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Welcome to Our First Issue of *Victims' Voice.*

Greetings and welcome to our first issue of the Victims' Voice, Newsletter for those impacted by crime! My name is Tamika Dobbins and I am the Victim Services Coordinator for the Tennessee Department of Correction. I am humbled to serve in this position and assist crime victims through the criminal justice and corrections process. We hope to bring you the latest news related to the Department, and keep you informed of important and valuable information. Victim's Voice will be issued on a quarterly basis and will be available online at our web-site, [www.tn.gov/correction/victim services](http://www.tn.gov/correction/victim%20services).

In this first issue we'd like to provide you with a overview of the programs offered in the Victim Services Division and other initiatives within the Department. I hope you'll enjoy reading and learning about some of the great things TDOC is doing. The primary mission of the Department of Correction is to enhance public safety and our Victim Services Division is at the core of that mission.



Season to Remember

December is the time of year that Victim Services set aside to honor homicide victims. Tennessee Department of Correction and other partnering agencies work together to organize the Season to Remember event. Remembrance Events are designed to reflect and remember the victims' legacies. Survivors are able to hang an ornament in memory of their loved one.

Crime Victims' Rights Week

Every year in April, victims of crime are honored. National Crime Victims' Rights Week (NCVRW) is an annual observance to promote victims' rights and services. Tennessee Department of Correction partners with Tennessee Board of Parole, Tennessee Rehabilitative Initiative in Correction (TRICOR), and Tennessee Bureau of Investigation to host these events. Trees are planted across the state in city parks and other locations across Tennessee.

Victim Services Programs

“Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.” - Martin Luther King, Jr.

TDOC VICTIM SERVICES MISSION

To support victims, their families, and the laws that protect their rights, while utilizing recognized principles of offender behavioral change to help reduce the risk of repeat criminal behavior.

VICTIM IMPACT CLASSES FOR OFFENDERS

The goal of victim impact classes is to reduce recidivism by increasing offenders’ awareness of the negative impact of crime on their victims and others. TDOC provides these classes to incarcerated and supervised offenders.

Victims/ survivors of crime who are willing to speak to an audience of offenders are invited to come and speak about the impact crime has had on his/her life, and the lives of their loved ones.

SAFE CLASSES FOR OFFENDERS

Stopping Abuse for Everyone (SAFE) is a 26-52 week program designed to offer offenders an opportunity to learn the skills necessary to live a life free of violence and abuse. It promotes positive life changes by encouraging offenders to practice and apply new or different ways of thinking, feeling, and behaving.

VICTIM OFFENDER DIALOGUE

Victim Offender Dialogue (VOD) is a program that provides victims of violent crime an opportunity to have a structured face to face conversation with the offender who committed the crime. The focus is on the deep harm that is done to victims and the offender’s personal responsibility for these harms while hearing the impact of their actions.

VICTIM SERVICES PROVIDES:

- Information regarding the status of offenders in prison with felony convictions
- Registration for victim notification
- Assistance with threats, unwanted calls/ correspondence from an offender

TDOC VICTIM SERVICES ACTIVITIES:

- Community education programs
- Coordination with the Board of Parole, the Attorney General’s Office, and the Tennessee District Attorney General’s office to respond to victims’ concerns
- Education to TDOC staff to increase awareness of victims’ issues
- Collaboration with other victim advocates



Recidivism Update

Newly released recidivism numbers show Tennessee is moving in the right direction. Statewide recidivism for 2016 was 47.1%, down from 50.5% in 2010. Tennessee recidivism is defined as the percentage of felony inmates who are re-incarcerated within three years of their release. Since 2010, the Department has focused on the implementation of new, evidence-based programs and a “whole patient” approach to rehabilitation and offender care in order to improve offender success rates. Reducing recidivism not only makes our neighborhoods safer for Tennessee families; with the average cost to house an inmate in a state prison at \$76 per day, it also saves valuable taxpayer dollars.

“Providing offenders with informed, evidence-based rehabilitative programs and resource support both during incarceration and in the community is key to changing criminal behavior,” says TDOC Commissioner Tony Parker. “We still have work to do, but these encouraging numbers demonstrate that we’re on the right track and I’d like to thank our dedicated team of correctional professionals for their work in making Tennessee safer.”

Working to reduce recidivism is just one way the Department of Correction works to carry out its mission of enhancing public safety.



The Threat of Contraband

The introduction of contraband, such as cellular phones and drugs, into correctional facilities is a serious violation of Tennessee state law and is not tolerated by the Tennessee Department of Correction. That is why TDOC works vigilantly to intercept and recover any contraband. In addition, we work with our law enforcement partners to actively prosecute those who violate that law.

The Department is not only committed to tackling the problem of contraband, but is dedicating more resources to this issue than we ever have in the past. Earlier this year, TDOC joined other Department of Correction agencies throughout the nation in asking the FCC to reconsider their stance on cell phone jamming technology. In addition, the Department earlier this year hired a Chief Interdiction Officer (CIO) to lead out efforts regarding this issue. Mr. Lee Dotson, who was appointed to the CIO position, has been charged with collaborating with statewide investigative agencies and their officials at the local, State, and Federal levels, not only to stop the flow of contraband but to also yield arrests in the community thus making Tennessee safer, which is at core of TDOC's mission.

Contraband is not a problem that only we in Tennessee face – It is a national problem. That is why Commissioner Tony Parker, CIO Dotson, and the Chief executives from other State DOC's recently took the opportunity to meet with the Counselor to the Attorney General and the Chairman of the FCC, in Washington, DC to discuss one piece of the contraband issue – cell phones and the utilization of cell phone jamming technology.

“The possession or use of contraband wireless devices poses a risk to public safety, the safety of our staff, and inmates,” CIO Dotson says. “We will continue to pursue investigative tactics and technological advances as we work to eliminate these threats.”

Custody Level

Having an offender classified at the appropriate custody level is essential to maintaining a safe environment for staff and offenders. In order to determine an offender's custody level, the department conducts an assessment and takes into account a number of factors, particularly the individual's behavior during his or her incarceration.

Maximum— Restricted housing, intense level of supervision

Close— Constant supervision, inmates with consistent disciplinary problems

Medium— Constant supervision, minor disciplinary issues, work/movement limited to secure perimeter

Minimum— Intermediate supervision, some qualifying inmates have outside work detail

Offenders at medium and minimum custody levels are able to participate in more rehabilitative programming, such as substance use treatment, cognitive-behavioral programs, and educational programs. These programs help prepare offenders for success after prison, which serves to reduce recidivism and create safer communities for all Tennesseans.

Who To Call About Contraband?

If you have information regarding an illegally operated social media page or any other threat to the security of the public, a TDOC facility or field office, call our free TIPS hotline:

1-844-TDC-FIND

or Tamika Dobbins 615-253-8145



Rehabilitative Services includes:

- Victim Services
- Clinical Services
- Educational/Vocational Programming
- Religious Services
- Volunteer Services
- Substance Abuse
- Mental Health Services

A Word from Edward Welch

Assistant Commissioner Rehabilitative Services

The Mission of the Tennessee Department of Correction is to operate safe and secure prisons and provide effective community supervision in order to enhance public safety.

The Division of Rehabilitative Services supports this mission by providing evidenced based programming informed by the belief that the best way to protect the public is by inculcating fundamental skills that allow justice involved individuals to lead independent, successful and crime free lives. Through the development and implementation of an empirically validated risk and needs assessment instrument, Rehabilitative Services insures the most effective, evidence based and individualized programming available nationwide.

Rehabilitative Services fosters a holistic model of programs designed to address the whole person in mind, body, and spirit. Rehabilitative Services is committed to providing people in prison and under community supervision the opportunity to become productive citizens by providing Health and Wellness Care, Behavioral Health and Substance Use Services as well as career and technical educational programs.

Rehabilitative Services provides victim centric and family inclusive programming that includes victim offender reconciliation, family reunification, acknowledging and repaying one's debt to individuals and other measures to hold people accountable and make victims whole again.

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