

FRONTLINE NEWS

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Photo credit: Darby Baham

Uniform Inspections Highlights Officers

Closing out the month of April, all three shifts of the D.C. Jail correctional officers participated in uniform inspections. The inspections, which began as an initiative under Warden William Smith's watch, are held semi-annually, and last for three days.

During that time, all uniform staff are required to report to Roll Call in their Class "B" uniforms and adhere to inspections conducted by the shift Majors, and in some instances, the Warden and Director Tom Faust.

This year the initiative was a great success, according to Warden Smith. "The inspection went very well, and [I] would guestimate that the compliance percentage was approximately 97%," he said. "[This is] not bad considering the first inspection was probably in the 80% range. Staff appeared to be just as enthusiastic if not more."

The inspections also featured an opportunity for at least three officers to be commended for their outstanding appearance at each shift inspection. Those who were chosen as representatives were also eventually commended with a photo shoot acknowledging their efforts and example setting for peers.

"The best outcome I believe is that I see more pride in the wearing of the uniforms on a daily basis," said Warden Smith.

By Darby Baham

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"The inspection went very well and... staff appeared to be just as enthusiastic, if not more. The best outcome I believe is that I see more pride in the wearing of the uniforms on a daily basis."

-William Smith, Warden



Annual Ceremony Closes Out Correctional Employees Week



DOC Honor Guard competed in the annual Honor Guard competition at the Wreath Laying Ceremony. Photo credit: Darby Baham

Marking the close of National Correctional Employees Week which began on May 2nd and ended on Saturday, May 9th, this year's annual Wreath Laying Ceremony and Honor Guard Competition was again held in Washington, D.C. at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial to celebrate the lives of correctional professionals throughout the country who have served with courage and dedication and lost their lives in the line of duty. The ceremony is a long standing tradition that for over 20 years has brought jurisdictions together from across the region to honor the fallen and pay tribute to those who have taken the oath to uphold public safety in our neighborhoods and communities.

This year's Master of Ceremonies, Alexandria Sheriff Dana Lawhorne, opened with comments reminding the audience of the reason we gather each year at the site of the memorial—not only to honor the fallen but to acknowledge the courage, dedication and fortitude of those walking the beats each and every day.

The year's keynote speaker was Federal Bureau of Prisons (FBOP) Director Charles Samuels. Appointed on December 21, 2011, Director Samuels is a career public administrator responsible for the oversight and management of the FBOP, which employs more than 39,000 staff and is responsible for the care and custody of over 200,000 inmates. Director Samuels began his career in public safety as a Correctional Officer in March of 1988, making his remarks that much more relevant to the occasion. Following Director Samuels' presentation, Director Thomas Faust and members of the DCDOC honor guard paid tribute to Carolyn Cross, former Deputy Director for Operations who was murdered in September of 2014 as she prepared to attend a professional conference in Atlanta, Georgia. Deputy Cross was a valued member of the corrections family who began her career in 1979 as an officer and ascended through the ranks to become Deputy Director at DCDOC.

Herb Giobbi, Chief of Staff for the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund, followed with the roll call of heroes—those fallen officers/correctional professionals whose names will be added to the National Law Enforcement Memorial. As he read the names of the fallen, honor guard representatives from across the region laid roses and saluted in memory of the sacrifices made. The honor guard competition followed with the U.S. Army's Old Guard providing the three person team of judges. The first place award went to Alexandria with the Fairfax County team being recognized as best dressed.

By Sylvia Lane

Healthy Ways to Incorporate Summer Fun into Your Fitness

Summer is coming, and it is the perfect time to shed old habits that no longer work for you and begin healthy, new ones. One way you can do this is by improving your life through a good old-fashioned summer cleaning with a better diet and fitness regimen.

If you're looking for ways to avoid boredom with your workout, let the season inspire you to be more active and fit. Take in the beauty of summertime with a walk, bike riding, or perhaps an outside Zumba class — all of these options provide cardiovascular health benefits. You may even want to join up with family, a friend or co-worker for camaraderie and a dose of healthy competition. Including some weight-training exercises into your regimen at least twice weekly is a good way to tone your muscles. However, you will benefit most if you can increase your heart rate and break a sweat. Experts recommend at least 30 minutes of moderate activity most days of the week.

The best way to eat a healthy and delicious diet in the summer is to find ways to incorporate fresh produce and lean cuts of meat and fish into your meals. One fun activity might include planting a vegetable or herb garden and reaping the benefits for months to come. Vine-ripened tomatoes are a classic garden staple, and research has shown that the lycopene in tomatoes may boost immunity and prevent diseases, as well as reduce the risk of prostate cancer.



Photo courtesy of EatingWell.com

Whatever you decide to do, at least pick one or two changes you would like to make, and set goals you'd like to accomplish in the next three, six, and twelve months. The summer is the perfect time to get started on your journey!

By Judy Poole

Getting to Know Mr. Johnson

Lennard Johnson has served as Deputy Warden for Operations since July 2014. He has served in the field of public safety for 26 years, beginning in 1988 with the Maryland Division of Correction as an entry level Correctional Officer temporarily assigned to the Maryland Penitentiary until the Maryland Correctional Adjustment Center "Supermax" opened in 1989.

Before entering the corrections profession, Deputy Warden Johnson was a Sergeant with the U.S. Army, 82nd Airborne Division, Ft. Bragg. He would go on to provide excellent leadership in a variety of positions, including: Chief of Security, Maryland Reception Classification Center; Director, DOC Intelligence Coordinating Unit in Jessup, MD; Commander, Correctional Officer Recruitment Unit in Maryland Department of Corrections; and Captain, Maryland House of Corrections in Jessup, Maryland.

In 1991, Mr. Johnson was transferred to the Maryland House of Corrections-Annex, where he was promoted through each rank to the rank of Captain. During his years at the Annex, he served in numerous capacities including Tactical Commander, Training Coordinator, and Risk Management Coordinator.

He also served as the Segregation Team Commander where he and his team received the Maryland Governors Award for Excellence "Team" for a collaborative approach to managing highly assaultive maximum security segregation inmates. The group was recognized for the significant reduction in assaults on staff and reductions in use of force.

Profile: Lennard Johnson

Lennard Johnson joined DC DOC in July 2014, with an excellent background in corrections management and 26 years of experience. He now serves as Deputy Warden for Operations.

Please read below to learn more about Deputy Warden Johnson.



Q: What influenced your decision to join the executive team at DOC?

A: Many years ago I read a book called Effective Prison Leadership, and in the book it talked about 3 "P's" — Pride, Proficiency and Professionalism. Throughout my career I've put these principles into action. In preparation for my interview with DC DOC, I did some research on the agency and found they had 3 "P's" —Pride, Professionalism, and Passion as their vision, and I believed this would be a good fit for me. After meeting Director Faust and the Late Deputy Director Carolyn A. Cross; however, I knew this was the place for me. As an added bonus, the opportunity to work for Warden Smith sealed the deal.

Q: What have you most enjoyed about working for DC Corrections?

A: I enjoy working with the management team and staff at CDF. I have the opportunity to learn from Warden Smith's many years of experience. Most of all I enjoy the opportunity to impact lives in a positive way.

Q: What are some of your short term/long term priorities as Deputy Warden for Operations?

A: To establish Team Management for the 1st Floor housing units which will provide consistency of operations and better communication with staff and inmates. My long term goal is to see CDF operations function in the most efficient, effective, and consistent manner possible and achieve our vision of being a "Benchmark Agency"

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

A: I enjoy exercise, bowling and most importantly time with family. I'm an avid fan of football, basketball, and MMA.

Visit from Poet Ignites Spark in Juveniles

Someone once wrote that poetry can be healing, and on March 31, DOC juvenile residents found that to be very true. Thanks to the Juvenile Unit partners at the Free Minds Book Club, the youth were able to spend time with Mr. Richard Gold, published poet and founder of the Pongo Teen Writing Program based in Seattle, Washington.

The Pongo Teen Writing Program is a volunteer, nonprofit effort with Seattle teens that are in jail, on the streets, or in other ways leading difficult lives. Their mission is to help young people express themselves through poetry and other forms of writing. In his work, Mr. Gold asks teens to speak from the heart about who they are as people, and from this type of sharing, the healing process begins. Teens often respond by writing about traumatic losses that occurred when they were little children, such as the death of a parent, abandonment, neglect, abuse, and a parent's addiction.

DOC juveniles were afforded the opportunity to read and interpret poems from published teens with backgrounds similar to themselves. "Mr. Gold's visit showed the guys just how powerful it can be to put your thoughts and feelings on a piece of paper," said Kelli Taylor Free Minds Co-Founder and Book Club Facilitator. Ms. Taylor continued stating, "Every single one of them wrote, including one young man who had just arrived on the unit. He was so excited and said this was the first time he'd ever written a poem."

The juveniles' ability to both create and interpret poetic metaphor was amazing. They were able to see and feel very deeply what the teen writers similar to them were trying to communicate on an emotional level.

By Fred Rogers

Masthead

Publisher/Editor/Writer

Sylvia Lane

Writer/Editor/Layout Editor/Photographer

Darby Baham

Contributing Writers

LaToya Lane

Judy Poole

Fred Rogers

*To submit story suggestions,
please contact Sylvia Lane
(sylvia.lane2@dc.gov) or
Darby Baham
(darby.baham@dc.gov)*

DOC Participates in Trauma-Informed Care Training

DOC, in partnership with The National Center for Trauma Informed Care (NCTC), provided Trauma Informed Care Training to DOC and CTF staff members, all of whom work in some capacity with female offenders. The training took place on February 24 and 25 at the Correctional Treatment Facility.

Four sessions were offered to maximize participation of correctional officers from every shift. A total of 97 staff participated to include the CTF Warden, Assistant/Deputy Wardens, Correctional Managers/Counselors/Officers, Program Managers, DOC/CTF Training Specialists, Medical/Mental Health/RSAT clinicians, Transportation, R&D staff, volunteers, and contractors. Facilitated by two experts in the field of Trauma Informed Care, Dr. Joan Gillece and Dr. Brian Simms from SAMHSA both have over 30 years of experience in trauma-informed care practices.

The trainers discussed the definition of trauma and its prevalence in society, as well as in an incarcerated settings. An overview was given about how trauma impacts the brain functions and the behaviors that are associated with this traumatic episode. The trainers gave several examples of programs and interventions being used in other correctional and mental health facilities that decreased aggression in the persons being housed in those facilities. The trainers also solicited ideas about interventions from staff for the population that they serve.

Based upon a survey given after the training, there was a lot of positive feedback. Some of the comments were:

"I am a trauma survivor myself and I would like to help."

"I now know to ask what happened to you instead of what is wrong with you."

"The training was phenomenal; I have a new insight and am more trauma informed."

"The training was excellent. It really motivated me to be more aware of the women's needs"

The surveys showed a majority of the participants reported having a *Fair* understanding of trauma prior to training, and after receiving the Trauma Informed Care Training they rated themselves as having a *Very Good* understanding of trauma.

By LaToya Lane