



DCJS/news

Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services

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Office of the Director – Human Resources



Michele G. Thorpe

Many of the articles in this edition of our newsletter highlight the work that we do, how we've continued to do it during the Covid-19 pandemic, and the staff who make it all happen. There is one story, however, that is a difficult one to share. Michele Thorpe, our Human Resources Manager, unexpectedly passed away on July 31, 2020. Michele came to DCJS on January 25, 2019, although her career with the State of Virginia began in July 2012 when she worked for the Virginia Department of Health. During her time at DCJS, she provided guidance, direction, and programs to foster an inclusive, effective, and quality workforce. She also balanced tradition with innovation in the Human Resources section where they serve as planners, consultants, and strategists to staff in the support of agency programs and services.

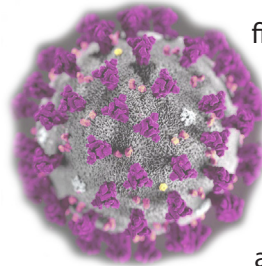
DCJS Director Shannon Dion shared these words for Michele: "We will continue the good work Michele started at DCJS – we will continue cheering each other on, and nurturing each other as people and professionals; we will continue growing into an equitable and inclusive organization; and we will continue doing the right things for the right reasons."

*There are some who bring a light so great to the world
that even after they have gone the light remains.*

— Unknown

Division of Programs and Services – Victims Services

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, DCJS has suspended most business travel for meetings, training events, and site visits. This response has impacted our ability to engage in travel to conduct onsite compliance reviews (site visits). The purpose of sub-recipient monitoring is to ensure that the subaward is being used for the authorized purpose, in compliance with the federal program and grant requirements, laws, and regulations, and the subaward performance goals are achieved. The virtual, Enhanced Desk Review (EDR) process consists of in-depth monitoring performed remotely to assess the financial and programmatic integrity and accountability of subgrants via virtual and telephone communication methods for interacting with grantees; reviewing grant general ledgers; supporting



financial and programmatic documents, etc. Grant monitors utilize online technology platforms to include Zoom and Google that allow visual and audio participation by multiple participants simultaneously. Monitors coordinate with sub-recipients to negotiate the details of the agenda and provide detailed instructions on the documents, analysis period, post visit follow-up, and other requirements of the EDR. For the sub-recipients who have engaged in this process, they found that the online format provides a more convenient and safer option considering the national pandemic and limitations regarding travel. Virtual EDRs are conducted in accordance with the DCJS Monitoring Policy and have contributed to reduced travel costs and increased efficiency with the compliance review process. ■

Agency Risk Management Internal Control Standards (ARMICS)

DCJS' ARMICS (Agency Risk Management Internal Control Standards) review was recently completed. DCJS Senior Accountant Karen Roth spearheaded this project with assistance from staff. During this annual process, all divisions of the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services are reviewed to ensure compliance with the Virginia Department of Accounts' (DOA) minimum requirements to provide reasonable assurance of adequate internal control, fiscal accountability, and integrity of financial reporting and safeguarding of the Commonwealth's assets. DOA is responsible for financial accounting practices for state agencies and institutions.

Forfeited Assets Sharing Program (FASP)

Did you know the Forfeited Assets Sharing Program (FASP) is under the umbrella of the Financial Services Department? FASP allows local and state law enforcement agencies to utilize state forfeiture laws to seize and forfeit property connected to illegal drug activity, then receive a percentage of the forfeited proceeds for law enforcement use.

Law enforcement agencies are required to report property and currency seized and their disposition to DCJS. DCJS then distributes approved forfeitures to agencies based on percentages in sharing agreements or MOUs. These funds must not take the place of budgeted items but supplant the budget. Some qualified law enforcement expenses are training, purchase of equipment, certification expenses, facility costs, and drug education and awareness programs.

In FY-2020, DCJS distributed a little over \$5 million to Virginia law enforcement agencies based on 1,462 forfeitures. The 376 sheriff's offices, police departments, task forces, and Commonwealth's Attorneys certified in the program must report annually on the use of these funds. DCJS staff reviews these annual reports to determine agencies' compliance and to ensure that funds were used for permitted expenses.

Law enforcement agencies interested in joining the Forfeited Asset Sharing Program should contact Coordinator Beth Dandridge at 804-371-0538 or elizabeth.dandridge@dcjs.virginia.gov.

New Employees

Two employees have recently joined the Financial Services section. New employees hired during the pandemic have had to navigate a unique set of circumstances, including not seeing their fellow employees in-person on a regular basis, and meeting some only through virtual meetings. Our new employees are:

Elizabeth Gindhart



Elizabeth Gindhart joined DCJS in July, 2020 as the accounts receivable specialist. She comes to DCJS from the Science Museum of Virginia. Elizabeth also spent several years working as a special care provider, mentoring and supervising staff for an adult day care facility, and working with youth with special medical and behavioral needs. She lives with two cats, a super-senior dog, and her partner in Southside Richmond. Elizabeth has been playing a single round of the License Plate game for over a year, and with two recent finds has only one state left to go!

Keshana Pierce



Keshana Pierce joined DCJS in August, 2020 as a senior accountant responsible for the timely and accurate reconciliation of agency financial records. Keshana comes to DCJS from the Commission on Virginia Alcohol Safety Action Program (VASAP), where she handled most of the finances and she has experience in many financial areas. Keshana earned her Bachelor's in Business Administration with a concentration in Finance from Old Dominion University. Keshana also enjoys traveling and riding with her husband on the motorcycle and has a Pomeranian fur baby named Teddy. ■

RETIREMENT: William “Bill” Dodd, Grants Administration Supervisor

“Life is uncertain. Eat dessert first.” So says William “Bill” Dodd sharing his favorite quote by author Ernestine Ulmer. As we near the end of 2020 in unprecedented times, Bill is right...life is very much uncertain and often unpredictable. While DCJS continues to adjust to the circumstances, we do know we will be saying farewell to one of our most treasured and appreciated employees. Bill worked for the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services for 30 years, all within the Grants Administration. He served the people of the Commonwealth as both an Accountant and Senior Accountant, retiring as a Grants Administration Supervisor.

Bill was hired at DCJS after working for Dominion Energy, Inc., which was known at that time as Virginia Power. He then found his new work-home in downtown Richmond, Virginia working alongside eight different agency Directors during his tenure.



When asked what he will miss most about working at DCJS, Bill said, “The people. I have worked with some very special, talented, and super intelligent people at DCJS.” Over the years, Bill has shared many stories about his wife, children, and now grandchildren – their holiday gatherings, travels, and how proud he was of their accomplishments. He is looking forward to relaxing and spending time with his family during his retirement. He plans

to travel to various places such as Seattle and doing some home improvement projects down the line. When asked what advice he has for those coworkers he is leaving behind Bill said, “Keep up the great work that DCJS continues to produce.”

Bill leaves DCJS with a tremendous amount of historical and financial expertise. His dedication and commitment to DCJS will not be forgotten. ■

Division of Programs and Services – Adult Justice Programs

Self-Care is something that is important and often overlooked, and during these trying times it is even more important. The DCJS Adult Justice Programs (AJP) worked diligently to coordinate an agency-wide Self-Care training. The training was facilitated by the Trauma Informed Care Network of Greater Richmond. This training provided tips and tricks for working from home during a pandemic as well as great self-care strategies to include but not limited to: breathing techniques, a centering activity, and reminders to focus on getting up and moving.

The Adult Justice Programs team is encouraging self-care for our grantees. The team has been working to provide technical assistance (TA) to our stakeholders and constituents. The AJP has held numerous virtual roundtable discussions focusing on “The New Normal.” During these discussions the AJP team has listened and discussed ways DCJS can better provide TA and support. These discussions were also used to share tips and tricks on how programs are coping between stakeholders. The AJP team will continue to provide TA as needed in the capacity that is most comfortable for everyone involved. ■

ABC's Movement Game

Spell your name, your favorite word,
or pick a few letters, and follow the prompts to move & calm!
Please change any prompts to best fit your body and brain needs!

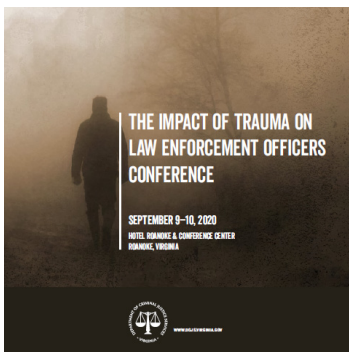
- | | |
|---|--|
| A 3 BIG deep breathes | N Skip for 5 seconds |
| B 5 push-ups | O Breathe in through nose,
out through mouth 3 times |
| C 3 figure 8's with your arms
across your body | P 5 sit-ups |
| D 3 stretches to your tippy toes | Q Reach to your toes |
| E Take a seated forward fold | R Stretch to the stars &
lean right and left |
| F Push the wall for 10 seconds | S Twirl for 5 seconds |
| G Hug your knees near your
chest for 10 seconds | T Raise your knees to your
chest 10 times |
| H 5 big arm circles | U Take 4 slow breathes |
| I 1 tight self-hug | V Move in slow motion for
10 seconds |
| J Tap your head, shoulders,
knees & toes 5 times | W 30 second wall-sit |
| K 5 *slow* squats | X 10 jumping jacks |
| L Push your feet against the
floor for 10 seconds | Y Jump up and down for
10 seconds |
| M Dance for 5 seconds | Z Clap your hands 10 times |

Take a minute and do the ABC's Movement Game to
provide your mind and body some self-care.

<http://grscan.com>

Rising to the Challenge: Virtual and In-Person Trainings Continue

The DCJS Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (VCSCS) has maintained a high level of service to constituents during the global pandemic. The innovative VCSCS staff quickly mobilized to continue to perform the legislative mandate to provide training to stakeholders. VCSCS has hosted 77 events virtually and in-person in the period from mid-March 2020 through September 30, 2020 with nearly 8000 participants. Over 150 events have been completed or scheduled for the calendar year 2020, serving in excess of 10,000 law enforcement, school, and campus professionals. Virtual training topics have included Trauma and the Pandemic, Crisis Management, Threat Assessment, Legal Updates for School Security Officers, and more. In-person training resumed in June. Training offered has included School Resource Officer and School Administrator basic training, Threat Assessment and Management, Disability Awareness for Law Enforcement Officers, Active Shooter Response for law enforcement officers and Civilian Response and Casualty Care.



The first in-person conference since the pandemic was held in Roanoke, Virginia on September 9–10, 2020. The *2020 Impact of Trauma on Law Enforcement Officers Conference* was attended by over 130 law enforcement professionals and provided

information, awareness, resiliency tools, and support related to the impact of trauma in policing. The conference included personal stories from officers involved in national tragedies, like the Orlando Pulse Nightclub Shooting, as well as local incidents. Resources and handouts provided by conference presenters can be found on the [Conference Resource Page](https://www.dcjs.virginia.gov/2020-impact-trauma-law-enforcement-officers-conference-resource-page-0).

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The conference received positive feedback, with a 4.75 out of 5 rating for overall value to professional development and comments included, *“The workshop was an excellent mix of personal stories, resiliency and growth. Just the right mix!”* and *“Overall great information with engaging speakers. Very helpful to have officers share their experience and what they learned as to where to get help.”*

2020 BJA STOP School Violence Grant Funding

The DCJS Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety (VCSCS) was awarded a grant from the federal Department of Justice, under the Bureau of Justice Assistance’s (BJA) *Student, Teachers, and Officers Preventing (STOP) School Violence Grant* in the amount of \$1.83 million. This grant program is designed to improve school safety and security by providing students, teachers, and law enforcement partners with the tools they need to recognize, respond quickly to, and prevent potential acts of violence.

Through this funding, VCSCS will implement an innovative, 36-month project around VA C.A.R.E.S. in an effort to build Caring, Awareness, Recognition, Engagement, and Support in Virginia schools. VA C.A.R.E.S. will increase recognition of students at risk of self-harm or harm to others, and allow for increased interventions and supports provided through threat assessment teams. This project will include the following major initiatives:

- Implementation of a statewide youth suicide prevention public service announcement (PSA) campaign in collaboration with the Virginia Department of Health.
- Delivery of “Pathways of Prevention for School Violence” trainings for school personnel and local law enforcement.
- Delivery of “Handle with Care” trainings for local law enforcement and school staff.
- Development and production of virtual violence prevention training modules for school personnel and local law enforcement.

Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety Staff

The Virginia Center for School and Campus Safety staff has continued to grow during the pandemic. VCSCS has welcomed three new team members. Adam Keene is serving in the position of Active Attack Training Coordinator, Dennis Proffitt is the Substantial Risk Protection Order Training Coordinator, and Alan Chambers will be assisting with the Active Attack training program. In addition, VCSCS staff produced a short video in an effort to stay connected to constituents while the ability to connect in person is limited. ■

RETIREMENT: Linda Strohecker, Customer Service Specialist

Linda Strohecker retired from DCJS after more than 22 years of service at the agency. She worked for 50 years in both the public and private sector. Linda began her career in 1971 as an Executive Assistant to the station manager of WTVR Channel 6 in Richmond, Virginia, then in 1980, Linda began her lifelong career with the Commonwealth of Virginia. Linda first worked for the Virginia Employment Commission (VEC) for one year, and then transitioned to the Alcoholic Beverage Commission (ABC), where she worked as a Unit Secretary for 12 ABC agents. Linda collaborated with enforcement agents and high school students that were recruited for sting operations, to combat the sale of alcohol to underage customers.

In 1998, Linda began working for DCJS. Linda started as an Assistant to the Division Director, Leon Baker, and then transitioned to her current role as a Customer Service Specialist. Linda served a regulant population of over 50,000 for the majority of her state career. Known by many as having a photographic memory, Linda challenged herself and others to provide the most accurate and efficient customer service to all patrons. The keys to Linda's success include having good-natured and respectful managers, her understanding that everyone has unique abilities and responsibilities to fulfill, and lastly, having the ability to understand what each unit in the agency does to serve the public.

Linda always kept her focus on helping others. Even during tumultuous times, in the midst of a pandemic, Linda maintained her high level of service. Linda's responsibilities used to include face-to-face customer interactions, but shifted to remote working before her retirement. The laughter and cheer caused by office chatter turned into telephone conferences with her supervisor, with email being her main method of communication with her coworkers.



None of us knows what tomorrow will bring, so it is with great courage that we live each day with compassion and humility, as if it was our last.

Linda admitted that she missed the personal touch that working in the office used to bring, as many others would agree as well. However, remote working opened the door for her to provide even better service by going above and beyond to meet the needs of the customers, electronically and telephonically as a call center representative. Linda did not lose her spark for making people happy and whole, which seems to be the sentiments of most customers who encountered her.

As Linda's retirement date approached, she looked back on what she has seen, heard, done, and what she will do with her state career ending. Upon retirement, Linda is looking forward to visiting museums, traveling to visit different wineries, taking long walks with her dog, and most of all, spending time with close friends and family. If the opportunity presents itself, Linda would like to volunteer at a fine arts museum, where she can help others to explore the artistry and creativity of those around her. This next stage of her life is not a somber one, but a vibrant new beginning where she can be

who she wants to be on any day of the week. When the alarm clock goes off, instead of getting dressed to report to the office, she can hit the snooze button and lay there just a little while longer. The worry of the hustle and bustle of downtown traffic is behind her, and Linda will continue to carry her coworkers in her heart.

Lastly, Linda appreciated the privilege of working on the Capitol grounds, and being able to meet celebrities such as Stephen Spielberg or the Governor. Linda looks at both the small and the great things that have given her peace and solitude, and is grateful for moments such as seeing her husband recover from quadruple bypass surgery. None of us knows what tomorrow will bring, so it is with great courage that we live each day with compassion and humility, as if it was our last. ■

Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice and Prevention

Every three years the Virginia Department of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) is tasked with the development of Virginia's three-year plan for juvenile justice, a requirement of the federal Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention Act. The plan is developed and voted on by the Virginia Advisory Committee on Juvenile Justice and Prevention (ACJJP), a body whose mission is to advise the Criminal Justice Services Board, DCJS, other state agencies and localities on matters related to the prevention and treatment of delinquency and the administration of the juvenile justice system. This is a federally required state advisory group.

The composition of the ACJJP is guided by state and federal statute and is made up of ex-officio and appointed at-large members representing justice-related areas. The uniqueness of the composition is important in ensuring that the voice of those that administer and receive services are heard. The ACJJP members include youth members, advocates, formerly system-involved individuals, and representatives from the volunteer community. The ACJJP is dedicated to making sure that research and data lead the way to address issues that affect the youth and families involved in the juvenile justice system.

The ACJJP met virtually September 28 through October 1, 2020, for a retreat to develop, discuss and to set priorities for the new three-year plan. In developing the plan, the ACJJP heard from partners through presentations that included an interview with a system-involved youth, an overview of



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the School Resource Officer program, the profile of youth by the Virginia Department of Juvenile Justice and lastly, the importance of juvenile justice advocacy from Legal Aid Justice Center.

Additionally, the ACJJP discussed recent challenges faced on the local level, including COVID-19, which has disrupted services and in some cases necessitated shifted resources from programming and services to address the pandemic. Before concluding the retreat, the ACJJP reviewed the current priority order and processed any new urgent issues within the juvenile justice and related systems.

As a committee subject to public meeting laws, the ACJJP cannot typically meet virtually. However, because of the state of emergency associated with the pandemic, we can do so now. It is worth noting that 98% of the members of the advisory committee participated throughout the three-day retreat, presumably because of the allowance of virtual public meetings during the pandemic. ■



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Division of Law Enforcement – Field Inspections and Audits

New Employee: David Stone, Region VI Field Representative

We are pleased to introduce the newest DCJS Field Representative for the Division of Law Enforcement, David Stone. He is assigned to the area currently referred to as Region VI covering the greater Richmond area extending southward to the North Carolina border. As the Field Rep for Region VI, David serves as the liaison between DCJS and 55 criminal justice agencies, ten independent criminal justice training academies, and one regional academy in Central/South Central Virginia.

Field Reps have a wide range of responsibilities in ensuring regulatory compliance with compulsory training standards. In addition, they provide training expertise and advice based upon their prior experiences.

David began his career in criminal justice in 1986 at the Madison County Police Department in Anderson, Indiana. Subsequently, he and his wife, Laura, moved to Virginia after he accepted employment with the Chesterfield County Police Department. He retired as a major in 2018 after 28 years of service. David has an extensive background in law enforcement training and held full-time positions as an academy advisor, training officer, training sergeant, and director of training during his tenure with Chesterfield.



In addition to his duties at DCJS, David serves as an adjunct faculty member at Liberty University where he has provided online instruction for ten years. However he really hits his stride on the weekends when his band, *Last Chance Cowboys* is scheduled to play in the area. This is an acoustic duo that specializes in country and southern rock music. ■

CONTACT DCJS

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