



District of Columbia Government  
Adrian M. Fenty, Mayor

# DC Department of Corrections *News*



Department of Corrections  
Devon Brown, Director

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## Department of Justice Visits Juvenile Inmates

Six employees from the United States Department of Justice recently visited the new juvenile unit at the Correctional Treatment Facility (CTF). Director Devon Brown and DC Jail Warden Simon T. Wainwright escorted the tour participants around the unit, highlighting the behavior modification graded tier system and the school program that is administered by the DC Public Schools. The prosecutors and other legal experts were anxious to observe first-hand the services available to the City's 16 and 17-year-olds committed to adult detention. They also wanted to ensure that the youths' placement at the facility was aligned with the mandates set in Title XVI.

Staff, including a DCPS special education teacher, provided overviews of the constructive programs available to the juvenile population such as mandatory education, barbering, behavioral management and chess. The prosecutors acknowledged the agency's progress and made recommendations for additional programs.

The juvenile inmates were transferred from the D.C. Jail to the CTF in November. They remain completely separated from adult offenders.

## Accomplishments of Correctional Staff Highlighted During 2008 Promotional Ceremony

The Department of Corrections held its largest promotional and recognition ceremony in more than ten years to commend approximately 300 employees on their recent professional accomplishments. Uniformed staff promoted through the correctional officer ranks from Sergeant to Major, security and civilian personnel achieving professional certification from the American Correctional Association (ACA), as well as those making outstanding contributions to the profession were among those honored at the event.

The program, held at the H.D. Woodson High School in northeast, Washington, began with a military inspired procession from that school's junior R.O.T.C. cadets. They saluted the newly promoted Majors (5), Captains (3) Lieutenants (26) and Sergeants (52) as they filed into the auditorium exhibiting the pride and distinction of a public servant. "The most important element in our organization is the staff," said Director Brown, in addressing the honorees, their colleagues and family who attended. "The men and women who are so deservedly being recognized for their professional achievements reflect the elevated standards and insistence upon excellence that are characteristic of the Mayor Fenty Administration. They will take the torch, keep it lit, and enlighten others about the remarkable progress that the Department of Corrections is making."

One hundred and forty three correctional officers, managers, supervisors, and executive staffs representing the DC Department of Corrections (DOC) have earned credentials by the ACA, the nation's premier correctional organization. Developed specifically for practitioners in the correctional profession, the vast number of staff achieving professional certification highlights an ambitious change within the DOC to advance the workforce and improve the overall organizational culture. The overall number of correctional officers to obtain ACA certification now surpasses all other correctional systems in the country. Louisiana correctional staff had proudly held this honor for the past few years. Various divisions within DOC like the K-9 Unit and the Emergency Response Team (ERT) were highlighted. The K-9 unit earned dual certification from the American Canine Association as well as the Maryland Division of Corrections. The ERT recognized its 10 new members, including Private Cassidy Jones, the only female on the team.

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## *A Message From Director Devon Brown*

As the final days of 2008 come to a close, the Department of Corrections reflects upon its experiences of the past 12 months and is grateful. It has been an amazing year for the Department, which is evidenced by the remarkable transformation and progress that has occurred throughout the organization. Significant operational improvements, security enhancements, upgraded technology, expanded inmate programs, and increased external partnerships achieved this year reflect a stronger, more confident and proficient agency.

Key to our success is the workforce as they also represent the most important element in the organization.

Earlier this month, the Department recognized approximately 300 employees for their professional accomplishments and contributions to the District government and criminal justice field. The workforce represents the future of the Department and I am optimistic that the incoming year will be filled with greater success. I look forward to what lies ahead.

On behalf of the DC Department of Corrections in its entirety, I wish you a happy, peaceful, and safe holiday and warm wishes for the new year.

## **Phraselator Reduces Communication Barriers**

The expanding cultural diversity within the District effects how the Department of Corrections provides services to its inmate population who are limited or non-English proficient. All individuals being committed to jail custody have access to information and services that facilitate a constructive orientation to the agency, with the Department utilizing a variety of measures to effectively communicate with approximately five percent of those who may not understand, speak, read or write English. The Department recently introduced the Phraselator, a speech-to-speech translation tool, to further address language diversity inside the DC Jail. The small hand-held device can translate more than 100,000 preloaded English phrases into more than 40 languages and dialects. It is designed to give out instruction as opportunities to convey a verbal response to commands are limited. Phrases such as 'stop and prepare for a strip search' or 'show me exactly where it hurts on your body' can be programmed instantly into the Phraselator and communicated to an inmate in any language.

Keith Godwin, the Department's Chief of Network Operations recently conducted training on the Phraselator for the K-9 Unit. "Using the Phraselator can help this special security group improve its overall patrol and contraband search functions," says Godwin. "The Phraselator is not intended to engage a person in conversation but to get that individual to appropriately respond to direction. It is a practical alternative to a translator for the simple tasks we ask inmates. However, it is not designed to eliminate the need for a translator if two way communications is required."

The Phraselator was developed as a military translation system in the early 2000's. Plans are underway to place the device in the R&D Unit, on each floor control, as well as have an officer carry one when escorting an inmate to the infirmary. It is currently used by the Howard County, Maryland Police Department.

## **The Storyteller**

While the DC Jail is not your typical site for a story hour gathering, inmates at the facility eagerly anticipate the weekly visits by Vera Oye' Yaa-Anna who uses storytelling



to impart lessons about morality, self esteem and becoming more constructive individuals .

"The inmates enjoy the stories, poems and honest talk back and forth," says acclaimed master storyteller, Ms. Vera, or Auntie Oye as she is sometimes referred. "It saddened me at first to see them in this predicament but my purpose is to infuse good will and instill hope to those who have often felt discarded," she said. For two hours each week, the Liberian native uses traditional, value-based African folklore to capture the interest and hold the attention of offenders participating in the Reentry and RSAT programs. The cultural music and candid speech that envelop her presentations vicariously lead the group on a unique journey to the motherland. Finally, she teaches her confined audience how to craft their own illuminating stories in order to market their skills and prepare for a successful return to the community.

In many cultures, storytelling as a communicative art is recognized and appreciated as a medium for sharing important information in community building, thereby encouraging individuals and communities to develop healthier lifestyles. Stories transmit lessons in ethics and principles, in addition to interpreting our past, defining our present and imagining our future. Ms. Vera provides services to the Department of Corrections through a City Arts Project grant by the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities and the National Endowment for the Arts. Ms. Vera plans to extend her services to the juvenile population at the CTF.



(Correctional Officer—Corporal).

The DOC extends well wishes to retirees **Kofi Agyapong** (Legal Instrument Examiner), **Donna Banks** (Correctional Treatment Specialist), **Mozelle Byrd** (Correctional Officer—Corporal), **Elijah Daniels** (Supervisory Correctional Officer—Lieutenant), **Rogelio Fisher** (Correctional Officer—Corporal), **Edward Givan** (Supervisory Correctional Officer—Lieutenant), **Ellis Hagy** (Maintenance), **Joan Hill** (Correctional Officer—Corporal), **Riley James** (Correctional Officer—Corporal), **Grady Kidd** (Correctional Officer—Corporal), **Wayne Krause** (Correctional Officer—Sergeant), **Harold Levy** (Correctional Treatment Specialist), **Peggy McGee** (Correctional Officer—Corporal), **Terrence Richards** (Correctional Officer—Sergeant), **Cheryl Scott-Moore** (Correctional Officer—Corporal), **Joe Smith** (Correctional Officer—Sergeant), **Richard Smithson** (Electrician), **Roosevelt Streeter** (Correctional Officer—Corporal), **Robert Wilson** (Correctional Officer—), and **Vickie Wilson**

## Opinion Poll

The end of the year marks a time for personal and professional reflection. DOC staff is thankful and acknowledge some of their blessings.

**Benita Bagley** (Correctional Officer) - The best gift I ever received was having my daughter work at DOC. She is working out well and I'm so proud.

**Maurice Blackwell** (Correctional Officer) - My best gift was my wife (Dorothy) who has stuck by me through thick and thin.

**Dr. Reena Chakraborty** (Statistician Forecasting) - I have been blessed with many wonderful gifts throughout the years including grace and a few precious friends, but the one that touched me the most was the little xylophone my parents gave me when I was three-years-old. The music moved my spirit and allowed me expression.

**Pamela Chase** (Correctional Officer/ Training Academy Instructor) - It just happened, my engagement ring. This is the man of my dreams who has made all of my dreams come true.

**Kevin Davis** (High School Intern) - The best gift I ever received was my life. Without that I couldn't do anything!"

**Reverend Linda Greene** (DOC Jail Chaplain) - The greatest gift I ever received was the gift of the Holy Spirit. It leads me and guides me in truth in both the work place and the community.



**Rahim Jenkins** (Program Specialist) - My parents were the best gifts I ever received because of the many wonderful lessons they taught me as a child that benefit me now as an adult.

**Frankie Lightfoot** (Secretary) - The best gift I probably ever received is my seven-year-old granddaughter because it shows growth in our family. It gives us the opportunity to extend and share family values.

**Ron Peele** (Agency Fiscal Officer) - I once got a thick Ravens sweatshirt as a present. It is one of my favorites because it keeps me warm especially at this time of the year and I am an avid Baltimore Ravens fan.

**Nathaniel Robinson** (Correctional Officer) - The best gift I ever received was the ability to give back to others what I learned in my life to people who didn't have it. I hope they take the information, use it and have a better life.

**Al Sanders** (Reentry Coordinator) - The best gift I ever received was my dear departed wife because she gave me three fine children that I'm still thankful for today.

**Ja'net Sheen** (Correctional Officer) - The best gift I ever received was my three children. They were my saving grace because they gave me character, endurance and wisdom that I didn't know I had.

**Terrance Wilson** (K-9 Unit Commander) - The best gift I ever received would have to be my wife because she is my best friend and life partner.

# Happy Holidays from the Office of Communications



Your input is very important. *DC Department of Corrections News* encourages responses and article suggestions from its readers.

Let us hear from you for the next issue. Feedback or other submissions should be emailed to [Beverly.Young@dc.gov](mailto:Beverly.Young@dc.gov) or [Anthony.Diallo@dc.gov](mailto:Anthony.Diallo@dc.gov).

## Health and Safety Tips

### *Holiday Shopping Safety Tips*

The hustle and bustle of the holiday season creates a level of excitement among people that can present a unique danger to those who lose focus of their surroundings and become vulnerable to holiday crime. The pressures associated with finding that perfect gift to purchase, locating a prime parking space at the mall, and being the next person in the cashier's line can turn an enjoyable activity into one of despair. It is important during this season of merriment for people to become more diligent in guarding their most precious commodity ---themselves.

The following safety measures can help you experience a joyful holiday:

- ✓ Remain focused. Distraction equates to people becoming more vulnerable to crimes like pick-pocketing.
- ✓ Visually survey an area before leaving and approaching your car. Park in well lighted areas. Avoid parking in isolated areas.
- ✓ Be sure to lock the car, close the windows, and hide shopping bags and gifts in the trunk.
- ✓ Avoid carrying large amounts of cash. Pay with a check or credit card whenever possible.
- ✓ Be careful who you give your credit card. Try to ensure that the card is always in your *presence*. Many people have been victims of identity theft because their credit card has been photo copied and used illegally.
- ✓ Deter pickpockets and purse-snatchers. Don't overburden yourself with packages.
- ✓ Pay attention to unusual people, occurrences or sounds. Perpetuators can sometimes look harmless. Stay vigil.

### Mission Statement

The mission of the District of Columbia Department of Corrections (DOC) is to ensure public safety for the citizens of the District of Columbia by providing an orderly, safe, secure, and humane environment for the confinement of pretrial detainees and sentenced inmates, while affording those in custody meaningful rehabilitative opportunities that will assist them to constructively re-integrate into the community.

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