

**AGENCY OF HUMAN SERVICES - STATE OF VT**  
**VERMONT DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS**



**2015 REWARD AND RECOGNITION**  
**AWARD WINNERS AND NARRATIVES**

MARK SHELTON - 5/13/15

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## EVENT SUMMARY

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The Vermont Department of Correction's Reward and Recognition Ceremony is an event, which recognizes the top performers in the Department of Corrections. Through a department wide nomination process, the Commissioner determines the Manager of the Year, Supervisor of the Year, Correctional Officer / Community Corrections Officer / Corrections Service Team Leader of the Year, Correctional Services Specialist of the Year, Administrative Support Services Employee of the Year, Support Services Employee of the Year, and the Corrections' Team of the Year. The ceremony also recognizes outstanding performances and achievements by various Department of Corrections individuals, including employees reaching their 20th, 25th, 30th, 35th and 40th State Anniversary milestones; and the Community Service Award Recipient, Preservation of Life Award Recipients along with Medal of Valor Recipients.

The awards are plaques for those selected as employees of the year, medals for those receiving Preservation of Life and Medals of Valor. The ceremony itself was attended by the award winners as well as those who made the nominations, field and facility superintendents and members of central office. The Human Resource Development Unit organized the event and the work of Janette Hoague and Wendy Perrault from Central Office was invaluable in this year's event coordination.

As the event is to support the dedication and excellence of our Department of Corrections staff, the event is coordinated to reflect this appreciation. For the past several years, the Department of Corrections Reward & Recognition Ceremony has featured a guest musician (who donates their talents for the event). This year we were fortunate to have master musician Gene McCormick. Prior to the start of the event there was a social time with coffee and a variety of pastries, cookies, cinnamon buns and danishes made and provided by Southern State Correctional Facility and Northeast Correctional Complex. "A Place at the Table," a moving presentation by Victim Service was displayed. During the coffee time, various photos of staff around the State, facilities and field, were projected on the wall.

The event itself was hosted by the Commissioner of Corrections, Andy Pallito, and included a presentation by the Dept. of Correction's Honor Guard and the ceremony featured Vermont Agency of Human Services Secretary, Hal Cohen, Secretary as guest speaker The Office of the Vermont State Governor, presented the Department of Corrections with a Governor's Proclamation designating the week of June 14 through 20th as the "Correctional Employee's Week". Following the Proclamation, the Deputy Commissioner, Lisa Menard, read the selections and narratives of why the "Staff of the Year" selection was made and the Commissioner presented the awards. The Preservation of Life Awards were announced and distributed. At the end of each award presentation photos were taken of the award winner alongside of the Commissioner and AHS Secretary.

When the ceremony was been completed, the guests and honorees enjoyed a luncheon while musician, Gene McCormick, continued to entertain the crowd. All the leftover desserts were brought to a local food shelf around the four corners of the state at the events close.

# SPEAKERS

## Welcome Address



*Heather Simons, Director Human Resources Development*

## Commissioners Address



*Andrew Pallito, Commissioner of the Department of Corrections*

**Secretary Address**



*Hal Cohen, Secretary of the Agency of Human Services*

**Presentation of Awards**



*Lisa Menard, Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Corrections*

# NOMINATIONS

## MANAGER OF THE YEAR



### **Amy Holloway**

Nominated by Anne Cosgrove/Kim Bushey

Amy was eager to ensure the entire State was covered by only four Victim Service Specialist's and herself. As a Director, she has pitched in and done direct client contact, traveling to and from to meet with victims, doing Victim Offender Dialogues and trainings throughout the State and sits on numerous committees. One of Amy's greatest accomplishments was to instrument the Automated Victim Notification System eliminating the need for booking officers, Corrections Service Specialists and Parole Officers to do manually. She is currently working on instrumenting the advanced VANS+Choice notification system, which will allow victims to upload their Restraining Orders, Family Court orders, etc. This implementation will happen, after the new Offender Management System is up and running. She is known to be the Central Office baker and supplies her goods either at meetings or just on a regular basis. She instrumented the Homicide Survivor Group on a quarterly basis at her home. This has been a very therapeutic experience for all that attend. In the past couple of years, although she is already a Masters of Social Work, she pursued another Master's degree in Positive Psychology.

## SUPERVISORS OF THE YEAR



**Kevin Jenkins**, Corrections Facility Shift Supervisor Nominated by Joshua Rutherford and Mark Potanas

11.5 years of State Service

Kevin Jenkins is a remarkable leader. In a cast of high performers, Kevin shines as an absolute all-star. Not only does his work present with the highest quality (and impeccable integrity), but he manages this with a consistency that is nothing short of amazing. His work ethic, quality and professionalism could serve as a role model for any employee of the state. His handling of emergent incidents is calm and measured. He handles these incidents according to departmental values and in a safe and secure manner. His approach inspires confidence. He actively trains his staff to handle incidents and supports their career progression through this and other skill developing activities. He uses drills to challenge staff to improve performance. He supports his staff and gives them guidance so they can continue to grow. He listens to them and acts on their concerns when appropriate. He is always willing to take on more to help the team. Kevin Jenkins sets the mold for what a Corrections Facility Shift Supervisor should be.



**Sue Ransom-Kelley**, Corrections Program Supervisor      Nominated by Keith Tallon

*28 Years of State Service*

Sue Ransom-Kelley has excelled above and exhibited the very highest levels of performance in every position she has held during her 28-year career in the department. Sue has made a very successful transition from facility operational and supervisory responsibility to supervision of a field office staff. Sue has responsibilities that often exceed job class. Sue currently oversees supervision as the Risk Reduction Liaison, processes referrals for transitional housing applications, serves as the field office COSA coordinator and serves as team leader for the RRP program team meetings. To say that Sue cares very deeply for the staff she works with is a significant understatement. That same level of compassion is represented in her judgment and sense of objective advocacy for the offenders we supervise. Sue is always open to the concerns and well-being of her staff and often volunteers to cover any absences or assignments for her subordinates and peers.

## CORRECTIONS SERVICE SPECIALIST OF THE YEAR



**Brian Fisher**, Corrections Service Specialist II

Nominated by Joseph Silvestri & Shawn Baraw

*16 years of State Service*

As a Corrections Service Specialist, Brian has evolved into a leader among his peers. Brian consistently demonstrates a commitment to perform the four key practices within the agency while interacting with both offenders and staff. Brian balances the needs of the offender while being mindful of the public safety concerns. This has enabled him to assist the offenders on his caseload with being successful in the rehabilitative process. Brian not only performs the fundamental duties of the Corrections Service Specialist in an exemplary manner, he frequently goes above and beyond through his collaboration with the inmate as well as the case co-managers. We would like to thank Brian for his commitment and dedication to this often thankless and undervalued role by honoring him as Corrections Service Specialist of the year.



**Leona Watt**, Corrections Service Specialist II

Nominated by Rae Hirst & Joseph Sampsell

*11 Years of State Service*

Leona maintains a high degree of personal and professional conduct at all times. She does an outstanding job managing the Center cases assigned to her which is around 70 +/- cases at any one time. Leona has done an excellent job moving cases along to release. She has developed nice working relationships with the Corrections Service Specialist at the various facilities. Leona does a nice job getting household investigations out for assignment in a timely fashion. She does a consistent job documenting her work in case notes. The work that Leona does on these re-entry cases will continue to make a huge difference in both the quality and quantity of releases this office makes.



Rosemary Webber, Corrections Service Specialist Nominated by Stu Gladding

*3.8 years of State Service*

Rosemary Webber is an exceptional Corrections Service Specialist II and a natural leader. These qualities have been displayed during the past year. She has skillfully supervised a complex caseload of sexual and domestic violence and youthful offenders. Rosemary focuses offenders on developing comprehensive case plans that have realistic goals and are constantly updated. With Rosemary's leadership, offenders focus their plans on treatment, mental health, and life issues as well as barriers to success. She coordinates the W.I.S.E. (Judd South) program of transitional housing with support services in a modified therapeutic model. In addition, Rosemary has represented Saint Johnsbury Probation & Parole as a member of the Bright Futures Board. Rosemary serves as Saint Johnsbury Probation & Parole's Change Champion for the Offender Management System start up. Again, her leadership was demonstrated by the amount and quality of the feedback provided, communication with staff, competency with the system, and the quality of the training she provided. With Rosemary's leadership, Saint Johnsbury Probation & Parole was prepared for the challenges of implementation of the new system.

**CORRECTIONS OFFICER/COMMUNITY CORRECTIONS OFFICER/  
CORRECTIONS SERVICE TEAM LEADER OF THE YEAR**

**Corey Beaudet, Community Corrections Officer**      Nominated by Keith Tallon

*16 years State Service, 4.5 years in position*

Community Corrections Officer Beaudet is a dependable, conscientious, true Department Of Corrections professional. He is an outstanding employee. He has enhanced our relationship with local law enforcement through his efforts with Project Vision and his on-going work with the Rutland City Police. He is an extremely valuable team member within our Rutland Probation and Parole operation. His Project Vision involvement is something that likely will be modeled elsewhere in the state as measurable, and very positive results are already taking place within the Rutland Community. Community Corrections Officer Beaudet comes to work each day with a positive, can do attitude. He has a good grasp of the big picture in regards to our successes, and challenges, in supervising offenders in the community. He is a key member of our sex offender team and is fair, firm and consistent with the offender population. He presents a nice balance between supporting offender reintegration and offender accountability.



**Alden Tewksbury, Corrections Service Team Leader**

Nominated by Paul Brosseau

*11.5 Years of State Service*

Alden has a work ethic, which is to be desired, not only for himself, but he also instills it to the inmates that are assigned to his community based work crew. Alden has demonstrated leadership in this role and in fact plays a large role in training, coaching and mentoring staff that has been newly transitioned into the Work Crew Leader position and Yard Officers. Alden consistently works toward the creation of a positive work place environment, as he instills the mindset, with his inmates, that they are part of the community work force and that high standards must be met. Alden has demonstrated effective interaction with the public as the majority of his day is spent in the community working for State Agencies, local Towns and Municipalities and Non- profit organizations.



**Johnny White**, Community Corrections Officer      Nominated by Bill Soule

*28 years of Service*

Community Corrections Officer White is a very dedicated employee of the Department Of Corrections. He worked countless hours, often working both of his scheduled days off; to provide field work for about 235 high risk offenders while the Community Corrections Officer pool had been reduced to one officer. At one stretch, he worked forty consecutive days. He is assigned to the Sex Offender team, meeting weekly with PO's and monthly with treatment providers providing a wealth of information as well as network building with community and family members. Community Corrections Officer White is known as tough but fair with offenders and has a keen knack of getting to the bottom of problems before they get out of hand. He does this through building trust and respect.

## SUPPORT SERVICES EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR



**Mary Jane Ainsworth**, Change Management Analyst      Nominated by Monica Weeber

*9 years of State Service*

Over the past 16 months, MaryJane has led a major IT project for the Department Of Corrections. This project replaced a 30-year-old offender management database with a new modern system. When the project was formed, she was asked to take on the lead role and accepted without reservation. As her direct supervisor, I observed MaryJane exhibit excellent leadership. Without getting into details, it is safe to say that the project was not fully organized when MaryJane took over. Throughout the year, she brought the entire department together to prepare for the change that would occur. She worked closely with the project manager from the vendor, Department Of Corrections leadership and line staff to complete the project on time, minimized the risks associated with the change, and provide training to the entire staff. She is highly competent, organized, and has the complete trust of the Department Of Corrections. This IT project was successfully launched on March 17<sup>th</sup> due to her commitment and hard work. The Department is fortunate to have an employee like MJ.



**Elizabeth, Whitmore**, Housing Coordinator

Nominated by Derek Miodownik

2 years of State Service

Liz operates from a place of deep commitment to the fundamental necessity of housing in order for our clients to build successful lives. She balances the demands of specific projects with the need to understand and inform the big picture. Liz develops the high-integrity relationships necessary to be an effective agent of progress. She is results-oriented and consistently sets a high standard for her work while maintaining an enduringly positive attitude, making her a joy to be around. Through her astute grant management, collaborative approach and human services focus, Liz exemplifies the Department Of Corrections Vision: To be valued by the citizens of Vermont as a partner in prevention, research, control and treatment of criminal behavior.

**ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT SERVICES EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR**

**Amber Thomas**, Admin. Services Coordinator      Nominated by Deb Thibault

*3.5 years in State Service*

As the Business Manager, Amber is constantly looking for efficiencies in the overall operations of Burlington Probation and Parole. She has developed and maintains a strong, efficient working admin team that is the nucleus of all the operational complexities that contribute to Burlington Probation and Parole functioning at such a professional level. She is a team player in every sense of the word and models it. During the past 8 months, the added duty of becoming an Offender Management System trainer for Burlington Probation and Parole was assigned to Amber. Amber satisfied this requirement and excelled in this role. Whatever job duty Amber is tasked with she commits to at 100%. She excels at her job and is a tremendous asset to the Burlington Probation and Parole.

## CORRECTIONS' TEAM OF THE YEAR



### **PREA Team**

*Heather Simons, Wendy Yoder, Jennifer Sprafke, Greg Young, Benjamin Webster, Mark Potanas, Edward Adams, Kathy Astemborski, Kat Tkaczyk*

When the Prison Rape Elimination Act was passed in 2003, the standards had not yet been finalized by the US Department of Justice. Despite this, the early members of this team organized their plan of action, secured funding and began the journey of culture change. This required countless hours of training, mock audits, documentation, and negotiations with partners within and external to state government. Over the past decade, the team changed in membership but the vision never changed. Each member carried the message of sexual safety with the goal of 100% compliance to the federal standards. In July of 2014, the first three audits were conducted in Vermont facilities. The team worked diligently with each facility to make sure they were ready for the auditor's arrival. In her findings letter to the Commissioner, the auditor stated that the PREA Team was "exceptionally helpful and supportive" and commented that the entire Department Of Corrections is "an impressive, highly professional organization."

## PRESERVATION OF LIFE

### Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility

#### *Taylor Osgood, Correctional Officer I*

On July 21, 2014, COI Osgood was on relief in the dining hall at the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility. An inmate began to choke on a piece of apple while sitting at her table. Staff and inmates noticed the inmate having difficulty breathing and witness her rubbing her chest as she walked to another table. COI Osgood noticed an officer speaking with the inmate who was in distress. A few seconds later, the inmate began to drop to the ground and was very unstable on her legs. COI Osgood reached around and began performing three thrusts, dislodging the piece of apple that was causing the inmate to choke prior to medical arriving.

### Hartford Probation and Parole



#### *Johney White, Community Corrections Officer*

On September 18<sup>th</sup>, 2014, Community Corrections Officer Johney White stopped by a local motel in White River to check on a probationer. Prior to his arrival, a female offender had injected heroin with another individual. The offender became unresponsive. When Community Corrections Officer White arrived, he observed the offender lying on the bed. The occupants in the motel room indicated that the offender had suffered from a seizure. Community Corrections Officer White recognized the individuals in the room as known heroin users. He immediately called 911, verbally cleared the room and began following the instructions of the 911 dispatcher. He placed the offender on her side, tested her vital signs and felt a weak pulse. EMT arrived and Community Corrections Officer White notified them that the offender was suffering from a likely heroin overdose. Medical personnel informed the Hartford Probation and Parole that if Community Corrections Officer White had not responded as quickly as he did the offender would have likely died at the scene.

**Marble Valley Regional Correctional Facility*****Corey Hoague, Correctional Facility Shift Supervisor***

Corrections Facility Shift Supervisor Hoague was returning home from a school function with his 11-year-old daughter. At approximately 7 p.m., he witnessed an accident where a vehicle went off the shoulder of the road at a high rate of speed causing the vehicle to “vault” into the air. Corrections Facility Shift Supervisor Hoague arrived on the scene, the vehicle was on its roof, and a strong odor of gasoline was present. Corrections Facility Shift Supervisor Hoague attempted to open the door to reach the victim, but the damage to the vehicle was severe and he had to smash the back window to gain access to the driver. Corrections Facility Shift Supervisor Hoague attempted to calm the operator, but the operator climbed out the back window and Corrections Facility Shift Supervisor Hoague render assistance on the shoulder of the roadway. This assistance consisted of Corrections Facility Shift Supervisor Hoague placing his ungloved hands on the large chest wound on the operator to stem the bleeding until the EMS arrived. “Based on Hoague's response and quick actions, Hoague was able to provide care to an injured motorist who had been involved in a potentially life threatening crash. Hoague’s actions are commendable and should be recognized.”

**Northwest State Correctional Facility*****Richard Brosseau, Correctional Officer II***

On April 10, 2015, an inmate in Booking at the Northwest State Correctional Facility made a serious attempt at taking his own life by hanging himself with an ACE bandage. Richard Brosseau entered into the cell and lifted the inmate up. When other staff arrived, Corrections Officer II Brosseau removed the ACE bandage from around the inmates' neck and administered a sternum rub to assess consciousness. He then continued to assist Medical staff upon their arrival in the unit. It is directly due to his vigilance that this inmate is alive today.

**Southern State Correctional Facility**

***Dean Florence, Correctional Officer I***  
***Emily Howarth, LPN***  
***Gregory Pitts, Corrections Officer II***

***Rachel Stagner, RN***  
***Chris Phillips, Correctional Facility Shift Supervisor***

On June 20<sup>th</sup>, 2014, LNA Howarth observed an inmate attempting to self-harm by hanging. She immediately notified Unit Officer Florence. Correctional Officer I Florence radioed for assistance. As Corrections Officer II Pitts and Corrections Facility Shift Supervisor Phillips entered the cell, COI Florence, RN Stagner, and LNA Howarth were able to remove the ligature from the inmate's neck. They provided immediate first aid and stabilized this inmate until an ambulance reached the facility. Due to their prompt action, the inmate survived this significant attempt on his life.



**Chris Phillips**, Corrections Facility Shift Supervisor      **Scott Burton**, Correctional Officer I  
**Brett White**, Corrections Facility Shift Supervisor

On December 11<sup>th</sup>, 2014, while conducting a tour, COI Burton observed an inmate actively cutting with a razor. He radioed for assistance and verbally intervened with the inmate. Correctional Facility Shift Supervisors Phillips and White, supported by COIs Larson and Nareau responded. The inmate held the blade to his neck and threatened to cut his throat if staff tried to intervene. Using verbal interventions, Corrections Facility Shift Supervisor Phillips convinced the inmate to turn over the blade voluntarily. Because of the officer's observation, the quick response by staff, and the supervisor's verbal interventions, the inmate recovered fully from this incident.

**Stephen Riendeau**, Corrections Officer II      **Jose Roman-Suarez**, Corrections Officer II

On Sept. 29<sup>th</sup>, 2014, while conducting a tour, Corrections Officer II Roman-Suarez observed an inmate to be hanging from his cell window. He immediately radioed for assistance. He then entered the cell and lifted the inmate up to relieve pressure on his neck. Corrections Officer II Riendeau entered the cell and used a cut-down tool to remove the ligature from the inmate's neck. Corrections Officer II Brooks and Corrections Facility Shift Supervisor Cornwall also entered to aid in response to this incident. The inmate made a complete recovery as result of staff's timely response.

**Michael Groner**, Corrections Facility Shift Supervisor  
**Rachel Stagner**, RN

**Jere Smith**, Correctional Officer I

On November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2014, while conducting a tour, Correctional Officer I Smith observed an inmate to be hanging from his toilet. Correctional Officer I Smith radioed for assistance. Corrections Facility Shift Supervisor Groner responded and entered the cell with COI Smith attempted to remove the ligature. Corrections Facility Shift Supervisor Groner was able to remove the ligature and the inmate began breathing, with difficulty. After the ligature was removed Correctional Officer I Secoy, Corrections Officer II Van Horn and RN Stagner arrived. The inmate continued to have difficulties breathing and RN Stagner performed a sternum rub, which would elicit a response from the inmate. The inmate was stabilized until an ambulance arrived. Due to the immediate response of staff, the inmate made a full recovery from this incident.



**Kenneth Cooper**, Corrections Officer II  
**Dana Richmond**, Correctional Officer I  
**Michael Groner**, Corrections Facility Shift Supervisor

**Jason Hurd**, Correctional Officer I  
**Anthony Giordano**, Correctional Officer II

On January 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2015, Corrections Officer II Cooper discovered an inmate hanging in his cell. He attempted to radio for help, but his radio malfunctioned. COI Hurd radioed for assistance. COI Richmond also arrived. They removed the ligature and CPR was started, first by Cooper, then by Richmond. Shortly after, the inmate began to breathe, although with difficulty. Corrections Facility Shift Supervisor Groner arrived on scene with Corrections Officer II Giordano and they began providing additional first aid. The inmate was given oxygen and stabilized until an ambulance arrived. Despite being non-responsive and gray when discovered, due to staff's immediate reaction, the inmate made a full recovery.



***Kevin Jenkins, Corrections Facility Shift Supervisor Benjamin Wood, Correctional Officer I***

On May 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014, Correctional Officer I Wood and Correctional Facility Shift Supervisor Jenkins observed an inmate to be in medical distress during a routine tour of the unit. The inmate was unconscious due to an unidentified condition. He had poor overall vital signs and unexplained bruising in multiple places on his body.

They immediately identified his distress. They provided prompt attention. They notified on-duty medical staff who assessed this inmate. Because of their timely identification and response to this issue, the inmate was transferred to the hospital and subsequently received treatment for a life-threatening condition.

## ANNIVERSARIES

### 20TH



*Barry Allen, Kyle Beckwith, Robert Berthiaume, Scott Cookingham, Michael Dounetos, Arthur Gibney, Carl Mallette, Jr., Jeffrey Percy, Richard Rondo, Larry Shedrick, Joseph Silvestri, Timothy Simoneau, Theresa Stone*

**25TH**



*Joseph Aldrich, Richard Bilodeau, Mark Colgrove, Michael Lebreque, Scott Lapointe, Joseph Miller, Robert Moran, Scott Tomlinson, Michael Touchette, David Zavistki*

**30TH**



*Stuart Gladding*

**35TH**



*Thomas Braginetz, Vickie Garfield, Kevin Peck, William Soule*

40TH



*Herbert Sinkinson*

**Master of Ceremonies**



**Mark Shelton, Agency of Human Services Training Coordinator**

Thanks Mark for organizing this great event.