



AROUND THE BLOCK

MASSACHUSETTS DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTION NEWSLETTER



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Correctional Industries

Industrial Accident Unit

The Industrial Accident (IA) Unit is made up of a Director and seven hard working case managers who handle claims on a day-to-day basis plus a dedicated administrative staff member to keep things running smoothly. The IA Unit works hand in hand with three attorneys and a paralegal from the Legal Division to ensure that injured employees are paid in a timely manner, receive the medical care that they require, and transition back to work as quickly as possible. Case managers assist employees with all aspects of the IA process and act as a liaison with HRD in Boston.

The IA Unit works with medical providers to ensure that treatment is provided to injured workers through the IA system and the case managers work with the facilities to craft appropriate modified work plans based on the recommendations from treating physicians for those in the IA process and those requiring modified work due to non-work-related injuries and illnesses.

One of the greatest success stories of the IA unit involves an employee who was injured many years ago as a young Correction Officer. He suffered a head injury at work and he has been receiving IA benefits for many years, but his elderly parents were no longer capable of providing the care he required. The IA unit worked to involve MCOFU and the family to increase the officer's income by making him aware of additional benefits that were available to him outside of the IA system and by making sure that paid caregivers were made available to assist family members and provide for the long term needs of the officer. The IA Unit provided information to the officer's family about additional services that were available to the officer, which were becoming more necessary as his circumstances changed. It was gratifying for the IA Unit to assist the officer and his family and to see his circumstances improved through education and outreach.

On the opposite end of the spectrum comes another success story for the IA Unit. In one well-publicized case, an anonymous tip to the IA Unit led to the discovery that an employee who claimed a severe back injury was more active than he was willing to admit to his treating physicians and to the IA Unit. It turned out that this employee was training for and running marathons. In fact, he ran a half marathon one day and a full marathon the next. Through the litigation team, this information was introduced during legal proceedings and an administrative judge terminated benefits. The Office of the Attorney General indicted the now former employee, a guilty plea was offered, and the IA benefits are being repaid. While such abuses are extremely rare, they have an adverse impact on all employees since they introduce an element of distrust into the IA system.

We hope that employees make the most of the services available through the IA Unit. While most employees only interact with the IA Unit when they have suffered an unfortunate accident or injury, we do strive to make those interactions as positive as possible. We are here to help employees with any issues relating to modified work requests and IA benefits and we look forward to being of assistance.



Industrial Accident Unit

First MassCor Expo

By James Karr, Director of Industries

On Wednesday, April 27, 2011, MassCor held its first exposition. It was an opportunity for purchasers and other DOC staff to view MassCor products and services firsthand while meeting with Industries staff. While discussing the idea to hold a trade-show, we realized that a lot of people may be new to the department or may not know anything about MassCor. This provided us the opportunity to showcase our products and services.

Staff first enjoyed a networking session where they were able to interact with other staff and view and purchase products.

Acting Deputy Commissioner Paul DiPaolo spoke to the crowd on the necessity of MassCor, including how inmates learn soft and hard skills that make them more marketable upon release. Furthermore, everyone who purchases from MassCor plays an integral part in the reentry process by supporting the organization. The Director of Industries, James Karr, shared his vision for the future while answering questions. He stated that anyone who has a need, should look to Industries for solutions to their everyday procurements and can call the sales department directly. "No project is too small."

All MassCor staff put a lot of time and effort into the Expo and the responses from the attendees' surveys reflected this. MassCor would also like to extend a "Thank You" to the Shirley Training Academy for their assistance with this successful event.

MassCor received such positive feedback that we would be amiss not to share some of the comments from the Expo Surveys.

Question: What did you learn about MassCor that you did not know before today?

- The amount of products produced by MassCor
- The public can purchase too
- Huge variety of items and minimum orders okay
- The extent of products and the scope of their business
- It was great to be here and learn so much about the many products MassCor has to offer

Question: Was talking directly to the Shop Supervisors helpful? Please elaborate.

- Yes, staff were very helpful and knowledgeable
- Staff at each booth were professional, knowledgeable, interesting
- Shop Supervisors were very helpful and knowledgeable. They did an excellent job
- VERY – most helpful. All are so proud and knowledgeable of what they do

These are just a few of the many positive comments that were received. This was the first step, MassCor will now take Expo on the road.



MassCor employees explain the benefits of purchasing through Industries at the Expo.

2

Don't Throw Us Away

By Ann Regan and Anita Collins

On February 4, 2011, Deputy Commissioner Veronica M. Madden signed off on the "Don't Throw Us Away" Program. This is the first program in the Massachusetts Department of Correction where inmates work with shelter dogs.



Inmates play with one of the shelter dogs named Pluto

Michelle Riccio, a Pepsi Refresh Grant recipient, contacted NCCI in the fall of 2010 promoting her project. She had been working on this project for three years trying to encourage the Department of Correction in her home state of Connecticut to accept the program. When Connecticut failed to accept it, instead of giving up she continued her search for an area that was open to hearing her mission.

This program has been modeled after SOS Pen Pals, a successful prison dog program in Virginia. Dogs from southern states are rescued from kill shelters, transported to northern states and after a mandatory 48 hour quarantine at Forever Homes Shelter, they are transferred to North Central Correctional Institution to begin a new life with minimum security inmates.

This program runs in an eight-week cycle with the inmates working with a professional dog trainer to teach the dogs basic obedience training. The goals of the program are for inmates to learn compassion, care and social skills and for each pup to pass the AKC Canine Good Citizenship test with the hopes of each being adopted by a loving family. As each cycle is completed a new cycle begins with six more rescues.

The six dogs arrived on Monday, April 11. The pups were introduced to the program participants and within an hour the dogs had chosen their "person." We began training the next afternoon and by the end of the 90-minute session, these 'saved souls' were learning their names and how to sit.

The shelter organization is thrilled. Staff and inmates agree this is an extraordinary opportunity for all.

DOC staff honored at 2011 Correctional Employees of Year Awards Ceremony

By Diane Wiffin

The Patrick-Murray Administration honored 31 state and county correction professionals for their bravery, dedication and public service to the citizens of the Commonwealth at the 2011 Correctional Employees of the Year ceremony held May 13, 2011. Secretary of Public Safety and Security Mary Elizabeth Heffernan, Public Safety and Security Undersecretary for Criminal Justice Sandra M. McCroom, Department of Correction Commissioner Luis S. Spencer, County Sheriffs and other elected officials recognized the outstanding work of these honorees during a State House ceremony in the House Chambers.

"Every day, these men and women put themselves in harm's way to ensure our safety. That alone deserves our highest appreciation," said Secretary Mary Elizabeth Heffernan. "Today's ceremony is an opportunity to highlight the leadership of many brave men and women, whose extraordinary work and efforts have protected the safety of residents across the Commonwealth."

During the ceremony, Undersecretary Sandra M. McCroom said, "We appreciate the care and concern shown by correctional staff as they model the way for offenders, setting a path for a better life."

"Public safety is the primary function of the Department of Correction," said Commissioner Luis S. Spencer. "DOC employees make this happen by working collaboratively with stakeholders to ensure that offenders leave our custody better prepared to reenter their communities and lead productive lives."

DOC Correction Officers Mark Gregoire, Paul Gordon and Sgt. Antonio Servello received the Medal of Honor. MCI Norfolk CO Gregoire prevented an inmate from assaulting a staff person, while MCI Cedar Junction Sgt. Servello subdued several inmates from assaulting another inmate. Massachusetts Treatment Center CO Paul Gordon, while on his way home observed a man assaulting two women. He tried to stop the assault and in turn was attacked. He was able to subdue the man and assist in his arrest when the police arrived. They are to be commended for putting themselves at risk in order to save the lives of others.

Meritorious Recognition was given to MCI Cedar Junction Sgt. Jason Cummings who, while off duty, alerted residents of a fire on two separate occasions, entering the burning buildings to save their lives. Old Colony Correctional Center staff received Meritorious Recognition for their emergency response to an inmate who was semi-conscious due to self inflicted wounds. The inmate's life was saved due to the dedication and professionalism of Lt. Stephen Kennedy, Lt. Corey Cotta, Correction Officers John Rodrigues, Gerald Andrews, Michael McGinn, Michael Lewis, Robert Herrick, Matthew Lee, James Barrett, and Elizabeth Stephanian RN, Marion Yuille LPN, and Phyllis Santaskas LPN.

Community Service Awards were given to Brenda Melanson, Administrative Assistant at North Central Correctional Institution (NCCI) in Gardner and Dr. Patricia Ruze, Sarah Maria RN and Nancy Todd RN at MCI Concord. A longtime employee of NCCI, Brenda Melanson continuously dedicates her own time to the betterment of the DOC and the community, spearheading blood, food and clothing drives. She is an active volunteer with the Gardner Community Action Center. Dr. Patricia Ruze, Sarah Maria RN and Nancy Todd RN volunteered their skills to provide medical aid to the Haitian earthquake victims in the Dominican Republic in January and February 2010. In addition to obtaining donations, medical supplies and clothing from their colleagues at MCI Concord and employer UMASS Medical, a DOC contractor, the three provided medical care on site.



DOC Honor Guard Bag Piper John Haskell at the Ecumenical Service at St. Jude's Church in Norfolk.

National Correctional Officer/Employee Appreciation Week May 1-7, 2011

By Cara Savelli

In an effort to express appreciation to all the staff that help make the DOC successful, a weeklong series of events were planned to show gratitude to those who place their safety on the line everyday within the MA DOC. Highlights of the week included Employee Recognition Awards, which were presented to outstanding employees at each facility and division on Tuesday. On Wednesday, May 4th there was an Ecumenical Service at St. Jude's Church in Norfolk. Both current and past employees of the DOC who passed away throughout the year were featured and remembered.

Apron Ladies

By Pam Gerrior

Administrative Services Staff from Milford pose in their monogrammed aprons after the cookout held during the 2011 CO/Employee Week. These were gifts purchased from *MassCor Industries* by their supervisors in appreciation for a job well done. (Names below are listed from left to right.)

Back row:
Thelma Hincapie,
Sandi Dempsey,
Jeanine Haley,
Cindy Heywood,
Paula Daggett

Middle row:
Sandy Mann,
Kerry Nash,
Collette Blais,
Jessica Pacheco

Front row:
Heather Ryan



Commissioner Luis S. Spencer with Dr. Patricia Ruze, Sarah Maria R.N., Nancy Todd R.N. and Secretary Mary Elizabeth Heffernan

UNSUNG HERO

By Steven Duxbury

Nestled in the woods of the Miles Standish State Forest is one of 18 correctional facilities of the Department of Correction—MCI Plymouth. MCI Plymouth is a minimum facility and one of its functions is sending inmate work crews to help local communities. Interaction with communities is based on staffing levels and budgetary constraints, as is the case with all of our DOC facilities that provide inmate work crews. Even with the current fiscal crisis, MCI Plymouth is still able to assist public agencies in the area with continued success.

Staff at MCI Plymouth were pleased they were nominated for the “Hero’s Award” from the South Shore Community Action Center in Plymouth, MA. This award was in part for the work performed at the Greater Plymouth Food Warehouse. Each month, MCI Plymouth sends a crew of inmates, supervised by Correction Officers, to the Warehouse to unload food from trucks from the Greater Boston Food Bank. The weight of these items would be impossible for the staff at the Food Warehouse to lift and the energy that it would take would be exhausting. The food is eventually distributed to seven South Shore food pantries to feed the hungry. With today’s economy being what it is, some of the food is provided to people who are recently unemployed. Additionally, on a quarterly basis, an inmate crew inventories the food stock. Staff at the food bank have indicated that the positive inmate attitude and the eagerness of the crew help make the partnership between the two agencies a success.

MCI Plymouth was also recognized for tabletop gardens made by maintenance staff with the help of inmate laborers. These table top gardens were made from our current stock of picnic tables. The benches were removed and reinforcements were made. The gardens were distributed to REACH INC., an organization assisting developmentally disabled adults in Kingston, MA. MCI Plymouth also received recognition for the child sized picnic tables that were also made by inmates and distributed to the South Shore Early Education program.

On March 30, 2011, at the Radisson Hotel in Plymouth, MA, MCI Plymouth was officially named as a local unsung hero in the community with a dinner and award presentation sponsored by Rockland Trust. Superintendent Steven O’Brien accepted the award from Senate President Therese Murray on behalf of the staff and inmates. Staff from MCI Plymouth as well as Commissioner Luis Spencer and his wife were also present for the ceremony. It was a memorable evening listening to the stories of other agencies doing good in our communities.

MCI Plymouth prides itself in giving back to the community by utilizing resources available, as well as modeling the way. There is no doubt that MCI Plymouth is a small facility that is dedicated to the betterment of the community and will continue to assist as needed.



Representatives from MCI Plymouth (Gail Kilpeck, Noemi Lymon, Steve Duxbury and Supt. Steven O’Brien,) with Senate President Therese Murray, Representatives Thomas Calter III and Vinny deMacedo as well as other attendees of the “Hero’s Award” from the South Shore Community Action Center in Plymouth, MA.

Massachusetts Hospital School Dance

By Katherine Gonzalez

“Life isn’t about waiting for the storm to pass. It’s about learning how to dance in the rain.” ~Vivian Greene

On May 18, 2011, I had the opportunity along with Cara Savelli, Kyra Silva, Kristie Ladouceur and Terry Kingman, to attend a dance for the children of the Massachusetts Hospital School. I did not know what to expect, but once I stepped into their gym and could hear the music from DJ Chris Fallon, I knew the night was going to be a fun one. The children were all in the gym moving to the music accompanied by several of the Mass Hospital School staff. We began asking them for requests and were surprised by the variety of music the children wanted to hear. We had requests for greats like Frank Sinatra, as well as requests for Hip Hop, Country and the Chicken Dance. In no time we had the children forming a Conga line, playing Limbo and dancing the YMCA while we wore the costumes of the Village People. DJ Chris had costumes for the children to wear and Mardi Gras beads in all colors, which were a hit with the children. It was amazing to see the power of music in full effect and how much joy that the music brought to the children.

They sang the words to the songs that they were familiar with and were able to just enjoy themselves. Watching how much excitement was in their eyes when we spent a few minutes with them made me realize that sometimes with the hectic schedule of life, we need to take the time and enjoy moments like these. I can speak for everyone that night and say that we cherished the chance to meet these children and the time to relax and unwind, but most importantly the opportunity to bring them a night of smiles and laughs.



MCI Concord Superintendent Bruce Gelb with Dan Smoot in the finished children's area in the visiting room at MCI Concord.



MCI Concord Eagle Scout Project

When Dan Smoot was looking for a final project in preparation for his Eagle Scout medal, he decided that he’d reach out to MCI Concord and Superintendent Bruce Gelb. The idea that developed was to do something special for the children who visit the Concord prison. Dan and volunteers that he recruited built bookshelves, a checkers/chess table and provided some bins and carpeting for a children’s activity corner in the visiting room. As he and his helpers began working on the project, it morphed into something even bigger. Dan held a book drive to collect books for the shelves that were to be installed at MCI Concord. The book drive yielded hundreds of books. In fact, they had too many books for the shelves and the rest of them were donated to other prison visiting rooms. Dan’s project not only benefited the children that visit MCI Concord, but ended up benefiting many DOC facilities and touching many more children’s lives. We thank people like Dan that volunteer their time to make the world just a little bit better every day. Good luck to Dan as he goes for his Eagle award. We’re sure that his future will be bright.

Sled Hockey at Massachusetts Hospital School

By Jennifer Gilardi

On May 4, 2011 Department of Correction employees played a game of sled hockey against children at the Massachusetts Hospital School (MHS). The MHS serves children aged 6-22 with Cerebral Palsy, Muscular Dystrophy and other neuromuscular disorders, Myelodysplasia, Traumatic Brain Injury, Spinal Cord Injury, and congenital or acquired physically debilitating disorders. It was a great time and brought big smiles to everyone’s face - especially the children. They really enjoyed competing against the adults and one excited child said he was going to be on the Bruins. All individuals, regardless of their abilities, have the right and the need to participate in recreation and leisure experiences at school, at home and within the community. Thank you team DOC for making this event so enjoyable for these children and brightening their day.



Left to right: Dan Gilardi, Tom Neville, Michael Rodrigues and Dan Calis from the DOC with some of the MA Hospital School kids they played sled hockey against.



Kathy Gonzalez with one of the students at the dance at MA Hospital School.

4

DOC Inmate Work Crews Clean Up at Boston Marathon

By Gina Perez

Again this year, Massachusetts Department of Correction inmate work crews set up and cleaned up in Hopkinton and Boston during the Boston Marathon. On Marathon Monday, eleven crews picked up trash and recycling in Hopkinton and Boston. They recycled all cardboard and plastic bottles. The trash was processed at a DOC facility and kept out of local landfills. The 2010 Marathon resulted in 7,252 pounds of trash being recycled.

The recycling initiative was introduced in 2008 for DOC community work crews, who have been in operation for over 18 years. The Boston Marathon was the first project in this initiative. Boston's 4th of July Esplanade extravaganza, Walk for Hunger, AIDS Walk, JP Morgan Corporate Challenge, Head of the Charles Regatta and the Pan Mass Challenge followed.

DOC work crews are minimum security inmates nearing release or parole eligibility. They are supervised on site by DOC Correction Officers and staff. The work experience allows inmates an opportunity to return something positive to the community during their incarceration as well as learn responsibility. Additionally, at a time when cities and towns are struggling with resources, these crews have played an important role in performing work that might otherwise not be done.

In 2010, 348 community work crews provided one million work hours saving the Commonwealth \$8 million. The DOC has provided inmate work crews to the Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation, Emerald Necklace Conservatory and Massachusetts Emergency Management Agency to assist in cleanup projects following several major storms, as well as to cities and towns throughout the Commonwealth.



Community Correspondents Network

- Nelson Alves
- Patricia Capozzoli
- Kathleen Doyle
- Sherry Elliot
- Christopher Fallon
- Sharon Ficco
- Joy Gallant
- Bet Gentz
- Paul Henderson
- Jaileen Hopkins
- Claire Kilawee-Corsini
- Carol Lawton
- Mary Lynch
- Debra Moschos
- Anne Manning
- Gregory McCann
- Brenda Melanson
- John O'Malley
- Chris Pearson
- Michael Rodrigues
- Cara Savelli
- Christopher Shlimon
- Kyra Silva
- Gary Temple
- Michael Thomas
- Mari Lou Whalen
- Diane Wiffin
- Shawn Zoldak



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Commissioner Luis S. Spencer

Staff Wellness

Exercise to reduce stress

It's a fact of life. Most people experience stress—going to work, caring for children, keeping up with the bills. Evidence shows that **stress** damages your health. It can weaken your immune system, increase your risk of heart trouble, raise cholesterol, keep your blood sugar too high, cause weight and skin problems. The list goes on.

Regular exercise not only strengthens physical health; it can help you handle stress by:

- relaxing tense muscles
- helping you sleep better
- releasing endorphins, adrenaline, serotonin and dopamines—chemicals that give you a sense of well-being

What activities best treat stress?

The main thing is to find things you like and commit to doing them regularly.

For many, repeating the same motion for a period of time has a relaxing effect similar to meditation. Rhythmic exercises that can provide this effect can include swimming laps, walking, running and cycling.

Some people enjoy exercises that focus on breathing and fluid movement, such as yoga and tai chi.

Others prefer exercising in pairs, for instance, by playing tennis or dancing the tango.

Ideas to explore

These ideas can help you explore ways to reduce stress through exercise:

- **Think of exercise as "recess."** Children need play time, and so do adults. We need to stretch our muscles, get our hearts pumping, breathe fresh air and take a break from our responsibilities.
- **Separate yourself from work.** To get a stress-reducing benefit from exercise, choose an activity that's separate from the work you do all day long. Chasing after children, using the stairs at work, running the vacuum cleaner and mowing the lawn are good ways to burn calories. But they may not do much to reduce stress. Find activities that take your mind away from the daily grind.
- **Keep it varied.** Many people get bored doing the same activity, then feel like quitting. So mix it up. For example, take a yoga class once a week, go for a walk a few times per week, then play racquetball with a friend.
- **Remember activities you enjoyed as a child.** Chances are, you'll still like them. Was ballet a lot of fun? Take dance lessons. Did you love to go skating? Adults can do that too. Did you enjoy competitive sports? Look into group activities at the local community center, health club or similar organization.
- **Schedule it in and keep it regular.** If your days already seem too crowded without exercise, you probably need to let something go. That could mean spending less time watching television, trying to cut back on working late, or going to the gym instead of happy hour. If you have children, see if you can swap childcare with other parents to give yourself some time on your own. Also, many health clubs offer free childcare while you exercise.

Source: C. Krucoff, M. Krucoff. *Healing Moves*. Harmony Books, New York, New York, 2000; F. Pashkow and C. Libov. *The Women's Heart Book*. Hyperion, New York, New York, 10023, 2001

Retirements March – May

Benoit, Michael J	06-1991	Doherty, Paul E	07-1978	Mullen, John M	04-1980
Bianchini, Alan	03-1987	Edwards, Margaret A	07-1988	Murphy, Kenneth J	11-1977
Bonin, Stephen P	04-1991	Fletcher, Robert D	01-1983	Palmieri, Scott J	11-1978
Bowzer Sr, Thomas A	02-1997	Gendron III, Leonard J	08-1987	Piana, Peter L	11-1974
Collins, Chester S	12-1985	Hyde, Gregory S	04-1991	Royer, Jane E	12-1985
Corey, Steven C	03-1990	Infante, Domingo L	08-1990	Sargent, Andrea L	09-1981
Dickhaut, Michael P	12-1989	Leonard, Charles S	10-1980	Smith, Paul M	03-1991
				Zimmerman, Susan T	02-1998

Promotions March – May

Alexandre, Ricardo R	Biggs, James E	French, Billy E
Antonucci, Linda D	Connor, Ryan W	McLaughlin, Pamela J
Barrett, John	Farrell, David J	Noonan, Patricia E



We need your input!

A re-design of the newsletter is in the works.

What changes would you like to see?

How can we make it even better for you?

Email Cara Savelli on Groupwise and let us know your thoughts!