



Impact Georgia

December 2013 Newsletter



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Have a great story idea?

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Spirit of giving abounds with GDC employees during State Charitable Contributions Program activities

Story & Photos By Lisa Rodriguez-Presley

There was nowhere to hide for senior staff members, as officers made the rounds through the State Offices South at Tift Campus Nov. 20, making arrests. The annual Jail and Bail fundraiser for the State Charitable Contributions Program (SCCP) is one of several fundraising events held throughout the holiday season.

Warrants notifying the intended arrestees were served several days in advance to allow them to gather donors to post their bail, but for those who hadn't raised the funds yet, wanted posters went up on the Department's Facebook page, and officers rounded them up one by one. Over the course of two days, everyone had been apprehended and made bail and the fundraiser netted more than \$2,500 for SCCP.

Throughout the month of November events raised money, but also raised awareness of the state charitable contributions program. The program allows employees to choose a charity of their choice and make contributions through payroll deduction. More than 1,000 different charities receive essential funds through giving employees the chance to choose a cause that matters most to them.

Lunch at the Tift Campus cafeteria isn't normally a cause for excitement, but it could not have been more entertaining on Nov. 14, as the GDC

(see *SPIRIT* Pg. 2)



Assistant Commissioner Timothy Ward is cuffed and led away by Cpl. Julia Abrams to await his bond being posted for the Jail and Bail fundraising event Nov. 20. The event raised more than \$2,500 and was one of several fundraisers for the SCCP.

Voices of Hope release second holiday CD

Contributed by Chaplain Susan Bishop
Photo by Gwendolyn Hogan



The Voices of Hope Choir at Lee Arrendale State Prison in Alto, Ga., is a 42-member women's choir, directed by Chaplain Susan Bishop. Christmas at Lee Arrendale is their second CD release and features both Christmas classics and contemporary holiday songs. Chaplain Bishop was honored for her many years of work with the prison music ministry during the CD release event held at the Lee Arrendale Chapel on Nov. 13.

In a little chapel nestled among the mountains of Alto, behind the barbed wires and chilled winter air stood a group of female inmates being recognized for their musical gifts. The Women's Choir of Lee Arrendale State Prison celebrated with a day of music on Nov. 13, hosting a CD album release event. The Women's Choir, "Voices of Hope" is comprised of 42 female inmates that are housed at Lee Arrendale State Prison in Alto. Under the direction of Chaplain Susan Bishop, the women released their 2nd Holiday (see *HOPE* Pg. 2)



Calendar Events



- Thursday, December 5**
Board of Corrections Meeting
- Tuesday, December 10**
GDC Holiday Breakfast
- Thursday, December 12**
BCOT Graduation
- Friday, December 13**
Commissioner's Pistol Competition
- Monday, December 16**
GDC "Day in Central Office"
- Monday-Friday, December 16-27**
GDC Casual Attire Weeks
- Tuesday December 24**
Christmas Eve
HOLIDAY
- Wednesday December 25**
Christmas Day
HOLIDAY
- Wednesday January 1**
New Years Day
HOLIDAY

Message from the Commissioner

It's the time of year where many of us are spending time with family and friends over the Holidays, reflecting on life and looking ahead to the New Year. As we reflect over the many years at the Georgia Department of Corrections, we feel very blessed by the opportunity to be part of such a tremendous organization and work with so many dedicated and talented people. Our values of honesty, integrity, and teamwork, make this agency what it is, and we could not be prouder to be surrounded by so many good people who believe in the mission of making Georgia a safer place. Wishing you all a Happy Holiday season filled with joy, family and friends, and looking forward to working with each of you in the coming year.

--Commissioner Brian Owens



SPIRIT (from Pg. 1)

Employees at Central Campus were waited on by their "favorite" co-workers. During the month of November, employees casted their votes at 25 cents apiece to nominate the co-worker they wanted to put to work in the cafeteria. Roughly \$350 was collected by the employees and cadets at central campus. Ten employees gained enough votes to serve in the cafeteria and the staff wasted no



Employees served food, bussed and cleaned tables. (L to R) Dir. Prob. Opns Mike Kraft, Exe. Asst. Kenneth Mantle, Asst. Comm Greg Dozier, Dir of HR Patricia Smith, Dir. Facilities Opns Randy Tillman, Asst. Comm Tim Ward, Deputy Dir HR Angela Williams and Employment Svs Mgr Jeffrey Lee

time putting them to work. There are still a few fundraisers to go, and we are getting close to our goal of \$15,000. If you would like to donate to the SCCP, visit the SCCP website at: <https://www.giveattheoffice.org/sccp>.



Patricia Smith, Director of Human Resources cleans up after cadets eating lunch in the cafeteria on Nov. 13. as part of the SCCP Cafeteria service fundraiser.

HOPE (from Pg. 1)

Album just in time for the holidays! The CD was dedicated to Warden Kathy Seabolt for her dedication to the choir. As one inmate remarked on Warden Seabolt's influence over the program, "You have created an atmosphere of compassion...we know that you care about us."

Chaplain Bishop shared with the guests her passion for the ministry of music; especially within a correctional setting, "Mu-

sic removes shackles from their creativity and ability...Engaging in arts in prison is a way to 'escape' without going anywhere!" Songwriter and Artist, Emily Saliers from the Indigo Girls, was also in attendance. Saliers performed a solo act entitled "Labor of Love" with inmate La'Sha Adams and Chaplain Susan Bishop.

If you are interested in purchasing a "Voices of Hope" CD, you can contact the facility to place your order (706-776-

4800). The CDs are \$16, and proceeds go to support other ministries at Lee Arrendale State Prison. The video of the Voices of Hope CD release performance can be viewed on the Georgia Department of Corrections Facebook page, or visit our YouTube Channel GACorrections.



"Forever homes" the goal for Forever Friends K-9 Rescue at Arrendale

Story & Photos by Susan Megahee

With a slice of the scissors, the Grand Opening of the "Forever Friends" K9 Rescue dog program at Lee Arrendale State Prison took place on Nov. 5. The mission of "Forever Friends" is

to save dogs from being euthanized while providing inmates the training to teach basic dog obedience and to learn animal care and grooming skills.

Through this program both inmates and dogs are rehabilitated, providing valuable support to our local community. The dogs are trained so that they are more adoptable and in return the women in the program are learning valuable social and vocational skills that will help them become more productive members of their communities upon release, thus reducing recidivism.

There are 15 women that are a part of this program, and they have had a 100% adoption success rate since this program started in June 2013. The dogs go through a 12-week training period before they are adopted out. Andrew Kitchens, the K9 Instructor of the prison has worked with the women since the inception of the program, has noticed that these women "use their whole heart, they are so eager to work with the dogs". Lee Arrendale State Prison Warden, Kathy Seabolt, addressed the crowd near the end of the program remarking on the transformation of both the dogs and the women,



Two inmates care for, and train each dog in basic obedience. Dogs are crate trained and housebroken before adoption.

"The dogs that come in to the program are abused and broken animals and some of these women are abused...and they heal together. And more to that, that part of healing is a heart moment; it's a miraculous transition of healing together."

If you know of any friends or family members that are looking to adopt a dog, please SHARE this story with them. There will be more dogs in the program that will be looking for a Forever Home.



Warden Kathy Seabolt, Habersham County Manager Phil Sutton and Habersham County Animal Shelter Director Jeff Sosebee cut the ribbon to mark the opening of the Forever Friends K-9 Rescue program at Lee Arrendale State Prison.

GDC joins Griffin Dawgs for Criminal Justice Day

Story & Photos by Lisa Rodriguez-Presley

November 18, was not your average school day at The University of Georgia Griffin Campus. Georgia Department of Corrections was one of several criminal justice organizations that took part in UGA's Inaugural Criminal Justice Day event. GDC Commissioner Brian Owens was the keynote speaker for the day and discussed both the past and

future of corrections in the state of Georgia. Taking students on a tour through the history of corrections, Commissioner Owens recounted the primitive beginnings of Georgia's prison system compared with the sophisticated system of rehabilitation that is in place today.

In addition to the seminars throughout the day, students had a chance to talk to GDC employees about career opportunities within the department of corrections. UGA Griffin recently added a criminal justice degree program to course offerings at the Griffin Campus, and students had a chance to interact with human resources staff to find out how to put their criminal justice degrees to good use in the probation and corrections fields.



Employment Services Manager Jeffrey Lee speaks with students and their parents about career opportunities with the Georgia Department of Corrections during UGA Griffin Campus Criminal Justice Day event.



ADRC Graduates 21



The Augusta Day Reporting Center celebrated their eighth commencement ceremony on Thursday, Nov. 7. The ceremony was held at Mt. Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Augusta. There were approximately 200 guests in attendance. Special guests attending the ceremony included Probation Operations Director Mike Kraft and Georgia Department of Corrections Board Member Lee Anderson. Family members of graduates, community stakeholders, and local probation and parole staff also attended this wonderful occasion.



Wardens take on Chief Probation Officers in annual Shooting Competition

Story & Photos By Lisa Rodriguez-Presley

A lot of shooting and even more trash talking was the order of the day during the 5th Annual Wardens vs. Chief Probation Officer's Pistol Competition held at the Georgia Department of Corrections Firearms Complex in Jackson, Ga., on Nov. 8. While the annual competition was a chance to earn bragging rights for the next year, it was also a fundraiser for the State Charitable Contributions Program.

The competition was especially fierce through the first two rounds, with only a few hundredths of a point separating the two teams. When the smoke finally cleared after round three, and the final scores were tallied, it was the Chief Probation Officers who emerged victorious, taking the overall title for the second year in a row. The Top Gun competition was also extremely tight right until the end. County Facilities FOM Carl Humphrey was repeated as the individual champion, taking home the Top Gun Trophy back to back. The event is an opportunity to raise money for a worthy cause, but also gives participants a chance to meet their counterparts from different regions and facilities throughout the state in a fun and relaxing atmosphere.



"Top Gun" Carl Humphrey, County Facilities FOM (center right) receives a trophy from Commissioner Brian Owens and Assistant Commissioners Timothy C. Ward and Gregory C. Dozier. After a fierce day of competition, the Chief Probation Officers took home the overall title for the second year in a row.



Around the Agency..



Georgia State Prison



Smith State Prison



November 4-6, 2013 the Office of Audits and Compliance conducted the comprehensive audit of Georgia State Prison. Honored for excellence during the audit were CO James Waynick for his work in the Security Threat Assessment Group, the GSP Prison Rape Elimination Act (PREA) Team and the Business Office staff. Congratulations to GSP Staff!

November 18-20, 2013 the Office of Audits and Compliance conducted the comprehensive audit of Smith State Prison. Lt. Johnny Davis won an individual award for his work in the Isolation/Segregation Unit. Also recognized for excellence, were Officer Johnathan Santiago for his work in Security Threat Group and the Care and Custody Unit. Congratulations SSP Staff!

MISSION

The Department of Corrections creates a safer Georgia by effectively managing offenders and providing opportunities for positive change.

VISION

To be recognized as the best corrections organization in the nation.



BRIAN OWENS
Commissioner

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