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# VCA Exchange

**Virginia Correctional Association**

P. O. Box 36, Richmond, Virginia 23218-0036

[www.vca-aca.org](http://www.vca-aca.org)

Welcome to the first VCA Newsletter of 2007. We appreciate your patience during our staffing transition. We look forward to many more editions of the "VCA Exchange" in the future.

Coordinating the VCA Exchange this year under the auspices of the VCA Communications Committee is **Jill A. Hartzell** with the Department of Corrections, Corrections Technology Services Unit. Our Editor is **Arnita Gray** with the Department of Corrections, Deerfield Correctional Center. In addition, **Win Sisson** with the Department of Correctional Education provides on-going support and is our at-large contributor.

## VCA/VPPA TRAINING CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT



Ticket to Quality Training

In fact, the next edition soon to follow will provide details on this year's VCA Conference scheduled for **October 31 – November 2** in Roanoke, Virginia.

This will be a joint training conference with the [Virginia Probation and Parole Association \(VPPA\)](http://www.vppa.org).

The VCA Exchange is the official publication of the **Virginia Correctional Association (VCA)**. It is published throughout the year.

Articles may be submitted at anytime to Jill A. Hartzell at [Jill.Hartzell@vadoc.virginia.gov](mailto:Jill.Hartzell@vadoc.virginia.gov)

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#### Walter McFarlane

Superintendent  
[Virginia Department of Correctional Education](#)  
804-225-3314  
[E-MAIL](#)

### PAST PRESIDENT

#### John Taylor

Chief Technology Officer  
[Department of Corrections](#)  
Corrections Technology Services Unit  
804-674-3303, ext. 1127  
[E-MAIL](#)

### PRESIDENT ELECT

#### Patricia Barnes-Goodwyn

Offender Transition Coordinator  
[Department of Corrections](#)  
Hampton Roads Regional Jail  
(757)488-7500, ext. 2306  
[E-MAIL](#)

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#### Jo G. Holland

Chief Probation and Parole Officer  
[Virginia Department of Corrections](#)  
PPD31 - Chesapeake  
757-424-6760, ext. 5064  
[E-MAIL](#)

### SECRETARY

#### Barbara Wheeler

Warden  
[Virginia Department of Corrections](#)  
Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women  
434-984-3700  
[E-MAIL](#)

### TREASURER

#### Wendy Brown

Court and Legal Manager  
[Virginia Department of Corrections](#)  
Offender Management Services  
(804) 674-3218, ext: 1504  
[E-MAIL](#)

## Message from our President



Walter McFarlane

I know that you will agree with me when I state that sometimes there is nothing worse for some newsletters than space taken up with a president's uninformative, boring message.

A president's message should be used to inform or to rally support for a project of the association. Given that understanding, I will make my first use of this space as a vehicle to express my heartfelt appreciation.

First, I want to thank you for the signal honor of serving as your President. Being elected by one's peers, particularly peers so admired because of their abilities and dedication to public service, as well as their significant contributions to public safety, is a great privilege and I extend to you my most sincere appreciation.

Second, let me thank you for electing a Board to serve with me who represents the broad perspectives of the corrections field. They provide a foundation for assuring that VCA continues as a leader in the field across this great nation. All of them are intelligent, capable, and hardworking individuals with whom I feel extremely lucky to be working.

Third, please accept my appreciation for your continued support as we move forward to assure that the Board gets the message out about the importance of corrections to the everyday life of the citizens of our great Commonwealth. We need to continually remind people of the significant role that corrections plays in public safety. You, too, can help as we wave the flag. We are in this together and we cannot become complacent.

Finally, let me invite you to begin making plans to attend the VCA Conference in October. This is a great opportunity to further your education, make connections with your colleagues, and show our unity in further developing and strengthening our roles in public service.

*Walter McFarlane, VCA President*

## VCA Board Members 2006-2007

**Kimberley Lipp**  
 Capital Planning and Finance Director  
 Virginia Department of Corrections  
[E-MAIL](#)

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 Virginia Department of Corrections  
 Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women  
[E-MAIL](#)

**Wendy Hobbs**  
 Warden  
 Virginia Department of Corrections  
 Virginia Correctional Center for Women  
[E-MAIL](#)

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 Department of Correctional Education  
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 Chaplain Service of the Churches of  
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[E-MAIL](#)

**Colonel Michael A. Eaves, CJM**  
 Chief Deputy  
 Newport News Sheriff's Office  
[E-MAIL](#)



### VCA ANNOUNCES SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

In regard to the next VCA Newsletter the following have been **awarded scholarships totaling \$1,400:**

Layton Lester	VADOC
Valerie DaCosta	VADOC
Gayle Turner	CSU DJJ
Candice Perry	VADOC
Shirley Advent	VADOC
Connie Hairston	VADOC
Matthew Smith	DCE

**Our congratulations to the scholarship recipients!**

**REMINDER:**

**Correctional Counselors' Week** will be celebrated in Monday, June 25, through Friday, June 29, 2007.

**REMINDER:**

**Probation and Parole Officers' Week** will be celebrated from Sunday, July 15, through Saturday, July 21, 2007.

## VCA Committee Members 2006-2007

### MEMBERSHIP:

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Ed Wright, Wendy Brown

### Golf Tournament Coordinators:

Ed Wright, Don Guillory, Gary Bass

### NEWSLETTER

Jill A. Hartzell, Arnita Gray, Win Sisson



VCA WEBMASTER  
Jill A. Hartzell  
Department of Corrections  
[E-MAIL](#)

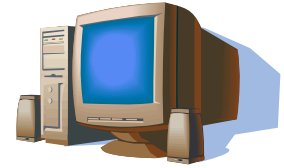
## Correctional Education Association (CEA) Leadership Conference

Superintendent **Walter A. "Mac" McFarlane** served as moderator to a national panel of correctional education experts during the recent Correctional Education Association (CEA) Leadership Conference at Annapolis, Maryland. Approximately 150 leaders from across America collaborated during the two-day event that counted state directors of correctional education, federal experts, and researchers among its attendees. Superintendent McFarlane oversaw a panel of adult experts. DCE's **Gwynne Cunningham** presented on Transitional Education, **Murray Ellison** presented on Community Corrections, and **Judy Philpott** presented on Career Readiness. Besides Mr. McFarlane's adult education panel, the March 11-13 conference entertained panels on education in juvenile facilities and jails. The adult panel's activities culminated with the delivery of findings which were delivered by Superintendent McFarlane. Before his delivery, he encouraged the audience to promote awareness of the importance of correctional education. The day after the conference the panels' various findings were discussed with Congressional delegates.

The adult panel findings:

- Expressed support for the federal Second Chance Act, a comprehensive offender re-entry planning grant to the states.
- Recommended that the Homeland Security Agency consider designing a national policy on issuing identification cards to inmates.
- Suggest that the Federal Bureau of Investigation reduce barriers to employment for inmates by making criminal records more accessible to employers.
- Recommended that the text of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act be revised to state that it "will" require a funding set aside for correctional education.
- Recommended that there be a mandatory set aside for correctional education in the Carl Perkins grant, and increase the 1% level of funding to 2%.

# TECHNOLOGY CORNER



## Advancing Correctional Technology in Virginia

### Background

As in many other states, the agencies of the Commonwealth of Virginia are trying to fulfill their public responsibilities while providing additional services with an increasingly strained workforce. For the Virginia Department of Corrections (VADOC), this situation has become a growing concern.

Over the last 15 years, the population of incarcerated offenders in Virginia has increased by 95% and the number of offenders under community supervision has increased by 63%. To compound the situation, most offender information is stored in hardcopy (paper) files without any benefits of a centralized location or system to store and access offender information. Over the years the VADOC had implemented a number of systems to handle various aspects of offender information. However, these systems operate in isolation and do not effectively interface with each other.

That has led us to **VirginiaCORIS**. The Department of Corrections awarded the contract to xwave, a division of Bell Alliant, for their **CORIS** (Corrections Information System) solution to provide our technology solution.

The **CORIS** solution, which is currently being used in Maine and New Hampshire, is being modified to meet the specific needs and requirements of the VADOC, thus creating the **VirginiaCORIS** program. **VirginiaCORIS** will replace the major systems used throughout the Department, as well as some of the smaller specialized databases. In the process of implementing the VirginiaCORIS system, the VADOC organization will experience a significant amount of change.

To help alleviate the stress of this change, the application will be implemented in three projects:

- Project 1 – Sentence Calculation
- Project 2 – Community Corrections
- Project 3 – Facilities

### Going Forward

The **VirginiaCORIS** software application is scheduled to be fully implemented throughout the VADOC in 2009, at which time it will also be used by representatives from other agencies such as the Virginia State Police.

In March of 2006, VirginiaCORIS went live with the Project 1 - Sentence Calculation area of the system throughout the state. Currently the xwave and VADOC teams are working to modify the CORIS application to meet the needs of the Virginia probation and parole offices. In late 2007, the application is scheduled to be implemented in all probation and parole offices. After the implementation in the probation and parole offices, system modifications for the institutional facilities will begin. Go-live for the final, institutional, phase is scheduled for late 2008.

Users from the various areas of sentence calculation, probation and parole, and institutions are playing an integral part in the project by providing their time and expertise. They are working hand-in-hand with the xwave team to ensure that the changes and modifications that are being made to the CORIS program will create a system that is user friendly and doesn't create unnecessary work for its users. With their knowledge of Corrections in Virginia and the support of the Department leadership the VirginiaCORIS application will help Virginia adjust to the increasing workload and financial pressures that they are currently facing.



## New Wallens Ridge Program Emphasizes Collaboration

Things are “bookin’ along” at Wallens Ridge these days as DCE has joined forces with the Virginia Department of Corrections (DOC) in a novel educational effort that engages dormitory tutors, students, a teacher and a classroom in a new place – inmate housing. The Building Opportunities of Knowledge program “BOOK” began when DOC received a grant that included an educational component, a component that allowed for the hiring of a teacher. DCE’s Jimmy Garrison works collaboratively with instructor O’Donna Ramsey to make this new effort a reality. “This initiative came about because inmates who cannot read and write well will not get the full impact of other programs such as anger management and substance abuse,” Mr. Garrison explained. Currently, the program serves about 95 students who are divided among 15 tutors. “The initial focus was on reading but now that has evolved into the adult basic education levels one to four,” Mr. Garrison added.

“The education program enhancements have improved inmate education, and we expect to realize an increase in GED completions,” said Wallens Ridge Warden Bryan Watson. “Having more inmates involved in education has also had a positive impact on the facility, as the inmates are concentrating on positive things. All of this translates into the possibility of a safer society that can result in fewer inmates returning to criminal behavior and fewer returning to prison,” Warden Watson said.

“Overall, this is going very well” Mr. Garrison said. “The progress has exceeded everybody’s expectations.

## GED Graduation at Wallens Ridge



Senator **Phillip Puckett**

Senator **Phillip Puckett** joined 32 DCE students at Wallens Ridge State Prison on March 16 as the students received their GEDs. “To everything there is a season,” Senator Puckett said before conferring the GEDs. “This is an important and outstanding accomplishment,” he added and then told of his efforts to facilitate the Commonwealth’s “Race for the GED” initiative. Senator Puckett helped enlist the support of popular raceways at Bristol and Martinsville.

Three of the students received Virginia Department of Education exceptional performance certificates 3,000 points out of possible 4,000 on the GED. “It was a wonderful day,” said **Paula Mullins**, the school’s GED instructor. “Our students love to send pictures home showing off their caps and gowns. It gives encouragement to their sons and daughters, nieces and nephews, and it shows that, even in prison dreams can come true.” Two from the DCE Central Office in Richmond attended the graduation: **Eddie Weeks** and **Win Sisson**.

## COMMUNITY SUPPORT Special Olympics



### Department of Corrections

A number of DOC locations supported the Special Olympics this year. Here are a few samples of generosity.

**Fluvanna Correctional Center for Women** was represented at the Polar Plunge by J.J. Barfield and Sergeant S. Horn, who both plunged into the icy waters of the Atlantic raising \$1,027. T-Shirt sales have so far brought in an additional \$630 to date. T-shirt sales are still going on.



Corrections Officer James Shantz represented **Nottoway Correctional Center** at the Polar Plunge held at Virginia Beach on February 3, 2007. He raised \$774.75 for this worthwhile charity.

He says it's a lot of fun, and he will do it again.



### Department of Correctional Education

Submitted by Dr. **Murray Ellison**

This is the fourth year that DCE staff has participated in the Polar Plunge to raise money for Special Olympics. This year's event was held at Virginia Beach on February 3. Many DCE people raised \$3,100 to see **Tina Tyree** (of Rustburg Correctional Center) and her husband, **Harry Trent, Arlene Green, Carnell Garner** (of Joseph T. Mastin High School), **Mark Markovich** (of Southampton Detention Center), and from Central Office **Chris Walsh, Matthew Smith** and **Murray Ellison** (along with his spouse, **Hainah**) plunge into the cold Atlantic Ocean waters on a windy and chilly Saturday in February.

The money raised for DCE is the highest ever raised by our agency for the Plunge. Future Special Olympic activities will include a shirt, hat and candy sale, a motorcycle raffle, "jail lockup" and the Torch Run and statewide final games-at the University of Richmond on June 8 & 9.

See SOVA Coordinator, Murray Ellison or call 804-786-4383 for additional information.



## Corrections Today Features DCE Parenting Program

DCE's Moms Inc./Dad's Inc. was featured prominently in a national magazine in December. [Corrections Today](#), the flagship publication of the American Correctional Association, featured the parenting initiative in a special annual edition that focuses on offender programs. The article offered an outline of the program, and the story of the woman who designed and today coordinates the program, Sue Kennon.

In May 2006, Ms. Kennon won the Governor's Award for Innovation, one of seven awards given statewide during Virginia's annual Employee Appreciation Week. The three-page feature begins on page 54 in the magazine and pictures Kennon during two different award ceremonies.

## Parenting Program Makes TV News

DCE's Moms Inc./Dad's Inc. received another dose of publicity recently when a news crew from Charlottesville's CBS affiliate, WCAV-19 featured the program on its evening broadcast, February 14.

Reporter **Jummy Olanbaji** investigated the innovative parenting program after reading about it in *Corrections Today*. Ms. Olanbaji interviewed the Program Coordinator **Sue Kennon** and DCE's Director of Specialized Programs **Gwynne Cunningham** for the lengthy segment that explored the needs of children of incarcerated parents.

The lengthy segment also looked at a Department of Corrections program, Mothers Inside Loving Kids (MILK), which builds upon and expands the tenets of the DCE parenting program, especially personal leadership skills such as organizing activities and trying to be a positive role model for children. "MILK differs from Moms and Dads in that it is an ongoing program run by a board of directors made up of inmates that allows for six all-day visits per year for inmates and their children," explained **Sharon Dunn**, the DOC counselor who coordinates MILK at Fluvanna Correctional Center. "Participation in the DCE parenting class is a prerequisite for MILK, so that inmates participating in the program can build a healthy relationship with their children."

READ MORE: [Part I](#)

READ MORE: [Part II](#)