

FRONTLINE NEWS

DC Department of Corrections Newsletter

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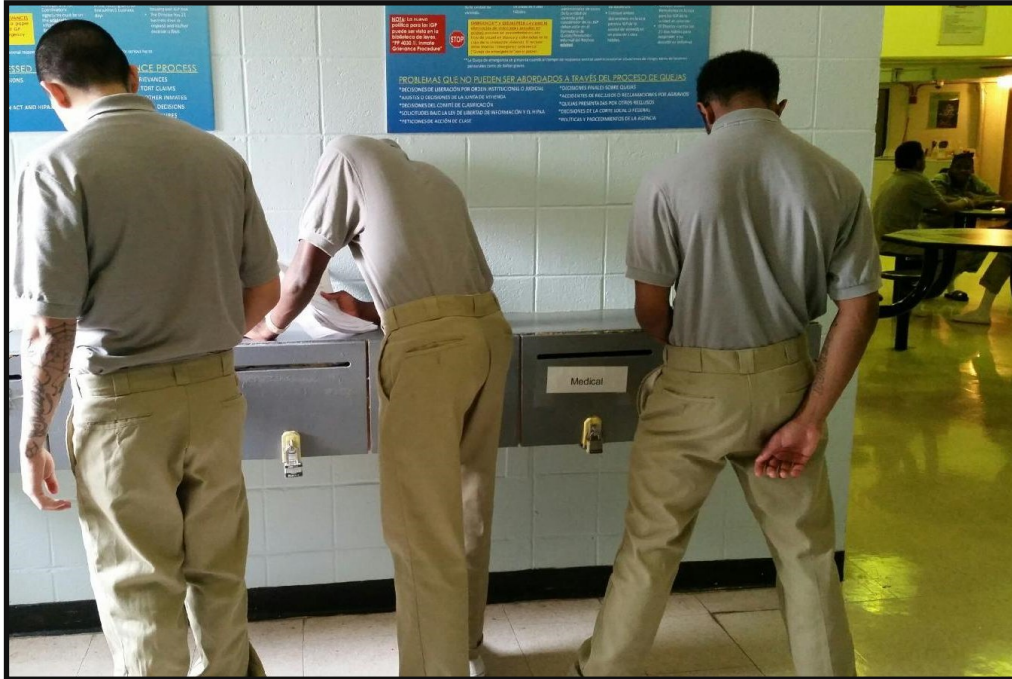


Photo credit: Sharon Hargrove

Juveniles Credit New Uniforms with Helping Improve Positive Self Image

Effective July 27, the Department authorized a change in attire for all juveniles in our custody. Approval was granted to discontinue use of the traditional orange jumpsuits in exchange for khaki pants and gray polo shirts.

This new uniform will also be acceptable attire for all court appearances. The change is in line with positive youth development best practices that teach how to build on assets while promoting positive outcomes for young people. Juvenile resident “J” said, “The uniforms make me feel normal again. Even though I am incarcerated I feel like a student again.”

DOC strives to create an environment and offer programming for juvenile residents that fosters rehabilitation, helps build positive self-images and improves self-esteem. We believe appearance has an impact on behavior and by making a change in the current dress code, even better outcomes will be evidenced.

By Fred Rogers

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“The uniforms make me feel normal again. Even though I am incarcerated I feel like a student again”

- “J”,
Juvenile resident



In2Work Culinary Program Graduates Class of Fifteen



Photo credit: Donald Hilliard

What began as a pilot program last November as a partnership project with Aramark and DOC is one of the agency's effective examples of reentry programming. The In2Work Culinary Program encompasses three (3) eight week sessions with two separate classes simultaneously running for male and female students. The program includes food service training, practical work experience, and the opportunity to obtain national certification in ServSafe and DC licensure for food handling.

Donald Hilliard, Food Service and Canteen Contract Administrator sees firsthand the experience and training participants receive while in the program and is proud of its success. "The projected results are that at least 90 percent of the participants will complete the vocational program and 80 percent will obtain certification; currently the

certification rate is 98 percent," he said. "Being certified is a hiring incentive to employers who would otherwise have to pay for the training and ServeSafe certification. [In fact] upon release some are already referred to the DC Central Kitchen for further training or to ORCA for employment assistance."

Participants become eligible for the program by filling out an application, submitting it to their case manager, having a projected release in 3 months, being low or medium custody, and medically cleared. The latest session ended on September 14 and had a graduating class of 15 — 6 women and 9 men.

"[This] program will have a long term effect by providing a skill for employment and thus reducing recidivism and producing productive citizens for the community," said Hilliard.

By Darby Baham

DOC Partners with DOES to Launch Work Readiness Program

This July, DOC (in partnership with DOES) launched its Work Readiness Program for eligible inmates within six to twelve weeks of release. Following the pilot, a press event was held on September 14 with Mayor Muriel Bowser to announce the program and other workforce initiatives that support the community reintegration of returning citizens.

The program is located on a designated housing block within the Jail—SW1. The unit is set up classroom style with tables and chairs along with a resource area housing books and other educational materials for participants. The computer lab includes six computers and a printer for completion of work assignments, preparation of resumes, cover letters and other documents.



Photo credit: Bridget Reavis-Tyler

Workforce Development Facilitators provide instruction in areas that support successful reintegration and enhance preparation for employment, skills training or other work related activities. During the multi-week program cycle, participants are involved in classroom and individually focused activities--life/employability skills development. Topics covered include life skills (communication, team building, conflict resolution, anger management, decision making), resume preparation and interviewing, use of the personal computer/Internet resources, labor market information, and an orientation to employment and workforce training resources. Participants also learn about post release resources and wraparound services available through DOES, DHS, ORCA, DMV and other public/private sector organizations.

Formal graduations are held at the end of each cycle with certificates of completion given to graduates.

By Sylvia Lane

Getting to Know Mrs. Perry

Toni M. Perry is a third generation Washingtonian who originally began working for the Department of Corrections in 1987 after having worked at the DC City Council for Council Chairman John Wilson. She previously worked at DCDOC in the capacity of Special Assistant, Executive Assistant and Chief of Staff to the Deputy Director and Director from 1987 through 1997.

After a short period of working for CCA at the CTF as a Compliance Officer from 1997 to 1998, she returned to the DC government to work at the Department of Human Services, in the former Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities Administration. For the last 8 years she has worked as the Chief of the Fraud Investigations Division at DHS running an office that does Food Stamp, Medicaid and TANF fraud.

In April 2014, she began working for Deputy Director Carolyn Cross in the capacity of Special Assistant. She has been Deputy Director for Operations since April 2015.

Profile: Toni Perry

Toni Perry re-joined DCDOC in April 2014 as the Special Assistant to former Deputy Director Carolyn Cross. Previously, she'd worked at DCDOC from 1987 to 1997, serving in key positions such as Special Assistant and Acting Chief of Staff. She now serves as Deputy Director for Operations.



Please read below to learn more about Deputy Director Perry.

Q: What influenced your decision to accept the role as Deputy Director for Operations at DOC?

A: I began my career in corrections in 1987 working for the Deputy Director who was Walter Ridley at the time. So it's an honor for me in my career progression to be in this position, because it sort of feels like the circle of life; like it was meant to be.

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

A: I've always enjoyed that it's a family. It's a group of people that, despite fighting crazy outside forces, always steps up to the plate to be there for the least of us. We really are like a family, and like a family, sometimes we're dysfunctional — but that doesn't stop us from loving each other. DC Corrections is home to me.

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

A: My short and long term goals are the same — to re-staff the Training Academy, and to make the Training Academy the benchmark academy in the country. We want it to be an academy that's befitting of our agency. And lastly, I want it to be accredited within three years.

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

A: My biggest interest is to give back to the community the blessings that have been bestowed upon me. I went to Ballou High School, so my mission is to reach back to those public schools I came from and recruit from them, and show those students how they too can be successful. My favorite thing is watching my child play sports. To relax, I like to read and walk my 111 lb. German shepherd. I also love to watch Law & Order and Criminal Minds.

DOC Celebrates the Life of Deputy Director Carolyn Cross — One Year After Her Passing

A year and a day after former Deputy Director Carolyn Cross was murdered, DOC officials and staff gathered together to honor her memory in front of the memorial garden planted the previous year at the staff entrance of the D.C. Jail.



Photo credit: Darby Baham

The ceremony, which was marked by a beautiful sunny day, began with the singing of the National Anthem by Sergeant James Johnson Jr. and the presenting of the flags by the Honor Guard. Following that presentation, remarks were given by Director Faust and Rev. Samuel Whittaker, Supervisory Chaplain for the D.C. Jail.

"We remain committed to honoring her work every day," said Director Faust when speaking about the former Deputy Director. He also noted that a single bud was blooming on the magnolia tree, just as it had been when the agency came together before to celebrate the life of Ms. Cross. "It's no coincidence," he said. "She's here with us."

After another solo performance from Sergeant Johnson Jr., six purple balloons were released to into the sky to conclude the ceremony.

By Darby Baham

Masthead

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Reentry Program Partners with Howard University for College Course

Beginning in late August, DOC's Reentry program embarked on a new partnership with Howard University that Jacqueline Williams, Women's Program Coordinator, expects to change the lives of the inmates who participate. "This is a once in a life time opportunity for incarcerated individuals to participate in college level learning," she said.

As part of the partnership, Dr. Bahiyah M. Muhammad, Assistant Professor of Criminology at the Howard University College of Arts and Sciences in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology will teach a fifteen (15) week college level course entitled "Inside-Out: Crime and Justice Beyond the Wall." The course is hosted at the Correctional Treatment Facility and includes males and females from the reentry and general population units, as well as college students from Howard University. The class will conclude on December 15 with a graduation ceremony to follow.

"We are very excited about it," said Dr. Muhammad. "The course is titled 'Crime and Justice Behind the Wall', and we will be focusing on the collateral consequences of incarceration, especially as it relates to children of incarcerated parents. This partnership is very important because it allows the students to recognize the power of education as a vehicle for transformation and a force for social change. Through course readings, students critically discuss hope, compassion, integrity, respect, truth, service and leadership."

Patterned after the national Inside-Out prison exchange program based at Temple University, this is the first Inside-Out course offered in the D.C. Jail and in the District as a whole. It now stands with more than 600 Inside-Out classes offered across the globe, and Dr. Muhammad is excited about how the class will impact the lives of all the participants. "This course is evidence of the DCDOC's commitment to innovative programming that prepares returning citizens for the realities of life beyond incarceration," she said.

Ms. Williams agrees. "These inmates (students) will receive a certificate of completion from one the most prestigious universities in the country. This sense of accomplishment, for a person who may never get afforded this opportunity, will be transformative," she said.

By Darby Baham