



Impact Georgia

August 2014 Newsletter

In This Issue

Pg. 2

GED Fast Track Program Launches

Veteran's Re-Entry Program Dormitory Opens



Second Quarterly Awards Recipients

Pg.3

Pretrial, Probation & Parole Supervision Week

Pg.4

GDC summer interns embark upon tour across Georgia

Have a great story Idea?

Send to

Lisa

Rodriguez-Presley

rodri100@dcor.state.ga.us

Former Deputy Director of Facilities Operations Johnny Sikes retires after 34 years of service

Story by Susan Megahee

It was a day of storytelling, memories and laughter as the Department honored former Deputy Director of Facilities Operations Johnny Sikes at a retirement celebration on July 1 at Georgia State Prison Training Center located in Reidsville, Ga.

More than 200 people were in attendance at the celebration led by Master of Ceremonies, Warden of Riverbend Correctional Facility, Fred Head. Additional remarks were also offered by Commissioner Brian Owens, Assistant Commissioners Timothy C. Ward, and Gregory C. Dozier, former Warden Hugh Smith, former Director of Facilities Randy Tillman and Senator Jack Hill.

Sikes began his 34 year career with the Department in 1981 as a Counselor Associate at Georgia State Prison

(GSP). During his career, Sikes progressed through the ranks filling several key roles such as Administrative Assistant, Project Coordinator, and Acting Deputy Warden of Care and Treatment. In 1989, Sikes was promoted to Warden and from 1989 to 1998 he served in this capacity at the following facilities; Burruss Correctional Training Center, Rogers State Prison, Hays State Prison and Georgia State Prison. In 1999, Sikes was promoted to Regional Director of the Southeast Region. In 2004, he was promoted to Field Operations Manager of the South Region, and in 2010, to Deputy Director of Facilities Operations, where he served until his retirement. In addition, Sikes has been instrumental in his direction of the COBRA Squad; identifying and detecting contraband.



Former Deputy Director of Facilities Operations Johnny Sikes receives Alumni Award at his Retirement Celebration on July 1 at the Georgia State Prison Training Center.

Sikes plans to enjoy his retirement by spending time with his family.

Thank you for your dedicated and faithful service to the department and the great state of Georgia. We wish you and your family all the best in this next chapter.

Around the Perimeter with recently appointed Assistant Commissioner of Education Dr. L.C. "Buster" Evans

Story By Stephanie Colwell

Governor Nathan Deal appointed Dr. L.C. "Buster" Evans as the Department's Assistant Commissioner of Education, effective July 1. In his capacity as Assistant Commissioner, Dr. Evans will assist in the implementation of the Governor's criminal justice reform. Let's take a trip around the perimeter with our newest leader in Central Office.

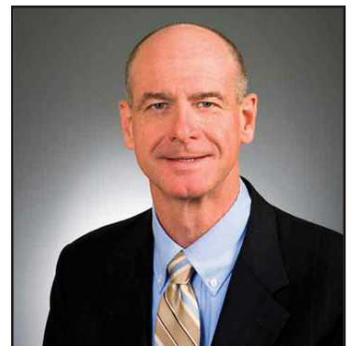
Q: What is your Educational Background?

Bachelor's degree in Criminal Justice and Master's degree in Sociology from Valdosta State University and a Doctorate in Educational Administration from the University of Georgia.

Q: What positions have you held previously?

After college, Dr. Evans worked in juvenile justice for two

(See EVANS Pg. 3)



Assistant Commissioner of Education Dr. L.C. "Buster" Evans



Calendar Events

Thursday, August 7th
Braille Program
Open House at
Central State Prison

Thursday, August 14th
Board of Public Safety

Sergeants Academy
Graduation

Monday, August 18th
GDC Roll Up
"Day in Central Office"

August 19-22
CJIS Training Seminar

Thursday, August 21
BCOT Graduation

Department launches GED Fast Track Program

Content submitted by Stevie Edwards

The Department has launched the GED Fast Track Program at three medium security prisons July 7. This new program, which will allow eligible offenders an opportunity to earn their GED in 12 weeks, has been launched at Lee Arrendale, Johnson and

Washington State Prisons.

The GED Fast Track is an accelerated educational program with a technology component. With over 27,000 offenders that have self-reported as not having a high school diploma, offering this additional programming will allow for more offenders to

earn their GED and become eligible for further vocational and job training programs.

"The inmates can improve their chances of success in their lives, and we want to help them increase that success," said Assistant Commissioner Dr. Buster Evans.

Re-entry Program dorms for military veterans open

Content contributed by Susan Megahee

In partnership with the Federal Department of Veteran's Affairs, Georgia Department of Veterans Services, and Georgia Board of Pardons and Paroles, the Department has implemented an initiative to better serve the incarcerated veteran population by providing veteran offenders with a Veterans Re-Entry Program Dorm. This pilot program was initiated on June 14 at Rutledge and Johnson State Prisons and Emanuel Women's Facility.

The Veterans Re-Entry Program Dorm provides an oppor-

tunity for incarcerated veterans to live in a supportive environment where they will receive veteran specific re-entry services and programming to assist in making a successful and seamless transition upon re-entry into the community.

With this program being in its infancy stage, the Department's plan is to expand the program by creating veteran re-entry program dorms in additional facilities and expand the criteria to allow higher security level and mental health veteran offenders into the program.



An inmate paints a mural on the walls of the newly opened Johnson State Prison Veterans Re-Entry Program Dormitory. The program provides veteran specific re-entry programs to Georgia's incarcerated veterans.

Employees honored at Second Quarterly Awards

Officer of the Quarter

Probation - Brandon Byrd
Corrections - Phillip Carter

Corrections Division

Customer Service Champion -
Dale Griffin
Unsung Hero - Kathryn Bass

Operations, Planning & Training

Customer Service Champion -
Gary Harmon
Unsung Hero - Lt. Samuel Scott

Administration

Customer Service Champion -
Katherine Brown
Unsung Hero - Billy Dixon

Executive Operations

Customer Service Champion -
Susan Megahee
Unsung Hero - Neal Thompson

Faithful Service Awards - 30 yrs

Suzanne York
Rudy Grant
Robert Rowland

Faithful Service Awards - 25 yrs

Catrina Thomas
Christopher Moore
Rex Swain
Maria Primas
Kathy Barnes
William Carver
Pernell Crayton
Carley Hickox
James Pittman
Cynthia Preskitt
Luke Christian
Donna Swearingen
Donald Jones

Faithful Service Awards - 20 yrs

Joe Jackson
Betsy Thomas
Elaine Cranford
Eugenia Harrison
Tracie Ervin
Cindy Harris
Larry Smith
Wanda Palmer
Wilson Hall
John Strand

Anna Resseau

Faithful Service Awards - 15 yrs

Stephanie Daniels
Vanessa Linder
Tammy Stankowitz
Otis Stanton
Michelle Johnson

Faithful Service Awards - 10 yrs

Gary Bell
Sharonda Henderson
Kathie Jackson
Arnold Smith
Marilyn Gilbert
Anthony Burch

Faithful Service Awards - 5 yrs

Ida Cannon
Brian Poore



Probation Officer of the Quarter Brandon Byrd & Correctional Officer of the Quarter Phillip Carter



(EVANS from Pg. 1)

years as a Court Justice worker and Program Director with Division of Youth Services. Temporarily leaving his criminal justice and teaching background, Dr. Evans then worked in corporate sector for seven years. Dr. Evans knew his heart was in education, so he returned to the field of education to work as an Educational Consultant with the Heart of Georgia Regional Educational Services Agency, specializing in areas ranging from drug prevention to strategic planning and environmental programs. In 1994, Dr. Evans became Assistant Superintendent of Bleckley County Schools, serving for two years until his promotion of Superintendent of Bleckley County Schools in 1996, a position he would hold for 11 years. Dr. Evans then worked as Superintendent of Forsyth County Schools in Cumming, Ga., where he served for seven years before joining the Department of Corrections.

Q: Proudest accomplishment?

Dr. Evans shared the two things he is most proud of in his life: first, a personal triumph. He is extremely proud of his 35 year marriage and his two kids—a son and a daughter—both of whom are college graduates, just beginning to start their careers. In his professional career, Dr. Evans is most proud to have served almost 18 years in two districts that consistently per-

formed at the top in the state of Georgia.

Q: Why did you want to pursue a career in Corrections/GDC?

Dr. Evans stated that he was drawn by the opportunity to influence lives. Though he had great opportunities in education previously, Dr. Evans felt that it was, “time for me to do some new things and make a difference. I believe in education.” Dr. Evans plans to focus specifically on the areas of Education, Chaplaincy, and Care and Treatment in his new role.

Q: What are some of your goals as Assistant Commissioner?

Dr. Evans believes that the education of inmates is a top priority, with plans to lead the nation in GED’s, increase vocational and technical training so offenders can be gainfully employed upon release, and engage, increase, and empower chaplaincy programs.

Q: What do you find most rewarding about working in Corrections?

“People. We are a people business.” Dr. Evans enjoys establishing relationships and accomplishing goals and projects as a team.

Q: What are some of the major challenges facing our facilities?

Keeping in mind that the safety

and security of our inmates and facilities is the ultimate mission; Dr. Evans feels that the biggest challenges he faces is the lack of education space and time, the need to leverage computer-based instruction to expand opportunities for inmates, and the task of building platforms with appropriate online capabilities for education.

Q: What do you look forward to most while working at GDC?

Dr. Evans is eager to “set goals that stretch,” thus creating success and opportunity for other people. On the flip side, Dr. Evans looks forward to celebrating success, stating, “When there’s hope in the future, there is power in the present.”

Q: Which career path do you feel will be most rewarding?

“I feel that we are put in certain paths along the way in life... be successful in as many roles as possible. In this current role, the reward is in the knowledge that every person we serve is a son or daughter, a mom or dad. By helping them to break those cycles of family dysfunction, we are actually changing generations of lives.”

Q: Do you have any hobbies?

“I could live off of my hobbies.” Dr. Evans enjoys staying fit, waking up at 5am daily for his morning workout. He is also interested gardening and forestry. Like a true educator, Dr. Evans

also enjoys reading.

Q: What are your favorite quotes?

“People don’t care how much you know until they know how much you care.”
“The biggest room in the world is room for improvement.”

Q: What is your favorite movie?

Sweet Home Alabama

Q: What music/artists are on your iPod?

Allman Brothers, Third Day and Lady Antebellum

Q: What was the first concert you attended?

Peach Jam at Macon Coliseum with the Allman Brothers and Charlie Daniels

Q: What was the first record you owned?

Led Zeppelin

Q: What’s your favorite website?

Google

Q: What’s your favorite app?

Weather Channel & MapMyWalk

Q: What’s your favorite book?

The Bible and Great by Choice by Jim Collins

Q: If you could be a fictional character, which one would it be and why?

“James Bond, why not???”

Pretrial, Probation & Parole Supervision Week at GDC

Story By Stephanie Colwell

For the week of July 13-19, 2014, the Georgia Department of Corrections (GDC) recognized Pretrial, Probation, and Parole Supervision Week. The Department takes this time to show how much the bravery and service of over 1,100 probation officers, that the agency employs, is appreciated in their supervision of more than 160,000 probationers across the state. The theme for this year’s supervision week was “Be the CHANGE”. Working in communities throughout the state of Georgia gives probation officers the opportunity to make significant change in the lives of probationers and possibly even their families.

“Probation and Surveillance Officers in the GDC are charged



Assistant Commissioner Timothy C. Ward (far left) and Director of Probation Operations Mike Kraft (far right) honor members of probation operations staff for their service to the Department.

an awesome responsibility; monitoring the supervision of court ordered conditions of probation and providing probationers opportunity for change,” said Director of Probation Operations Mike Kraft. “Recognition for Probation Officers does not come often, but they play a huge role in upholding the mission of public safety. Their professionalism and public service reflects positively on GDC and they make the State of Georgia a safer, better place to live.”



GDC summer interns embark upon tour across Georgia

Story By Stephanie Colwell

In the month of July, the newest members of the Georgia Department of Corrections team got a glimpse of some facilities they would otherwise only read about. The GDC Summer Intern tours gave 15 high school seniors interning with the agency a chance to travel around the state for an inside look at Corrections in action. Students visited the Georgia Diagnostic and Classification Prison (GDCP), Clayton County Courthouse, Morrow Probation Office, Clayton Day Reporting Center (DRC) Burruss Correctional Training Center (CTC), and Rogers farm/Georgia State Prison—facilities each with their own specific purpose. Accompanied by Correctional Officers, CERT team members, and tour guides, the interns had an array of perspectives by which to form a complete image of what it's like to run a correctional facility.

The tour series kicked off with a trip to Jackson, Ga. to visit GDCP, a maximum

security facility. Students got a look at the intake process of the male inmates, the Special Management Unit that houses some of the highest security inmates in Georgia's prison system. Facilities Operations Intern Rachel Pope commented "The tour really put things in a whole new perspective."

Touring a different area of the correctional field, interns then traveled to Clayton county to visit the courthouse, probation office and DRC. Interns received an overview of the probation process including revocation hearings, home searches and drug screening. They also observed classroom instruction at the DRC. Fleet Services Intern Angel Stegall noted the positive contribution of the DRC to the state, "It's an opportunity to take classes and create resumes, in order to better prepare them to re-enter society."

The interns also made a visit to a minimum security prison, Burruss CTC locat-

ed in Forsyth, Ga. Interns learned about the juvenile boot camp and the guide dog training program offered at the facility.

Being exposed to different levels of security in the facilities visited, the interns learned that the mission remained the same.

The final stop on the tour took the interns down to rural south Georgia as they visited Rogers State Prison farm and Georgia State Prison (GSP). The 9,000 acres of farm land gave a new perspective to the interns as they learned that the land not only cultivated crops but an opportunity to feed over 55,000 inmates on \$1.51 a day. After feeding the calves, sampling the fresh dairy milk and driving the tractors, the interns got a glimpse into facility court rooms, general population and the special mission and history of Georgia State Prison.

Overall, the tours provided the interns with perspective on how the different departments work together to accomplish GDC's mission.



GDC summer interns toured Georgia State Prison in Reidsville, Ga.



GDC summer interns learning about the dairy process at Rogers State Prison's dairy farm.



GDC summer interns outside of Georgia Diagnostic & Classification Prison in Jackson, Ga..

Battle of the Badges kicks-off 2014 campaign with new award categories

Battle of the Badges Overall Award— will be awarded to the facility or office that has the most blood donations per staff count

Probation Overall Winner- will be awarded to the region with the highest percentage of donations (based on staff count)

Largest One Day Blood Drive – will be awarded to the facility or office that has the single most units collected during one blood drive

Facility Overall Winner – will be awarded to the region with the highest percentage of donations (based on staff count)

To schedule a blood drive at your facility please contact Susan Megahee | megahs00@dcor.state.ga.us

Like us on Facebook Check out our YouTube channel at GACorrections Tweet us at @GA_Corrections

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

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Joan Heath
Director

Gwendolyn Hogan Managing Editor Lisa Rodriguez-Presley Editor/PA Specialist Susan Megahee PA Specialist

Stephanie Colwell
Intern