



Impact Georgia

September 2014 Newsletter

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Have a great story Idea?

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Saving lives an everyday mission for Rome Day Reporting Center's staff, Administrator Ken Ward

Story By Lisa Rodriguez-Presley

It's something he has spent his entire life doing, both on and off the battlefield. Caring for people comes as second nature to Ken Ward, the Administrator of the Georgia Department of Corrections Day Reporting Center (DRC) in Rome, Georgia. The retired Air Force medic spent 32 years flying air

evacuation missions providing life-saving medical treatment to wounded soldiers and civilian casualties. It comes as no surprise then that he continues providing life-saving treatment to offenders wounded in their battle with drug addiction.

The Kokomo, Indiana native still teaches classes on a regu-

lar basis at the day reporting center, even though he is responsible for overseeing the operation.

"I never get very far from the day-to-day operations," said Ward. "As a master sergeant in the Air Force, part of my job was taking care of my airmen, (See Ward Page 2)

Braille open house showcases offender skills, education programs at Central SP

Story by Lisa Rodriguez Presley
Photo by Gwendolyn Hogan

Offenders had the unique opportunity to showcase their skills during the Braille Program open house at Central State Prison on Aug. 7. Members of the public and local officials were invited to see the program and speak with both current and former participants. The offenders who participate earn a variety of advanced braille certifications, including music and mathematical braille.

The program started at the Central State Prison in 2003. Currently there are nineteen inmate volunteers who transcribe textbooks for the visually impaired. It is the only program of its kind in Georgia, with a total of thirty-eight prisons participating throughout the country. Students in the state of Georgia receive the books free of charge, but the transcribers also send books to students around the country.

"When I send a book out," says volunteer Ladjji Ruffie, "I think that this person might be the next senator. This person might be the next president. (See Braille Page 2)



An offender speaks to members of the community about tactile graphics and the role they play in helping blind students to "see" information in textbooks during the Central State Prison Braille Program Open House on Aug. 7

Calendar Events

Thursday, September 4
Board of Corrections
Meeting

Tuesday, September 9
Macon DRC
Commencement Ceremony

Friday, September 12
Interagency Pistol
Competition

Thursday, September 18
Fitzgerald PO DRC-Lite
Graduation

Sunday, September 21 -22
National Institute of
Corrections Conference

Saturday, September 27
Prison Fellowship
Volunteer Conference

Tuesday, September 30
Metro Atlanta DRC
Commencement Ceremony

(Ward from Page 1)

and doing the paperwork, but I still flew air evac missions until the day I retired. I loved the camaraderie and being a part of that team, and I feel the same way about my team here."

When talking about the DRC program, the passion in Ward's voice is evident. The non-resident program targets high-need/high-risk offenders where drug dependency is the true underlying factor for their criminal activity. Ward says if you get offenders sober, get them the education and vocational resources and mental health treatment they need, the odds greatly increase that they will become contributing members of the community.

"I love working with probationers," he said. "The most rewarding part of this job is when you see somebody who has been on drugs for a long period of time get clean. Life comes back into their eyes and they start to live life the way it was intended."

Ward has been invested in the DRC program almost since the beginning. In 2004, there was only one DRC in Atlanta and it was operating on a two-year federal grant. He heard about it, went and did the research and saw the value in what they were doing. He was hired as a probation officer that year and started working at the DRC shortly afterward.

"I refused to listen to the naysayers that said once the federal grant was over with I would be out of a job," he said. "It became a passion with me and I knew the work we were doing would be a game-changer."

The program has continued to expand over the years, with 14 DRCs operating around the state. In rural areas of Georgia, the DRC Lite program provides enhanced supervision and programming in rural circuits that do not have any, or very limited counseling services. The results of the programs speak for themselves.

"We do home visits on a monthly basis and get a snapshot of every aspect of their life," he said. "We know the complete person, and that is why our success rate is nearly double what a private recovery/rehab center program is. Mental health services were added was about 18 months ago and that has taken us to a whole other level of treatment."

At the end of the day, the passion that Ward and his team put into their work is worth the ef-

(Braille from Page 1)

With that, participating in his education, that's a great help to me. It definitely warms my heart."

The offenders want to be known for more than the crimes that brought them here.

Participating in this program and helping shape the future of is one way to make that happen.

"It was a catalyst in transforming my life," said Randy Davis. a former inmate, now a successful Braille specialist with his own business. "I will

do whatever I can to help this program out."

Davis one of several offenders who have made the successful transition back to society, and he credits the Braille program with giving him the tools to succeed.



Rome Day Reporting Center Administrator Ken Ward congratulates a DRC Program graduate during commencement. Ward credits the center's entire team for the success of the DRC program.

McDonough Probation Office hosts Annual Counseling Awards

Content contributed by CPO Christina Parker

The McDonough Probation Office hosted the Annual Counseling Awards Program on Wednesday, Aug. 20, which began at the direction of Counselor Roosevelt Gates.

This awards program recognizes the hard work and accomplishments of probationers successfully completing cognitive and substance abuse programs, as well as,

recognize local stakeholders for their contributions to meeting the offenders' needs (i.e. programming, employment, clothing, transportation, etc). The guest speaker was the Honorable Judge Brian Amero with the Henry County Superior Court.

Several probationers were awarded for their successful completion of court ordered programs like MRT, Anger Manage-

ment, and Relapse Prevention. Some of the local stakeholders like Shining Light Ministries, Shiloh Baptist Church, and the Department of Labor were also presented with awards. Several companies and employers like Krystal Fast Food and Publix were recognized for providing employment opportunities for convicted felons in Henry County.

Augusta PO hosts Crisis Intervention Training



Content contributed by POIII Nicole Rzasa

The Augusta Probation Office hosted Crisis Intervention Training August 18-22, 2014. The class is valuable training directed towards law enforcement in dealing with people diagnosed with a mental health illness, especially those in crisis. The CIT program is sponsored by the National Alliance on Mental Health (NAMI) and teaches law enforcement officers about mental illness, local resources, how to try and de-escalate a person in crisis. This training is enhanced by the use of role play scenarios to enhance the information learned by the officers. New to the curriculum this class was dealing with mental stress of officers. The class was hosted at the Augusta Day Reporting Center and coordinated by POIII Nicole Rzasa. The class represented several agencies in the area: Augusta Probation Office and DRC; The Augusta Parole Office; The Augusta Transitional Center; The Richmond County Sheriff's Office; Richmond County Marshall's Office; Columbia County Emergency 911 and Augusta Judicial Circuit Drug Court. Each class participant received a Certificate of Completion, CIT uniform pin and officers received 40 hours POST credit.



The Honorable Judge Brian Amero with the Henry County Superior Court and POIII Shamika Cody present awards during the Annual Counseling Awards Program Aug. 20. The awards recognize the hard work and accomplishments of probationers who successfully completed various programs.

Columbus Probation Office partners with local agencies, conducts sex offender checks

Content contributed by CPO Ayana Sharpe

On August 19 & 20, the Columbus Probation Office partnered with other local law enforcement agencies to include the Columbus Parole Office, the Central Probation TACT Squad, US Marshalls Office, Columbus Police Depart-

ment and Muscogee County Sheriff's Office for a two-day Sex Offender Operation. The operation focused on conducting interactions and searches on all registered offenders on probation and parole in Muscogee County.



Around the Agency...



The Tommy M. Rouse Day Reporting Center celebrated their Eighth Commencement Ceremony on July 31, 2014 at 6:00pm. The ceremony was held at Destination Church Blackshear, Georgia 31516. Tommy M. Rouse DRC honored 22 graduates. One of the graduates received their GED while in the program. The keynote speaker for this wonderful occasion was Senator Tyler Harper. There were approximately 150 guests in attendance. There were several special guests in attendance. Among the special guest were Department of Corrections Board Member Tommy M. Rouse, Probation Field Operations Manager Will Driver, Statewide DRC Manager Rosalyn Davis, Retired Chief Probation Officer Jim Arnold, Chief Parole Officer Chuck Chancey, and Ware County Commissioner Jimmy Brown. Refreshments were served to the graduates and their family members and all in attendance following the ceremony.



Staff at Augusta State Medical Prison are all smiles as they give the gift of life during a blood drive Aug. 12th.

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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.



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