COMMUNITY SPIRIT

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Center opens in West Memphis

The East Central Community Correction Center in West Memphis opened this summer and houses women who have committed a felony, but are more likely to successfully rehabilitate in a correction center rather than in a traditional prison environment. Photos of the transition from Pine Bluff to West Memphis are on pages 8, 9, 10, 11 and 26-27.

From Drug Court to law school

The Honorable Charles E. Clawson, Jr. (20th Judicial District Drug Court Judge since its start in 2003) is shown at right shaking hands with former Drug Court offender Matthew Lawrence in honor of Lawrence's recent achievement. Lawrence was recently admitted to law school.

The Conway Drug Court was honored to have Lawrence speak in court in May as part of the Drug Court month celebration.

Lawrence graduated the program and had his record sealed in 2013. He provided his testimony on how hard he worked in the Drug Court program and how since finishing the program, he has achieved his subsequent graduation from college with an undergraduate degree and his admission to the University of Arkansas at Little Rock Law School.

Lawrence said when he applied to law school, he was honest about his prior drug use, his criminal conviction, and the work it takes to achieve recovery.

He told current participants they need to have hope and a vision for their lives; they should shoot big in their goals for the future because he is proof that anything is possible.

He told the offenders in the court that if they work hard in Drug Court it will pay off as it has for him. Lawrence acknowledged there were some hard times, and he was concerned when the admission board requested more information about his felony conviction since law school is very selective. But Lawrence said he gave a full account of his recovery journey to them, which led to his big chance.

He also provides his testimony to offenders staying at the Bethlehem House, which is where he ended up because he had nowhere else to live when he came into the program in 2011.

Lawrence acknowledges the advantages he received by participating in the Drug Court program and his gratitude for the opportunity to change his future. This is a real story of why the Drug Court programs are so successful, as Lawrence went being a homeless drug addict to a law school student. We all rise in honor of this journey for Matt.

Arkansas Community Correction hires professional staff throughout the state for positions ranging from Correctional Officer to Counselor to Probation Officer. For information about applying for a job at ACC, go to: www.arstatejobs.com

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Arkansas Community Correction

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Three centers & parole and probation services to receive recommendations for re-accreditation

Auditors for the American Correctional Association (ACA) will recommend that three ACC centers and ACC's parole and probation services be re-accredited with 100% compliance of both the mandatory and non-mandatory ACA standards.

The positive recommendations follow audits of the Southwest Arkansas Community Correction Center in Texarkana, the Central Arkansas Community Correction Center in Little Rock, the Northeast Arkansas Community Correction Center in Osceola and statewide parole and probation services.

ACC employees listen to auditors presenting their findings during a closing after the ACA audit at the Southwest Center in Texarkana.

"We are very pleased with the recommendations of 100% compliance with ACA standards," says Director Sheila Sharp.

"This shows that staff are professionals and conduct themselves accordingly.

"I am proud of staff and their accomplishments," said Sharp.

The recommendations of 100% for ACC will be considered at ACA's Congress of Corrections slated to be held in Boston August 5-10.

Bradshaw named Deputy Director

Jerry Bradshaw

Long-time ACC employee Jerry Bradshaw has been named Deputy Director of Parole/Probation effective July 1, 2016.

Bradshaw replaces Deputy Director Dan Roberts who retired after working for the state for 29 years. Roberts was named deputy director in October of 2000.

Bradshaw, who has a bachelor's degree in criminal justice from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, began his career as a parole/probation officer in 1992.

He was promoted to area manager in 2000 overseeing the Little Rock parole and the Lonoke parole/probation office.

A year later he transferred to Conway to become the area manager for Area 6 (Conway, Morrilton, Russellville and Danville Parole/Probation).

He was promoted to deputy director for residential services in October 2013. In November 2015 he transferred to an assistant director for parole/probation services.

"Jerry has consistently supported the mission of the agency to provide public safety by working to hold offenders accountable and to improve our relationship with the criminal justice community," says ACC Director Sheila Sharp.

"Also having served in the role of Deputy Director for the community correction centers, Jerry gained insight into the treatment needs of offenders and the impact on recidivism that evidence based programming and supervision can have if applied in the correct manner," Sharp noted.

Rissinger takes helm at Central Arkansas Center in Little Rock

Don Rissinger has been promoted to Center Supervisor for the Central Arkansas Community Correction Center in Little Rock.

Rissinger is a 33-year veteran of corrections in Arkansas.

He started as a correctional officer and worked his way up through the ranks. He has served the past few years as the Assistant Center Supervisor the for CAC.

Residents at Omega TVC earn GED certificates

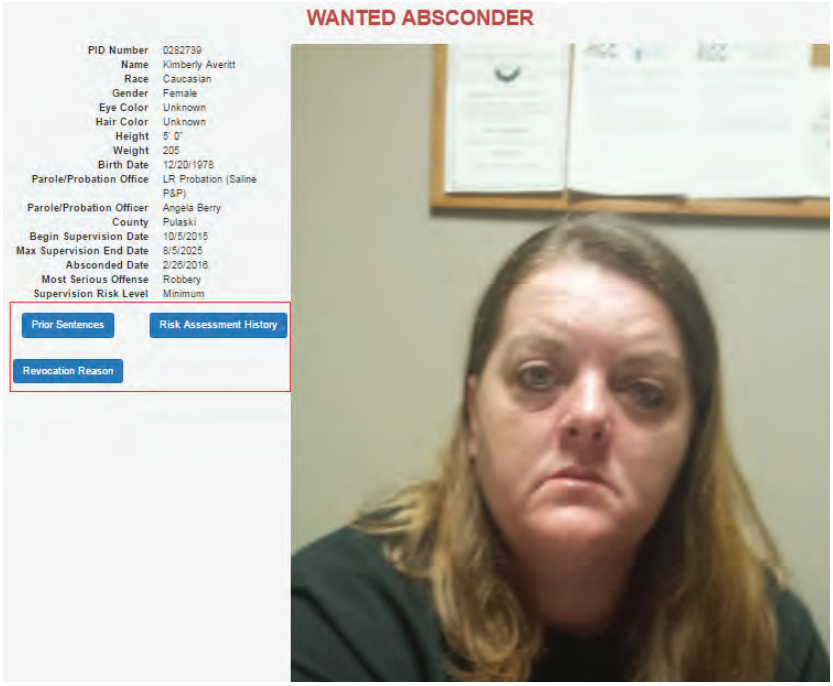
The Omega Center is proud to present three residents who received their GED during their time at the unit. Pictured left to right: Adult Ed Instructor Ann Batt; Resident Brandon Wisdom; Resident Jasyn Alexander; Resident Alton Cooke; and GED Teacher Kate Hilton

Additional absconder information now available on the ACC website

ACC's absconder list, posted on the agency's web site, now features additional data on each absconder including aliases, current sentences, prior sentences, risk assessment history, program referrals and revocation reasons.

The additions are visible in the photograph at right with each new item featured as a blue box. The public can access the information by clicking each individual box.

The additional information complies with the transparency requirements of Act 1265 of 2015, which was sponsored by Sen. David Sanders.



Advisory Board luncheon at the Southwest Center

In late March, the Southwest Community Correction Center in Texarkana hosted its annual Community Advisory Board luncheon.

SWC staff said of the event, "we love cooking up a good meal and serving our community, so we knew this would be another successful gathering!"

At this event special guests included State Representative Prissy Hickerson, ACC Director Sheila Sharp, and ACC Chief Deputy Director Kevin Murphy.

There were approximately 60 in attendance, including judges, city and county officials, FCI and other local correctional agencies.

Director Sharp was the speaker. She shared some of the agency's goals and prospects for the future andprovide an update on the progress of the agency's re-entry programs.

The community leaders in attendance seemed eager to know more about this new direction for ACC and SWACCC.

After a good meal and good conversation, guests were afforded the opportunity to tour the facility.

Pictured above is ACC Director Sheila Sharp, Chief Deputy Director Kevin Murphy and Southwest Community Correction Center Supervisor Steve Arnold. The photograph below shows employees and guests enjoying the luncheon and in the background you can see a slide show of center activities.

Treatment staff honored with ASACB awards

It was another clean sweep of awards for ACC Treatment Services at the Arkansas Substance Abuse Certification Board (ASACB) Awards luncheon during the Spring workshop in Little Rock. All three award recipients were ACC treatment field services staff: Covington Award- Randy Jo Nielsen, Assistant Treatment Program Manager, Northwest area; Counselor of the Year- Latasha Washington, Substance Abuse Program Leader, Area 11 Pine Bluff; Supervisor of the Year- Cassandra Davis, Assistant Treatment Program Manager, North Central area. The winners are shown above with Assistant Treatment Program Manager Jodi Howard and Assistant Director Ben Udochi.

Getting back needed ID

The residents shown at left are responding happily to a program that allows them to obtain a replacement driver's license or a state identification card.

The card is needed for life outside an ACC center.

Residents living and working in West Memphis

Residents and staff from the Central Arkansas Center in Little Rock, the Omega Technical Violator Center and the Northeast Arkansas Center in Osceola worked throughout the spring in renovating the former Crittenden County hospital building, which is now an ACC community correction center. This new center takes the place of the center in Pine Bluff and houses female offenders.

New ACC employees at the East Central Arkansas Center in West Memphis are spending their days going through training and orientation. Most residents were moved to the center in mid-June.

Moving into the new center

Residents from the former Southeast Center in Pine Bluff quickly adjusted to a regular routine of classes, work and counseling once they had moved into the newly opened center in West Memphis, the East Central Center.
Photos on this page and on the following page show day-to-day activities at the center.

The state's Mobile Workforce van was invited to the East Central Center to help residents with employment issues. The van is a mobile unit used for business retention and workforce transition. Residents were given a test titled Work Keys that 1.) helps to identify workplace skill strengths, 2.)alerts residents to areas where they can improve skills, and 3.) provides the training each needs to sharpen skills and qualify for a higher wage job. The criteria is that the residents taking the test be 30 days or less to release and be seeking a job. The ladies all did a great job on the pre-test that was administered and received a Workforce Bag at the end of the session. They also were given valuable information about seeking jobs once they are released.

ACC

Good Grid linking offenders with jobs

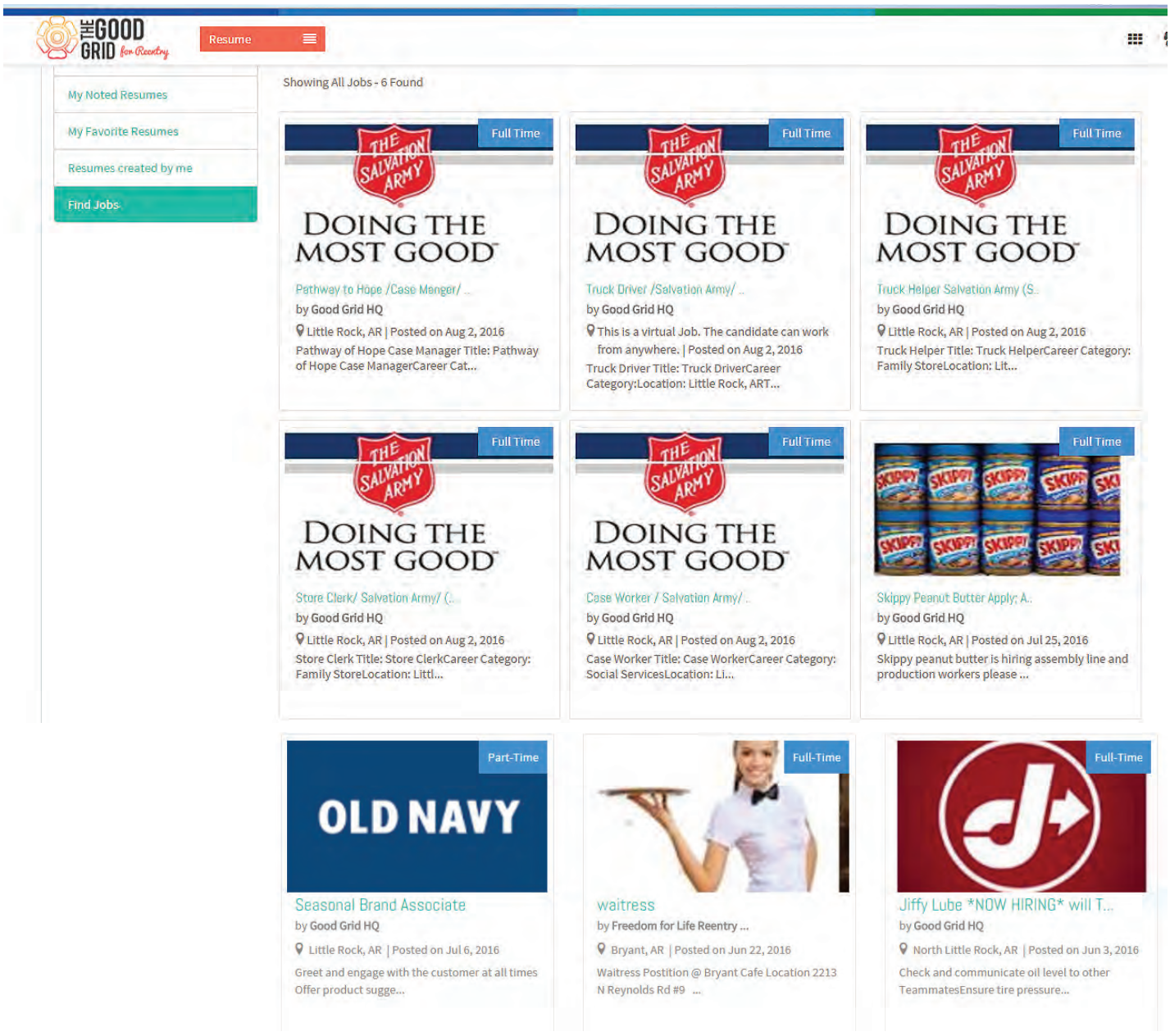
The Good Grid team is working hard to identify employers who will hire individuals regardless of criminal history.

These jobs are being posted daily on The Good Grid: My Portfolio.

Below you can see that current job openings are available at The Salvation Army, Old Navy, Jiffy Lube and the Skippy Peanut Butter company.

If you or someone you know is interested in looking at "felon-friendly" jobs go to www.goodgrid.com/myportfolio. Using your PID and DOB you can sign in and access all of these current job openings.

If you need assistance with logging in, updating your resume, finding your PID, or anything else, our Help Desk is always available. Call 501-687-2346 with any questions.



ACC staff help collect prescription drugs

ACC staff across the state participated in the collection of unused prescription drugs during the last weekend in April.

The collections were part of the 12th statewide Drug Take Back day, which is now a nationwide, on-going DEA prescription medicine take back initiative.

According to a news release from the Benton Police Department, more people died from drug overdoses in 2014 than in any year on record with the majority of the overdose deaths in this country resulting from prescription painkillers called opioids - Hydrocodone, Oxycodone, Methadone, etc.

"People don't understand how dangerous and addicting opioids can be," BPD Chief Kirk Lane said. "A lot of people become addicted very innocently; they're going through some pain trauma, and they get involved in this and can't find a way back."

About two-thirds of all prescription drugs (which include stimulants such as Adderall and depressants like Ativan) illegally obtained are taken from people's homes and not from pharmacies or off the street.

The Arkansas Take Back organization lists three reasons why people should turn in unused and/or out-dated prescription drugs:

Environment -

Safe Disposal to Reduce Medicines in the Environment. Large amounts of powerful medicines go unused or expire and the way we dispose of them makes a difference for our environment. Drugs thrown in the garbage are available for others to take and use and can still get into the environment. Returning medicines to a take-back program is the only environmentally-sound method for disposing of unused medicines.

Reduce Drug Abuse -

Safe Disposal to Reduce Drug Abuse. Prescription drug abuse is the fastest-growing drug problem in the country. The abuse of medicines by teens often results in medical emergencies or fatal overdoses. Most abusers of medicines, including teens, get the drugs from a friend or relative – not from a drug dealer. A safe medicine take-back program gets potentially dangerous leftover drugs out of our homes.

Accidental Poisonings -

Safe Disposal to Reduce Accidental Poisonings. Unwanted medicines left in the home endanger our children, seniors and pets. Poisonings from prescription and over-the-counter medicines are increasing. Getting rid of unwanted medicines at a take-back program is an important part of being safe in the home and will reduce these unnecessary poisonings.

A resident, shown above, drops off unneeded prescription drugs in Howard County. Pictured with the citizen is Howard Co. Investigator Blake Eudy, ACC Officer William Ball and Agent Allison Couch.

There are restrictions on what can and cannot be collected with the following deemed collectible, prescription medicines; over the counter medicines; vitamins; pet medicines; medicated ointments and lotions; inhalers; liquid medicines in glass or leak-proof containers (up to 12 ounces); and medicine samples.

Needles were not collected. Nor were common hygiene items such as shampoos or toothpaste.

Myth: It's ok to flush medicines down the toilet or pour them down the drain. The FDA encourages this because it's not really harmful to the environment.

Fact: Medicines that are flushed or poured down the drain can end up polluting our waters, impacting aquatic species, and contaminating our food and water

ACC staff help collect prescription drugs

supplies. Most medicines are not removed by wastewater treatment plants or septic systems. Scientists have found medicines in surface, ground and marine waters as well as soils and sediments in the Pacific Northwest. Even at very low levels, medicines in the environment hurt aquatic life. Using a medicine take-back program is a simple, sensible way to reduce the amount of medicines entering the environment.

According to an article in Scientific American, published online in 2013, "*When fish swim in waters tainted with antidepressant drugs, they become anxious, anti-social and sometimes even homicidal.*

New research has found that the pharmaceuticals, which are frequently showing up in U.S. streams, can alter genes responsible for building fish brains and controlling their behavior.

Antidepressants are the most commonly prescribed medications in the United States; about 250 million prescriptions are filled every year. And they also are the highest-documented drugs contaminating waterways, which has experts worried about fish."

Scientific American Link

And, according to a Harvard University Health Letter from 2011, "*A study conducted by the U.S. Geological Survey in 1999 and 2000 found measurable amounts of one or more medications in 80% of the water samples drawn from a network of 139 streams in 30 states. The drugs identified included a witches' brew of antibiotics, antidepressants, blood thinners, heart medications (ACE inhibitors, calcium-channel blockers, digoxin), hormones (estrogen, progesterone, testosterone), and painkillers.*

Scores of studies have been done since. Other drugs that have been found include caffeine (which, of course, comes from many other sources besides medications); carbamazepine, an antiseizure drug; fibrates, which improve cholesterol levels; and some fragrance chemicals (galaxolide and tonalide).

Sewage treatment plants are not currently designed to remove pharmaceuticals from water. Nor are the facilities that treat water to make it drinkable. Yet a certain amount of pharmaceutical contamination is removed when water gets treated for other purposes. For example, some research shows that conventional treatment methods result in a 90% decrease in the amount of ibuprofen and naproxen in the water discharged from sewage treatment plants. On the other hand, treatment doesn't seem to have much effect on the levels of drugs such as carbamazepine and diclofenac (a pain reliever)."

Harvard Health Letter Link

Myth: There is no reason why unwanted medicines cannot be put in landfills.

Fact: Modern landfills are well-designed, safe, and handle standard household waste well. However, medicines are a special type of hazardous chemical that we need to keep out of our solid waste system and landfills to prevent harm to people and the environment. Drugs can be very toxic for people and wildlife, even in low doses. Just as we do not put used motor oil or leftover paint thinner in the trash, we should not put these extremely potent pharmaceutical chemicals into unsecure curbside trash cans.

How can medicines thrown in the garbage get into the environment? Unwanted drugs are still chemically active when they are thrown in the trash, even if mixed with kitty litter or coffee grounds. Several studies have shown that medicines in a landfill can be released to the local environment through the landfill liquid – or "garbage juice" - that may be collected and sent to wastewater treatment plants. Because wastewater treatment plants are not designed to remove medicines, drugs may be discharged to rivers and bays.

Unwanted medicines should be disposed of properly like other household hazardous wastes. Medicine take-back programs are the best way to dispose of unwanted medicine.

Myth: It's a good idea to crush medicines before throwing in the trash.

Fact: Crushing pills to disguise them before disposal is difficult and dangerous and puts the handler at risk of exposure to the drug through skin contact or by breathing in the dust. Many medications are designed to release in the body over time, and crushing pills can release a dangerously high dose. The pill dust may endanger other family members and pets in the home, and some medications can be especially harmful to children and women of childbearing age.

If you need to dispose of these drugs when collections are not ongoing go to the Arkansas Take Back website and you will find listings that will provide a location for drop off - Drop Off Link.

Area 8 officer helping those who are hungry

In May, Officer Natasha Barkins, along with the help of a couple of her Day Reporting Center offenders, prepared sack lunches and went out into the community to hand these lunches out to the homeless and those in need.

She paid for the food out of her own pocket, and involved offenders in the giving.

"Providing meals for those in need has been something I have wanted to do many times for a long time. My birthday is approaching and I always try to do an act of service around that time to show how thankful I am," says Barkins

"I made a decision to purchase items to assemble a meal for those who may be displaced or having a hard time. I always telling my DRC participants to help others and give back to the community.

"Today, I had two who showed up and were a huge help. With the help of the DRC participants and Officer LaShunda O'Brien, we made the sandwiches and assembled the bags. We went out in the pouring rain and those we came into contact with were very happy to see us," says Barkins

"Some were not so comfortable taking bags from me with this badge around my neck but they made an exception. The sack lunches had a variety of turkey and ham sandwiches, potato chips, a package of peanut butter crackers, bottled water, and the choice of an apple or orange. Moments like that make me teary eyed. We had a lot of laughs and a lot of thank yous! I can't wait until I have the finances to do it all over again," says Barkins.

SWC hosts first volunteer appreciation dinner

In late April, the Southwest Community Correction Center in Texarkana hosted its first Volunteer Appreciation Dinner in what is planned to become an annual event. Chaplain Warbritton and Program Specialist Shaunda Scoggins planned and executed an amazing event to recognize the center's hard working volunteers.

Many times volunteers go unrecognized, despite the time and heart they put into their calling. Volunteers come from many different walks of life, but share one commonality: wanting to help their fellow man. Volunteers do not receive a direct deposit on payday; their payment comes in the form of accomplishment and self knowledge that they have made a difference in a life. SWC staff prepared all of the dishes and served the volunteers "pot-luck" style. The food was delicious, and very much appreciated. Each volunteer was given a Certificate of Appreciation.

At the top of the page Chaplain Warbritton, Reentry Manager Patty Sims, Center Supervisor Steve Arnold, Treatment Supervisor Tina Maxwell are shown presenting Mary Jane Allen from Christ United Methodist Church her Certificate of Appreciation; above left, Treatment Coordinator Greg Wicks, Program Specialist Shaunda Scoggins, Treatment Supervisor Tina Maxwell, and Warbritton listen to Arnold. Above right is Scoggins and Trio Program Program Specialist Jennifer Harrington and at left is Advisors Gale Neal, Trena Shea-Goings, Rhonda Sherman, Monica Macon DWS.

Area 10 Drug Court participants and ACC staff go bowling

The Area 10 Hot Springs Drug Court hosted its annual bowling night for drug court participants. Included in the group photo below is Judge John Homer Wright, Advisor Chris Skrivanos, Admin. Specialist Kelly Smith and PPA Michael Hall. A fun time was had by all.

Drug Court participants giving back in Area 2

In order to achieve the goal of rehabilitation, the 14th Judicial District Drug Court in Boone and Newton County offers the participants the opportunity to give back to the community that they have taken from in the past.

The participants are kept busy and involved with community events, say Drug Court staff in Area 2.

The Drug Court participants in Area 2 worked with community business leaders and entrepreneurs to organize and produce a community outreach event called the Party in the Park.

The Party in the Park event offered a ragball tournament, a classic car show, motorcycle show, live music, BBQ, a bounce house for the little ones, demolition car, knocker balls, local vendors, an auction and a dunk tank filled with various community leaders including local sheriffs, jail administrators, police chiefs, prosecutors and judges.

Area 2 Drug Court staff believe that participants working on the event gain and develop self-esteem while integrating themselves back into the community.

There were more than six law enforcement agencies that served as security for the event.

ACC Officers TJ Spencer and Marcus Hagler assisted Agent Watson, Drug Court Counselor Tammie Dewey, and Drug Court Admin Dee Conner as well as Maggie Spencer (ACC) and ACC volunteer Nicole Stephens volunteered at the event.

The band Black Oak Arkansas was the closing act for the event.

Booths at Party in the Park

Area 1 Officer returns to community to help kids

Area 1 Officer Harold Harris (Fayetteville), along with a plethora of friends, spent two days in June working on the basics of football with kids from first through twelfth grades.

The clinic, the Malvern Alumni Skills & Drills Football Camp, was held at Malvern High School's Claude Mann Stadium and was free for kids from all over the state.

The clinic featured Harris, a former Razorback, and several other former college and professional football players as coaches.

According to its website, The Malvern Alumni Skills and Drills Camp offered campers valuable instructions on technique enhancement, team work, sportsmanship, leadership and educational life skills

Instructors included some of the best athletes from college and the NFL, as well as elite members of high school coaching staffs.

By using the fundamentals in sports and real life testimonies, the camp introduced principles that will impact and remain with individuals for a lifetime.

- Student-athletes need to balance academics, athletics and social activities of school life. These are life skills to be carried into adulthood.
- Working well with others (coaches, teachers, parents, classmates and other members of the community) is a life skill that all student-athletes need to develop.
- Athletes are role models and leaders within the school community. Be a positive leader!!
- Teach student-athletes to work hard on and off the field.
- Having a positive attitude helps to achieve success.
- Stress the importance of giving back to the community.
- Encourage student-athletes to treat others with respect to gain respect.

During both days of the clinic, the participants were fed lunch.

Area 11 staff and drug court clients help flooded community

Area 11's 10th Judicial District Drug Court and staff from ACC's Crossett & Monticello offices pitched in recently to help the Desha County Extension Office assist local area flood victims. Shown above with some of the donated items is Chuck Capps with the Desha County Extension Office, ACC Officer Tim Collier, Advisor Helen Davis and Admin. Specialist Carolyn Bennett.

Lonoke Drug Court participant graduates from court in Spring

Lonoke Drug Court graduate Tasha Koski is shown above with the Honorable Sandy Huckabee, 23rd Judicial Drug Court Judge; Drug Court Counselor Earlene Wainwright; and Probation/Parole Agent Rodney Ford.

Offenders in the western part of the state are learning how to live healthily on a budget

Offenders in Mena attended a Life Skills Class for education on shopping for the best nutrition on a budget.

The class was taught by Amie Monk of the University of Arkansas county extension office.

Life skills classes are often offered to offenders in other areas as well.

Volunteer Appreciation dinner at the NW Center in Fayetteville

Shown above are guests at the Northwest Community Correction Center dinner and shown in the photo at right is Center Supervisor Maggie Capel listening as Chaplain Terry Schlinker provides the prayer.

In the photo below is Assistant Center Supervisor Gary Tabor, Mrs. Kevin Murphy, Chief Deputy Director Kevin Murphy and Center Supervisor Maggie Capel.

Drug Courts in Area 3 hold barbecue

The Randolph and Lawrence County Drug Court programs held their first ever Drug Court Barbecue at Old Davidsonville State Park outside of Pocahontas.

The event was held to celebrate National Drug Court month and to honor the hard work and progress made by current Drug Court participants and those who have graduated the program.

Approximately 50 individuals enjoyed a delicious barbecue lunch that was prepared by Smokin' Butts BBQ in Horseshoe Bend.

Some of the graduates gave their testimony about how the Drug Court program changed their lives and helped them to see that a life of drug abuse was not the life they wanted for themselves.

One graduate was able to share with everyone how he was able to receive a Governor's pardon and no longer has a felony record. The Drug Court teams in both counties are very proud of the participants' hard work and dedication and of the goals they have accomplished since entering the Drug Court program. It is Judge Phil Smith's desire to make this an annual event during National Drug Court month.

Residents at the Northeast Center help with event

Residents from the Northeast Arkansas Community Correction Center are shown in these photographs assisting with the set up of the South Mississippi County Relay for Life event that was held in May.

Offenders in Pine Bluff receive education information

In May, representatives from SEARK (Southeast Arkansas College) conducted a workshop with offenders in the Pine Bluff area regarding programs that are available to them. There were 11 offenders from the Pine Bluff office in attendance. Ivory Rice, SEARK's welding instructor, and Jeffrey Pulliam, Business and Community Coordinator, spoke about grants that are offered for the following careers: Microsoft Office Specialist, Welding TIG, and MIG Certification. Pulliam helped the offenders fill out applications. They were advised to go to SEARK in order to complete all required paperwork for grant approval. Qualifications were discussed, and it appeared most met the qualifications required for the grants. Offenders present were eager and excited about having the opportunity to go to college for the first time or to return to college

Pine Bluff observes National Drug Court Month

The Pine Bluff Drug Court held an observance of National Drug Court Month May 6, 20 at the Jefferson County Courthouse.

The guest speaker for the celebration was Supervisory Special Agent Anthony Lemons with the Drug Court Enforcement Administration.

Each May, Drug Courts nationwide celebrate their success and unparalleled contribution to society by holding special events.

Residents at the Northeast Center graduate

Each month, the Northeast Arkansas Community Correction Center has a graduation ceremony to recognize residents who have successfully completed the program and will be released the following month.

Residents who recently obtained their General Education Diploma or received a vocational certificate are also recognized.

The May graduation ceremony marked a milestone in NEACCC history, as families were invited and able to attend the graduation ceremony, implementing Phase 4 in the program. Phase 4 focuses on the families of the residents and educating them on ways to show proper support for the successful re-entry into their communities.

Along with the family members in attendance, NEACCC was honored to host Rogers Ford as a guest speaker for the ceremonies.

Ford is a prominent member of the Northeast Arkansas community, acting as a Rotarion, Gideon, and member of other numerous organizations. Ford is a well-known figure in the Rivercrest school district, a superintendent, and he encouraged the graduates to use the skills they learned in the program to live a sober and crime-free life.

The Treatment Staff at the Northeast Arkansas Community Correction Center are always looking for ways to better prepare residents for a successful re-entry into society, and the implementation of Phase 4 is a crucial element in doing so.

Renovation, Orientation and Training

Renovation, Orientation and Training