



# Pennsylvania Update

SPRING 2020

## WELCOME

Welcome to the Spring 2020 issue of the *Pennsylvania Update*, a publication of GEO Reentry Service Centers (RSC) throughout the state. As our state, country, and world face unprecedented challenges, I'm glad to share with you stories of RSC participants making positive contributions to their communities. This issue also features celebrations of the success of reentrants and introduces outstanding GEO Reentry Services employees.

Thanks for your support and at any time, let me know if you have questions.

Regards, John Hogan, Area Manager, Pennsylvania

## DAUPHIN COUNTY

### Dauphin County DRC Graduates 35 Reentrants

*By Jacqueline Schap, Program Manager*

On November 7, 2019, the staff and reentrants of Dauphin County RSC gathered with members of parole and probation, as well as loved ones, to celebrate the achievements of reentrants who completed programming.

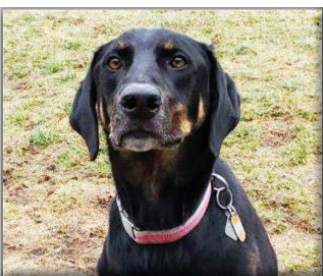
This event marked the sixth graduation of the RSC and spoke to the level of commitment to change each reentrant took in their respective journeys through the program. Graduates were presented with a certificate and awarded a candle signifying finding their light in the dark, as well as a king-sized Hershey treat to go along with the Hershey treats earned throughout their time in the program.

Finally, each graduate was presented with a grounding stone printed with a random word. The stone can be carried by the graduates as a reminder. When the graduate is faced with triggers, hard decisions, or negative influences, looking at the word will assist with centering thoughts and bringing a sense of clarity to the situation. The imprinted word should be kept at the forefront of the graduate's thought process and serve as a reminder of the tools learned in the program.



## CAMBRIA COUNTY

### Tails of Pawsitivity



During the holiday season and into the New Year, the Cambria County RSC collected donations for the Cambria County Humane Society. Donations included cat and dog food, bowls, blankets, toys, cat litter, sweaters, and more. Participants attending the program contributed to the donations and the Cambria County RSC team made a financial donation towards the adoption fee for one of the animals at the humane society. The Cambria team worked with the humane society to choose an older dog named Schultz (pictured here) to assist. The Cambria team is hopeful this will help him to be adopted soon.

## ERIE OUTPATIENT RSC

### Participant wins Top Tier Prize

Contingency Management is a system of rewarding or sanctioning in order to change behaviors over time. The purpose of contingency management is encouraging pro-social behaviors. Because reinforcements work better than sanctions so there is a ratio of at least four positive rewards to one sanction. Erie Outpatient's Contingency Management is structured around the participant's attendance, negative urinalysis, best participant in class, and completion of homework assignments. Since beginning the Contingency Management program over a year ago, there have been many rewards ranging from Tier 1 to 3.

There has been only one Tier 4 winner, Mr. Tore Sorles, who won the prize for completing treatment with perfect attendance in both groups and individual sessions, as well as negative urinalysis throughout his entire treatment. For his accomplishments, he was presented with a reward valued up to \$100. Mr. Sorles' Counselor, Ricky Lowe, reported that Mr. Sorles was also an exemplary participant.



He was not only present for all of his group and individual sessions, but he was always at least 20 minutes early. This is pro-social behavior we love to encourage in the participants we serve.

## LYCOMING COUNTY

### Lycoming County RSC Case Manager's Desire to Help Others

Nicole English, Case Manager at the Lycoming County RSC, was recently featured on one of Central Pennsylvania's most prominent online news websites, **On the Pulse**.

According to the website, On the Pulse is, "A team of dedicated journalists intent on bringing quality, in-depth reporting to the central Pennsylvania region" ([www.onthepulsenews.com](http://www.onthepulsenews.com)). Ms. English, was approached to be interviewed for the news site to bring awareness to the RSC mission.

Ms. English chose this field because she has a passion for helping people. By being featured on the news site, she has helped to further educate the community on the RSC and its mission. She said the program exists to help those with a criminal background, not to punish them. She added that participants show positive changes while in the program and the staff enjoy assisting participants to make those changes.

The interview also allowed Ms. English to show members of the community that those involved in reentry are not just criminals, but people who have made poor choices in the past and are prepared to make changes. Additionally, Ms. English, along with all Lycoming County RSC staff, have helped in showing the community that its participants are capable of being productive members of the community.



## YORK COUNTY

### Clothing and Shoe Drive

The York County RSC put together a clothing and food drive to help participants in need of assistance. We were inspired to extend this clothing and food drive by stories participants shared with us.



One participant, Mr. Moore, lost everything in a house fire and had to find a new residence and start all over. He was so grateful for the help with clothing and food and spoke about how it is already hard enough to start your life over without a fire.

Mr. Quinones was another participant who recently moved out on his own. He was excited and overwhelmed with this life change. He utilized the clothing and food drive to help him get back on his feet. He said, "The RSC has helped me become a better person in life. It has also helped me to get more organized and on the right path. I'm getting help with learning how to budget, gain employment, and learn what is available to me for transportation. It takes time for me to trust people and I feel I can trust the staff at the York RSC to have my best interest."

York County RSC sees when participants trust and believe in this process, they open up and see the benefits of the program.

## LUZERNE COUNTY

### Luzerne County Recognizes the Hard Work of Longtime Employees Through Promotion

*By Stacey Velez*

**Aleesha Whitaker** started her reentry career in December 2007 as a Client Services Specialist at the Franklin County RSC. She moved to Luzerne County Electronic Monitoring (EM) as a Case Manager in July 2010. Since then, she has mentored five Client Services Specialists in the EM office and was recognized for her leadership abilities when promoted to Supervising Case Manager in October 2019. Ms. Whitaker studied Paralegal Services at Hagerstown Business College.

**Kate Shaughnessy** began working for GEO Reentry Services at as a Client Services Specialist at the Luzerne County RSC in June 2010. She was promoted to Case Manager in January 2012 and to Therapist in March 2017. Ms. Shaughnessy recently completed the inaugural class of GEO Reentry Services Leadership Academy as well as her master's degree in Business Administration from Fitchburg State University. She was promoted to Supervising Case Manager in January 2020.

**Kevin Bzdyk** joined the Luzerne County RSC as an intern from Pennsylvania State University Wilkes-Barre in January 2012.

He was promoted to Client Services Specialist in February 2012 and soon after completed his degree in Criminal Justice Administration. Mr. Bzdyk recently completed training to become an Offender Workforce Development Specialist. He was promoted again to Case Manager, in 2013 and to Therapist in January 2020.

**Princess Edwards** completed a degree in Social Work from Northern Caribbean University prior to starting as a Client Services Specialist at the Luzerne County RSC in November 2017. She was one of three Client Services Specialists to pilot the promotion to Assistant Case Manager in October 2019. Ms. Edwards was promoted to Case Manager in February 2020.





## LANCASTER COUNTY

### Lancaster Celebrates 11 Program Graduates!

On February 19, 2020, the staff at the Lancaster County RSC celebrated the success of 11 graduates from the DRC, Workforce, and CBI programs. As part of the RSC's ongoing effort to be as responsive to reentrant needs as possible, graduation ceremonies have been held more frequently, with fewer in attendance. This allows the staff, reentrants, and parole agents to "be here now" and truly celebrate each individual for the behavioral changes achieved.



Two graduates featured in this photo with staff, are Marisol Cruz and Michael Ubiles-Negron. Both came into the Day Reporting Program completely committed to the reentry process and being successful. Both had near perfect phase progressions throughout the course of treatment and successfully completed all phases of the voluntary aftercare program. As their sense of commitment grew during the process, Ms. Cruz and Mr. Ubiles-Negron faced challenges, but they practiced good self-regulation and problem-solving skills and leaned on the positive support networks they built.

Although this graduation was small, it was intimate and powerful. For the 11 reentrants who were celebrated, it was another new beginning!

## BERKS COUNTY

### GEO Reentry Services - Berks County is Celebrating Reentrant Success!

*By Yasiris Martinez and Cody Bachman*

Berks County RSC is excited to celebrate our participants' success. Over the winter months, many reentrants have been successful in gaining employment – not just employment that they need, but employment they want. It's the difference between a job and a career.

At intake, one participant described his passion for cars, but he was never successful at finding a job in this industry that was pro-social and supportive. Now, his title is Collisions Vehicle Technician and he looks forward to work every day. In fact, he was so impressive to the employer that he was hired the very next day after his interview.

Another reentrant who has been working for a company doing manual labor and tree cutting was just promoted to foreman. A third example of positive success is a reentrant who restored his driving permissions, got his driver's license back, and gained employment all in the same week.

Congratulations on the accomplishments!

### PENNSYLVANIA REENTRY SERVICE CENTERS

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<b>RSC - Cambria County</b>	499 Manor Drive	Ebensburg, PA 15931	T: 814.471.1801	F: 814.472.4699
<b>RSC - Dauphin County</b>	2151 Greenwood Street	Harrisburg, PA 17104	T: 717-561-9600	F: 717-561-9620
<b>RSC - Franklin County</b>	550 W Loudon Street	Chambersburg, PA 17201	T: 717.263.0450	F: 727.263.3016
<b>RSC - Luzerne County</b>	125 N Wilkes-Barre Blvd, Suite 4	Wilkes-Barre, PA 18702	T: 570.208.4858	F: 570.208.4874
<b>RSC - Lycoming County</b>	330 Pine Street	Williamsport, PA 17701	T: 570.323.1274	F: 570.323.1659
<b>RSC - York County</b>	1 E Market Street, Suite 301-204	York, PA 17401	T: 717-848-4448	F: 717-848-5448
<b>RSC - Philadelphia Erie</b>	3768 L Street	Philadelphia, PA 19124	T: 215.744.9601	F: 215.743.7230

If you have questions about any of the information contained in this newsletter, please contact the facility staff.