





Updates detailed at the public meeting included:

- The hiring of a gender specialist to review gender policies within the Department. This includes, reworking the gender housing policy in order to provide an individualized assessment regarding housing placement for those incarcerated based on gender identity.
- More than 190 body worn cameras were outfitted on Correctional Police Officers who work at Edna Mahan.
- Increased recruitment efforts were implemented to hire more female correctional police officers within the Department and to address staffing levels.

- A Special Victims Unit was established in April 2022 to investigate sexual abuse allegations throughout NJDOC's prison system and clear a backlog of allegations that existed from EMCF.
- Video visitation at Edna launched back in June of 2021, and it continues to be a success story. To date nearly (500) video visits have taken place at Edna. These video visits provide additional opportunities for the incarcerated individuals at Edna to strengthen their familial ties.

Individuals can now watch the full Edna Mahan Correctional Facility Public Meeting by clicking the link [here](#).

HERO SPOTLIGHT

Senior Correctional Police Officer Diaz was at the airport returning from a trip when he noticed an elderly man who was unresponsive. Officer Diaz immediately began performing CPR on the individual, assisting medical professionals that responded. Through SCPO Diaz actions, he exemplifies what it means to be "NJDOC Proud" by going above and beyond the call of duty. He has been a part of the Department's Honor Guard, volunteers for assignments, and assists his coworkers, both on and off duty. Additionally, he always brings a smile and laughter to those he encounters. Thank you for all that you do SCPO Diaz.



Senior Correctional Police Officer Diaz is pictured on the right.





Officer Nwachuku donates back-to-school supplies to staff members to take home to their children and grandchildren.

NJDOC'S OFFICER RAISES MONEY TO DONATE BACK TO SCHOOL SUPPLIES TO FAMILIES OF STAFF MEMBERS

BY LAUREN LAGGY

As summer ends, parents start readying their children for back to school, and when it comes to the cost of back-to-school supplies, it can add up quickly. According to the National Retail Federation, families with children from elementary to high school spend an average of \$864 on school items.

Recognizing the financial strain that purchasing back-to-school supplies can put on parents, Officer Churchill Nwachuku of New Jersey State Prison (NJSP) started holding annual free backpack and school supply donations for civilian and custody staff members at NJSP.

"When I joined the NJDOC in 2018, I saw an opportunity to spread love to my fellow co-workers," said Nwachuku. "Times are hard, and if I can save a family \$70 to \$100 on a backpack and school supplies, that is money that they can put towards groceries or something else."

Officer Nwachuku and his friends have been holding backpack drives for eight years, each year donating more than the last. This year alone, he and his friends were able to raise enough money to purchase and donate a total of 120 backpacks. Next year he hopes to set the bar even higher.

cont'd p.4





"When I receive feedback from people about how their kids or grandkids loved their backpacks, it means everything to me and makes me want to work harder to raise more money next year," said Nwachuku.

Each backpack, equipped with school supplies such as notebooks, pens, and pencils, is donated to staff members to

ensure their kids or grandkids start the school year off with everything they need.

"What I enjoy most about doing the backpack drive is the smile and joy I can put on the faces of my brothers and sisters in blue," said Nwachuku. "It's all about spreading love and positive energy."



WILLIE BONDS IS APPOINTED TO ACTING DEPUTY COMMISSIONER

Mr. Bonds, a long-standing and widely respected leader within the Department, was recently named as Acting Deputy Commissioner.

Mr. Bonds' appointment by Commissioner Kuhn follows 24 years of exemplary service having joined the Department in 1998 as a Senior Correctional Police Officer, and subsequently earned the rank of Correctional Police Sergeant, then Lieutenant. In 2013, Mr. Bonds was named Associate Administrator at Bayside State Prison, Administrator at South Woods

State Prison in 2015, and subsequently Director of Operations in September of 2018.

"Mr. Bonds brings a unique, in-depth, and steady leadership to the role and is clearly focused on investing in staff, reintegration, and achieving the mission of the Department, making him a tremendous asset in shaping many of the reforms and goals before the agency," said Commissioner Kuhn.

As Acting Deputy Commissioner, Mr. Bonds will continue to be responsible for the overall management of the Division of Operations, including nine correctional facilities, as well as direct oversight of the Health Services Unit (HSU), the Special Operations Group (SOG), Central Transportation Unit/Central Medical Unit (CTU/CMU), County Services, Field Services, Agri-Industries, security audits, and special projects.





TRACEY SYPHAX VISITS NJDOC TO ENCOURAGE THOSE INCARCERATED TO ENTER ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Tracey Syphax and business partner CJ Meenan of Reentry Ventures, LLC visited Edna Mahan Correctional Facility and Northern State Prison to discuss their entrepreneurship program that will be implemented this fall. The Program encourages those exiting the prison system to enter entrepreneurship upon returning to the community.



Tracey Syphax meets with an incarcerated individual at Northern State Prison after discussing his entrepreneurship program.



CJ Meenan speaks to the women of Edna Mahan Correctional Facility about how to start a business plan.



Incarcerated individuals from Northern State Prison attend the presentation to hear Tracey Syphax speak more about the program.



Tracey Syphax shares his story at Edna Mahan Correctional Facility.

