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## The DOC Newsletter is Being Redesigned

Beginning in January 2009, the DOC Newsletter will focus on noteworthy events and new initiatives in addition to highlighting past activities.

We will bring you a monthly message from the DOC Secretary and continue to keep you apprised of what our departments, programs and employees are doing in the community to keep you safe.

Let us know what you think. Our intention is to provide you with information about the things you care most about. Take a few minutes to let us know whether or not we are meeting your expectations by emailing our editor, Joe Mitchell, at [jlmitchell@doc1.wa.gov](mailto:jlmitchell@doc1.wa.gov) with any feedback or suggestions about the type of stories you'd like to see presented on these pages.

**Thank you for your continued interest in public safety.**

## December 2008

- **DOC Team Receives Rare Award from Seattle Police Chief**
- **Mock Interviews at Women's Prison Helps Offender, Attracts Employers**
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### DOC Team Receives Rare Award from Seattle Police Chief



*From left to right: DOC Officers Steven Lambert, Rocky Bronkhorst, Tony Nisco, Leslie Mills (Field Supervisor), Martin Williams, Christina Lacy*



## Department of Corrections Newsletter

A Department of Corrections task force that has grown significantly over 10 years from a grassroots beginning was recognized by Seattle Police Chief Gil Kerlikowske. Kerlikowske recognized the Neighborhood Corrections Initiative (NCI) with the prestigious Chief's Award, which is normally only awarded to employees within the Seattle Police Department.

Chief's Award winners are recognized for an action, deed or distinctive and extraordinary achievements that support the mission, vision and core values of the Seattle Police Department. NCI is a law enforcement/corrections partnership that pairs Seattle police officers with DOC officers to address crimes that may involve individuals who are under community supervision. In addition to arresting offenders who have violated the conditions of their release, the program also attempts to keep them out of trouble.

Kathy Wenderoth, Strategic Advisor for Seattle police, said that NCI is worthy of more than just recognition as cooperation with an outside agency. "The award is given to folks who have done outstanding work inside the department," she said. "Our annual awards ceremony is internal, but Kerlikowske felt like NCI was worthy of something a little more, like a Chief's Award."

NCI was born out of "Operation Buy and Slide" in 1997, a multi-precinct Seattle police effort to slow drug trafficking. Sixty-two suspects arrested were under DOC supervision; the result was an agreement by then Secretary Joe Lehman and Seattle police Chief Norm Stamper to join forces. The program began as a pilot in the West Precinct in 1999, and in 2000 DOC hired Leslie Mills, Victor Maes and Manny Quiñonez to be the core of a program that would become so successful it would be adopted in every precinct.

"This team has had a significant impact on SPD's ability to deal with chronic offenders," says Wenderoth. Leslie Mills, Community Corrections Supervisor, was specifically recognized by Kerlikowske in 2006 for her efforts with NCI. She says that she's in the business to help offenders reenter, not go back to prison and cycle through the system.

"Of all the offenders we approach and detain only 4 percent go to jail," Mills said. "Most of the time we take them home, to their CCO, an out station, Harborview Medical Center or a Seattle police station. This is real, live reentry."

Mark Dalton of Department of Social and Health Services says that the work that NCI is essential to community safety. "You and your team are literally working directly to keep people from harm and to keep them alive, hopefully long enough to reach that magic moment when the light goes on and a change can occur," he said. "I find it heartening and reassuring that the team is out there, constantly intervening, looking for those moments, offering such opportunities at every turn."

Mills calls her team's practices "restorative justice." Since 2001 her teams have approached 785,000 people on the streets of Seattle. "More than 30 percent of those detainees were 'warrants issued' but not yet in the system," she said. "NCI simply carries out the request of the CCO and the Courts."

NCI has removed more than 72 guns per year off active DOC offenders; and has apprehended more than 4,900 knives, 868 grams of marijuana, 122 grams of cocaine, 1,210 grams of heroin, 400 grams of methamphetamine, 1200 ecstasy pills and 5500 rock pipes.

Seattle Mayor Greg Nickels describes NCI as "a proactive patrol ... Their primary goal is to provide an enhanced level of supervision of DOC clients and ensure that they stay in contact with their Officer and comply with their conditions of release."

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## Mock Interviews at Women's Prison Helps Offenders, Attracts Employers



*Ed Lindsay of Waste Management interviewing Offender Heidi Fero*

Local businesses recently had a chance to step inside the walls of a prison and scout potential news employees with Washington Corrections Center for Women's "9 to 5 beats 10 to Life" event.

Representatives from local businesses including Fred Meyer's, Monica's Waterfront Bakery & Café, and Kitsap Credit Union participated in a series of mock interviews in which offenders had a chance to sharpen their job-hunting skills. Each interview lasted 20 minutes, with every offender being able to participate in three separate interviews.

Many of the offenders who participated said that before the event they wouldn't have even applied at many of the participating businesses out of fear of disclosing their past.

James Luna, Correctional Industries General Manager, says that many of the representatives were as pleasantly surprised as the offenders. "Many of the representatives felt they had benefited greater than the inmates," he said. "Some of them were really emotional at the end of the day and they left with a greater respect for DOC staff."

Monica Downen of Monica's Waterfront Bakery & Café praised the event, "This program is a must-do for community oriented business owners and managers," she said. "By participating everyone wins. Knowledge is gained and human connections are made."

"Thank you for giving me a new perspective on the offender population," said Sarah Walker of Watson Furniture Group. She said that although she is still unsure about hiring ex-offenders in the future she was impressed by the quality and professionalism of the women.

"They were all very articulate, well prepared and passionate about life and about work, much more so than I often see my day to day job," she said.

Luna says that since the mock interviews were so beneficial to both offenders and employers that he hopes to organize another one.

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## Larch Corrections Center Celebrates Hispanic Heritage Month



*Members of the LCC Band perform during a celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month*

Larch Corrections Center celebrated Hispanic Heritage month on Oct. 4 with a program that featured internationally acclaimed producer Pedro Peraza, and the music of Los Lonely Boys.

Peraza is a producer, editor, and the owner of Peraza Productions. He has received numerous awards, including a local and national Emmy and several Telly awards for his work. He is currently working on a documentary about his return to his homeland of Cuba.

Peraza spoke to offenders at Larch who come from a wide variety of cultures and backgrounds, telling them the story of his challenges in life and how he kept moving toward his dreams in spite of adversity of coming to a country and not knowing how to speak English.

"We want offenders to know that you can be successful members of society and still embrace your Hispanic heritage," said Nancy Simmons, who worked with Larch's Offender Cultural Committee to organize the event. "It's something we tell offenders all the time, but it's always nice to have a specific event to get that point across."

The program also featured the LCC Band, a talented group that played a medley of songs by the Hispanic group Los Lonely Boys to add a Texican flavor to the event.

The program ended with a reception which included horchata and empanadas for the attendees and their guests.

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## DOC Employees Make ‘Arrests’ to Support Seattle Deaf-Blind Center



*Pictured from left to right K-9 Officer Paula Lewis, KING 5 reporter Lori Matsukawa, Correctional Officer Ruth Van Duren*

Four staff members at Monroe Correctional Complex recently used vacation time so they could work at a different prison for a day.

Georgeanne Logan, Ruth VanDuren, Paula Lewis, and Stephan Rose didn't just transfer to another DOC facility; instead they volunteered to be "prison guards" at a fundraising event for the Seattle Deaf-Blind Service Center (DBSC). The Deaf-Blind Service Center volunteer police force arrested 13 volunteer prisoners for a special "Jail N' Bail" fundraising initiative. Prisoners were handcuffed, charged and transported to the DBSC jail where they went before a judge and were detained until raising enough bail to buy their freedom.

The volunteer prisoners raised more than \$10,000 for DBSC's Support Services Providers program. Support Services Providers are sighted guides and providers of visual and environmental information that allows Deaf-Blind people to participate more fully in society, assisting with tasks like grocery shopping, reading mail and weekly banking.

Jackie Engler who is Deaf-Blind was the presiding judge and handed down her sentence through a tactile sign language interpreter. Other Deaf-Blind people acted as prisoners, lawyers or visitors.

Monroe Correctional Complex Sgt. Stephan Rose arrested one of the Deaf Blind prisoners drove him to jail. "It was one of those feel good experiences I'll never forget," Rose said. "The sign language interpreters helped me understand what everyone was saying, but I didn't need them to tell me a good time was had by all."

DBSC's Executive Director Jelica Nuccio was pleased with the volunteers from DOC. "The support from the Monroe community was great," she said. "The jail is amazing and can be used for future events. It was exciting having Lori Matsukawa (KING 5 News reporter) as a prisoner, but those officers from the Monroe Correctional Complex were the best. It was a fun tactile experience because the Deaf-Blind prisoners and their visitors got to feel the officer's badges, handcuffs and uniforms. A lot of them asked to be handcuffed again so they could figure out how it works."

More information on the Deaf-Blind Service Center can be found on its web site at [www.seattledbsc.org](http://www.seattledbsc.org).

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## Airway Heights Corrections Center Works to Change Prison Culture

Airway Heights Corrections Center is taking the therapeutic approach to a new level. In an effort to make the facility a safer place for employees and offenders alike, the staff is beginning to implement a change so progressive that it is the first of its kind.

Superintendent Maggie Miller-Stout says the success of the program comes from the staff being ready for the change.

"I felt like we could change the culture and the lifestyle here because the staff is ready for it," she said. "It really is a different style of doing things and it is going to take quite a while to transition the whole facility."

Right Living is similar to Therapeutic Communities but is designed to address the entire offender population rather than a specialized group. The program is designed to create a positive social hierarchy that breaks barriers between different offender populations.

"Right now there's a culture that says 'do your own time, don't mess with others and get out.,'" Miller-Stout said. "We want to make a shift into an environment where it will be safe to try and practice new behaviors."

As with any prison program, the goal of Right Living is to prepare offenders for reentry back into the community. But Right Living in that the goal is to change the environment in which offenders learn.

When asked about the skeptics, Lisa Bridges, Corrections Specialist, says that offenders need a different environment to make significant changes.

"Many traditional corrections models do not make any changes in offenders," she said. "It doesn't change offender introspection or accountability, and it doesn't give them any support. Now it's about giving them the opportunity to change."

Bridges says offenders in the program, which is isolated to a small camp away from the general population, notice the changes. One of her favorite quotes is from an inmate who said, "I was able to change when I started thinking about myself less like a criminal and more like a human being."

Bridges says that accountability and positive communication go hand-in-hand.

"Once we break down the barriers between everyone, that's when the real changes can start happening," she said.

Bridges added that accountability doesn't mean a tattle-tell society that plots every offender against each other in a battle of manipulation. It aims to have offenders holding each other accountable and creating and "correctional" environment

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