

FRONTLINE NEWS

DC Department of Corrections Newsletter

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DC DOC Honor Guard compete at the annual Wreath Laying Ceremony and Honor Guard competition.
Photo credit: Darby Baham

DOC Helps to Honor Fallen Officers

This year's annual Wreath Laying Ceremony and Honor Guard Competition were held on Saturday, May 3rd at the National Law Enforcement Memorial in Washington, D.C. Marking the start of National Correctional Employees Week, this event brings jurisdictions together from across the region to honor correctional professionals who have tragically lost their lives in the line of duty and to pay tribute to those still courageously serving in jails, prisons and other institutions throughout the country.

Now in its 23rd year, the ceremony is hosted by the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments (MWCOC) Corrections Chief Committee which includes representatives from the District of Columbia, Alexandria, Arlington, Fairfax, Frederick, Loudoun, Prince William, Montgomery, Prince Georges and Charles counties.

The event's keynote speaker was the Honorable Karol V. Mason, Assistant Attorney General from the U.S. Department of Justice's Office of Justice Programs (OJP). In quoting the Department of Justice's mission, she conveyed a message that exemplified the importance of this annual event...[achievement of their mission] depends on the work [correctional professionals] do each and every day--- and there can be no justice in the absence of [their] contributions.

Following her remarks, Craig Floyd, Chairman of the National Law Enforcement Museum, began the roll call of fallen officers as members of the different honor guards laid roses for each one. With the retiring of the colors, the wreath laying ceremony ended and the honor guard teams from each participating jurisdiction prepared for the competition. This year the Honor Guard team from Prince Georges County placed first, the District of Columbia second and Fairfax County third. The award for best dressed team went to Fairfax County.

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"[Achievement of our mission] depends on the work [correctional professionals] do each and every day — and there can be no justice in the absence of your contributions." - Karol

*V. Mason,
Assistant
Attorney
General*



By Sylvia Lane

DOC Employees Honored at Annual DC One Fund Ceremony



DC DOC poses with Mayor Gray at the DC One Fund ceremony.
Photo: Darby Baham

The Department of Corrections once again exceeded expectations, as it was honored for being the number one agency to raise money for the annual DC One Fund campaign.

DOC raised a total of \$90,386.57 with 27 percent participation, a number that far exceeded any other agency in the city, and also helped to cement the Public Safety cluster as the number one cluster in the District for two years in a row.

The ceremony, which featured live music from F.A.M.E (Foundation for the Advancement of Music and Education) and performances by the East of the River Boys and Girls Steelband, was held in the Old Council Chambers at One Judiciary Square on February 25. Following remarks from Mayor Vincent C. Gray, Director Tom Faust and DC Labor Representative, Anntoinette

“Toni” White-Richardson presented certificates to the top three agencies in both the below 500 employees and above 500 employees categories. When DOC’s name was called, staff excitedly made their way to the front to represent the agency and its efforts. “I [am] proud to be part of a giving organization like DC DOC,” said Laurinne Ellis, Co-chairperson for DOC’s One Fund Committee. “To be the shining example not only of labor and management partnering, but to show the city and nation the results of that partnership. The neediest in our region are that much better off thanks to the compassion and generosity exhibited at the DC Department of Corrections.”

In a moving turn of events, Mayor Gray, Director Faust, and the One Fund Committee surprised Ms. White-Richardson with a plaque honoring her commitment to the city and to the One Fund.

By Darby Baham

Honoring the Volunteers who “Lend Hands and Change Lives”

The Department of Corrections honored its volunteers in the Volunteer Appreciation Ceremony on April 9, 2014. The ceremony, which was held at the Saint Elizabeth Hospital Auditorium, was titled “Lending Hands and Changing Lives” and had a turnout of over 150 people.

Following remarks from Deputy Director Carolyn Cross, Director Tom Faust, and the guest speaker, Judge Rainey Brandt, plaques were presented to the “George Strawn” Awardees for excelling as the top 10 volunteers of the year. However, over 65 in total organizations were recognized for their exemplary work with the agency.

“It’s important that we honor them, because they are volunteering their time,” said Reverend Linda Greene, DOC Volunteer Coordinator and Mistress of Ceremony for the evening. “Because of the amount of work they do and what they do — they are so committed and give so much — they deserve to be appreciated.”



Director Faust poses with some of the volunteers honored at the ceremony.
Photo: Bridget Reavis-Tyler

Reverend Greene also acknowledged that the ceremony serves as not just recognition for the volunteers, but as incentive for them to keep volunteering. “The volunteers get excited and motivated by the ceremony, so it helps us going forward as well,” she said.

Getting to know Warden Smith

William J. Smith has a distinguished career in corrections, including having previously served as Warden with DCDOC from October, 2006 to October, 2007. For the past two and a half years, he served as Deputy Director of Operations for the Prince Georges County, MD. Department of Correction, where he was responsible for planning, leading, organizing, and controlling 493 sworn uniform personnel in all aspects of custody and control of a Detention Facility.

Warden Smith began his career 44 years ago as a correctional officer in the Patuxent Institution in Jessup, Maryland and went on to serve in numerous roles, including but not limited to Security Chief in Patuxent, Director of Security Operations in Baltimore, MD, Assistant Warden at the Maryland House of Correction — Annex in Jessup, MD, Commissioner of the Maryland Division of Pretrial Detention and Services, and Warden of the Patuxent Institution. He has experience in all aspects of juvenile and adult corrections.

His career also includes Warden of the Patuxent Institution and Commissioner of the Maryland Division of Pretrial Detention & Services, and he served 4 years in the United States Marine Corps, military police.

Warden Smith is an ACA Certified Correctional Executive and is a skilled small arms expert. He is also skilled in word processing, data management, correctional facility management, and tactical planning.

Profile: William J. Smith

Mr. William J. Smith rejoins the DOC family as Warden after having previously served in that capacity from October 2006 to October 2007. He has a distinguished career in corrections and returns with a positive outlook in the Department.

Please read below to learn more about Warden Smith.



Photo credit: Darby Baham

Q: How long have you worked in corrections?

A: I started my career in corrections as a civilian on December 27, 1966. All, minus three years were spent in corrections. I mentioned as a civilian because my last two years in the Marine Corps, I served as the base “Provost Marshall” for the United States Naval Academy. My duties included managing a small military brig.

Q: What influenced your decision to return to DC DOC as Warden?

A: I felt that I still have a lot to offer and I could impart the vast knowledge I’ve acquired over the years to younger, committed correctional professionals.

Q: What are some of your top priorities as Warden?

A: I’m committed to bringing the Director’s vision to fruition. Specifically, increasing staff morale; creating a safe and secure environment for staff and inmates; making our facility a model for others to follow; and increasing the level of professionalism amongst staff as it relates to uniform bearing, carriage and deportment.

Q: What are you most looking forward to?

A: I am most looking forward to when we as an agency become single minded in a professional approach to the challenges of our profession.

Q: Tell us a bit about yourself—some of your hobbies and interests.

A: I’m an avid sports fan. My favorites are football, basketball, and track and field. I’m also a gym rat, as I strongly believe in physical fitness as a lifestyle. I love fusion smooth jazz.

NexTalk Laptops Help to Serve Deaf and Hard of Hearing Population

This March, the Department of Corrections began conducting training for fifty (50) staff members and contractors to use NexTalk video remote interpreting (VRI) services as part of an agency-wide initiative to provide effective communication tools for deaf and hard of hearing inmates.

DOC is the first jail facility to use the VRI service in the District, Maryland, and VA region, which provides instant access to sign language interpreters for American, English, and Spanish sign languages. Once logged in, individuals are able to connect to a live interpreter via the web-based service, allowing for greater access to sign language interpreters for inmates.

“Although VRI technology isn’t new, providing it in a correctional setting is,” said Sarah Rand, DOC Risk Manager and ADA Coordinator. “DC DOC should take great pride in that.”

Since the training, the Department deployed NexTalk laptops at six locations in April, including the AAS Program Coordinator’s Office, the Central Cell Block (CCB) Clinic, the Central Detention Facility (CDF) Command Center, CDF Medical, Correctional Treatment Facility (CTF) Command Center, and CTF Medical. The laptops at the Program Coordinator’s Office, the command centers, and the CCB Clinic are all portable and can be signed out from their home location for use around the facility.

By Darby Baham

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DOC Attends 10th Anniversary of Language Access Act

To commemorate the 10 year anniversary of the DC Language Access Act, the Office of Human Rights commissioned a report from the Urban Institute to reflect on 10 years of implementation and make recommendations on how to further improve government services for those who are limited and non-English proficient (LEP/NEP).

This report was released at their 10th Anniversary event titled, "The Road to a Global DC: Ten Years of Language Access and Immigrant Inclusion" held on April 15, 2014 at the Carnegie Library at Mt. Vernon Square. The ceremony, which began with a speech from Mayor Vincent C. Gray, provided a great opportunity for further discussion surrounding the findings of the report.



Eric Tagne, member of DOC’s Language Access Team, poses with Gretta Rivero and Stephanie Franklin from the Office of Human Rights.

“The findings describe a pioneering Language Access Act that emerged through a community-based effort led by the DC Language Access Coalition, made up of diverse immigrant-serving organizations that recognized the importance of ensuring full access to DC’s LEP/NEP residents,” said Eric Tagne, DOC Language Access Team member. “However, they also acknowledge the complexity of assessing the language needs of an extremely diverse LEP/NEP population, across a wide array of agencies and with limited resources.”

Following the release, a panel discussion and reception took place.