

IMPACT

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A Message from the Deputy Secretary



*Cheryl Strange, Deputy Secretary
 for Correctional Operations*

When Secretary Vail offered me the position of Deputy Secretary nine months ago, I was serving as the Health Services Director in the Department of Corrections Health Services unit for a few short months. I was honored to be asked and enthusiastic about the challenges I was about to face.

Prior to working at DOC, I worked for the Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS). My background is in the field of mental health and so during the current legislative session I have participated in many work sessions and legislative hearings representing the Department regarding bills that affect our mentally ill offenders. Many great bills have been introduced and I am optimistic that regardless of whether these bills become law, we will continue to provide much needed assistance to special needs offenders. DOC will continue to work in collaboration with DSHS to ensure offenders with major mental illness receive appropriate services once they are released. While in prison, DOC will work to effectively treat offenders with significant mental illness.

None of us can predict what an offender on supervision in the community will do. Yet, we all, in some way, are personally impacted when a tragic situation occurs. We serve the citizens of the state of Washington and our mission statement is at times a tall order. I know how dedicated the staff of DOC is and I have seen it first hand. I also know that there are many tough times ahead, not just for DOC, but for all state agencies.

We have recently had the difficult task of eliminating staff positions throughout the Department. As Deputy Secretary, I have been involved in many discussions with DOC leadership to find creative solutions that would impact the least amount of staff while still fulfilling our obligation to the citizens we serve. This is always a very agonizing activity.

Times are difficult for everyone and we have asked staff to add additional responsibilities to their already full workloads. Some of us have seen our co-workers lose their jobs while also having concerns about our own position. I wonder how much more staff can do when there does not seem to be enough hours in the day to accomplish what is before us all now. At the same time, I am witness to the dedication and contagious enthusiasm of staff that so impressed me when I began working for DOC.

I know we all will continue to move forward, doing the best we can under difficult circumstances. From where I sit, our best is very impressive and it is a privilege to work with you all.

Let us know what you think of our newsletter format. We want 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, Joseph Mitchell, at jlmitchell@doc1.wa.gov with any feedback or suggestions you have about the DOC newsletter and the type of stories you'd like to see presented on these pages.

Thank you.

Leadership Profile: Ron Fraker



Ron Fraker

As New Clallam Bay Superintendent, Fraker will Continue Progress Made in Reducing Violence

**By Chad Lewis
West Team Leader, Communications**

Being the superintendent at any prison is challenging. Being the superintendent at Clallam Bay Corrections Center is challenging in unique ways.

"It's in a remote location with a violent inmate population," Deputy Prisons Director Dan Pacholke said. "You've got to have somebody who is a steady leader and someone who is resourceful."

Given those necessary criteria, prison administrators selected Ron Fraker as the new superintendent at Clallam Bay. Fraker has been acting superintendent since January when the previous superintendent, Karen Brunson, retired.

"It's a big honor and one that I take seriously," Fraker said. "I'm fortunate to come in at a time when we've made progress in recent years, so my goal is to keep that momentum."

Fraker has been the Associate Superintendent for Security and Operations since June 2005, a time in which violent incidents declined. The number of violent incidents dropped 16 percent from 2007 to 2008.

"Ron's appointment reinforces DOC's commitment to maintaining safe prisons and how much his efforts are appreciated," said Prisons Director Dick Morgan, who is a former Clallam Bay superintendent himself. "This is not a case where we just wanted to maintain the status quo. We want to give Ron the opportunity to continue the outstanding work he's done so far."

Inmates at Clallam Bay tend to be younger than those at other prisons with medium- and maximum-security populations. Inmates there also are more likely to have committed a violent offense.

Fraker says key reasons for the reduction in violence include an increased focus on programs available to inmates and a philosophical change in how staff members interact with inmates.

"In the past if an inmate refused to come out of his cell we would automatically have officers forcibly extract him," Fraker said. "Now our initial action is to use crisis negotiators in those situations, which reduced staff injuries and showed inmates that they don't have to resort to violence."

Pacholke said Fraker was also selected because he has shown that he can be innovative.

"Clallam Bay is the most remote prison in our state," Pacholke said. "You don't have a lot of resources nearby, so you have to be innovative during a crisis and during day-to-day operations, and Ron has shown that ability."

A native of nearby Forks, Fraker spent 20 years in the U.S. Air Force after he graduated from high school. After he retired from the military, he and his wife moved to Port Angeles.

Fraker was hired as a correctional officer at Clallam Bay in January 1990, making him the first superintendent at the prison to have started as a correctional officer.

"I think that helps me relate to our staff members," Fraker said. "They know I understand what it's like to work here and what it takes to succeed here."

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Leadership Profile: Armando Mendoza

New East Regional Administrator Was Told Early in Life That He Would Do Well in Criminal Justice

*By Maria Peterson
East Team Leader, Communications*

Regional Administrator Armando Mendoza took his first corrections-related class in high school, though he said he never expected it to become a career.

"I got an 'A' in one police science class," he said. "Despite my reluctance, my college guidance counselor suggested I major in criminal justice because of that 'A' grade."

Mendoza said he had little interest in pursuing a career in criminal justice, but he took the classes partly because of his mother's insistence on a college education. He finished his associate degree in criminal justice and then transferred to San Diego State University where, again, his counselor suggested he continue with the field to earn a bachelor's degree. After college Mendoza received several job offers.

"I was recruited by the Border Patrol, San Diego Police Department, and the California Highway Patrol and blew them all off," he said. "I snow skied and traveled the world instead of taking a job."

But as is often the case, Mendoza started a family and decided he needed to find a career that would support them.

An associate encouraged him to take a job in the Juvenile Rehabilitation Administration at Maple Lane School in Centralia. He then moved to adult community corrections at the Olympia Field Office. He worked in various community corrections positions before accepting a job on the audit team.

"That job was a blast," he said. "I traveled to almost every field office in the state and enjoyed meeting all the people. It gave me a chance to learn every aspect of caseload management."

From the audit team he moved to headquarters legislative implementation, then to workload manager, field administrator, Southwest Regional Administrator and finally to his new position as East Regional Administrator.



Armando Mendoza

Mendoza said he took opportunities when he was starting with DOC to network and involve himself in committees and agency-wide projects. He said that building relationships is the most important part of working in corrections.

"I tell new staff members to take opportunities to meet people," he said. "It's up to you to engage yourself in the work of the agency."

Though he got a late start in the field, Mendoza said he's hooked on corrections.

"There's never a dull day," he said. "Right when I think I've heard it all, something new comes up that just blows me away."

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Leadership Profile: Debra Conner



Debra Connor

New Field Administrator Strives to Show Offenders a Different Way of Being

By Joseph L. Mitchell, Impact Editor

Field Administrator Debra Conner's interest in crime and criminals became evident when she was a very young girl. Conner began writing papers about the American jail system while in the seventh grade. A few years later, Conner would ride the bus from her high school in Cheney, Washington to Spokane where she would attend court hearings.

"I used to sit in on trials and litigations," Conner explains. "I don't know why I was so fascinated by the subject matter. No one in my family had a law enforcement background. Both of my parents were educators."

Conner's mother has a master's degree in education and was a school teacher. Her father has a doctorate in education and was a professor at Eastern Washington University. Conner eventually followed her parents' path and became an educator, albeit briefly, and she did it in a way that was consistent with her long term career plans.

"Eastern had an exchange program for professors that allowed them to teach at various colleges around the world," she explained. "One summer when I was in high school, my dad went to teach in Morelia, Mexico. I went with him and volunteered to teach English at the Michoacan State Penitentiary to a class of 15 male offenders."

Conner has been with the Department of Corrections since 1986. She earned her bachelor's degree in criminal justice from Eastern

Washington University. After completing an internship with DOC at what was then known as Geiger Pre-Release, she was hired to work there as a corrections officer.

"My career so far has been anything but boring," says Conner. "It is full of events, places and times and is brightly highlighted by the people there with me. I have had the privilege of working with so many wonderful people. Some are no longer with us and some I rarely see, but the memories of times shared in the trenches have formed a lifelong bond that remains regardless of time and place."

Conner assisted in the renovation and temporary move of the offender population from Geiger to the lower campus of Eastern State Hospital. The operation was later moved into the new Eastern Washington Pre-Release (EWPR) facility which is now Pine Lodge Corrections Center.

She was promoted to Community Corrections Officer (CCO) in 1988 and became a CCO2 after one year. Conner continued at EWPR until 1990 when she took a position as a CCO2 in the Port Angeles Field Office. After transferring back to Spokane and working in the Spokane Valley Office Intensive Drug Unit, and at Brownstone Work Release, she was promoted to a Community Corrections Supervisor 1 position in 1994.

Conner's star continued to rise. In 1998 she was promoted to Community Corrections Supervisor 2 and directed operations at the Brownstone Work Release facility for nine years.

When the Offender Accountability Act was passed by the Legislature directing DOC to conduct its own hearings, Conner created the Northeast Hearings Liaison Unit (NEHLU) to manage the violations process. The unit was responsible for representing CCOs in violations hearings and transporting offenders to violator facilities.

"NEHLU set the trend for units of this type across the state," said Conner. "They have provided tremendous support to the CCOs in taking on this time-consuming aspect of their work."

During her tenure at Brownstone, Conner was also responsible for leading a \$1 million renovation of the building that made it one of the better maintained work release facilities in the state.

"It is important for us to set the tone for reentry by providing a nice, clean, well maintained environment for offenders," she said. "It now looks like a Starbucks in there."

In 2006, Brownstone Work Release achieved American Corrections Association accreditation with a score of 100 percent on both mandatory and non-mandatory standards. Brownstone was the first facility in the state to achieve a perfect score for both mandatory and non-mandatory standards.

Continued on next page

Leadership Profile: Debra Conner

Continued from previous page

"This was the result of a lot of hard work and dedication on the part of the great staff at that facility," said Conner. "Brownstone was my best job ever. I loved working with the offenders and custody staff. Running your own shop was a kick in the pants."

Conner was selected as the Community Corrections Supervisor of the Year in 2005. Last month, she was appointed as the Field Administrator for East Region Section One. Conner has been acting in the position since August 2007.

"I have always tried to give my best at work, especially as I am getting older," said Conner. "I have tried more and more to focus on those areas where I can grow as a human being."

Conner believes that anyone entering the corrections field should have a clear idea of who they are and what they are trying to accomplish.

"They must have a basic desire to help people," she said. "This work is all about planting seeds and showing people different ways of being. If you don't help someone become a better person, you haven't accomplished much."

Conner and her husband enjoy international travel and experiencing other cultures. They have been on church mission trips to China, Israel and Russia.

"My favorite quote comes from the Book of Deuteronomy," she said. "Hear O' Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one. Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul and all your strength."



Wellness Tip: Brought to You by the Occupational Nurses at DOC

The Link Between Alcohol and Cancer

The Risks

Cancer of all types kills approximately 526,000 U.S. citizens each year and is the second leading cause of death in the nation behind heart disease. Alcohol consumption is a known risk factor for a number of cancers in humans, including mouth, breast, liver, colon, rectum, throat, pancreas and esophagus. Alcohol is the primary cause of liver cancer in the U.S.

The more alcohol consumed, the greater the risk of developing these cancers. The strongest link is between alcohol and cancers of the mouth and gastrointestinal tract.

Alcohol is linked to deaths in two - four percent of all cancers in the U.S. and three and a half percent of all cancers worldwide.

Research

While scientific research has demonstrated the strong link between alcohol consumption and cancer, the exact mechanism has yet to be discovered. It is known that alcohol can damage cells and irritate the lining of some organs. Excessive use can deplete certain substances in the body such as folic acid, vitamin A and selenium. These substances may have a protective effect against some cancers. Alcohol has been shown to decrease the effectiveness of the body's immune system. Some research indicates it may act as a co-carcinogen by enhancing the cancer causing effects of other chemicals.

Prevention

Drinking alcohol in moderation is the key to reducing the risk of alcohol related cancers.

The American Cancer Society recommends no more than two drinks per day for men and one drink per day for women.

For more information about the link between Alcohol and Cancer go to: www.cancer.org or www.niaaa.nih.gov

Occupational Nurses - here to serve DOC employees. For more information contact Glenn Johnson, BSN, RN at gjohnson@doc1.wa.gov

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Employee Spotlight



Linda Huck, Community Corrections Specialist

*By Jose Cortez
Communications Consultant*

Linda Huck usually doesn't see the effect of her work right away. Successful reentry into the community is a slow process.

But there are times when Huck knows she's making a difference in people's lives - like the time she attended a former offender's graduation from a master's program or the many times an offender has approached her in the community, introduced her to their family and said, "You changed my life and got me on my feet again."

"This job is so rewarding to me," says Huck. "I love being able to help people, and when a former offender tells me I helped them, I just tell them that I gave them the tools to change themselves."

Huck enrolled at Central Washington University and started volunteering with DOC as an intern in 1989. She was offered a full-time position before she graduated with her degree in Law and Justice.

Huck will celebrate her 20th anniversary with DOC in November. Looking back on her years with the agency, Huck has seen a difference in the way women contribute to the agency.

"Many doors have been opened and you see this by noticing how many women are in top-level positions now," she said.

Over the course of her career, Huck has taken advantage of opportunities created by the changing roles of women. She feels fortunate to work in corrections.

"I never thought I'd be able to do many of the things that I do now. It's just been the best job in the world and I get up every morning looking forward to going to work. I love helping people."

A Yakima native, Huck has been living in Central Washington her entire life and spends her time gardening and remodeling the house she has been living in since 1982.



Mirchelle McKoy, Active Directory Administrator

*By Jose Cortez
Communications Consultant*

When Mirchelle McKoy's unit landed in Iraq during Operation Desert Storm, stress and fatigue were already starting to set in. The soldiers wanted to stay and rest, but they followed orders and moved on. Eleven hours later, the site was bombed and everyone who stayed behind was killed.

McKoy can tell you what it's like to be in a highly stressful environment. Perhaps that's why he was able to keep his cool during the major network crash that plagued DOC this past October.

"When I was in emergency situations during my military service, I was able to maintain my composure by getting into the zone - a place where I'm comfortable," said McKoy. "When the network crashed, I just got into the zone and focused on my tasks."

McKoy served 16 years in the military; 14 in the Army as an electrician and systems administrator, and two in the Air National Guard as an information manager. His unit, based out of Fort Bragg, was one of the first deployed to Iraq during Desert Storm. McKoy and his brother served in Iraq at the same time.

McKoy came to work for DOC after his stint in the military. He attended a job fair at St. Martin's College in Lacey and was offered employment shortly after. McKoy has been with the agency for eight years and currently serves at the Active Directory Administrator for Information Technology.

"He's one of the unsung heroes in IT," says supervisor Amy Ridgeway. "He put in a lot of extra time and pulled some all-nighters to help resolve our network issues."

McKoy and his family, which includes his wife and two children, enjoy giving back to the community. The McKoy's donated over \$1,000 in clothes and money to the Goodwill last year. They also give money to support children stricken with cancer.

"I was brought up in church and my mother raised me to be a giving person," said McKoy. "To me, giving is the best way to feed your soul."

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DOC Facilities

Reading Is Fundamental at Stafford Creek Corrections Center

By Pauline Geraci, Instructor, Stafford Creek Corrections Center and Grays Harbor Community College

Stafford Creek Corrections Center recently held its first book fair for families of offenders during a monthly Family Friendly Night event. The Grays Harbor Community College Education Department at Stafford Creek recently joined the ranks of correctional institutions providing free books to children of offenders through Reading Is Fundamental (RIF). RIF is the nation's oldest and largest children's and family literacy organization.

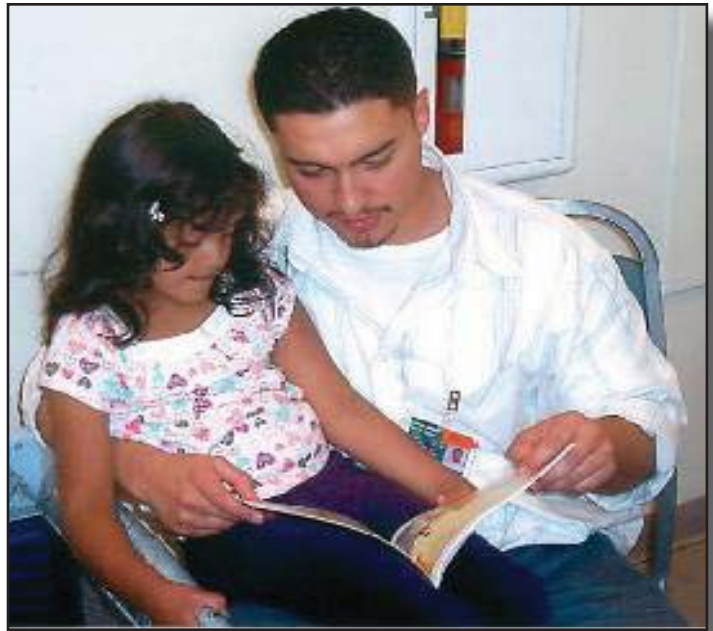
Approximately 50 children were able to choose books during the fair. In addition to books, children received a plastic bag with bookmarks and a pencil. Cat in the Hat walked around passing out Cat in the Hat stickers. Local librarians from the Montesano W.H. Abel Timberland Library read books to eager children who sat in small chairs with their parents. One little girl confidently volunteered to read from her new book to the audience. After reading the book, she received a rousing round of applause.

Children around the room could be seen sitting in chairs and laying on mats reading their new books. Children sat on their father's laps while being read to. Some mothers and fathers were taking turns reading to their children from their new treasures.

There were about 100 children who did not make the book fair, but will be mailed books that their fathers selected for them. A second book fair is scheduled in the summer and more children are expected to participate.

The Education Department at SCCC applied for and received a RIF grant totaling \$8,910 for approximately 7,000 books. They also provided local matching funds totaling twenty-five percent of the grant. Stafford Creek wanted to share the grant so they invited Coyote Ridge Corrections Center, Clallam Bay Corrections Center, Olympic Corrections Center and the Washington Corrections Center to participate. Each of those institutions will be conducting separate book fairs.

Before the actual book fair, offender fathers attended a Reading Journey where they were given a chance to look at the books that were ordered through RIF and choose three books for the fair. While the men were choosing books, several men commented, "I remember reading the same book a long time ago," and "My child reads really well for her age. Does that mean I need to pick a book that is a little higher than her level to challenge her?" There was a buzz of excitement as the men looked through the books.



Adrian Garcia reads to his daughter from her new book courtesy of Reading Is Fundamental.

Jenny Penoyar, a librarian from the Raymond Timberland Library, came to the facility to tell fathers why reading to children is important and to help them choose age appropriate books. One father asked, "What type of books would 15 year old girls like?" Jenny replied, "Books about boys would be good." The father quipped back, "We don't want to encourage boyfriends."

The premier literacy organization of its kind, RIF makes reading fun through exciting motivational activities that culminate in "book distributions"—opportunities for kids to choose and keep books at no cost to them or their families. The mission of RIF is to inspire passion for reading and learning through innovative literacy programs and services. RIF serves children in traditional settings such as schools, libraries, and community centers. The program also extends to children who are hardest to reach and at risk of growing up without books, such as those in crisis facilities, migrant labor camps, detentions centers, and hospitals.

Nationally, RIF serves children from preschool through high school in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, the U.S. Virgin Islands, Puerto Rico, and Guam. Since its founding in 1966, RIF has distributed more than 250 million books for children to choose and keep. Each year, RIF serves approximately five million children through its National Book Program and special initiatives at nearly 23,000 sites across the country.

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DOC Facilities



Rodney Wallace, a Larch Corrections Center inmate, plants trees along the Washougal River as part of a

DOC Work Crews Assist with River Restoration

*By Chad Lewis
West Team Leader, Communications*

The Washougal River, a tributary that flows into the Columbia River and a key habitat for salmon, is being restored thanks in large part to assistance from inmates from Larch Corrections Center.

For 10 hours a day, four days a week, 10-man inmate work crews plant trees and shrubs, build dams to collect sediment, clear debris, build beaver fences, re-gravel the riverbed and more.

"There's not much they don't do, really," said Captain Rick Kartan, who organizes the offender work crews along with Sgt. David Lynch. "When you compare the 'before' and 'after' photos, it's pretty remarkable."

Flooding and excessive water runoff washed away much of the sediment that salmon need to survive. And much of the gravel was mined from the river. The inmates putting gravel back in the riverbed gives the salmon a place to spawn.

The river restoration project is coordinated by the Lower Columbia Fish Enhancement Group, a nonprofit organization. In late 2006, the group approached Larch Corrections Center about using inmate work crews to assist with the Washougal River project.

DOC has inmate work crews based in prisons across the state that help nonprofit groups and government agencies with wildlife rehabilitation, park cleanups, rebuilding hiking trails, reforestation and more.

Tony Meyer, executive director of the Lower Columbia Fish Enhancement Group, said without a partnership like this much of this river restoration would not be done.

"If we had to pay for similar labor, I don't know that we could afford to do it," he said. "We're grateful to have them out here helping us out."

The inmates say they get a lot out of the partnership as well.

"I like knowing I can give back to society for what I've done to end up here," inmate Rodney Wallace said. "And it's nice to know one day when I'm out I can come back here and show my family what I helped build."

Kartan, the captain at Larch Corrections Center, said partnerships like this help the community and are beneficial to inmates.

"It teaches the inmates responsibility, and it keeps them active," Kartan said. "It also is a good way for us to show that we are part of the community."

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DOC Facilities



McNeil Island Ferry Captain Helps Distressed Kayaker

By Chad Lewis, West Team Leader, Communications

As one of the weekend ferry captains at McNeil Island Corrections Center, Jim Lemar sees the novice mariners struggle in Puget Sound.

"I see the 'weekend warriors,'" Lemar said with a laugh. "You can tell they're not used to being in open water." That was the case on a recent Sunday when a 66-year-old first-time kayaker was tossed into Puget Sound by a 4-foot swell. He was holding on to his friend's kayak as they struggled to reach the shore in 25 mph winds. They were nearly hit by a sailboat.

Lemar was guiding the 87-foot Neil Henly ferry back to McNeil Island when he saw the distressed kayakers through his binoculars. "At first I thought maybe they were practicing some rolls," Lemar said, "but then I could tell they were really struggling."

Lemar contacted the Associate Superintendent for permission to take a detour from the usual ferry run and assist the kayakers. Lemar, his engineer and two inmates pulled the kayaker out of the water while his friend paddled back to Steilacoom.

The ferry crew took the 66-year-old kayaker to McNeil Island Corrections Center where the prison's fire department checked his vital signs. "He had on a dry suit, which made a big difference," Lemar said. "Otherwise he would have been in rough shape being in that cold water for as long as he was."

Thomas Stevens, the Marine Operations Supervisor for McNeil Island, says he wasn't surprised to hear that Lemar assisted the kayakers. "Jim has a lot of experience out on the water," Stevens said. "All our captains know there's a written law that you assist people whenever you can because lives can be at risk."

Lemar, a native of Pierce County, spent 25 years as a commercial crabber in Alaska before returning in May 2006 to be a ferry captain for DOC.

"He's a good boat handler," Stevens said. "He made the right call and helped somebody out."

DOC in the Community



Community Corrections Specialists Jacob Whitehurst and Nick Weber helped a mail carrier out of her U.S. Postal Service van in Tacoma after it was broadsided by a speeding car.

DOC Staff Rush to Assist Mail Carrier Hit by Speeding Car

By Chad Lewis, West Team Leader, Communications

Two community corrections specialists in Tacoma on March 24 witnessed a car slam into a U.S. Postal Service van and rushed to help the mail carrier out of the upturned vehicle before emergency crews arrived.

Specialist Jacob Whitehurst ran over to help the carrier out of the van while his partner, Nick Weber, blocked oncoming traffic. Whitehurst asked the carrier if she was OK to move and then helped her out of her seatbelt.

The accident occurred at the intersection of 38th Street and Pacific Avenue, a high-traffic area of Tacoma.

Tacoma firefighters and police officers arrived as Whitehurst helped the carrier out of the crumpled van. "It was a big crash at a busy intersection," said Community Corrections Supervisor Mike Poston, who supervises Weber and Whitehurst. "In that situation the mail carrier needed someone to step up in a hurry, and Nick and Jake did."

The two specialists, who are part of the Northwest Fugitive Task Force and work with the U.S. Marshals Service in Tacoma, were on the way to search for a fugitive when they happened upon the crash. Police said there were plenty of other witnesses so Whitehurst and Weber left to pursue the fugitive.

"This is a great example of how our staff members are always looking for ways to help people when they're out in the community," Assistant Secretary Karen Daniels said. "It says a lot about the people we have in this agency. It should make us all proud."

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DOC in the Community



Claudia Dicy Sorum

Claudia Dicy Sorum Chooses to Make the Best of a Second Chance

By Joseph L. Mitchell, Impact Editor

Claudia Sorum is a multi-faceted woman who is driven to make the most of every positive opportunity that is available to her. She describes herself as a criminal justice professional, a community college graduate, the mother of four beautiful children, a grandmother, a part-time student, an artist, a writer and a faculty member at South Seattle Community College (SSCC).

Between the time it takes to raise a family, attend college classes, work in church ministries and volunteer as a resource coordinator for a local community organization, Sorum teaches basic computer skills classes for SSCC at five different sites in Seattle.

"I believe in myself and all the possibilities," exclaims Sorum. "I am hoping to pursue my bachelor's degree starting in September."

Claudia has a passion to help at-risk, vulnerable people overcome barriers and achieve self sufficiency. She teaches computer skills to former offenders at the King County Community Corrections Learning Center and to the homeless at the Downtown Emergency Service Center, one of the largest multi-service agencies serving homeless adults in the Pacific Northwest. She also serves as an offender advocate for the King County Community Partnership for Transition Services. Sorum works Monday through Saturday and is grateful for the opportunity to give something back to the community while earning a paycheck. Claudia says her current lifestyle is the result of choices she learned how to make.

"This is not where I was seven years ago," she said, referring to a time when she was known as 'Seedy', a nickname derived from her first and middle initials and a lifestyle that earned Sorum 11 felony convictions and a prison sentence. "I was told that I was not fit to live in society and then I was transported to the Washington Corrections Center for Women."

Sorum said that her first day in prison was not the worst day of her life, nor was it the worst place she'd had ever been. Before her incarceration, Claudia's life was dominated by drug addiction, domestic violence and fear.

"Every decision I made was based on fear," she explained. "Fear of losing my mind, of being hurt, losing my children, the responsibility of

my children, fear of failing, success, not having enough dope, having too much dope, fear of dying, living, sleeping. You name it, I was afraid."

Claudia sees her prison sentence as the turning point in her life. "I stared at myself in the scratched metal plate screwed into the unforgiving cement wall above a cold metal toilet and saw myself," she explains. "There was no reflection of the people I was fond of blaming for my misery. There was just me and the decisions I had made. I took a long look at my reflection and said, 'something's got to give sister!'"

Claudia received relapse prevention drug treatment and took anger management classes. Although she addressed these issues during her incarceration, Sorum said that she still lacked the skills, support, credentials and confidence needed to successfully reenter the community when she was released.

"After 15 months under supervision, I was dangerously close to giving up on myself, which often leads to re-offending," she explained. Sorum enrolled in a Life Skills-to-Work program where she took computer, family management and communication classes. She worked on her cognitive thinking skills which she credits with helping her to realize that change was a choice. Claudia chose to change the way she thought and behaved.

"If you change the way you look at things, the things you look at will change," explained Sorum. Since completing the program, Claudia has graduated from South Seattle Community College with two degrees and four program certificates. She has obtained employment in a career she loves and continues to search for opportunities to better herself.

"I don't see my past the same way, so ultimately my past has changed," said Sorum. "And like a stone thrown into a pond, I know the ripple effect of my commitment to change will influence my future and others in a positive way."

A Second Chance

Written by Claudia Sorum, March 2007

A second chance looks like a wiry eleven-year old boy with thin legs made of tightly wound springs.

His platinum buzz cut bounces in rhythm with the forever present basketball.

"Hey, Mombo, watch this!" (Only he calls her Mombo.)

So she watches.

She watches his dance and listens to his music.

The ball hits the sidewalk - bass, thumpa.

Then back to his hand with an alto slap. He's moving now on tenor springs.

Then he smiled, and the Seattle sky parted its clouds of gray and the heavens sang.

So she watches.

She watches his dance and listens to his music.

She remembers a place where razor-barb wire

surrounded her world and a three minute phone call with a three-year old boy.

He held the receiver to his new basketball,

"See, Mommy, see!"

"Hey... hey, Mombo, are you watching?"

He pulls her from her past.

So she watches.

She watches his dance and listens to his music.

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DOC in the Community



Mario McRae, Robin McLaughlin, Jack Kuczynski waiting to get out of the MDA Maximum-Appreciation Facility.

Puyallup Officer Recalls Being Locked Up for Good Cause

By Robin McLaughlin, Community Corrections Officer 2, Puyallup Field Office

The Muscular Dystrophy Association (MDA) sponsors the MDA Lock-Up each year to help raise money for Jerry's Kids. The money raised goes toward sending children to the MDA Summer Camp, buying wheelchairs, funding research, and a host of other activities.

Warrants are issued for the arrest of participants who then have to raise "bail" (donations), before their court date. Volunteer "arresting officers" visit area businesses to pick up "jailbirds" who are unable to make bond and escort them to a makeshift jailhouse. To be set free, prisoners promise to try and raise \$2,000 bail from friends, family and community for Jerry's Kids.

Last month, Community Corrections Officers Mario McRae, Jack Kuczynski and I were arrested by the MDA police and charged with "having a big heart." I was sitting at my desk and the phone rang. When I answered the call, a woman informed me that I had been turned in anonymously for the crime of having a big heart and that I would be going to jail unless I could post \$2000 bail. She explained that she would be my probation officer. I thought this was part of a prank and said "Do you realize you have called the Department of Corrections and I AM a probation officer?" She then explained who she was and quickly told me that my co-worker Jack Kuczynski referred me and that he and Mario McRae would be participating as well.

The three of us were picked up from our office on Stewart Street. The MDA "officers" walked in and announced our arrest. Jack took great joy in whipping out his handcuffs to replace the fake ones the "arresting officers" had. I ended up being the only one handcuffed.

As I was being escorted out of the building, two of my offenders were in the lobby. They looked very surprised and somewhat smug to see their CCO being marched around in handcuffs. I said, "Get a good look guys because this is the last time you'll see this!"

Jack, Mario and I were transported in the most beautiful stretch limousine I have ever seen. After stopping for three more "offenders", we were driven to the MDA's "Maximum-Appreciation Facility" at the Puyallup Pavilion for lock-up.

Several local area business people were there who had been "arrested." Once we arrived, we were served a warrant and booked. We then had to don striped prison attire to have our mug shots taken by the judge. After booking, we were served our "bread and water" which consisted of a scrumptious spaghetti lunch served by a local Italian restaurant. We were introduced to a young man who was fighting Duchenne MD. His mother told us about the help she and her family received from the MDA, which included an electric wheelchair.

We also had the opportunity to call people we knew to try and raise more bail. Each table had some sort of bell to ring when a participant was able to get another donation. We didn't come anywhere near our \$2000 bail but we were able to raise almost \$300 and felt pretty good about that. At the end, we were escorted back to the office in the limo.

The MDA Lock-Up is a fun way to give back to the community. It helps to promote a positive image of community corrections and it's a blast! I turned in my daughter, her friend and my pastors. I encourage anyone who has this opportunity in the future to jump on it.

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Service Anniversaries



DOC Employee Service Anniversaries for March 2009

Keith Meyer celebrating 34.9 years of service with DOC.

34.9 Years of Service

- Keith Meyer, Correctional Unit Supervisor

30 Years of Service

- Karen Randall, Secretary Supervisor
- Paula Waring, Office Assistant 3

25 Years of Service

- Tracy Daniel, Correctional Unit Supervisor
- James Dyson, Correctional Unit Supervisor
- Shirley Leise, Corrections and Custody Officer 2
- Donald Morgan, Corrections and Custody Officer 2
- Ronald Simmons, Maintenance Mechanic 4
- Timothy Taylor, Heavy Equipment Operator Supervisor
- Darlene Tiffany, Correctional Records Technician 1
- Eleanor Vernell, Field Administrator
- Nancy Waggoner, Community Corrections Officer 3
- Catherine Wood, Correctional Records Supervisor

20 Years of Service

- Grant Bradley, Corrections and Custody Officer 2
- Susanna Leopard, Human Resource Consultant 3
- Cynthia Nelson, Corrections Specialist 4
- Andello Paterson, Corrections and Custody Officer 2
- Daniel Thompson, Registered Nurse 2

15 Years of Service

- Danny Avent, Community Corrections Officer 2
- Randy Blankenship, Corrections and Custody Officer 3
- Page Blanton, Corrections Specialist 3
- Shane Burdett, Corrections and Custody Officer 3
- Paddy Hescock, Consolidated Plant Manager
- Gloria Howell, Correctional records Technician 1
- Dorothy Paulson, Corrections and Custody Officer 2
- Sydney Price, Correctional records Technician 2
- Laurie Ramseyer, Corrections and Custody Officer 2
- Genie Randolph, Correctional Records Supervisor
- Beth Rietema, Corrections Specialist 4
- Nancy Travis, Correctional Hearings Officer 3
- George Williams, Corrections and Custody Officer 2
- David Wyman, Corrections and Custody Officer 3

10 Years of Service

- Brent Beck, Corrections and Custody Officer 2
- Glyn Beecroft, Corrections and custody Officer 2
- Walter Ellison, Correctional Lieutenant
- James Gore, Corrections and Custody Officer 2
- Brenda Greenland, Correctional Mental Health Counselor 2
- Donald Hawkins, Information Technology Specialist 5
- John Hinson, Community Corrections Officer 3
- Herbert Joy, Corrections and Custody Officer 2
- Douglas McLean, Corrections and Custody Officer 2
- Louise McLean, Retail Clerk 1
- Steven Packer, Corrections and Custody Officer 2
- Patrick Roeber, Corrections and Custody Officer 2
- Hayley Sheppard, Administrative Assistant 3

Home

Mission, Vision and Statement of Values

Mission Statement

The mission of DOC is to improve public safety.

Vision Statement

Working together for safe communities



Statement of Values

We Value

Staff as our greatest asset

We are committed to the personal and professional development of our staff, and actively seek staff involvement and a shared sense of commitment and service at all levels.

Professionalism and quality of service

As correctional professionals, we demonstrate our commitment through competency, accountability, ethics, and pride in work.

A safe, healthy work environment

We are committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for staff and offenders.

Respect for individuals

We recognize the diversity of individuals and their contributions, and we strive to treat all people – offenders, staff, and public – with dignity and understanding.

Clear, open, honest communication

We encourage communication that promotes unity, productivity, and understanding.

People's ability to grow and change

We acknowledge that people – offenders and staff – have the need and ability to grow and change and we support their endeavors.

Community interaction

We encourage positive interaction with the community as we strive to promote public safety, community protection, and public understanding.

This Statement of Values was developed by our employees to clearly articulate the principles that guide our behavior and the vision that will shape our future.

*Pine Lodge Staff :
(left to right)
Marye Jorgenson
Steward Kauwe
Earl Rodgers
Diane Haynes*

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