

In This Issue

Welcome to the first issue of the *Re-entry Reader*. In this issue, you will find information about the upcoming DRC graduation, how the department is focused on removing barriers to re-entry, and how a new crisis intervention program is making prisons safer for the inmates and the staff.

If you have questions or want to know more about the stories you see here, please contact the department at TDOC.Communications@tn.gov.

TDOC SUCCESS STORIES

In 2017, TDOC opened six Day Reporting/Community Resource Centers (DRC/CRC) across the state. These centers serve as an alternative to incarceration by placing eligible individuals in a structured and intensive, three-phase outpatient program that will assist moderate to high-risk participants with a substance-use and/or mental health issue.



The Madison County DRC is set to celebrate its first graduation ceremony next week.

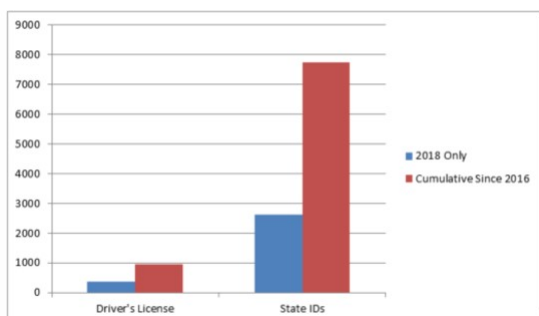
Jacob Morford, who will be honored as one of the graduates, reflects on how the program gave him the opportunity to avoid incarceration and to be able to keep a job and see his family. "This has been a positive thing for me," Morford shared, "The counselors leave recovery up to you because it's not up to them for you to get better. I've felt like I can open up to the people here."

Morford is one of the youngest in the program; at just 20 years old he has started building a new way of life through the programming at the DRC. Morford stated, "I've gone through so much bad stuff already and it has made me mature faster. I believe people have to go through something traumatic to change their way. Change is uncomfortable, but it causes you to better yourself."

Through the three-phase programming, Morford said the staff at the DRC has held him in constant accountability which has taught him perseverance. "It's an intense program and it's like a job; you learn mental strength here where before, I never thought of any consequences good or bad. I had to come here to humble myself, God told me I needed this. It's not about me, it's about integrity."

As graduation approaches, Morford is looking forward to the opportunities that lie ahead for him. He said he found a new calling to be a motivational speaker and is currently working on his personal trainer license. "Coming here has given me so many options. I take it a week at a time and every day I want to do better, but I know not every day is built for progress. I'm looking forward to getting back to work full-time and seeing what's next."

The Madison County DRC will hold their first graduation on January 22, 2019, at 5:30 p.m. The event will be held at 300 Benchmark Place in Jackson, Tennessee.



DRIVERS LICENSE

More than 90-percent of offenders will eventually return to their communities, and without a government issued ID, they are at a higher risk of returning to department custody. One of the largest barriers offenders face upon release is obtaining a valid ID. It is with that in mind that TDOC partnered with the Tennessee Department of Safety and Homeland Security (TDOSHS) to begin processing and providing Tennessee ID's to offenders nearing release.

This service is available to all inmates as part of their release plan further ensuring they are as prepared as possible for a successful reentry. In the past three years, TDOC has issued more than 900 drivers licenses and more than 7,000 IDs.



THEI GRADUATION

Did you know that TDOC has higher education classes in prison? Through partnerships with the Tennessee Higher Education Initiative (THEI) and the LIFE Program, offenders at several Tennessee prisons have the opportunity to earn a degree.

THEI operates higher education partnerships at two prisons - Turney Center Industrial Complex and Northwest Correctional Complex, while the LIFE Program operates at Tennessee Prison for Women.

Research shows that each dollar invested in higher education is also an investment in safer Tennessee communities. In a study by the American Correctional Association found that the recidivism rate is 44% lower for those that complete their degree.

On January 24th, Turney Center will host a graduation ceremony for THEI graduates. To learn more about higher education programming, please visit <https://www.theinitiativetn.org/>



#TDOCTALKS

CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM

Hosted by AC Ed Welch w/ special guests, Vicki Freeman and Sherlean Lybolt

CIT PROGRAM PREPARES OFFICERS FOR ENCOUNTERS WITH MENTALLY ILL OFFENDERS

Conflict de-escalation and resolution are tools that every correctional officer needs. Being able to prevent a tense situation from turning violent ensures the safety of all offenders and staff. While TDOC has always provided training to officers for such occasions, the department saw an opportunity to expand training on working with someone suffering from a mental health illness.

In September of 2018, TDOC partnered with the Davidson County and Robertson County Sheriff's Offices to bring the National Institute of Correction's (NIC) Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) to Tennessee. This nationally recognized training program teaches correctional staff to better manage individuals suffering from mental illness. CIT empowers front line staff to not only recognize symptoms of a mental health crisis but also gives them the additional tools necessary to de-escalate a potentially critical situation.

The 40-hour training involved lectures, role-playing, and visits to facilities that specialize in mental health care. Currently, TDOC has had over 100 staff

complete this invaluable training since the inaugural class.

“This nationally recognized training builds upon the skills that are taught in the basic correctional officer training program,” says Assistant Commissioner of Rehabilitative Services Edward Welch. He goes on to add, “This additional training gives officers more tools to use if they come in contact with people in crisis. These additional de-escalation techniques will improve both offender and officer safety.”



- April 2 - Citizens Academy Begins. [Register today!](#)

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