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Have a great story Idea?

Send to

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The crusade in expanding Education and Programs

Story by Gwendolyn Hogan and photo by Lisa Rodriguez-Presley

It has been eight months since the agency implemented its newest division focusing on the education of the state's offenders. Assistant Commissioner of Education, Dr. Buster Evans and his team have lead the crusade in expanding offender educational and vocational programming.

Let's take a look at the great strides the division has made since its inception.

Educational program participation has increased more than 20 percent. Literacy (LRR) has 705 participants, Adult Basic Education (ABE) has 2,578 participants, GED Prep has 2,223 participants, and GED Fast Track has 122 participants!

Vocational program participation also continues to increase



Teacher of the Mountain Education Charter School at Lee Arrendale State Prison. Currently, there are 21 Freshmen, five Sophomores, eight Juniors, 11 Seniors, and one official graduate.

with 1,304 participants in vocational programs and 1,743 participants in on-the-job training!

One of our most recent additions to educational programming is the Mountain Education Charter School at Lee Arrendale-

le State Prison. We now have 45 inmates enrolled who are working towards obtaining their high school diplomas! Ten students have less than 5.5 credits to complete and 57 credits have been earned.

Around the Perimeter with Sheila Smith

Story by Susan Megahee

On October 16, 2014 Ms. Sheila Smith was appointed Vocational Education Manager. As Manager, Smith will be responsible for oversight of all GDC vocational and On-the-Job Training programs as well as inmate career centers. Let's take a trip around the perimeter with our newest leader in Central Office.

Q: Educational background: Bachelor's degree in Business Education from the University of Georgia, and Master's degree in Business Education and Specialist's degree in Educational Leadership from Georgia College and State University.

Q: Previous positions: After college, I taught high school for several years. I decided to try the world of business, when I became a junior officer in Lamar State Bank (currently United Bank) in Barnesville, Ga. Missing the field of education, I returned to Mary Persons High School to teach for 12 more years. I then became Assistant Principal for Curriculum and Instruction. Later, I became Director of Personnel and Testing for Monroe County Board of Education from which I retired.

Q: Why did you want to pursue a career in a correctional setting: I think that part of being



a good teacher is the desire to
(See Smith Pg. 2)

Calendar Events

Thursday, April 16
Annual Law Enforcement
Appreciation Day
&
Joint Board Meeting

Friday, April 17
Commissioner's
TACT Challenge

**Sunday-Sunday,
April 19-25**
National Crime Victims'
Rights Week

Tuesday, April 21
GDC Senior Leadership
Off-site
&
Lookout Mountain DRC
Commencement
Ceremony

Wednesday, April 22
GDC Senior Leadership
Off-site
&
GDC College Fair at
State Offices South at Tift

Thursday, April 23
Savannah DRC
Commencement
Ceremony

Tuesday, April 28
Northwest DRC
Commencement
Ceremony

Thursday, April 30
Military Career Fair
Fort Gordon
Augusta, Ga.
&
Rome DRC
Commencement
Ceremony

(Smith from Pg. 1)

help people become better than they are currently. Working in a correctional setting gives me that opportunity, just with a different twist.

Q: What do you find most rewarding about working in Corrections: It is rewarding to be able to provide access to programs in which people can learn skills that will better their life and our communities. Seeing people be successful is what it is all about.

Q: Proudest accomplishment: My family. My husband and I have two wonderful sons and daughters-in-law (all teachers) and four amazing granddaughters. In my professional career, I am proud and humbled when a former student tells me how much I have helped in their success in life.

Q: What are some of your goals as the Director of Vocational Programs: I would like to see more programs and more participation in programs. Education, whether academic or vocational, can and does change lives.

Q: What are some of the major challenges facing our Department, and or vocational programming: A major challenge is motivating inmates to want to participate. Another challenge is resources. We have to look at ways to provide these services in the most economical way without jeopardizing quality.

Q: What do you look forward to most working in this new role: I look forward to working with people across the state to improve our programs and influence the lives of others for the better.

Q: What is your favorite quote: "An investment

in knowledge always pays the best interest." - Benjamin Franklin. As I have gotten a little older, another quote I like is, "Age is an issue of mind over matter. If you don't mind, it doesn't matter." - Mark Twain.

Q: Do you have any hobbies: I like to read, play the piano, cook, walk through the woods, and baby sit my grandchildren. I have given up water skiing and riding horses.

Q: What is your favorite movie: Fried Green Tomatoes. In the early years of my parents' married life, they lived in the building behind where the sheriff is telling Ildgie that she may be arrested. The building which was the café in the movie was once a general store, in which I visited when I was a child. All of the Juliette scenes bring back memories.

Q: What music/artists are on your iPod? Third Day, Chris Tomlin, Maroon 5, Carrie Underwood, and classical music.

Q: What was the first record you owned? I hate to admit it, but it was classical.

Q: What's your favorite website? Pinterest

Q: What's your favorite app? Photo apps

Q: What's your favorite book? The Little Red Hen (I am a grandmother) and Rebecca by Daphne du Maurier.

Q: If you could be a fictional character, which one would it be and why? Superman. He does good, can fly, mysterious, smart, and good looking—a package deal.

SMU at GDCP offers new program: Offenders Under Transition

Story by Gwendolyn Hogan

The Offender's Under Transition (OUT) program has been operational within the Special Management Unit (SMU) since January 2015.

The OUT program is a new and creative approach, which provides an additional pathway for high risk offenders to develop, learn, and practice new behaviors through cognitive programming. This program, utilized within TIER II/III facilities, enhances an offender's motivation to change problem behaviors, criminal thinking, and provide pro-social skills.

In order to move through the

program, an offender must complete all program materials and must meet assessment expectation on their attitude and behavior. These on-site evaluations are conducted by the Risk Reduction Services (RRS) Counseling and Cognitive Behavioral Unit.

RRS, through the support of Facilities Operations, have been instrumental in the training and implementation of this program.

Since its implementation, there are currently 26 inmates participating in the program and 10 who are in process of being



RRS Counseling and Cognitive Behavioral Unit.

placed in program.

Interested in learning more about Risk Reduction Services? Read about it here:

<http://bit.ly/1CXZvNd>



Bob Gaylor and Neal Thompson retire after years of faithful service

Story by Gwendolyn Hogan

Photo of Bob Gaylor by Abriana Corley



Bob Gaylor receives an OPTD plaque for his service

On March 26, Bob Gaylor retired with more than 32 years of dedicated service to the state of Georgia in the field of Education. Many of Bob's friends, coworkers and family gathered to congratulate him on his retirement. OPTD's Director of Training Gail Donnelly presented Bob with a plaque of recognition of his work for the Department.

Earlier this month, on March 5



Director of OIC, Ricky Myrick, presents Neal Thompson with his retired weapon

Neal Thompson retired with 30 years of dedicated service to the state of Georgia. Neal held many positions during his career that included service on the 1988 Democratic Convention crowd control as well as the G8 Security Field Force; he worked within the Special Management Unit at Georgia State Prison, was a member of the CERT squad and ended his career as an Investigator.



Caught in Corrections



Santina Warren

Mental Health Counselor of the Macon Day Reporting Center (DRC) was "caught" working with passion! Macon DRC Administrator Maria Stephenson, who nominated Santina, commented, "Santina is a person who has strong passion for the work she performs!" Santina has worked for the state for 14 years in both facilities and within the community assisting Mental Health participants with single and dual diagnoses. Santina has assisted the Macon DRC with building a strong partnership with their local Community Service Board, RiverEdge. She conducts all of the Mental Health evaluations for the Macon circuit, has participated in the DRC Processes and Procedures Process Action Team, and assisted with coordinating Macon's GEAR UP DAY (Getting Excited About Recovery). Santina is currently seeking her Alcohol and Drug Addiction certification, in her continued efforts to advance her knowledge in her field! She truly is a great asset to the Macon DRC!

1st Annual Law Enforcement Appreciation Day



On March 18th, Lt. Gov. Casey Cagle and other lawmakers hosted the 1st Annual Law Enforcement Appreciation Day! The Senate Chamber presented law enforcement officials with a resolution honoring their work protecting the citizens of Georgia. Following the resolution, a special program was held at the North Wing of the State Capitol with Governor Nathan Deal, Lt. Governor Casey Cagle and Commissioners of law enforcement agencies across the great state of Georgia!

The department assisted with the transportation of law enforcement by providing transport officers and buses. Commissioner Homer Bryson, Assistant Commissioners Greg Dozier and Timothy C. Ward, Probation Operations Director Mike Kraft, Deputy Director of Probation Operations Sandra Thomas and probation officers from across the state attended in recognition of the event.

"It is truly an honor to take the time to recognize the state's law enforcement officers."

**-Homer Bryson
Commissioner**

Around the Agency...



NEWSWORTHY

The Cordele Judicial Circuit/Fitzgerald Probation Office and Tifton Judicial Circuit/Tifton Probation Office assisted local authorities, when a collision on HWY 129 between a Ben Hill County school bus and semi-truck resulted in the injury of nine students.

Officers Jermaine White and Jarrod Roberts were two of the first responders on the scene. They assisted in getting the children off the bus, assessed their injuries, retrieved first aid kits and helped console the children. Officers Chris Wynn and Christopher Davis purchased bottled water to take to the children and others at the scene and assisted in comforting all that were involved.



NEWSWORTHY

On March 23, while conducting field interactions in Macon county, located in the Southwestern Circuit, SPS Officer Gabe Jacobs and PO Tyler Denham, were the first responders to a scene of a shooting. They attended to the victim and when local police arrived, they assisted in the arrest of the suspect. The victim was transported to the hospital by ambulance and the suspect was taken into custody.

Thank you Officers Jacobs and Denham for the selfless and courageous work you both do for the great state of Georgia!



Chaplaincy Services Quarterly Meeting



On March 19th, Chaplaincy Services hosted their quarterly Chaplains meeting at State Offices South at Tift College. Chaplains who provide their services at facilities such as Hays State Prison, Baldwin State Prison, Burruss Correctional Training Center, Lee Arrendale State Prison, Ware State Prison, attended the event to discuss the services they provide our offenders and for training on certain topics to include prison fellowship, Faith and Character-based programming, NOBTS, volunteer training, and PREA training. (Photos by Abriana Corley)

Fire Services Chief David Emery retires

On March 26, Fire Chief David Emery of Hays State Prison (SP) retired with 30 years of service to the Department and great state of Georgia!

His commitment to the mission of the Fire Department at Hays SP is to be commended.

His presence at Hays will be greatly missed. Hays SP and the Department are proud of his great accomplishment and we hope David enjoys his freedom to hunt, fish, and attend his daughters softball games!

We are truly thankful for your faithful and selfless service to the Department and citizens of Georgia!



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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.



Homer Bryson
Commissioner

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