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# CORRECTIONS

Newsletter of the New Jersey Department of Corrections

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*Class 252 participates in the Oath of Office during the graduation ceremony at the Trenton War Memorial.*

## **WELCOME STATE CORRECTIONAL POLICE OFFICERS, CLASS 252**

On July 13, the Department held a graduation ceremony at the Trenton War Memorial for Class 252 trainees who have completed the State Basic Course for Correctional Police Officers.

“I am proud to welcome the newest class of correctional police officers who will undoubtedly represent the best of our department in promoting public safety and the successful reintegration of incarcerated individuals back into the community,” said Commissioner Victoria L. Kuhn, Esq.

“Correctional police officers in New Jersey are among the country's most well-trained and skilled officers,

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and I extend my sincerest congratulations on completing the rigorous 18-week training.”

The class comprises 58 graduates, including five veterans representing the Army and 14 members of Class 252 come from families with a strong tradition in law enforcement. In addition, 28 trainees have received secondary degrees: Associates (13), Bachelors (14), and Masters (1).

"The NJDOC is the largest law enforcement agency in New Jersey, offering numerous opportunities for career advancement as

well as excellent benefits, making it a great place to start a career in law enforcement, said David Scott, Acting Assistant Commissioner of the Division of Training, Recruitment, and Professional Development. "Like many law enforcement agencies right now, the Department is facing challenges with recruitment and retention of officers and we are excited to have this newest class willing to serve."

Individuals can now apply to join the next class of recruits by visiting our [website](#) or contact [NJDOCHiring@doc.nj.gov](mailto:NJDOCHiring@doc.nj.gov).

## HERO SPOTLIGHT

When NJDOC’s Sergeant Stephen Schwartzter noticed his neighbor’s SUV on fire in their driveway, he immediately sprang into action, running across the street with a fire extinguisher to attempt to put out the vehicle fire while his wife called 911. Sgt. Schwartzter risked his own life and safety to alert the victims sleeping family to the fire that was burning close to their house and an adjacent vehicle that was parked next to the car on fire. He acted quickly and asked the victim for their keys so he could move the smoke-filled and heat-damaged car away from the vehicle that was on fire and out into the street. Sgt. Schwartzter stayed with his neighbors until the police and fire were dispatched to the scene, providing them with information on what happened, including a video from his doorbell camera. Thank you, Sgt. Schwartzter, for your bravery and heroic actions that night.



*Sergeant Stephen Schwartzter of the NJDOC.*





# NJDOC's DIVERSITY, EQUITY, AND INCLUSION COUNCIL PROVIDES A VOICE FOR STAFF

BY LAUREN LAGGY

Diversity and inclusion are essential in today's workplace. Cultivating an environment that is inclusive of individuals with a variety of backgrounds and cultures encourages different perspectives and creativity, producing a positive and enriching work experience.

Recognizing the need to create a more inclusive and diverse work environment in the New Jersey Department of Corrections (NJDOC), Assistant Commissioner of Diversity and Legal Affairs, Melinda Haley developed the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Council in January 2021, aimed at fostering an environment where all staff feel truly valued.

“I wanted to develop a voice for staff to

establish a work environment with uniqueness and inclusiveness that is comprised of members from all walks of life,” said Haley. “Diversity and numbers are easy, but inclusion is different and intangible. You could be invited to the table, but when you get there you also want to make sure your voice is heard.”

Currently, the Council is in its second year and is comprised of approximately 20 uniformed and civilian staff members of different ranks and diverse backgrounds, committed to promoting greater inclusion.

The Council’s efforts are developed through a series of subcommittees, which include: Events and Recognition, Messaging, Training and Outreach,

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Department Climate, Hiring, Promotion, and Retention, and Zero Discrimination Day Celebration.

A recent initiative of the Council included measures creating a pathway for staff to provide feedback and recommendations on ways to improve the work environment.

“I think that the biggest accomplishment of the Diversity and Inclusion Council so far providing an outlet for staff to voice what they feel and think,” said Haley. The Council's initiatives have been well received by the Department.”

Looking ahead, Haley hopes to see that the Council develops new ideas and continues to embrace inclusivity while

acting as a conduit for positive change. Providing more exposure to staff to learn about the council, who they are, and interacting with staff in various facilities will assist in building a stronger workforce.

Staff who wish to join the Diversity and Inclusion Council should look out for an announcement and application that will be distributed in the near future.

Additionally, staff who are not currently on the Council can still get involved by participating as facility ambassadors for diversity-related recognition days.

For more information on the Diversity and Inclusion Council and their efforts, please email [doc-diversity@doc.nj.gov](mailto:doc-diversity@doc.nj.gov).

## NJDOC COVID VACCINE BOOSTER SCHEDULE



**Where:** COHQ, Harris Auditorium

**Dates:** August 10, 2022  
September 7, 2022  
October 5, 2022

**Time:** 12:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Institutional staff needing a vaccine or booster can contact their on-site Rutgers University Healthcare medical staff to arrange this.

# WE ARE HIRING

## CORRECTIONAL POLICE OFFICERS



### APPLY ONLINE NOW

[www.state.nj.us/corrections/OfficerRecruitment](http://www.state.nj.us/corrections/OfficerRecruitment)



# A MESSAGE FROM THE OMBUDSPERSON

On May 5, 2022, Governor Murphy announced the appointment of Terry Schuster to lead the independent Office of the Corrections Ombudsperson. The Public Information Office sat down with Terry to ask him a few questions.

## Tell us a bit about yourself.

Hi, my name is Terry Schuster. I was appointed by Governor Murphy to be the new Corrections Ombudsperson starting in May. I moved here from Washington D.C., was born in Texas, and have worked in corrections oversight and criminal justice policy roles in Texas, Ohio, Utah, Alaska, Louisiana, and Michigan.

I now head up the Corrections Ombudsperson office here in New Jersey, which has a staff of 11 and will be expanding to a staff of 21 to carry out our new duties under the Dignity Act.

## Why do we have an Ombudsman office?

When a person in New Jersey is sentenced to a prison term, they are removed from the community, and the Department of Corrections becomes responsible for their safety and well-being.

Because the state has so much power over people who are placed in prison, lawmakers created an independent oversight office—the Ombudsman—to ensure incarcerated people are protected from harm, have their health needs addressed, are engaged in productive activities, and have reasonable access to their loved ones.

## What does “Ombudsman” mean?

“Ombudsman” means representative of the people. The office is meant to be a set of



civilian eyes and ears overseeing the prison system on behalf of the public.

## How has the role of the Ombudsman changed?

With the passage of the Dignity Act, the Ombudsman office has been given expanded authority to investigate complaints, inspect prison facilities, and access documents. Lawmakers want the Ombudsman office to look at big picture trends and recommend changes in Department policy and state law that would better protect the safety, health, welfare, and rights of people held in state custody.

I hope to do that policy work in partnership with staff and leadership at the Department of Corrections. You all have expertise and ideas for how to keep improving conditions, operations, and services, and we’d love to hear them. In many ways, improving prison living conditions also improves working conditions and helps to build a sense of pride among correctional and civilian staff. Please feel free to reach out to our office at (609) 633-2596, speak with the Assistant Ombudsman assigned to your facility, or connect with us when we are making site inspections. I look forward to working with you all.



# NJDOC CELEBRATES CORRECTIONS OFFICER DAY

NJDOC's facilities held several events for this year's Corrections Officer Day to celebrate and honor the Department's officers who demonstrate leadership, dedication, honor, and integrity. We thank our officers for all of their hard work and unwavering commitment.



*North State Prison held a BBQ outside of it's facility, providing officers with food after their shift.*



*During the Corrections Officer Day at Central Office, Officers were awarded for their outstanding work in the Department.*



*Garden State Correctional Facility revealed a memorial plaque to in remembrance of Administrator Mervin Ganesh.*



*South Woods State Prison Officers play a game of bean bag toss during the facilities Corrections Officer Day BBQ.*

**[Click to view the Corrections Officer Day tribute video.](#)**

